

ISSN 0970-5260

Panjab University
Research Journal (Arts)

Volume XLV

No 1

January-June 2018



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Chandigarh (India)

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Student Organising in Pakistan: New Spaces for Articulating Old Political Forces

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Abstract

Student politics in Pakistan has historically been a tussle between the right wing religious party, IJT (Islamia Jamiat –i- Taliba) and the left wing NSF (National Student Federation). However, in the mobilization against General Musharraf in 2007 an independent student movement, centered in the private colleges of the major cities, emerged to protest. Access to communication technologies meant that this group were also able to mobilise transnationally and organised protests in London, Manchester and New York. This class of students were not the most likely candidates for being the vanguard of the youth movement, but following national elections in 2008 they were also involved in the mobilisations to reinstate the Chief Justice. This new political space was short lived and the return of confrontational politics between IJT and other student groups emerged despite the potency of student organizing. Subsequent governments have maintained the ban on student unions in Pakistan and as such this brief flowering of student politics remains nascent.

‘It was hardly a student movement...more like a few universities in the main urban centre of Pakistan and that mainly in Punjab...also the issues were abstract, like rule of law, so maybe it was more like an elite schism, rather than a mass popular protest.’

(Saad, Student activist)

‘Certainly the long march was the most important...for everyone who was there..it really shaped the way I think about the world’.

(Maria, Student Activist)

‘We really felt like we could change things, there was so much momentum, so much energy and for the first time it felt like this country (Pakistan) could become something’

(Student Action Committee Member)

Not since the 1960s have students played such a prominent role in politics, as that in the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and Iran (from 2011 onwards). However, while those momentous events have attracted a considerable amount of academic and media attention, the student movement that began in Pakistan in 2008 and that played a central role in the return to democracy in that country, has not received as much attention. This is

despite the fact that there are a considerable number of similarities between the role played by Egyptian and Pakistani students in their specific struggles. Indeed, three areas that will be explored in this article; the role of private universities; the presence of an integrated transnational response and the use of social media are all aspects that show continuities with Pakistani and Arab mobilisations, but have only been compared in relation to social media (Arif, 2014). This relative neglect is indicative of research on Pakistan, which has been dominated by the spectres of religion and terrorism. Focusing on the student movement contributes to alter-narratives of understanding Pakistani society outside of these dominant frames (Asdar Ali, 2015).

The academic literature on the role of students in social movements remains largely derived from 1960s scholarship, with its focus on France and the USA (Cockburn and Blackburn, 1969). No doubt these remain paradigmatic moments for the mobilisation of Western youth, but to some extent neglect the longer histories of anti-colonial movements, which were driven and led by students.¹ One notable exception to this can be found in the pioneering work of Altbach, who frames his understanding of student movements in an international context, based initially on an analysis of the All India Students Movement, of the 1960s (Altbach, 1969). This largely empirical framework gives a crucial role to the public university, as a seeding ground for radical anti-state politics. Subsequently, scholars have developed this perspective to take into account the role that private universities can make (Bellei et al, 2014) and in the contemporary period the role of transnational organising and social media (Eko, 2012). These latter two phenomena have been prominently remarked upon in the Arab spring for instance.² In this article, these issues are taken up to consider the student activism that took place in 2007-8 and was part of a movement that led to the re-establishment of democracy in Pakistan. Oscillating between military rule and dictatorship, but never far from authoritarianism, Pakistan's political history has been fractured and fractious. Nonetheless, students played a crucial role alongside trade unions and political parties in the overthrowing of the military state in the late 1960s (Asdar Ali, 2015). Indeed, it was only in the early 1980s, under the military rule of General Zia that student unions were banned and campuses came under the effective control of a right wing coalition of students and teachers. It is in this context that the student movement of 2007 can be placed and the relatively unexpected role of private universities can be understood.

In November 2007, the President and General of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf, declared a state of emergency, effectively a coup on himself. From that time on, until the eventual restoration of democracy a sustained campaign against his rule was carried out by various groups and parties. Central to this mobilization was that of elite students in private

¹ Bhagat Singh, the leader of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association was only 23 at the time of his execution and mobilised actively amongst students in Lahore, when he studied at the National College there.

² See the online Journal, *Arab, Media and Society*, (<http://www.arabmediasociety.com>) for extensive coverage of the role of social media in the social protests.

colleges, who, hitherto had generally been in support of the status quo. The research in this paper is based on interviews with activists involved in the student movement and on the basis of being a visiting lecturer at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) at the time that the protests were occurring.³ LUMS is the premiere social science institution in Pakistan and charges one of the highest fees for students. Academic staff are by and large educated at PhD level in non-Pakistani institutions and the campus attempts to maintain an atmosphere of tolerance and open-ness. This defence of a liberal ethos was perhaps one of main reasons that in the first month of the declaration of ‘emergency,’ whilst political activists were being detained and arrested, LUMS remained a space where protests could be organised. The University administration was also keen to defend the students’ right to engage in non-violent protest, a situation that did not exist in other Universities in the city. Ironically, the lack of an active student population meant that the committee that was formed was initially able to overcome the sectarianism present amongst the existing student wings of political parties. A reliable infrastructure was also important, as a campus with good internet access and relatively unhindered electricity, coupled with a transnational network of former students (who had often gone abroad to do higher degrees) contributed to the central role for LUMS in the movement. However, the process by which elite students became active and participated was also closely linked to the broader political mobilisation led by the Lawyers Movement.

Lawyers Movement

While it is perhaps too much of an exaggeration to call the mobilisation against military rule as a ‘Pakistani Spring,’ as Vali Nasr (2013) has done, it is not difficult to agree with his pithy summary of the forces that accomplished this fact: “Pakistan had its spring in 2008 when its lawyers, media, students, and civil society joined hands to send

General Musharraf packing” (Nasr 2013: 92). Given the historic suppression of students it is not surprising that it took so long for a formal student movement to emerge against the Musharraf regime. The broad campaign against the military dictator, began in May 2007, when the deposed Chief Justice, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry went on a tour of bar councils around Pakistan, encompassing Peshawar, Lahore, Faisalabad and Hyderabad, in fact crossing the length of the country in an ostensible move to be reinstated, but what was effectively a call for regime change. What was perhaps most surprising about these visits is that they turned into mobile street demonstrations. Indeed, the trip to the Lahore bar from Islamabad that began on the 5th of May took twenty-six hours as a cavalcade joined Chaudhry and the sides of the GT Road were lined with people.⁴ This was followed by another long journey from Islamabad to Abbottabad, covering 70km in 8 hours following the same pattern of streets lined with supporters. To

³ Many thanks to Anushay Malik, who carried out some of the interviews and was present when other were carried out and for being a useful sounding board for developing some of the ideas.

⁴ These protests were extensively covered in the local and international media; for example <http://www.outlookindia.com/printarticle.aspx?234697>;
<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1628168,00.html> accessed 9th May, 9:30AM, GMT

some extent, these protests and demonstrations reflected the strength of the political parties, that had been marginalized and dormant since the beginning of military rule in 1999. However, they tapped into general discontent with General Musharraf and it was the unlikely leadership of lawyers that led the way for a civil society and political party coalition.

The lawyers' protests, their general non-violent tenure and success at mobilisation left many commentators in the West a little perplexed. Even sympathetic academic commentary such as that by Ahmed and Stephan (2010) seemed to rest on the premise that this was a unique response by an otherwise passive and apolitical populace. In a rather absurd comment piece on the Guardian newspaper, otherwise respected academic Saskia Sassen, reflected on her two days in Lahore in 2007 spent at LUMS, that this was not a popular uprising of the street, but rather a small niche of the elite engaged in a specific confrontation.⁵ Systematic analysis of students protests as highlighted how it is those from the best academic backgrounds in the country's power centres and in the best institutions who engage in activism (Altbach 1992). The view of the Pakistani population and students as passive and accepting (which harks back to older discourses about the passive Indian in colonial discourse) does not fully take into account the extent to which the Zia regime viciously repressed student dissent (Talbot, 1998). Also the fact that in the previous era of military rule in the 1960s, it was students who were at the forefront of deposing of the Ayub Khan regime. Just as in the 1960s, students in the anti-Musharraf movement were part of a wider coalition of social forces. Perhaps their enlistment was possible because it was the lawyers movement that acted as the touchstone and was essentially middle class and urban. The lawyers protests provided an organizational focus for civil society groups and political parties to come together under the banner of 'Go Musharraf Go.' It was in London in July 2007 that the All Parties Democratic Movement (APDM) formed as an alliance of the main political parties that included, the Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PML-N), the Awami National Party (ANP) and the Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) with the notable exception of the Pakistan People's Party. It was the PTI that ultimately would develop a synergy with the students movement and arguably were one of the main beneficiaries of the protests. The formation of the APDM signaled that the movement that had begun with the simple demand for the reinstatement of the deposed Chief Justice had become one that was looking for the removal of Musharraf and the full restoration of democracy. To try and take the impetus out of the lawyers movement, Chaudhry's reinstatement in July 2007 was not opposed by Musharraf, a move that also allowed the US to continue their support of the regime (Ahmed and Stephan, 2010).

The reinstatement of the Chief Justice was not to be the end of the judicial story, while the protest movement lulled over the summer of 2007, General Musharraf decided to hold an indirect election for the post of President before the planned 2008 parliamentary elections, in an effort to preserve his power as president before a fully democratic

⁵ Sassen, Saskia, 'Pakistan's two worlds'

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2007/nov/07/pakistanstwoworlds>, accessed 13:00, 27/7/15

parliament would come to power. However, several challenges were presented before the Supreme Court against this and even though Musharraf won the parliamentary election on October 6th, it was not clear that the Supreme Court with Chaudhry as its head would ratify the decision. To counter this threat, on November 3rd Musharraf declared a state of emergency, suspended the constitution and the supreme court, in effect declaring a coup on himself. Chaudhry and sixty other judges refused to take the oath under the new regime and were therefore sacked. A puppet Chief Justice affirmed Musharraf as president late in November 2007. The declaration of Emergency was followed by the estimated arrests of 1000 lawyers and up to 2500 activists. The vast majority of these were from the NGOs and political parties involved in the major protests early on in the year. The entire audience of a meeting of the Joint Action Committee at the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) held on Saturday 4th November in Lahore were arrested.⁶ Even though up to this point students had been involved as part of the various lawyers movements as parts of the student wings of the formal parties, such as the Insaaf Students Group (PTI) the Islamia Jamiaat-i-tuleba (Jamaat-i-Islami), no independent movement had formed. Indeed, the politicization of student politics has often meant that issues that do not directly concern academic life become the central focus of student politics. This tension between fighting for the rights of students and students fighting for rights is particularly marked in Southern contexts (Luescher-Mamashela and Mugume, 2014). By declaring a state of emergency in November 2007, General Musharraf provoked a backlash that was perhaps unexpectedly widespread and student led.

Student Mobilization

Perhaps due to the contingencies of geo-politics since 2001, the main academic studies of student movements in Pakistan, in English, have focused on the mobilisation and role of religious organisations. Most notable of these is by Humeira Iqtidar (2011) in the book *Secularising Islamists*, but also the work by Mathew Nelson (2011). The main focus being on the Islamia Jamiat –i- Taliba (IJT), the student wing of the Jamaat-i-Islami, the oldest and most organised right wing religious party of Pakistan. The only systematic attempt at looking at the wider student movements comes in the form of an extensive and detailed blog by journalist-cum-social commentator, F. Paracha.⁷ To some extent the student movement that emerged in 2007-8 was a surprise, as University campuses and student politics generally had been discredited in the 1980s, due to violence and involvement of non-student political forces. In that period, the ideological battle for the control for the colleges and Universities across Pakistan was accompanied by violent confrontations. Indeed, when martial law was declared in July of 1977, all Colleges and Universities were closed for many months to ensure the silencing of student opposition. The harsher side of this involved promoting and arming the IJT. Violent confrontations across the major Universities and Colleges resulted in the injury and death of many anti-

⁶ The HRCP blog during the period is a good source of events coverage:
<http://hrcpblog.wordpress.com/2007/11/04/>

⁷ <http://nadeemfparacha.wordpress.com/> accessed 12/10/12, 14:22

IJT students and left wing cadres. Indeed, such was the extent of the conflict on campuses that General Zia himself banned student unions in 1984. This was a turning point in Zia's previous policy of direct confrontation and the precursor to assembly elections. These political machinations were accompanied by ideological work in the field of education that has had a long lasting impact (Rahman, 2004). The University Grants Commission (UGC) led the process of Islamization, where it declared in 1981 that the basic ideology of Pakistan was religious and this was to be reflected in textbooks and teaching.⁸ In Universities, a new compulsory degree level subject was introduced; Pakistan Studies, regardless of the institution being private or public and to include all students, including those doing science.⁹ The banning of student unions in this period and subsequent domination of higher education administration and faculty by the Islamia Jamiat-i-Taliba (IJT), had led to a general de-politicisation of campuses and students in general. Indeed, when the military coup of 1999 took place and General Musharraf came to power, there were no protests by students against this return to authoritarian rule.

The advent of the emergency in 2007 and the arrests of lawyers and activists was followed by a public protest in Lahore on the 4th of November. At this demonstration, the Police were heavy handed, tear gas was thrown and many of the protestors arrested. A few active students from the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), returned from the protest to find the campus alive with rumours that some LUMS students had been arrested and also that two faculty members had been detained. An impromptu demonstration took place on the campus outside of the canteen, with two students who were already active in left wing politics speaking and a faculty member. LUMS then became the hub for a month of frenzied activity that primarily involved the main private Universities of Lahore: Lahore School of Economics, Beacon house National University, FAST (National University of Computing and Emerging Sciences) and Punjab University, the only public sector institution. The various range of student organisations that were spawned and declined in the 18 months of activities up to the second long March in 2009 when the Chief Justice was finally restored and effectively General Musharraf removed from power remains to be fully disaggregated. But broadly the private colleges generated a transnational, media savvy, liberal in outlook, vociferously independent, short lived student movement, which was mostly headed by the Student Action Committee. On the public sector campuses, the new space created by this movement spearheaded the formation of more explicitly left leaning groups such as the United Students Federation and ultimately an attempt at reinvigorating the National Students Federation.¹⁰ What was perhaps most surprising about this activity was the mobilisation in private universities, where students, often paying high fees are seen as

⁸ University Grants Commission directive, quoted in Azhar Hamid and others, *Mutalliyah-i-Pakistan* (Islamabad: Allama Iqbal Open University, 1983).

⁹ Ironically, Pakistan studies has also been a mechanism by which students are introduced to the humanities in general and forces institutions into investing in those subject areas, such as History and Sociology, which would otherwise be neglected.

¹⁰ The NSF was the most important left wing student organisation in Pakistan up until the late 1980s.

less likely to disturb the status quo (Klemencic, 2014). However, these are also the places where students are more likely to feel that they have a stake in the national and to be influenced by staff who were themselves politicised.

A number of perspectives therefore arise about why LUMS students initially protested. For one of the leading members of the Student Action Committee it was primarily because this was an opportunity for her to channel discontent that she had been feeling for a long time but with no venue for expression:

‘I was just an ordinary student worried about my grades....I had always been outspoken about my rights as a women in my household.. my mother was always scolding me about my outspoken ways.....when the lawyers protests happened it was like, so shocking.. ..this can’t be happening.. so when the demonstrations began on campus I got involved..’ (Shaira, SAC Member)

This was perhaps the most common view amongst the rank and file of students who were involved in the early stages of the movement, the sense that something outrageous had happened. A further significant point was the role that women played at the forefront of the Student Action Committee, a significant new element in politics of this kind in Pakistan. The relatively open environment of LUMS made this participation more possible, but also led to a sense of being above and beyond the repressive arm of the state. This changed when, on the day the Emergency was declared, two faculty members were arrested at a meeting held at the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) in Lahore. This was part of a country wide detention of around 3,000 human rights and outspoken critics of the regime. Perhaps the most ludicrous of the charges was against Professor Rasul Baksh Rais who was accused of chalk walling, or writing graffiti. All three professors detained were from the Humanities (Economics, Law and Social Sciences). In that sense the affront to the LUMS community itself, which to some extent would prior to this feel protected by its elite position, perhaps gave a sense to the student body that anyone could be targeted in the new state of Emergency. This view is summarized by one of the Faculty:

We were thinking if the faculty can be picked up from LUMS then no one is safe in this country...students started to feel insecure, when this place and this campus is all about creating a bubble, protected space where the problems of Pakistan, no electricity, chaos are left behind....

(Furrukh Khan, LUMS Faculty member)

This personal sense of offence also draws upon a more structural analysis of the movement offered by one of the students involved, but who had also been previously engaged in left wing organising:

There was no class contradiction for the elite students involved. This was an elite schism, ideas like the ‘rule of law’ the judicial system itself all worked in favour of the elites.

(Ahmad, Student Activist)

Bolognani (2010) frames elite student involvement in terms of the logical outcome of the spawning of a liberal class by the Musharraf regime, rebelled in order to protect those rights. Arguably the lawyers movement itself, which actually began the large scale protests, was a relatively unusual group to be at the forefront of street mobilisation. However, given the degradation of traditional institutions of popular dissent, such as trade unions and political parties, the organisational strength of the lawyers was an essential requirement for the movement's success (Ahmed and Stephan, 2010).

It is the Student Action Committee and the role of students from the private colleges that has attracted the most international media attention (Bolognani, 2011). These Universities emerged as part of the privatisation of the University sector that General Musharraf bought in during the early part of the 2000s. Their development was also aided by the difficulties that Pakistani elite students faced in getting visas for Universities in the USA and UK post 9-11, thereby creating a pool of students who were looking to study in a liberal environment and who could afford high fees. In that context the growth of social science and law courses in these Universities is also related to the restriction on those opportunities abroad. Nonetheless, for a college like LUMS, which started out as a management school in the 1980s offering professional degrees and essentially drifted into the social sciences due to the requirements for all Pakistani students to complete a course in Pakistan studies, the central role in the movement was unexpected.¹¹ Despite its appearance as a liberal space, relative to the public sector college, the National College of Arts (NCA), LUMS was actually socially far more conservative. Indeed, the Student Action Committee became effective precisely when it was reorganised outside of LUMS, at its first meeting in the city, at Narang Gallery in mid-November. The broad span of groups of students that attended this meeting is well illustrated by the involvement of FAST, which as a relatively new computing and engineering institution which did not have students subjected to the kind of atmosphere in LUMS and NCA, but was caught up in the tide against the Emergency. The formation of FAST Rising was parallel to that of the SAC and one of its main components. One of the central organisers, Jaleel, describes his role:

‘We were part of the SAC, but organised as FAST Rising when it came to our own campus. We joined in other group's protests, like that of the lawyers and the CCP (Concerned Citizens of Pakistan) but we also did our own events....’

We were not allowed to organise in the University, as any student union is not allowed on the campus...the Police would come and lock the gates anytime we had a protest, so we could not go out....so the main organisers of FAST Rising were alumni...one guy had come back from America and was very active...’

This loose structure was facilitated by the use of texting and social media but crucially through spoken communication. As Jaleel further describes:

¹¹ For a detailed analysis of LUMS student cultures see Bolognani (2011).

We had distributed our lists of contacts amongst four or five of us and it was our responsibility to contact 40-50 people, either through text or through calling them, to keep the motivated and involved in the movement...even though people knew through social media, but we still got in touch with them..

Though the role of transnational media has been rightly emphasised in highlighting the role of students, the mobilising for the Long March (a large protests demanding the removal of President Musharraf) relied on a range of methods. Bolognani (2010) provides a convincing case about the central importance of the global audience for the local events that were going in Pakistan. Indeed, in many ways this is where the Pakistani students pre-empted the kinds of mobilisation which was to become so central in the Arab spring. Arif (2014) articulates this point succinctly: ‘...this study also makes a strong case that Pakistan experienced online informational activism long before the Arab Spring of 2011. Since political communication in Pakistan is a relatively under-researched field, academic archives do not provide sufficient information on the role and emergence of social media in the country’ (vi: 2014). Arguably, there is a lack of research on social movements more generally in Pakistan, due to the dominance of narratives concerned with religious extremism and political Islam. In contrast the activities of the students in the SAC reflect a dynamic engagement with social media. Students published a daily media blog; ‘The Emergency Times,’ which also appeared for a brief period as a physical newspaper from the 4th November 2007 till the end of June 2008.¹² This was an amazing effort, given that it gave daily coverage for the first thirty days of the emergency and attempted to document, not only local protests, but the coverage of the issue and crucially the protests that were occurring globally. For a volunteer team of activists, the daily blog was also an entry into the global media, with *Al Jazeera* and the *New York Times* using it as source material for articles and coverage (Bolognani, 2010). These engagements with the global media and virtual organising played a role in morale lifting:

It was really important for us to see the support we were getting from around the world. The media coverage, the fact that our small protests were making such big waves was a big deal. How much it made a difference to the way in which the movement went, I’m not sure. (Khalil, Student Activist)

Though this virtual transnational organising was essential in conveying the opposition to the emergency in Pakistan, it was accompanied by a series of protests outside Pakistani Consulates across the world. As would be expected London was the centre of these mobilisations, but it also involved other major cities in the UK, such as Manchester and then across North America (Boston, New York City, Washington DC, Chicago and Los Angeles). These protests were again co-ordinated thorough the internet and attempted to bring together the diverse anti-Musharraf political elements. These protests did not manage to mobilise the Pakistani diaspora, rather it was students from Pakistan who were studying in the West. Farheen, who was doing her Masters course in Manchester at the time, offers a typology of the protesters:

¹² See <http://pakistanmartiallaw.blogspot.co.uk/> for the online version.

There were three types of Pakistani student. The first were those who were doing an undergraduate and from wealthy backgrounds who were relatively apathetic. The second were postgrads on Pakistani government HEC sponsored courses and they were worried about losing their grants if they protested. Finally there was the British Pakistani diaspora and they were the least aware of Pakistani politics, actually they were the most pro-military and for Musharraf! (Student activist, Farheen)

Farheen was the main organiser of the protests in Manchester and was herself a LUMS alumni. She further articulates the reasons for the lack of involvement of the diaspora students:

The students were afraid of doing any kind of protest, because of Islamophobia. The only way they would protest was if there were no anti-American slogans and no anti-imperialist banners.

In that sense the prime organizers of protests, in the UK, were already linked in with the students in Pakistan. Key individuals, who were already active in Pakistan played a major role in organising and mobilising in North America and Europe. For example, Tehmur Rahman a key activist of the Communist Mazdoor Kisan Party as well as an adjunct lecturer at LUMS, was studying for his PhD at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the time so became the key focal point for London organising. This was also helped by the role that Jemima Khan, Imran Khan's ex-wife played in giving the movement publicity.¹³ The first protest in London was followed by a meeting at SOAS where the solidarity being offered was not from a group distant from the events, but due to the social media reports and friendships with those involved was urgent and immediate. Though these activities dissipated in the return to democracy in 2008, the occurrence of transnational mobilisation amongst this group continued. This was most notable in the attacks on the army school in Peshawar in 2014, when again students of Pakistani origin organise a number of solidarity events.¹⁴

Whilst the legacy of the movement in the transnational context is notable, the impact it had on actual student organising in private universities in Pakistan is probably less easy to gauge. The intense and prolific activities of the SAC were noted by the civil society activists as well as the main political parties and it ultimately merged into the wider anti-Musharraf and lawyers movement. As the wider political energy became tamed by the return to democracy and the removal of General Musharraf, the student movement leaders became disillusioned, as Jaleel states:

After the long march, because there was no revolution, no real change we all became tired. We had mobilised so much for the Long March, but it left us all feeling like nothing was achieved.

¹³ Jemima Khan leads protest over Pakistan crisis, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1568899/Jemima-Khan-leads-protest-over-Pakistan-crisis.html>, accessed 12/7/15, 13:38

¹⁴ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-30523833>, accessed 12/7/15, 13:45

The Student Action Committee did try to establish itself as an independent student movement, but got caught up in the politics of the already aligned student groups. Even the independent left wing students, who did not represent a mainstream party were more interested in reviving the National Students Federation, rather than supporting an independent movement. To some extent this was to the loss of the development of student unions as independent campus based organisations on the private sector campuses. Even though another student group, the Democratic Student Association was formed a few years later, it has not had the same kind of impact as that of the SAC. In that sense the more profound changes from the movement actually occurred in the public Universities, such as the University of Engineering and Technology and most significantly at Punjab University. Indeed, each particular University context provided local reasons for the desire for protest, at the University of Engineering Technology, any kind of student organisation (which would often mean three or four students just sitting together) was considered an offence that could result in expulsion. In other words, a draconian administrative machine was in place that caused resentment. At the Punjab University the long-standing control of the IJT meant a campus that was relatively devoid of student life, even though again the aspirations and desires were present. It is Punjab University that offers a parallel case study to that of LUMS, in that the protests there rarely made the international media coverage, yet the long term implications of the protest were to open up the political space of the campus.

Punjab University

Punjab University in Lahore, was the site of intense confrontation between the left and the religious right through the 1960s and 70s. Under General Zia's regime the formal banning of student unions in 1984 led to the dominance of the Jammat-i-Islami on campuses, in relation to students through the IJT, but it also slowly extended its control over academic Faculty and ultimately the University administration. This was undertaken by the transfer of progressive teachers and the imposition of administrators by the military regime. Despite formal power, the IJT exerted its control through coercion and bullying. This essentially meant a patrolling of personal space, with interaction between boys and girls forbidden and brutal suppression of any dissenting voices. The IJT's rule meant for example that whilst the University maintained a degree program in Music, practical classes were not allowed on campus, as the playing of instruments was deemed against the principles of the organisation. To some extent the student body was relatively passive in the face of the overwhelming organisational power of the IJT and the simmering threat of violence. In an outline sketch of student politics from the 1950s to the present day Paracha offers an insight into the oscillation between the IJT and various progressive student opposition groups in the main Universities of Pakistan. From this analysis it becomes clear that student politics reflected the increasingly violent confrontational politics of the society more generally. Though student unions were legalised after General Zia's demise, public universities remained a site of confrontation, often playing out wider vendettas of political groupings and parties. Even though up-to the mid-1990s, Punjab Universities student body oscillated between progressive groups

and the IJT, the deep influence in the faculty and administration meant that by the time of the return to military rule under General Musharraf in 1999, his banning of student unions meant, de facto control of the campus was returned to the IJT.

It was therefore not surprising that on November 14 2007, when Imran Khan the leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf, or Justice Party attended the Punjab University to address a student rally about the Emergency, that IJT students manhandled him, detained him on the campus then handed him over to the Police. He was charged under public disorder offences and anti-terror legislation. Most ironic of course was that his party was at the time in an alliance with the Jamaat-i-Islami, the mother party of the IJT.¹⁵ These actions acted as a spark to galvanise the Punjab University student body for the first time in a decade and most notably it was the female student body that seemed to respond in the most visible manner. This may be in part due to the resentment at the IJT controlling and policing of the campus, which would inevitably mean greater surveillance of the female student body. But it was also reflective of the way in which the IJT was out of touch with the reality of life for students in Lahore, as Fayyaz remarked:

I went to Punjab University from Government College Lahore and could not believe how strange it was...like you could not talk to or sit next to a girl if she was on her own or even with her friends...there was segregation and the IJT students were like guard dogs, barking at all of us (Insaaf Students Organiser – Fayyaz)

The Imran Khan incident galvanised this resentment and up to three thousand students marched in the campus in protest at the events, with placards ranging from ‘We love you Imran’ to calls for the banning of the IJT from campus.¹⁶

As with the mobilisation by the SAC, but perhaps not reflected in the subsequent leadership from Punjab University, young women were active in the demonstrations and protests against IJT. This reflected the growth in political participation of young people generally due to the mobilisations of Imran Khan’s Tehreek-e-insaaf, but also reflected the shifting dynamics in higher education, with almost a doubling of levels of female participation in the first decade of the twenty first century (Batool et al, 2013). Whilst the protests at the private universities remained relatively peaceful, the activities at the Punjab University were more confrontational and violent, perhaps reflecting the political history of the campus. In the wake of the protests against the IJT, a progressive independent student organisation, the University Students Federation (USF) was formed. One of the activists, Shams, describes the rationale behind the group:

In the mid-2000’s a group of us had got together as we were opposed to the hold of the Jamiaat on Punjab University Campus, we could not believe the kinds of restrictions they put on students.... so when the Imran Khan event happened it

¹⁵ Though as Paracha notes, there were several periods in the relationship between the IJT and the Jamaat where the parent body admitted it has not control over the students.

¹⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLbyKE7XoC4> accessed 27/2/13, 13:32

was an opportunity for us to form the USF...Our main concern was that we should be a non-violent and non-partisan group and that students should not be affiliated to an outside political party but rather should be concerned with their student life and campus.... this did not mean that there should not be political discussion, but it should be independent....our concern about non-violence was because of the way that the Jamiaat used intimidation and bullying as one of their central strategies to control the campus...we met with the SAC group at the demonstration at Liberty Chowk in late November...and I was on the founding convening committee.

Though a part of the SAC, when it came to the wider issue of the Chief Justice and the end of dictatorship, the USF was primarily concerned with reducing the control of the IJT and of taking control of Punjab University campus. Perhaps, reflecting the social class of the students, the USF, rather than relying on social media and English language publications, published an Urdu pamphlet to articulate its demands. Indeed, as the protests for democratisation were taking place in the city and throughout Punjab, the campus itself was increasingly become a scene of violent confrontation. On the 3rd of December 2007 at 3am in the morning about fifty men, not all of whom were students (a tactic often deployed by the IJT) raided one of the University hostels. They then captured two of the main USF members, beat them up and shot and injured another two. When other USF activists arrived they were also assaulted with about ten sustaining injuries. Students then blockaded the Canal road, one of Lahore's main roads, outside the University in protest at the attack.¹⁷ Shams describes the tensions that led up to these events:

You have to understand that the situation in the campus was such that you could not even put up a poster in your own hostel without getting permission from the IJT. After the Imran Khan event, we became more bold and began to advertise the SAC and CCP of events all over the campus...by this time the infamous torture cells that the IJT had set up had been closed by the administration so we were not that worried, but they had started to harass and beat up our members...two of the Phd students from the media school were roughed up....but it did not stop us mobilising and that led to the showdown where there was firing [gun shots]..

The highly politicised nature of Punjab University campus activities can be witnessed by the fact that the Punjab Governor and Chancellor of the University, Salman Taseer visited the injured students in hospital.¹⁸ Despite the support of the Vice-Chancellor and the staff, the assailants were not apprehended, even though various activists of the IJT were removed from the campus.

¹⁷ Interview with USF activist

¹⁸ Mansoor Malik, The Dawn, 4/12/8, <http://archives.dawn.com/2008/12/04/nat47.htm> accessed, 2/1/11 12:12

After this event, the following of the USF waned as the general student body feared reprisal from the IJT, as Shams relates:

Most of the student were not willing to take the risks that we were taking, they had come to study for a few years and even though they did not like the atmosphere on the campus they were not willing to stand up to the intimidation. After we were shot at by the IJT, they were even scared of talking to us....but the movement did open up a space for politics that had not been there for a long time....

Whilst the Punjab University campus itself became less repressive, the election of the Pakistan People's Party government in 2008 signalled a shift in the general political climate.

Despite the lifting of the ban on Student Unions by Prime Minister Yousaf Gillani in 2008, formal elections in Pakistan's Universities have been few and far, largely due to the fear of violence and disruption. However, the more open political climate has meant a greater pluralisation of organisations on campuses. The attempt at reviving the National Student Federation, an organisation from the 1960s which resolutely defended campuses against the IJT until the 1980s was only partially successful. Other attempts at independent organising, such as the Democratic Students Alliance in Lahore remain nascent. The most sustained shift in student politics has been the return of the youth wings of political parties to campuses. It could also be argued that the opening of campuses and the events at PU were part of the process by which Imran Khan's Justice Party became so popular. Certainly the more politically minded activists of the USF found the *Insaaf Students Federation* a platform from which to carry on the anti-IJT activities, however, in that context there were joined by a plethora of other organisations, such as the People's Student Federation (Pakistan People's Party) and the Muslim Students Federation (Muslim League-N), as youth wings of their respective parties. In addition, a whole range of ethnic and sectarian groups have emerged on campus reflecting general societal cleavages. Nonetheless, the primary tussle on PU campus still remains between these various groups and the IJT, with newspapers regularly reporting clashes.¹⁹ This has taken on various hues, with sectarian clashes between the IJT and Shia students groups and at other times an ethnic hue, with a recent clash between IJT and Pakhtoon/Baloch students.²⁰ The tactics of maintaining control over students everyday activities has also not relented, where the IJT asserting that canteens should be segregated and even that only certain products be sold, again reflecting an anti-Ahmadiya sectarian position.²¹ The outcome of the 2008 events was not to create a united students movement, but perhaps more limitedly to create the conditions of possibility for an organisation to develop.

¹⁹ (<http://jafrianews.com/2011/12/24/several-shia-students-of-punjab-university-injured-by-attack-of-ijt-terrors/>)

²⁰ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1240107> '15 injured in student groups' clash at PU hostel'

²¹ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/342027/banned-drinks-no-shezan-pepsi-at-punjab-university/>

Student Politics – Refrain

The relative neglect of the Pakistan student's movement is perhaps symptomatic of the general lack of academic attention paid to the country, other than where the issue of terrorism or Islamist politics is of concern. Though perhaps not as widespread or successful in its mobilising as the students of the Arab Spring, the movement in Pakistan nonetheless does provide an illustration of the way in which new forms of communication, liberal education and political instability can combine to politicise and activate students. Of perhaps most particular note in the general literature on student mobilisation is the way in which privatised education, which is an outcome of neoliberal reforms in education can give rise to protesting students, rather than docile subjects, as would be expected. This aspect of at least the activities of the Student Action Committee is worth reflecting on as education provision in South Asia becomes increasing commoditised. The involvement of engineering colleges and institutions, which had no previous history of student politics, also indicates that the generic role of education even in its most vocational form can still result in student bodies demanding liberal democratic rights. Student involvement in politics, more generally, since the 2008 movements has not been as prominent or visible. On campuses a national student movement with a focus solely on issues of concern to the education sector has also not emerged. Nonetheless, the political space opened up on campuses has broken the suffocating monopoly of the IJT, but rather than a new independent student movement emerging, it has been filled by the student wings of political parties.

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Militants Attacks on the Security Personnel in Kashmir : Human Rights Perspective

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Abstract

The trajectory of ongoing terrorist violence in the state of Jammu and Kashmir has made it difficult for the people to defend their lives and liberties. The perpetration of human rights violations could be attributed to the terrorist and the state forces as well. Acts of terrorism whether perpetrated by individuals, groups or state forces, is a crime against humanity. The paper however, focuses on attacks on police and security personnel resulting in violations of their rights at the hands of the terrorists, insurgents, protesters and the agitating mobs. The attacks on security personnel by militants have been examined in the light of human rights perspectives. The violations committed by the militants on security personnel have jettisoned the Indian Constitution, particularly Article 21 which guarantees right to life and personal liberty. State must ensure to protect rights of security personnel in accordance with relevant national and international human rights principles and instruments particularly the right to life.

The beleaguered State of Jammu & Kashmir is passing through an unending violence which has forced common people to be sandwiched between the gun-toting militants and the counter terrorist operations conducted by the security forces. The violence wrecked with guns, grenades, blasts, stones, tear gas shells etc. has dislodged the human perspective of attaining normalcy and order in the state. As many as 13936 civilians and 5,043 security personnel had lost their lives upto 31st December 2016.¹ Violence apart, the flags of Pakistan and ISIS have been waved intermittently and stone pelting on the security personnel has been spearheaded by local youths to foil counter-terrorist operations. In addition, the Valley has witnessed a recurrence of bank robberies, burning of schools and destruction of public property and sacred places. More than that, the age-old tradition of amity and peace in Kashmir has been eroded and the acts of surveillance, cordon, ambush or attack from concealed positions, encounters, and counter terrorist operations galore.

The present paper, however, focuses on the rise of attacks by militants on the security personnel in the Kashmir Valley. The term security personnel in the paper includes the army personnel, para military forces (CRPF, BSF) etc. and the state police. The attacks on security personnel leading to loss of lives or limbs have been examined in the light of

¹ Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Annual Report 2016-2017, p.6. Available at http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/EnglAnnualReport2016-17_17042017.pdf.

the human rights perspective. The army and state police have been often accused of violating human rights of citizens during the course of conducting raids, search operations, and counter-terrorist exercises. Regarding this, the Ministry of Home Affairs, while replying to a Right to Information application, revealed that “most human rights violations involve Defence forces”.² Out of the total 186 complaints received between 2012 and 2016 from seven states, Jammu and Kashmir accounted for 49.5 per cent of the human rights complaints against the armed forces. However, it does not mean that the security personnel themselves have not faced any violations of their rights at the hands of the terrorists, insurgents, protesters and the agitating mobs in the state. As a matter of fact, hundreds of men in the uniform have lost lives and many of them their limbs. Omar Abdullah, the former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, while referring to casualties of police and army personnel in militancy related incidents, said that the killings of security forces also needed to be strongly condemned.³

Regarding this, under Article 3 common to four Geneva Conventions, the killing, mutilation, cruel treatment, torture, taking hostage, outraging personal dignity etc.⁴ of police and army personnel by militants is as much a violation of the Conventions as the deliberate killing of a civilian by a soldier.⁵ The International Conventions are not just an encumbrance but a protective shield relating to such cases or any other violations of rights. Though it is argued that since militants do not accept either the Indian Constitution or Indian law, they have hardly violated anything they themselves have accepted as law. No doubt, it is true that states are under an obligation to comply with the international obligations binding for that state (*pacta sunt servanda*), Article 3 and Protocol II⁶ also

² “50 pc rights abuse complaints from J&K”, The Tribune, July 18, 2017.

³ M Aamir Khan, “Judicial probe into Shopian killings”, The Tribune, October 2, 2013.

⁴ Article 3 of the four Conventions of 1949 prohibits specifically:

- (a) Violence to life and person, in particular, murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture.
- (b) Taking of hostages.
- (c) Outrages upon personal dignity, in particular, humiliating and degrading treatment.
- (d) The passing of sentences and their carrying out of executions without previous judgment pronounced by a regularly constituted court affording all the judicial guarantees which are recognised as indispensable by civilised peoples. For details see, R.H. Robertson & J.G. Merills, *Human Rights In the world : An Introduction to the Study of International Protection of Human Rights* , 2005, p.302, Universal Law publishing.

⁵ Asia Watch, *Kashmir Under Siege : Human Rights In India*, 1991, p.19

⁶ Article 4 of the Second Protocol of 1977, which is devoted to ‘Humane Treatment’ prohibits:

- a) violence to the life, health and physical or mental well being of persons, in particular murder as well as cruel treatment such as torture, mutilation or any form of corporal punishment;
- b) collective punishments;
- c) taking hostages;
- d) acts of terrorism;
- e) outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment, rape, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault;
- f) slavery and the slave trade in all their forms;
- g) pillage;

impose obligations on rebel forces and their members, which are non-state contenders.⁷ Acts of terrorism are banned, without exception.⁸ The international legal instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Geneva Conventions etc., which India has signed, apply to both the Indian forces as well as to the militants. Serious violations of International humanitarian law are international crimes which entail the obligation of states to bring the alleged offender to justice before their courts. In addition to international humanitarian law, international human rights law also applies in times of armed conflict.

The brutal killings, including mutilation of the bodies of Indian soldiers by Pakistani army or ‘non-state actors’, would also be a violation of Article 3. There are several instances when bodies of Indian soldiers have been disfigured or mutilated by Pakistani perpetrators.⁹ Among the cases of such brutalities included : torture of Captain Saurabh Kalia during the May- July 1999 Kargil conflict by his Pakistani captors who later handed over his mutilated body to India; killing of seven Indian soldiers in the Nowshera sector and taking back to Pakistan the head of a 24-year-old Indian *jawan* of the 17 Maratha Light Infantry in February 2000; the body of a soldier of the 2/8 Gorkha Rifles, who had lost his way and was captured by a Pakistani Border Action Team (BAT) in Kel sector, was found beheaded after a few days in June 2008; one soldier was beheaded and another killed by Pakistani troops after they had crossed over into Indian territory in the Mendhar sector of Jammu and Kashmir in January 2013; bodies of two Indian soldiers were mutilated by the Pakistan army which violated ceasefire along the Line of Control in Poonch district and attacked a patrol team near the border; a soldier was mutilated by a militant in Machil near the Line of Control while the army was engaged in cross-border firing with Pakistan's army on October 28, 2016 ; three Indian soldiers were killed, with body of one of them was mutilated by suspected Pakistani terrorists in a cross-LOC attack on 22 November 2016.

Recently, the Kashmir Valley has witnessed a series of attacks on the security personnel resulting in a number of casualties of the men in uniform as well as the militants in retaliation, counter terrorist operations etc. The year 2016 witnessed a 54.81 per cent increase and 110.25 per cent increase in the number of terrorist incidents and fatalities of security forces in comparison to the corresponding period of 2015. The 2016-17 report of the Home Ministry shown in table-I has also highlighted a “significant increase” in

h) threats to commit any of the foregoing acts. See, R.H. Robertson & J.G. Merills, *Human Rights In the world : An Introduction to the Study of International Protection of Human Rights* , opcit, p.309-310.

⁷ Hans-Peter Gasser, “Acts of Terror, “Terrorism” And International, Humanitarian Law”, in Larry Maybee and Benarji Chakka (eds.), *International Humanitarian Law : A Reader For South Asia*, International Committee of the Red Cross, New Delhi, 2007, p.299.

⁸ See also the International Law Committee’s Draft Code of Crimes against Peace and Security of Mankind (1996) whose Art.20(f)(iv) makes serious acts of terrorism committed in a non-international armed conflict a war-crime.

⁹ <http://www.news18.com/news/india/pak-brutality-again-when-bodies-of-indian-soldiers-were-mutilated-1388553.html> (Accessed on 6th Aug 2017)

violence. With 82 security personnel killed in 2016, the number was the highest in a decade.¹⁰ Similarly, according to an RTI application, the killings of Army men and BSF personnel in Jammu and Kashmir due to cross-border firing have also increased since 2014 as reflected in table-II. The information provided to the RTI activist revealed that five Army men and eight BSF personnel were killed from 2011 to 2014. It increased to 27 Army men and 12 BSF personnel from 2014 to September 2017.¹¹ The killing of 150 terrorists in 2016 was also more than twice as much from 2013 to 2016. It is, in fact, the wave of retaliations and striking back that has ruled the roost in the current phase of violence in the Kashmir Valley. The data from South Asia terrorism Portal signifies that “61% of all fatalities in 2017 are terrorists, and among these are top field commanders of all active terrorist formations in the state”.¹²

Table - I

Number of incidents and killing of security personnel, civilians and terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir (2013-2016)

Year	Incidents	SFs Killed	Civilians Killed	Terrorist Killed	Total Killings
2013	170	53	15	67	135
2014	222	47	28	110	185
2015	208	39	17	108	164
2016	322	82	15	150	247

Source : Government of India, Ministry of Human Affairs Annual Report 2016-2017

Table - II

Personnel killed in Jammu and Kashmir due to ceasefire violations and cross-border firing (2011-2017)

Year	Army	BSF
2011-2014	5	8
2014-2017 (September)	27	12
Total	32	20

Source : Based on information revealed by an RTI application as analysed by Deepender Deswal

¹⁰ Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Annual Report 2016-2017, p.6. Available at http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/EnglAnnualReport2016-17_17042017.pdf.

¹¹ “39 soldiers killed in J&K between 2015-17”, The Tribune, October 25, 2017.

¹² Ajai Sahni, “Don’t look for ‘silver bullet’ solutions”, Hindustan Times (Delhi), November 03, 2017.

The emergence of a new generation of mostly home-grown militants in Kashmir, particularly in the southern districts of the Valley has also contributed to the increasing spate of violence resulting in more casualties. The violence is further fomented by the factor of taking vengeance. It reached a crescendo in 2016 in the aftermath of the killing of Burhan Wani, a local militant and the supreme commander of the Hizbul Muzahideen. His killing on 8 July 2016, sparked widespread protests and stone pelting, resulting in terrorism-linked fatalities upto 267 in 2016 and 290 in 2017 (till October 22, 2017).¹³ According to the information provided by the Minister of State for Home Affairs in the Lok Sabha, a total of 8,932 civilians were injured in 2016 following the killing of Burhan Wani. The figure was almost eight times higher than in 2010, when the people held protests for months following the killing of three civilians allegedly by the security personnel in an encounter in the Machil sector. It was, in fact, the Machil encounter which paved the way for prolonged protests and rallies in the Valley in 2010. Moreover, the death of a young student, Tufail Mattoo, in a tear gas shell during protests further triggered violent protests in the valley. As crowds poured into the streets to protest, the paramilitary forces responded with a “bullet for a stone policy” in an atmosphere charged with restrictive curfews, arbitrary arrests and stone pelting. An orgy of protests and stone-pelting continued unabated for 90 days costing around 120 lives,¹⁴ mostly teenagers and young men, and closure of business and educational institutions. The method of opening fire to quell the protesters comprising a huge mob of stone pelters fuelled more violence.¹⁵

The current conflict in Kashmir has acquired almost a lethal character. The security forces are facing militants on the one hand and the stone throwers and agitating mobs on

¹³ Ajai Sahni, “Don’t look for ‘silver bullet’ solutions”, Hindustan Times, November 03, 2017. Regarding distribution of violence, according to South Asia Terrorism Portal, 14 of J&K’s 22 districts account for all the fatalities; on a further breakdown to the tehsil level, just 32 of 82 tehsils recorded fatalities. Crucially, the worst five tehsils accounted for 48% of all fatalities. Quoted by Ajai Sahni, “Don’t look for ‘silver bullet’ solutions”, Hindustan Times (Delhi), November 03, 2017)

¹⁴ Toufiq Rashid, “Post-Wani stir will scar Valley”, Hindustan Times (Delhi), August 18, 2016.

¹⁵ As the number of civilian casualties mounted, the centre called the army into Srinagar on 7 July 2010 to enforce “law and order” for the first time in 20 years, making it clear that such move was intended to deter the protests. After initial denial, on 17 August 2010, the then Union Home Minister, P. Chidambaram finally admitted that atleast 12 civilian deaths were “unprovoked” and required investigation. The police also admitted that while some of those deaths were unjustified and a result of wrongful action, in most cases the intent of the mob was violent, and there was no option but to open fire. The *Amnesty International’s report* revealed “some of the protesters, most of them young, have resorted to throwing stones at security forces, which have on many occasions retaliated with gunfire using live rounds”. The protests brought the life to a grinding halt in the Kashmir valley. For details See, Aaliya Anjum and Saiba Verma, “Curfewed in Kashmir : Voices from the Valley”, Economic And Political Weekly, August 28 – September 3, 2010, vol. XLV, No. 35, p.11 and 14; Nirupama Subramaniam, “Feel our pain, say Kashmiris”, The Hindu, November 24, 2010; Amnesty International, India : A Lawless Law : Detentions under the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety ACT, ASA 20/001/2011 Published 21 March 2011).

the other. The stone pelters are viewed as innocent protesters by the local people whereas the security forces consider them elements like militants/terrorists. It is reported that local youths instantly gather and stone the security personnel to disrupt the counter-insurgency operations and pave the way for militants to escape. The frequency of militant attacks on the security camps and convoys has increased. They have also avenged the killing of fellow terrorists. The present NDA government at the centre, which follows the policy of zero tolerance for terrorism, has given a free hand to the forces to wipe out militancy from the Kashmir Valley. However, the heavy handed approach to silence or eliminate terrorism, particularly the local-grown militancy in South Kashmir, has evoked sympathy and support of younger people as manifested by frequent shut outs, street protests, stone pelting, enrolment in militancy and crowded funeral processions of slain militants. Conflict between the protesters and the men in uniform, including the state's police, has become a common feature in the Valley. Likewise, the frequent attacks, including gruesome acts of barbarity, on the forces by militants or vice versa have increased manifold. The horrific attacks on security personnel may be illustrated by cases such as: the brutal killing of Lieutenant Umar Fayaz, a local Kashmiri who was on leave when he was shot dead; lynching of DSP Mohammed Ayub Pandith; and disfigurement of the faces of the six police personnel ambushed and killed by militants in June 2017. These acts were a horrible manifestation of hate and hostility towards the security forces among militants.

To elaborate these cases further, Lt. Umar fayaz was abducted by Lashkar-e-Toiba militants from Batpora village of Shopian district on the evening of May 9, 2017, where he was attending the marriage ceremony of a cousin. The next morning his body riddled with multiple bullets was found in an orchard. The killing was widely condemned and the army men felt to avenge it soon. Regarding this, a Lashkar militant was killed in Kulgam in September 2017. However, like Lt. Fayaz, a young soldier, Irfan Ahmed Dar, of Territorial Army was abducted and shot dead on November 25, 2017. He was also on vacation at his village. When he went to meet his relatives in a nearby village in the Shopian district, he was abducted and his bullet riddled body was found by locals in a neighbouring village.¹⁶ In the case of DSP (security wing), Mohammed Ayub Pandith, he was stripped and lynched by an unruly local mob outside the Jamia Masjid of Srinagar when people were observing "Shab-e-Qadr" on June 23, 2017 . People had gathered for congregational prayers. According to locals, Mr. Ayub Pandith was taken as a spy and attacked after he pulled out his service revolver and fired at the group of people injuring three persons. The DSP was a part of the security wing at the Jamia Masjid for the Mirwaiz, Umar Farooq, the head priest and leader of the "All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC)". He was attacked by the mob with sticks, iron bars, stones resulting in his death on the spot. "The body was defaced and disfigured, and his clothes were torn".¹⁷ Even the

¹⁶ Suhail A Shah, "In Shopian, another off duty soldier killed", The Tribune, November 26, 2017

¹⁷ Abhishek Saha, "20 arrested for lynching Pandith, says J&K police", Hindustan Times (Delhi), July 25, 2017.

men of the security wing that he headed reported to have abandoned him. According to sources, “many people in the mob knew his identity and attacked him. They suspected him to be an intelligence officer”.¹⁸ Inspector General of Police (Kashmir range) told reporters that DSP Ayub Pandith, who was in plainclothes, was confronted by four men coming out of Jamia Masjid allegedly shouting slogans in support of a top militant. Then these four started questioning Mr. Ayub Pandith and asked for his I-card and he refused to give it.¹⁹ They started heckling him, the number of miscreants swelled and when the mob grew violent, Mr. Pandith reportedly defended himself by opening fire with his service pistol. Eyewitnesses later told police that Pandith was identified as a policeman before he was surrounded, stripped and killed. His body was then dumped in a drain besides the mosque.²⁰ This was the first mob lynching of a policeman during the three decades of unrest in the Kashmir Valley. It was symptomatic of an intense anger against the local police among the militants and sympathizers. The Chief Minister, Ms Mehbooba Mufti, termed the incident as “shameful” and said “the DSP was a local and had not gone to the mosque for his personal work but was there to protect the lives of people and fulfil his duty. She warned such people.”²¹ Likewise, Omar Abdullah, the previous Chief Minister, said, “May the people who lynched DSP Pandith burn in hell... Such heinous elements are enemies of Kashmiriyat, humanity and should get the sternest sentence.” Similarly, the Mirwaiz, Umar Farooq, termed the incident as most unfortunate and described “mob violence and public lynching outside the parameters of their values and religion”.²²

Apart from DSP Mohammad Ayub Pandith, on June 16, 2017, six policemen of the state, including a Sub-Inspector, Feroz Ahmad Dar, were ambushed and shot dead by militants, while they were returning to the Achabal police station headed by the deceased SHO. The assailants were so cruel that they had disfigured the faces of policemen before walking away with their weapons. Mention may be made here that the incident happened within hours of the killing of Junaid Mattoo, a known terrorist, in an encounter at Arwini in Kulgam district. The militants were on the trail of policemen before the ambush. The speculation was rife that the killing of policemen was in retaliation to the killing of Junaid Mattoo, along with two more militants.²³ All the three militants belonged to the Lashkar-e-Toiba. Junaid Mattoo, who carried a bounty of Rs 10 lakh, was A++ and most wanted commander of the Lashkar in Kashmir. The police investigation revealed that it was a group of five terrorists, headed by Bashir Lashkari, who were behind the attack in which six policemen were killed.²⁴ Bashir Lashkari was subsequently killed in an

¹⁸ Majid Jahangir, “DSP lynched outside Srinagar Jamia Masjid”, The Tribune, June 24, 2017

¹⁹ Abhishek Saha, “20 arrested for lynching Pandith, says J&K police”, Hindustan Times (Delhi), July 25, 2017.

²⁰ Damayanti Datta and Kaushik Deka, “Stop The Madness”, India Today, July 24, 2017, p.36

²¹ Majid Jahangir, “Don’t test patience of police: Mehbooba”, The Tribune, June 24, 2017.

²² Majid Jahangir, “DSP lynched outside Srinagar Jamia Masjid”, opcit.

²³ Suhail A. Shah, “SHO among 6 J&K cops killed”, The Tribune, June 17, 2017.

²⁴ Majid Jahangir, “LeT Commander Wani behind Anantnag ambush, say police”, The Tribune, June 18, 2017.

encounter conducted by a joint police, Army and CRPF team on July 01, 2017. The killing of policemen was avenged. Unfortunately, two civilian protesters were also killed during the encounter. On this, the separatists called for shutdown to protest the killing of innocent civilians. The Chief Minister Ms Mehbooba Mufti, while expressing grief over the death of two civilians, appealed to the people to keep away from the point of conflagration. She further said, the vicious cycle of death and destruction confronting Kashmir must end and efforts should be made to revive peace.²⁵

Earlier, with a view to avenging the killing of fellow terrorists militants shot dead two policemen on June 15, 2017. One of the deceased policeman named Shabir Ahmad Dar, was on vacation when militants fired multiple rounds at him outside his house in the Bogund area of Kulgam. The second policeman was shot dead at Hyderpora in Srinagar.²⁶ Moreover, an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI), Abdul Rashid, was shot dead by militants on August 28, 2017, when he was busy regulating traffic at Anantnag.²⁷ He was not involved in an anti-terrorist operations when he was gunned down. The picture of the slain ASI's inconsolable eight year old daughter wailing (Zohra), flashed on TV screens evoked a lot of sympathy on social media. "Her cries had a heart piercing question : why was her father killed? Zohra's father was targeted and killed simply because he was wearing a uniform".²⁸

Similarly, a police head constable kishan Lal was killed and four were injured when their vehicle was ambushed and fired indiscriminately by militants at Zeewan on the outskirts of Srinagar on September 01, 2017. The grief stricken son of the deceased constable said, "I will join police to avenge my father's killing".²⁹ In another incident, the motor-cycle-borne militants fired a burst of 20-25 rounds on the policemen deployed inside the Anantnag bus stand leaving a cop killed and another injured on September 9, 2017.³⁰ Likewise, on 27 September 2017, a BSF constable, Rameez Ahmad Parray, was shot dead in Hajin town of Bandipora district. He was on a 37 day vacation when a group of militants barged into his house and opened fire killing him and injuring three family members including his father. The militants tried to kidnap him but it was resisted by him and his family members. He tried to repel militant attackers with an axe before they shot him dead at his residence.³¹ Interestingly, Hajin town in the mid – 1990s used to be the base of a brute counter-insurgency militia Ikhwan-ul-Muslimeen, which had operated outside the ambit of law. Now, in the changed conditions, "people talk about militants

²⁵ Majid Jahangir, "Bashir Lashkari – a recycled ultra who joined LeT in 2015", The Tribune, July 2, 2017

²⁶ Sahil A. Shah & Majid Jahangir, "Militants gun down two cops in Valley", The Tribune, June 16, 2017.

²⁷ Suhail A. Shah, "Cop gunned down by militants in Anantnag", The Tribune, August 29, 2017.

²⁸ Arun Joshi, "In name of conflict, do not camouflage crime", The Tribune, September 4, 2017.

²⁹ "Will join police to avenge killing, says policeman's son", Hindustan Times (Delhi), September 03, 2017. See also, "Cop dies in ambush near Srinagar", The Tribune, August, 31, 2017.

³⁰ Majid Jahangir and Suhail A. Shah, "Cop killed, another injured in Anantnag militant attack", The Tribune, September 10, 2017.

³¹ See, The Hindustan Times (Chandigarh), 29 September 2017.

with reverence”.³² Attacks continue and retaliatory violence has acquired significance. A police Head Constable, Ashiq Hussain was shot dead by militants in Awantipura in South Kashmir on 2nd October 2017, when he was on his way home.³³ Likewise, a Jammu and Kashmir police officer was killed and another injured when militants attacked a police vehicle in the kulgam district on October 14, 2017.³⁴ This apart, militants shot dead a constable, Zahir Abbas Khan, after a gunfight with security forces in Bandipora. The gunfight started after a team of policemen accompanied by army and Central Reserve Police Force searched an area in Bandipora following information about two militants hiding there.³⁵ The other cases relating to loss of lives of policemen included: killing of a policeman in a gunfight with Lashkar militants in Hajin on 29 October 2017; a police constable in a militant attack on 4th November 2017 in Pulwama district; and a Sub-Inspector, Imran Tak in Zakura in Srinagar on 17th November 2017. More recently killing of four policemen including a Sub-Inspector and three constables in an Improvised explosive device blast in Sopore’s Gole market on 6 January 2018.³⁶ It is reported that 30 Jammu and Kashmir policemen have been killed in 2017 alone. Of them, 25 have been killed by militants in South Kashmir, which has been the epicentre of new-age militancy. The killings have left 44 children, including 20 girls, orphan.³⁷

The policemen are targeted by the terrorists on account of being in uniform and a part of the state’s security mechanism against which militants have picked up guns. As the militants are also projected as crusaders fighting against the oppressive state machinery, the killing of local policemen is largely taken to be as a violence ridden-conflict in the state. Militants have not only brutally killed local policemen mostly muslims, but have also warned youths to desist from recruitment to the army, paramilitary force and state police. They have often avenged their fellow terrorists’ killings by eliminating soldiers, policemen and informers. On October 18, 2017, a Shopian schoolteacher, Aijaz Ahmad Lone, in whose house three militants were killed in a gunfight, was found dead and his throat slit at Wathoo village several kilometres from his home at Gatipora village. A note found next to his body alleged that he was an informer for the security agencies.³⁸ The handwritten note claimed Lone had been killed to avenge the death of Hizbul-associated

³² Azhar Qadri, “Hajin, once a counter-insurgency base, now pro-militant”, The Tribune, October 2, 2017.

³³ See, Majid Jahangir, “Cop shot dead by ultras in Pulwama”, The Tribune, October 3, 2017.

³⁴ Abhishek Saha, “Civilian Dies As Police ‘Fire At’ J&K Protesters After Encounter”, Sunday Hindustan Times (Delhi), October 15, 2017.

³⁵ Ashiq Hussain, “Militants kill cop in J&K’s Bandipora, manage to escape after encounter”, Hindustan Times, (Delhi), October 30, 2017.

³⁶ Majid Jahangir, “4 cops die in Sopore market blast”, The Tribune, January 7, 2018.

³⁷ Majid Jahangir, “Oblivious to reality, kids of slain cops await their homecoming”, The Tribune, December 7, 2017

³⁸ Azhar Qadri, “Teacher, whose house saw encounter, killed ‘by ultras’”, The Tribune, October 19, 2017

militants, who were killed in an encounter at Lone's house.³⁹ The note also warned as "We have the names of everyone who provide information to the Army and the police."⁴⁰

Like the state police and Paramilitary forces, the army personnel have also been targeted by the militants. Three soldiers were killed in a night ambush by militants at Mulu Chitragam village in shopian district on 23 February 2017. Lance Naik Ghulam Mohiuddin Rather, who belonged to Anantnag district, was among the three soldiers killed.⁴¹ An old woman, Jana Begum (70), was also killed in crossfire. She was hit by a bullet inside her house and was found dead by her family members. Her killing sparked protests in the area.⁴² Likewise, in June 2017, Naik Dipak Kumar Maity and Gunner (operator) Manivannan G. were killed when their convoy, which was on way from Jammu to Srinagar came under heavy fire from terrorists.⁴³ Barely a month after these killings, Major Kamlesh Pandey and Sepoy Tanzim Chhutlim of the Army's elite counter-insurgency unit were killed in an ambush in South Kashmir on August 3, 2017. It was just two-day after the killing of a dreaded Lashkar-e-Toiba commander, Abu Dujane, along with an aide on 1st August 2017 that this incident occurred. Similarly, a junior commissioned officer Raj Kumar, was killed when a patrolling party was attacked by militants on October 8, 2017 in Budgam district in Kashmir.⁴⁴ Two Indian Air Force Garud commandos, who "were training with the army for operational experience", were also killed in a gunfight with militants in Bandipura district on October 11, 2017. It were Garud commandos who led the operation against terrorists who had targeted the Pathankot air base in which seven people, including three security personnel were killed.⁴⁵ Furthermore, a soldier was killed in a gunfight in Kupwara forests on November 21, 2017. Similarly, a soldier (Havaladar) was killed at Qazigund after an Army convoy was ambushed and attacked by the militants on November 5, 2017. Three militants were also neutralised at the encounter site in the Qazigund area. It may be mentioned that during their attacks on convoys, camps, police stations and other installations, at least one to two or more militants have been neutralised. Yet there is hardly any let up in attacks on security forces. Over 200 militants have been killed in encounters and military operations in the year 2017 alone.

The stone pelters are also dealt with strictly and the security forces have considered them as disrupters and elements like militants. The army chief, General Bipin Rawat, while suggesting strict action against those who hurl stones and interfere in operations, said the security forces in Jammu and Kashmir were facing high casualties due to the manner in

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Majid Jahangir, "Ops to continue with vigour- Army chief" The Tribune, February 25, 2017

⁴² Majid Jahangir, "Kashmiri soldier's death benumbs Anantnag village", The Tribune, February 24, 2017

⁴³ Tribune News Service, "Army pays homage to two soldiers killed at Qazigund", The Tribune, June 5, 2017.

⁴⁴ The Hindustan Times (Delhi), October 10, 2017.

⁴⁵ See, Ashiq Hussain, "Two IAF commandos die in J&K encounter", Hindustan Times (Delhi), October 12, 2017.

which locals were preventing them from conducting the operations and “at times even supporting the terrorists to escape”.⁴⁶ However, the APHC Chairman, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, while reacting, termed the army chief’s remark as “apparent threat to carry out a killing spree of civilians.”⁴⁷ This apart, Farooq Abdullah, former Chief Minister and a veteran N.C. leader, criticised the policy of responding to bullets with bullets. According to him, if someone says bullets will be responded with bullets, (should know) that they are not afraid of bullets.⁴⁸ Regarding this, some terrorists have also spurned surrender offer made by security forces before encounter. Abu Dujane, for example, said “Why should I surrender? I have left (home) for martyrdom, I have to die either today or tomorrow”.⁴⁹

Off and on, the militants have also attacked as fidayees and suicide squads and targeted the army installations, base camps, cantonments, the Regiment Field ordinance corps, airforce base, police lines, BSF camps, CRPF units and convoys. Since terrorism is concentrated in the Valley, the attacks have remained focused on the Kashmir Valley and made the military units their main target. The Valley has witnessed a situation of blood letting where the army keeps on targeting terrorists and their supporters and terrorists on army convoys and base camps. The major incidents of fidayeen attacks included : killing of ten army personnel including a Major during an fidayeen attack on 15 Corps Headquarters at Srinagar on November 3, 1999; 36 persons (mostly family members) in a fidayeen attack by the Lashkar militants on an army cantonment in Kaluchak (Jammu) on May 14, 2002; eight army personnel including a Brigadier in Akknoor on July 22, 2003; five police personnel, two CRPF soldiers and one civilian in Srinagar on October 5, 2006⁵⁰; one Lieutenant Colonel and seven soldiers of the army, one ASI and two police constables in an attack on 31 Field Regiment Ordinance Camp at Mohra in Uri sector on December 5, 2014; three security personnel and one civilian in an attack on a police station at Kathua on March 20, 2015; two CRPF men and 3 Army commandoes in an attack on a CRPF convoy in Pampore on February 20, 2016; eight CRPF personnel in an attack on a CRPF convoy near Pampore on June 25, 2016; 19 army personnel in an attack on the army base campon September 18, 2016; seven soldiers in Nagrota in an attack on November 29, 2016; a Captain and two soldiers in Kupwara on April 27, 2017⁵¹; four policemen and four CRPF men in an attack on a police complex in Pulwama district on

⁴⁶ PTI, “Army chief warns of tough action against stone-throwers”, The Tribune, February 16, 2017

⁴⁷ Tribune News Service, “Army chief’s remark will increase hostility, say NC”, The Tribune, February 17, 2017.

⁴⁸ Azhar Qadri, “Farroq takes up for militants says they’ve made a promise with God.”The Tribune, February 25, 2017.

⁴⁹ The Tribune, August 4, 2017.

⁵⁰ Available at <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/jammu-and-kashmir-kupwara-fidayeen-attack-timeline-terror-attacks/1/939451.html>

⁵¹ Majid Jahangir, “Pulwama attack : Initial Probe says Fidayeen Pak National”, The Tribune, August 28, 2017.

26 August 2017⁵²; and five CRPF men including an officer in a an attack on the Pulwama CRPF camp at Lethpora in the wee hours of 31 December 2017.⁵³Two of the three militants who carried out the fidayeen attack were locals residents of Pulwama district. Fardeen Khandey, one of the two local militants was the son of a police constable.⁵⁴The involvement of local youths in militant activities has increased considerably in the recent past. According to former DGP J&K, “Local recruitment, which was 13 in 2013, 53 in 2014, 66 in 2015 and 88 in 2016, has risen to 117 till November 2017”.⁵⁵In a first time joint planned fidayeen attack by the LeT and JeM on the CRPF camp in Sunjuwan in Srinagar on 10 February 2018, six soldiers and a civilian were killed.⁵⁶ According to some, “A joint attack is unheard of as these two militant outfits are considered sort of rivals in their field of operation”.⁵⁷ The Fidayeen attacks are mostly carried out either by the Lashkar-e-Toiba or Jaish-e-Mohammed. These outfits are based across the border in Pakistan. The suicide squad named after Afzal Guru, a convict of Parliament attack hanged on February 09, 2014, stormed the BSF camp at humhama (Srinagar) on 3rd October 2017 killing an Assistant Sub-Inspector and injured four constables.⁵⁸

In brief, the frequency of attacks on the army, paramilitary and police personnel of late, has increased in the Kashmir Valley. Indiscriminate killing of security personnel and massive level of violence perpetrated by militant groups is in violation of international human rights and humanitarian law. Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions is as pertinent to the act of militants as they are to security personnel. The security forces, while following the agenda of zero tolerance against terrorism have been given a free hand to stamp out terrorism to restore normalcy in the state. It has become a do or die battle resulting in more casualties on both sides. As many as 165 security personnel and 195 terrorists reported to have lost lives in 2017 itself till 30th November. Both the militant groups and the security forces should abide by the universal human rights norms. The state should ensure that those who have committing acts of violence in breach of international human rights standards and humanitarian law are brought to justice. This apart, all measures to seek international cooperation inrefraining Pakistan from financing, encouraging or otherwise supporting terrorist activities in the state of Jammu and Kashmir need to be taken.

⁵² Azaan Javaid, “Jaish fidayeen squad knew exactly where to go : CRPF report”, Hindustan Times(Delhi), August 30, 2017.

⁵³ Majid Jahangir, “CRPF : Prior info helped in containing militants”, The Tribune, January 2, 2018.

⁵⁴ Suhail A. Shah, “5 CRPF men die in Pulwama attack”, The Tribune, January 1, 2018.

⁵⁵ Amir Karim Tantray & Suhail A Shah, “Local Kashmiris being lured into suicide attacks via social media”, The Sunday Tribune, January 7, 2018.

⁵⁶ Harinder Baweja, “Cell phone intercepts ‘link’ militants to Pak”, Hindustan Times, February 14, 2018.

⁵⁷ Azaan Javaid, “Was it a joint LeT and JeM fidayeen bid?”, Hindustan Times, February 14, 2018

⁵⁸ See, Peerzada Ashiq, “Jaish attack on BSF camp leaves soldiers, 3 ultras dead”, The Hindu (Mohali), October 4,2017.

Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha and Society: A Brief Look At His Social Concerns

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Abstract

The paper explores the social concerns of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha (a scholar of Sikhism) of his contemporary society. His ideas, understanding and interpretation of the references of Gurbani and other literature given by him in his works are taken up. Comments on society, use of drugs and prohibition, his opinion about marriage institution, caste system, gender equality and education are some of the significant issues discussed. Three primary works of Bhai Kahn Singh, named Gurmat Prabhakar, Gurmat Sudhakar and Shrab Nishedh are analyzed. Some of the secondary works on Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha also have provided the basic information. Paper talks about a social change, which Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha was looking for. Being a Sikh, he always tried to explain the Sikhism was an outcome of the reformation period. Drawbacks of society rituals, customs, caste and religion based discrimination, that had polluted the social-setup was purified by the newly emerged reformation, called the Sikhism.

Introduction

Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha is a well-known Sikh scholar and Encyclopaedist, whose contribution in the field of literature is exemplary. In his lifetime from 1860s to 1930s various socio-political and religious changes were sweeping the region (Ashok 1966, p.1). Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha in his scholarly contribution has recorded and commented upon these changes. Therefore his works may be seen as a reflection of the society of that time and the thinking of the period. Bhai Kahn Singh's works include *Raj Dharam, Natak Bhavarth Depika, Hum Hindu Nahin, Gurmat Prabhakar, Gurmat Sudhakar, Samsya Poorti, Guru Gira Kasoti, Pahaad Yatra, Vilayat Yatra, Shrab Nished, Ik Jyotish Granth, Sad ka Parmarath, Gurshand Diwakar, Gur Shabad Alankar, Roopdeep Pingal, Gurshabad Ratnakar Mahankosh, Gurmat Martand, Gurmahima Sangrah, Anekarth Kosh, Nammala Kosh, Mad Maas Khandan* and *Vijay Swam Dharam*. There are some unpublished works as well, which were later on edited and published by the scholars on Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha.

The present paper, divided in three sections, attempts to look at social concerns of Bhai Kahn Singh of the 20th century. Although he is addressing largely the Sikh community, at same time he has a message for society in general and advocates social reform as the

need of the hour. Bhai Kahn Singh identifies caste and *varna* based discrimination in the society, issues related with marriage, education, drug abuse, rituals and superstition. He underlines the significance of hard work, care of the parents and gender equality as the social issues of the time. Section one deals with the general issues of the society. Section two is gender specific that includes the issues related to the women with special reference to their birth, marriage, equality and education. Section third is the conclusion.

Several portions of his works illustrate some important issues of society, religion and polity of the time. For instance in *Gurmat Prabhakar* selected meaningful points from *Gurbani* have been explained. It clarifies the socio-religious and political issues of that time. Sikhism itself is presented as a 'reform' for society. Sikhism is not for few people but for all, similarly the social issues and solution are also for the whole society.

Shrab Nished or 'alcohol prohibited' is another work of Bhai Kahn Singh, where he has taken up the issue of liquor consumption as a problem for society and wrote against the use of liquor. Publication year of the book *Shrab Nished* is mentioned 1907 by Shamsher Singh Ashok while writing his work *Parsidh Vidwan Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha* (Ashok 1966, p.52), Sukhjit Kaur another scholar in field of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha's works has also mentioned the publication of the book of 1907. Bhai Kahn Singh has taken up eastern and western religious as well as medieval views. Book was published during the social reformation movement. Ultimate purpose of the reformation was to save the Sikhs from cultural and religious destruction. In this atmosphere the book was written (Sukhjitpp.17-18). Devinder Singh Vidyarathi is of the view that *Shrab Nished* was written generally for whole Punjab but particularly for Sikh community. He further writes that Bhai Kahn Singh talked about the drawbacks of liquor consumption and supported his views by giving references from *Gurbani*, *Dasam Granth*, *Bhai Gurdas's works*, *Guru Bilas Patshahi 10th*, *Prem Sumarag*, *Rahit Nama Bhai Desa Singh*, Government reports, *Manu Samriti*, Sayings of *Hazrat Suleman*, *Hazrat Esa*, *Hazrat Mohammad*, *Hadis*, Doctors from Europe and *Hakims* from Greece, English newspapers and magazines (Vidyarthi1987 pp. 85-86). *Gurmat Sudhakar*, *Gurmat Martand* and '*Subhag Te Nirbhag Nooh Sass* (Fortunate and Unfortunate Daughter-in-law and Mother-in-law)' *Punjabi Bhaen* magazine are some of the other primary sources that have been used for the present paper.

Under the British rule, many changes took place in Punjab. A Large measure of bureaucracy and rule of law was introduced by the colonial rulers. This new setup established a new kind of relationship between the individual and state. Machine rule of laws, codes and procedures replaced the 'paternalistic' rule of early decades. The executive, financial and judicial functions were separated. Modes of communication and agrarian reforms were some of the features of colonial rule. For increasing the land revenue, agricultural production had to be increased. Irrigation projects completed between 1860 and 1920 brought nearly 10,000,000 acres of land under cultivation. Colonial rule in the Punjab was marked by economic exploitation. The introduction of 'English' education, the emergence of new middle class, activities of missionaries and

extension of the press created a 'transformed' Punjab. Christian missionaries had full support of British administrators of Punjab (Grewal 1994, pp. 128-130).

Conversion into Christianity was increasing. It was the major socio-religious change taking place in the British Punjab. Due to this change, many socio-religious reform movements were introduced. *Singh Sabha* was one of those movements and Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha had worked in collaboration with the *Singh Sabha*. With the establishment of the printing press in Punjab, books and articles as well as pamphlets were published in several languages and were polemical and even controversial in nature. Sikh students were believed to be converted into Christianity in the missionary schools. In 1872, there was an attempt of forceful conversion of Sikh students into Christianity. *Singh Sabha* was the outcome of such incidents. *Singh Sabha* was established to make a difference between pure Sikhs and other so called claimers. It means that the members of *Singh Sabha*, wanted to maintain and continue the Sikh code of conduct for the Sikhs that guides the followers for simple living and high thinking and moral values (Vidyarthi 1987 p. 59).

Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha was writing in this atmosphere of socio-religious tensions. His concerns for the society are reflected in his works. Caste and *varna* based discrimination in the society, issues related with marriage, education, drug abuse, rituals and superstition and gender equality are some of the significant issues taken up by him.

I

Kahn Singh is of the opinion that all people are the same and should live in common brotherhood feelings for each other. Difference is only due to culture and language. This difference should not be made the basis of discrimination. All should try for the improvement and growth of each others. This is what the Sikh Gurus taught (Nabha 1922b, p.23). Castes are derived from the Karma. Division of caste is based on occupation. With the change of occupation castes also change (Nabha 1922b, p.39). Person who is a teacher and performs the rituals is Brahman and the person in business or commerce is a *Vaesh*. But if a person born in *Shudra* or lowest family joins the teaching profession, should be considered as Brahman because a Brahman performs teaching and ritual as above-mentioned. Similarly a farmer, who works in his farm, also knows the use of weapons, and also keeps the weapons with himself should be called *Kshatriya*. Here, caste is defined by the occupation, not by birth (Nabha 1922a, p.389). As the bamboos get fire with a friction and all dry leaves start burning, similarly, Indian people are fighting and dying due to jealous and hatred feelings (Nabha 1922b, p.47). Person, who is devil, acts as bad person, does the bad deeds, is considered as *Malechha*. It means person who is born in high caste, still does the bad deeds is lowest person or *Neech*. An educated person, who is a good thinker, and idealistic and doer of noble acts and intelligent is considered a praise able person. On the other hand born in high caste but doer of bad and devil acts is considered as lowest or *Neech* (Nabha 1922b, pp. 64, 336).

Bhai Kahn Singh says that Guru Nanak always preached the idea of common brotherhood instead of caste or *varna*. He opposed the rituals, illusions, jealousy and

discriminations. He appealed to give up the feelings of hatred. Sikhism according to Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, was a change and a fresh option for reformation¹ (Nabha1922a, p.199). If somewhere in Sikh *Gurbani* terms lower or *Malechha* and *Neech* are used those are for the devil and those persons who do the activities of devils. These terms are not used for any particular group of people based on caste system² (Nabha 1922b, p.129). Bhai Kahn Singh explained the society before Sikhism and his contemporary times by referring the works of Bhai Gurdas, an interpreter of Guru Granth Sahib. People were busy in proving themselves and their sect above all. No one was ready to educate others. False discussions without proofs were taking place and for proving oneself right, they used to go up to any extent³ (Nabha 1922b, p.141). When the question is raised, who is above all and better than others, Hindu, Muslim or in present days all the religions and sects are compared together, then the final answer for all discussions is the 'good deeds'. Good and noble deeds are above all. There is not any battle of big, small, powerful or weak of any religion⁴ (Nabha 1922b, p.148). In Sikhism *varna* system is seen according to the deeds of the person. It has nothing to do with birth and caste. All *varnas* and castes become one by joining Sikhism like many metals are mixed and made single metal. Baptism in Sikhism finishes all previous births. This new change brings equality⁵(Nabha

¹ *Gurmat Prabhakar*, p.199

*Rah Doven Khasam Eko Jaan, Gur Kae Shabad Hukam Pachhan
Sagal Roop Varan Man Mahi, Kauh Nanak Eko Salahi.*

Ways are different to reach the God who is One. All kind of *varnas* are within mind and brain otherwise all are equal.

² *Gurmat Sudhakar*, p.129

*Ab Rachha Meri Tum Karo, Sikh Ubhar Asikh Sangharo
Dussat Jite Uthhvat Utpata, Sakal Malechh Karo Ranghata*

O Lord! Kindly protect me now, kindly raise the true one and suppress the falsehood. Devils, who are creating disturbing, should be destroyed.

³ *Gurmat Sudhakar*, p.141

*Chaar Varan Char Majhaba, Jagg Vich Hindu Musalmane.
Khudi, Bakhili, Tkabbari, Khichotaan Karen Dhigane.*

There are four *varnas* and Hindu and Muslims. Both are in a competition and practice to prove themselves great and upper.

⁴ *Gurmat Sudhakar*, p.148

*Puchhan Khol Kitab Nu, Vadhha Hindu k Musalmanoi?
Baba Akhe Haziyan- Shubh Amla Bajhon Doven Roi.*

Guru Nanak was asked to tell the best and powerful among the Hindus and Muslims. Guru Nanak replied that only good deeds for the establishment of peace, makes a person great. Bhai Kahn Singh interpreted that the Sikhism is not only for one country or particular community. It is for everyone.

⁵ *Gurmat Sudhakar*, pp. 142, 153, 435-437, 517

*Suni Pukar Datar Prabhu, Guru Nanak Jag Mahe Pathhaya
Charan Dhoye Rehras Kar, Charnamrit Sikhian Pilaya.
Parbrahm Pooran Brahm, Kalyug Andar Ikk Dikhaya.
Chare Paer Dhram De, Char Varan Ikk Varan Kraya.*

1922b, pp. 142, 153, 435-437, 517). One should not get indulged in praise and backbiting. Sikhs should equally love and respect the Hindus and Muslims. Concept of common brotherhood should be kept in mind. Sikhism has denied the discrimination created by *Vedas* and *Quran* in Hindus and Muslims respectively (Nabha 1922b, pp. 179, 191).

Bhai Kahn Singh is of the opinion that the Sikhism works for uniting all human beings as needle of a tailor that stitches the divided pieces of cloths. On the other side followers of caste and Varna system work as scissor of tailor which divides the people on basis of religion, caste and Varna. Here, importance of unity and drawbacks of division have been metaphorically explained. Many Muslims had joined the Sikhism at that time of Guru Hargobind the sixth Sikh Guru⁶ (Nabha 1922b, p. 261). People can eat together and distribute the food among each other. Reason is the caste system due to which some followers of castes did not accept the food in common. It was considered as polluted food. Such kind of practices and discriminations are denied in Sikhism (Nabha 1922b, p. 374).

Substance abuse, another important issue was taken up by Bhai Sahib, in his writings and he published a pamphlet named *Shrab Nished* or *alcohol prohibited*, later on published as a small book. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Punjab was facing many challenges and liquor consumption was one of them. Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha says that liquor consumption had been increasing day by day. He provided the references of government reports of 1905, where government revenue increased up to rupees 4 Lakh as compare to previous year (Nabha 1907, p. 1). Kahn Singh says that all the Sikh army-men who had been working for government, spent 4 Lakh 15 rupees per annum. This did not stop only up to drinking but it went up to quarrels and fights which further led them to the courts. He further gives the estimated expenditure of seven districts of Punjab of those days. Those districts were Ambala, Ludhiana, Ferozpur, Amritsar, Lahore, Sialkot and Gujranwala, all before the partition, where rupees 21,30,891 were annually spent only for liquor. Kahn Singh says that the amount spent on alcohol can be used for education and skill development of the community. Here, Kahn Singh's broad vision is clear, when he talks about the investment of the money for opening the schools and colleges for boys

Baptism in Sikhism, makes everyone the sons and daughters of Guru Gobind Singh and Mother Sahib Kaur. All four *varna* becomes single one after baptizing in Sikhism.

⁶ *Gurmat Sudhakar*, p. 261

Vune Julaha Tand Gandh, Ikk Soot Kar Tana Vana, Darzi Paar Vigad da, Pata Mull Na Lahey Vikana. Kaatan Katrey Katrani, Hoye Dumoohi Chardhi Sana. Sooi Sivey Jorr Kaey, Vichhorriyan Kar Mel Milana.

Sahib Ikko Raah Doye, Jagg Vich Hindu Musalmana. Gursikhi Pardhan Hai, Pir Muridi Hai Parwana.

A weaver combines all the threads and prepares a piece of cloth. The tailor cuts the pieces of cloth with scissor and uses a needle to stitch the piece of cloths. Similarly the focus should be on the union not on the division. Sikhism, according to Bhai Kahn Singh, unites all human beings.

Mian Jamal came to Guru Hargobind for adopting the Sikhism. Guru Hargobind advised him to read the *Gurbani* with devotion. According to *Gurbani* the body is combination of five elements. There is 'one' consciousness in all. Those who recognize that 'one' are the Sikhs.

and girls both for vocational training and skill development. Many new industries can be launched and that can provide the job opportunities to the unemployed youth. This can improve the economic conditions of the country. The expenditure that was useless could be used for social welfare. He appealed the villagers to spend that money for the welfare of country. He often used metaphorical language and gave a serious message to the readers. At one time he talks about the damage of liver by eating the snacks along with alcohol. Those snacks are also the reason of spending the money. If this money is saved then it can be used for running the schools (Nabha1907,pp.2-4). Kahn Singh has provided many references from various religions. According to Sikhism and Sikh code of conduct, alcohol is prohibited⁷ (Nabha1907,p. 5).While talking from Hindu point of view Bhai Kahn Singh says that *Acharya Manu* also prohibited the use of alcohol (Nabha1907,p. 7). Jewish are also aware of the drawbacks of use of liquor. Prophet *Suleman* in his sayings talks about the problems and affects of alcohol. He says, “who is this, who is sad and in deep sorrow? Who is quarreling? Who cries like children? is injured without any wound? Whose eyes are ruddy?”

Then he further answers that these are those men who had drunk the liquor late night, who are always looking for various types of wines. He further advises that a person should not be fond of liquor. It seems red and beautiful in glass but it bites silently as a snake. People, who drink the alcohol, they will also go in search of women for physical comfort and this in itself is a negative impact on society from the moral point of view. Jesus Christ also wrote against liquor. Prophet *Mohammad* in *Quran* at *Manzal 7*, Para 1 clearly says that one should be aware of the drawbacks of liquor consumption. Alcohol and gambling are the traits of devil. That stops one from the path of God.

Along with all these religious views, Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha has provided the views of Greek and European doctors. They all come to the conclusion that the liquor consumption is considered injurious to health. It affects the brain, liver, eye sight and immunity of the body (Nabha 1907, pp. 5-10, 14-20).

Along with alcohol, all other type of drugs are forbidden in Sikhism. Bhai Kahn Singh is of the opinion that drugs kills the immune system, it destroys the wisdom power. It creates the bondage and lethargy and many more diseases. In Sikhism God’s name and worship is considered as real dose. All worldly doses are nothing in comparison of real dose (Nabha 1922a,pp.462-464).Drugs spoil the life and person becomes patience less. It weakens the mind and body (Nabha 1922b,pp.452, 482).Word *Prem Pyala* is used by Bhai Kahn Singh. That means a ‘love drink’. Bhai Kahn Singh explains the meaning of the word by refusing the opinion of some of those drinkers who considered the *Prem*

⁷ *Shrab Nished*, p. 5

Amrit KaVapari Hovey Kiya Mad Chhuchhe Bhao Dharee, It Mad Pitey Nanaka Bohate Khattiye Vikar. Durmat Mad Jo Pivate Bikhali Pat Kamli, Naam Rasayan Jo Rate Nanak Sach Aml.

The above mentioned hymns are from *Gurbani*. It means, those who drink the holy nectar of God almighty and have a dose of holy name, they don’t go for worldly wine or alcohol. Those who drink the alcohol, they invite many other diseases.

Pyala as an alcohol drink or peg of weed. Love drink has something to do with 'divinity'. It can be possible only in connection with God (Nabha 1922b,p. 161). Drugs are not allowed in Sikhism. Along with alcohol, tobacco, opium and weed are considered as injurious and denied (Nabha 1922b,p. 410). Those who take it, are expelled from Sikhism. Bhai Kahn Singh has quoted a story in form of communication between Babur and Guru Nanak where Guru Nanak is answering Babur about the dose of Holy name of almighty that never goes down. Worldly drugs are not accepted (Nabha 1922b,pp. 304, 345).

While opposing the devils of the society, Bhai Kahn Singh also focused on some rituals and superstitions those were practiced in society. While mentioning the *Gurbani* and other sources Bhai Kahn Singh has finely interpreted and presented his own understanding of such practices and his opinions. All the practices are false, if these are not being performed from the depth of heart and with connection of almighty. Worship of stones, wearing *taweez* as necklace, worship of dead and forefathers etc is not the religion. These are not part of Sikhism too. References of Guru Gobind are given by Bhai Kahn Singh where example of a social custom known as Sati is mentioned. Guru Gobind Singh talks about the real truth and worship of almighty. He gives examples of Sati and snakes. If a woman whose husband is dead, burns herself alive willingly, she will never get salvation. Similarly, spending the whole life in caves, will not earn any salvation, because the snakes living for long time under the ground are not getting any benefit of it (Nabha 1922b,pp.3-13, 22).

God is above all who has created the whole universe. If it is accepted that human is made up of five elements. Those five elements are taken from the nature and nature is under the almighty. Instead of worshipping the almighty other worships and rituals are false. *Waheguru* or almighty is beyond and above all materialistic structures. God is neither created nor destroyed. Practice of pilgrimage at Kashi (Allahabad) is mentioned. According to this practice, people go to the Kashi for holy bath and then cut themselves by a cutter or hacksaw and in this way they think they will get salvation. But in Sikhism all such practices are denied. It is a socio-religious drawback, where people blindly follow a ritual and give up their lives (Nabha 1922b,p.24).

In some families women tries to control the husbands by following the superstition methods. Such practices should not be followed. Effect of ill stars and evil practices are not good for simple life. Such practices should be avoided (Nabha 1922b,pp. 77, 123).

According to some customs, due to caste system, during births and deaths, some houses were considered impure and unclean. This is just a custom and illusion of the society and it should be avoided. Kahn Singh says that the *Gurbani* has denied such customs⁸ (Nabha

⁸ *Gurmat Sudhakar*, pp. 164-166

Jekar Satak Manniye, Sabh Te Sootak Hoye, Gohey Ate Lakkri Andar Keeda Hoye.

Jete Dane Ann Ke Jiya Bajh N Koye, Pehla Pani Jeo Hai Jit Harea Sabh Koye.

Sootak Kyokar Rakhiye Sootak Pavey Rasoye. Nanak Sootak Ev Na Uttrey, Gyan Utaarey Dhoye.

It means the whole universe is with life. Water, food, woods and other materials received from nature are not pure. Only the true knowledge or *Gyan* will remove the impurity. Considering some one impure

1922b,pp. 164-166). Spell, charming and superstition are denied in Sikhism (Nabha 1922b,p.78). Bhai Kahn Singh is of the opinion that some people who are unaware of the significance of the pilgrims and other religious places, they follow it blindly. In this way, the *prasad* or blessings in form of eatable thing is thrown into water to pay homage to the God. By doing so, God does not be happy but the water is being polluted. This affects the health of users of that water.(Nabha 1922b,pp. 9-10, 85).

Hard work and earning the money by positive means is another theme discussed by Bhai Kahn Singh. One should always be busy in some productive activities. A free person will suffer from many mental and physical problems. Charity is considered the most significant aspect. But for charity, earning should be in a very honest way. Money earned through hard work should be used for welfare (Nabha 1922a,p.238).Hard work and hard life is better than the begging. Begging is a curse and sin. Depending on others for money is a sin. The ultimate message is hard work, no begging and self dependency (Nabha 1922a, pp.285-286). Charity is the first aim of the Sikhism but this is given up by those who go for begging instead of earning the money (Nabha 1922b,p.208). If cow meat is a sin for Hindu and pork is sin for Muslim, similarly the money that belongs to others, should not be grabbed, it is a sin too (Nabha 1922b,p.252).

Bhai Kahn Singh also touched the issue of the responsibilities of the children for their parents. Respect of the old parents is a noble duty. Children should respect their parents. If it is not so then the parents are better without the children. Living alone is preferable instead of living in disrespect. Mother and father should be cared by son and daughters. The parents spend the whole earning of their life for the growth, development and establishment of the children and the children should also perform their all duties for the parents in their old age. People don't bother about their parents during their life time but they perform many rituals and ceremonies after their death. That is curse and biggest drawback of the society (Nabha 1922a,p. 581, Nabha 1922b, pp. 273-274).

Bhai Kahn Singh was of the view about the education that the students, who are brilliant and able to go for higher studies, only they should go for the secondary education. Otherwise students, who are not interested in study, after completion of their primary education, they should go for handicraft and vocational education. In this way, they would be prepared for earning their livelihood and it will decrease the unemployment which was increasing day by day, due to educated unemployed youth. The reason of unemployment according to Bhai Kahn Singh was the shortage of work in the areas of interest of the educated people. Secondly, people avoid joining the family occupations. Through the vocational and handicraft education works and job opportunities would increase and it would enhance the economic system of the country (Ravi (eds.), Bhathuan 2008, pp.84-85).

just because of discrimination, jealous and hatred feelings is actually act of lower persons whose thinking is impure. Being in touch with such people is impurity in actual.

II

Girls and boys are equal in Sikhism. Those who accept the birth of a boy child and reject the female birth are 'female murderer', a special term *Kudi Maar* is used for them (Nabha, 1922b p.347). Female infanticide is considered sin in the Sikh Code of Conduct of Bhai Chaupa Singh, referred by Bhai Kahn Singh (Nabha, 1922b p.64). In Sikhism equal respect is given to women. Those, who disrespect the women and kill the girl child, should not be considered as relatives. They should be boycotted (Nabha, 1922b p.483).

Bhai Kahn Singh says that religious, social and spiritual, all kinds of education is necessary for everyone. It is not prohibited for women, or low caste people. All have an equal right of receiving the good thoughts either in form of preaching or in form of education (Nabha, 1922a p.25). Education for women should be compulsory. She should be a complete scholar because if a girl is educated, she will teach the brother and sister at home. When she will go to other house after marriage, she will teach the brother-in-laws, sister-in-laws and the children. In this way an educated woman will be beneficial for whole family and society. On the other side if woman is uneducated and does not know the way of management at home and outside, then the house becomes hell. Women should also be an expert in the kitchen works. In this way they will balance the house (Nabha, 1922a pp.103-104). Education for women should be compulsory. They should be trained properly so that they would be able to discuss the matters and participate in debates to avoid and eradicate the falsehood (Nabha, 1922b p.608). Women are equal to men. In Sikhism women are not considered as slaves or lower in status. She is a better half of husband and second tire of householder's life car.

Another aspect of society discussed by Bhai Kahn Singh in his works is marriage. Marriage is an important social institution that plays a significant role in the working of society. He is of the opinion that in Sikhism, marriage should be performed with the *Path* (practice of reading from Holy scripture Guru Granth) of *Anand Sahib*. Marriage should be considered as sacred. During the marriage functions some rituals are performed. Brother-in-law and sister-in-law pass some comments to each other in form of poetry and stanzas. Such kind of songs and stanzas known as *Sithhiniya* should not be in use as they appear sometimes little bit vulgar. Marriages should be based on truth. The boy and girl's families just for the sake of marriage should present no false information. This spoils the whole life of the couple. Marriage should be based on attributes of male and female. This is not only for male but the females should also know the male after satisfactory true information of both, the marriage should be fixed (Nabha 1922a,p.66, 71).

Girls should not be married at young age. If the bridegroom is poor but hard worker, should be accepted for girl. But it does not mean that the rich persons are unacceptable. Noble qualities and attributes are preferable instead of money. Both families should spend limited money for marriage. Money should not be wasted for show off only. Both families should deal properly with each other. Both should get together occasionally and share meals. This enhances the social bond. But it does not mean that both should be greedy for money from each other.

While talking about charity, Bhai Kahn Singh is of the views that the priest, who performs all the religious activities of marriage, should not receive money in form of fee, from girls and their family. The marriage ceremony is taken as a sacred ceremony and receiving money for the sacred cause is denied (Nabha, 1962 p.55). Daughter's respect is important. Father should take no money from daughter's earnings. Father should take the water from the in-laws family of daughter as alcohol. It means that the father should always give instead of taking something from daughter. Even a glass of water is considered as taking something from daughter's family. It means the gentlemen and noble persons never receive money in greed from daughter (Nabha 1922b, p.268).

The fathers should not sell girls for money. If a priest, who performs all religious rituals of marriage ceremony, is considered wrong due to asking money as fee, then how a father can be taken as correct if sells daughter for money only. Dowry is a curse according to Bhai Kahn Singh. Show off in form of traditional exhibition of the objects, clothes, ornaments and gifts brought by bride are not allowed in Sikhism. Dowry should not be demanded but the girl's family should give only necessary things, which they can easily arrange (Nabha, 1922b p.484). Bhai Kahn Singh mentions how a female should behave in her in-laws family after getting married where he has referred Guru Hargobind's teaching to his daughter. A daughter should respect the mother-in-law and father-in-law after going to in-laws family. All the elders and younger should be cared by her. Saints, Gurus and husband should be respected⁹ (Nabha, 1922b p.358).

Married women according to the traditional code of conduct should follow the rules and be loyal and husband also follow the rules and should be loyal (Nabha, 1922b p.172). Women, who are unknown, should be considered mothers, daughters and sisters according to their age. No other thought of any other relation should be there in the mind of person (Nabha, 1922b p.252). If husband or wife dies, the living person should not look for a partner without remarriage. Remarriage should take place within same age group and widow or widower should try to find a person who has also lost his or her life partner. Extramarital affairs are sins. Even a widow and widower are not allowed to have extra affair for physical comfort only. For this there is a proper way that is remarriage (Nabha, 1922a p.639, Nabha, 1922b pp. 450-452, 482).

The practice of Sati is decreed. By burning oneself alive along with husband is not a good deed. It creates the problems for the lady. She kills herself and does not meet the husband too. In Sikhism a sacred lady is Sati not that one who burns herself alive (Nabha, 1922a p.131). While defining a stanza, Bhai Kahn Singh denies the Sati and says that the Sati who burns herself along with husband, is not good for humanity (Nabha, 1922a

⁹ *Gurmat Sudhakar*, p.358

Sun Bibi Mai Tujhey Sunaau, Pati Ki Mahima Kehntak Gaaun.

Pati Sevak Ki Seva Safli, Pati Bin Aur Karey Sabh Nifli.

Gurjan Ki Izzat Bahu Karni, Saas Sev Rid Mahe So Dharni.

Listen dear daughter, I tell you the attributes of your husband. Serve your husband. Pay respect to the Gurus and elder people.

p.295). Whatever happens should be accepted patiently. Any death ceremony should be performed peacefully. Crying, weeping and other activities should be avoided (Nabha, 1922a p.561).

Though the women have a respectful place in Sikhism still they are beneath to the men. In a practical life woman is a good householder, equal partner of husband. She should not be criticized just for being female. Kahn Singh, while defining the importance of woman, has referred the *Gurbani* of Guru Nanak (Nabha, 1922a pp.29, 81). Most of the time character and loyalty are judged. Here, Kahn Singh says that the loyalty is not for the women only even the men should be equally loyal and honest to the women. If husband expects the loyalty from wife, he should also be honest, respectful and loyal to the wife. If extramarital affair is not allowed for male, same concept is applicable for female too (Nabha, 1922a p.110). Husband of two women and wife of two husbands, both destroy their lives. While talking about the positive and negative aspects of women Bhai Kahn Singh mentions in a poem the various attributes of a woman as a daughter-in-law and mother-in-law. Title of the poem is *Subhag Te Nirbhag Nooh Sass* (Fortunate and Unfortunate Daughter-in-law and Mother-in-law). Bhai Kahn Singh praises the positive attributes of a good daughter-in-law where she performs all her duties without any tension and problem. Even her mother-in-law considers her as a real daughter and handover all the householder's responsibilities to her. She also teaches her many times with love and care about the perfection as a householder lady. On the other hand, the daughter-in-law, though is independent, still seeks the suggestion and permission from the mother-in-law just to show her respect. She considers her as a mother. She (Daughter-in-law) is aware of the art of sewing and stitching, embroidering and the perfect kitchen work. Her husband and Father-in-law feel proud and fortunate for having such a special woman in their family. Poet, Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha who is also known as 'Hari Brijesh' addresses himself and says that the Brijesh sacrifices himself over such an exemplary Daughter-in-law and Mother-in-law¹⁰ (Bir Singh(ed.) 1931, p.27).

While mentioning the negative part of both daughter-in-law and mother-in-law Bhai Kahn Singh mentions the Hindu goddess 'Kali' who is known for fighting skills. Here Bhai Kahn Singh has used a metaphoric sense where the hard side of a woman is compared with Kali. He says that a woman can make a family heaven and hell when she comes into form of a negative personality¹¹(Bir Singh(ed.) 1931, p.27). It is Bhai Kahn

¹⁰ Kahn Singh Nabha, '*Subhag Te Nirbhag Nooh Sass* (Fortunate and Unfortunate Daughter-in-law and Mother-in-law)' *Punjabi Bhaen Magazine*, (ed.) Bir Singh, p.27

Dhee To Piyari Jaaney, Saump Ghar Khushi Manney, Ssikhhya Dindi Buddh Ate Prem Naal Hass Ke. Shradhha Kar Manndi Hai Maa To Vadhh Poojneek, Bhaaven Hai Sutantar, Par Kamm Kare, Dass Ke. Seevna Parona Te Rasoi Vidya Vich Taak, Dhann Bhaag Jaaney Kar Chaapi Paer Jhass Ke. Sahura Te Pati Bag Bag Hon Jinna Vekh, Hovanda 'Vrijesh' Vaari Aesi Nooh Sass Ke.

Daughter-in-law is equal to the daughter. Mother-in-law teaches her happily. Daughter-in-law also pays respect to the mother-in-law. She accepts everything with devotion. Her husband and father-in-law are very happy.

¹¹ *Punjabi Bhaen Magazine*, (ed.) Bir Singh, p.27

Kaali Da Karal Roop Bizali Karrak Dhun, Baap Put Jana Nu Bachaan Gharon Nass Ke.

Singh's unique quality to present a most important issue of society and family in an ironic way, where it makes everyone laugh but along with a deep thought.

Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha married his son to an Arora family daughter who followed the Sikhism. This radical step was an example in itself that the Sikhism and Sikh code of conduct does not teach any discrimination based on castes. Bhai Kahn Singh practiced what he preached and discussed in his writings. Bhai Kahn Singh had to face some problems due to this radical step. The priests of Golden Temple of that time opposed him. They did not allow the newly married couple to pay respect at Akal Takht (Sikh political chair at Golden Temple). Bhai Kahn Singh did not surrender before those racist priests for whom Bhai Kahn Singh has used the term *Pujari* in his works. This word is used for Brahman priest. This, indirectly, indicates the change, that might have taken place after the removal of *Pujaris* and *Mahants* from *Gurudwaras* and appointment of the Sikh priests (Ashok 1966, p. 108, Vidarthi 1987, p.42).

III

Bhai Kahn Singh's writings deal with the general issues of the society and the issues related to equality and mutual respect of the people by mentioning this idea of common brotherhood and unity. Idea of division of the society on occupation basis not by the birth is brought forward. It also illustrates identity of lower and untouchable according to the *Gurbani*. A request for settling down all the issues for proving the greatness one over the other in case of religions is made where again Bhai Kahn Singh provides references. Issue of substance abuse, which even at present time is the biggest problem of the society, especially of the youth is mentioned. Superstitions and blindly followed and performed rituals are discussed. Respect and care of the old parents is taken as an advice for the present as well as his contemporary people. He also talks about the life of women from birth to the marriage, role in the in-laws family, death and social responsibilities. Killing of girl child is denied with the reference of code of conduct for Sikhism where killers of the girl child are boycotted. Dowry is considered as sin and showoff money and other goods are also denied. Bhai Kahn Singh advocates the idea of proper age for marriage of a girl and widow re-marriage also. Sati is also fully opposed. Lesson on loyalty for male and female both is another important aspect discussed. Bhai Kahn Singh highlights the happenings of the contemporary society for example he talks about women, dowry, sati, marriages etc in general. But somehow it seems that he is talking about the education of the women, so that they will be the better wives and mothers. He is not talking about any change in the existing patriarchal society. He is reiterating the

Parivar Paalna Ta Riha Ikk Pase Yaro, Bachhean De Moohu Laen Roti Fall Khass Ke.

Dund Yudh, Latt Mukki, Haye Hu Da Raula Sun, Boohe Paer Dharan Sabandhi Pagg Kass Ke.

Darri Guttan Hathh Vich Farriyan Rehan Nitt, Pao Jhaate Bhass Aesi Nooh Ate Sass Ke.

When a women is angry she becomes like a Hindu goddess 'Kali' and all gets scared. Family becomes hell even the relatives think before entering into the house. Due to this negative aspect, both the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law are condemned.

same thing as of the other reformers. But he is not moving out of the patriarchal setup. All the things mentioned by Bhai Kahn Singh were important in 1920s. Though he is not considered as a reformer still he is an intelligent intellectual who is voicing the social concerns of contemporary society. He is addressing all cultural groups and communities and identifying the common issues of all. These are not the issues only of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha but society of late 19th and early 20th century Punjab. He is talking about just the betterment of the society where his focus is on the better values. Ideas of general changes are being reiterated. He is not mentioning any change in the basic structure of the society.

Bhai Kahn Singh, as the other socio-religious reformers of his times, is saying the same things. Many Socio-religious reform movements came into existence that opposed and rejected the rituals and priesthood. It also opposed the idol worships and promoted the concept of monotheism. Like Swami Dayanand, Bhai Kahn Singh raised many issues and provided the solutions. As the contemporary Hinduism, which included, *Puranas*, polytheism, idolatry, the role of Brahman priests, pilgrimages, Swami Dayanand rejected nearly all rituals and ban on widow remarriage. Many schools and colleges were opened after his death that was an attempt to carry forward the ideas and preaching of Dayanand. Like the many personalities of various movements, Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha played an important role, while working for the *Singh Sabha* in the service of Sikhism. Bhai Kahn Singh's efforts made the establishment of Khalsa College, Amritsar possible. With the help of Sikh Princely states and government of British Punjab, Khalsa College's foundation was led in 1892. *Singh Sabha* never went against the British government. On the other hand, Dayanand appealed to the people to go for the *vedic* education. His slogan was 'go back to *vedas*'. Arya Samaj worked for purification and propagation of *vedic* Hinduism and the *Singh Sabha* worked for crystallization of Sikhism.

There are some contradictions. At one time Bhai Kahn Singh is talking about no-discrimination in the society but on the other hand he is mentioning the two groups within the Sikhism the *Charan Pahul* and *Khandeki Pahul* Sikhs. Bhai Sahib says that if a *Khande Ki Pahul*'s Sikh wants to marry his daughter, he first of all should look for *Khandeki Pahul* follower bridegroom. If it is not available then *Charan Pahul* follower bridegroom is suitable. Does Bhai Kahn Singh find the differences within Sikhism? Is he suggesting another kind of division? Similarly idea of gender equality is advocated and loyalty and honesty both are mentioned equally important for male and female but the idea of the patriarchal structure of the society is not given up. For all the problems, education is considered as the possible solution. Even, there is mention of the education for the women, just to make them only good wives and mothers but not even a single idea or suggestion on new roles of the women is provided that will bring them out of the circle of just being educated wives, then mothers. There are some contradictions found during the research, which creates more possibilities for further research.

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Legitimacies of Caste Positions in Pakistan: Resolving ‘Upper Caste’ Dilemma in Shared Space of Knowledge Production and Emancipation

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Abstract

This paper is a theoretical attempt to resolve the dilemma of how a researcher belonging to a privileged class, caste or community can engage herself with Dalit activists. I have attempted to explain and suggest how ‘upper caste’ researchers can morally and ethically position themselves while producing an empirical knowledge on\for\with the subaltern or Dalit to legitimately contribute to their struggles of emancipation. I follow certain rules set up by Dalit scholars and Dalitbahujan activists, regarding ‘upper caste’ intervention to critically engage with Dalitbahujan activists without subverting or hegemonizing their struggles. With that Dalitbahujan understanding in foreground, I argue that since caste is a trans-Dalit issue affecting the whole society, it is necessary to allow and engage ‘upper caste’ researcher to produce coordinated and cooperative knowledge in a given shared space that will ensure not only inclusiveness of all the oppressed, but also problematize caste in its entirety.

Introduction¹

Looking from the Dalitbahujan perspective whereby epistemic primacy is assigned to a Dalit intellectual or the Dalit herself, an ‘upper caste’ male doing research on ‘lower caste’ or Dalitbahujans² can be taken as the contradiction in terms, the counterproductive exercise, since any such knowledge production could rather perpetuate and legitimize the ‘upper caste’ supremacy over knowledge production, and the colonization of Dalitbahujan epistemic space. The problem of the ‘upper caste’ researcher, doing research on caste and Dalitbahujans, begins with the appreciation of that paradoxical situation in which ‘upper caste’ researcher can be declared suspect, while the ‘lower

¹ Acknowledgement: I acknowledge the help from Prof. Dr. Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka (Bielefeld University) for her guidance and critical review of this paper.

² I am usually using the terms ‘Dalit’ and ‘Dalitbahujan’ quite interchangeably to mean the same group of people (SC, ST, OBC, Pasmanda Muslims, Dalit Christians, Dalit Buddhists etc.). However, depending on the context, at certain place I also use it to mean ‘Scheduled castes’. While ‘Dalit’ is used to refer to ‘Scheduled castes’ or those who had been treated as untouchables but considered as belonging to Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and other indigenous religions of South Asia, the term Dalitbahujan is used to include all those communities, irrespective of religion, that had ever been treated as untouchables, or excluded from the mainstream.

caste' or Dalit by virtue of being oppressed lacks equal agency and freedom to move across spaces and create knowledge. With this given epistemic background, I discuss my positionality as an action researcher from a particular 'upper caste' location as I engaged myself with civil society and Dalit activists in Sindh province of Pakistan. While conducting research among Dalit activists on casteism and Dalit assertions in Sindh province of Pakistan, my caste location was problematized by both, the Dalit and the non-Dalit activists. Caste-positionality emerged as one of the major limiting factors in not just data collection, but also in rapport establishment, and in writing ethnographic descriptions. It raised certain fundamental questions regarding the moral-ethical value of my engagement. It consequently demanded of me to reflect upon it. Somewhat agreeable settlement is offered by both Dalit theory and practice (activism) to manoeuvre in the shared space where the Dalitbahujan or the subaltern and the privileged caste activists can usefully engage with each other. It allowed me to position myself as an 'upper caste', the social identity assigned to me by the same society to which I belong to. Consequently, I discuss:

1. The barriers to mobility across spaces and the necessity to engage 'upper caste' within a shared space. Lack of choices to avoid interaction with the 'upper caste', and the lack of ability to move freely inter subjective spaces where Dalit and 'upper caste' happen to confront each other. Contrary to that the privilege of the 'upper caste' to move freely across spaces, thereby also becomes the reason for inflicting epistemic violence upon the 'Dalit'.
2. The necessity (of Dalit bahujans) to engage (with) the 'upper caste'. I will extrapolate it while discussing the limits of de-casteification, and how empirically I situated myself in the backdrop of concerns of Dalitbahujans. I will discuss the Dalitbahujan's suggestion for 'upper caste' researchers to explore 'upper caste' locations instead Dalit oppression.

I

Why is the upper caste engagement with the problem of caste and Dalit so problematic?

The claims to objectivity while doing ethnographic or qualitative research must be made with utmost caution. What ethnographers, by default, in their field studies witness is governed by, either what they 'would like to witness' when they study particular caste group or perhaps governed by the vantage point of the research subjects they interview want them to see. Ursula Sharma in her concise book on caste writes that western views of the untouchables "involve the marshalling of facts that are observer dependent" (Sharma, 2005, p. 54). If Dumont's study of caste is highly problematic and Brahmanism influenced, it could equally be probable to say that Berreman, Gough, Kapadia and others draw their vantage point and are influenced by the 'untouchables' and ignore other voices (Sharma, 2005, p. 54). Particularly in case of upper caste researcher situating herself in

the Dalit political field becomes even more complicated where making claims to objectivity, neutrality and impartiality requires a lot of self-reflection and introspection. With the deficient self-reflective understanding of the researcher's inter-subjectivity particularly in case of caste and Dalit studies, I turned to Dalitbahujan scholars for insights.

Positive checks against 'upper caste dominance and bias in academia, society and politics

The demand made from privileged castes and political organizations by 'Dalits' to 'act' for Dalits first by listening to Dalits to accordingly, instead of mere verbal agreements, should greatly determine the nature and level of engagement of a non-Dalit for Dalit rights or emancipation (Ambedkar, 2018). This operationalizes into certain positive checks on 'upper caste' intellectual intervention and remain on watch to point out any appropriation, misrecognition, exaggeration, fabrication or distortion of their lived reality. The influence of their gaze is even felt by some of the most celebrated 'upper caste' postcolonial and subaltern theorist such as Dipesh Chakraborty.³ It has also convinced renowned Marxist thinkers like Slavoj Žižek⁴ to take an inter subjective, intellectual discrimination and internal colonization of Dalits in South Asia with seriousness (Žižek, 2014; Žižek, 2013), and of the Brahminic or casteist misuse of academic authority affecting problematisation of caste at international level, as for instance at the 2001 World Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa (WCAR) (Berg, 2017).

As it stands, Dalitbahujan intellectual domain is dislocated such that without upper caste's intervention their articulations and struggles largely remain unknown, unappreciated, invisible and less attentive. While Dalitbahujan scholars put some positive checks on non-Dalit and 'upper caste scholars, their own agency is inherently curtailed by the intellectual, social and political barriers set up by the hegemonic casteist structures. A Pasmada-Dalit activist, Shafiullah Anis argues:

The basic difference between the oppressed and the oppressor is the lack of option that the former has, when the latter enjoys a privilege to pick and choose his/her position. S/he can pick if s/he wants to participate or remain bystander. S/he can choose to speak

³ Dipesh Chakraborty, Lawrence A. Kimpton Distinguished Service Professor of History, South Asian Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ABmMC6zC8I>

⁴ Slavoj Žižek is a noted Marxist philosopher who delivered the Navayana Annual Lectures in 2009–10, hopping from Delhi to Kochi and then to Hyderabad. He has on certain occasions spoke on Dalit question. "He did that, for instance, in February 2013 in Heidelberg, when in the middle of his ingenious thoughts on Hegel, Marx, Capitalism and Democracy, he spoke of his new hero: Ambedkar. He did this again at a public lecture delivered at the Institute of Public Affairs in LSE in November 2014, Ten minutes into the talk, "The Need to Censor our Dreams", he mounted an attack on "the Brahmin cultural studies people" who do not shy away even from glorifying the Hindu caste system and discount its critics for their Western imperialist perspective."

See: <http://navayana.org/blog/2015/09/15/when-zizek-says-when-i-was-in-india/>

or to remain silent. S/he can act or remain indifferent. This choice is the privilege by existence that the oppressed does not possess. In fact, a significant part of life of the oppressed is devoted in fighting against the oppressive structure for no fault of him/her, whereas, the oppressor remains a beneficiary of those structures without any effort. The oppressed is moving against the stream, and the oppressor is benefiting from the flow. And unless a well-meaning member of oppressor class does not contribute meaningfully to act in preventing this flow, her/his mere existence is a contributor to the oppressive structure. So, unless the well-meaning members of the oppressor community do not act, their "respect" is meaningless.

(Shafiullah Anis, Paradox of the Oppressed, Personal online communication, October 21, 2017)

Similarly, concerns have been raised by several Dalitbahujan scholars including Gopal Guru, who draw parallels between the oppressed Dalit and the 'upper caste' or the oppressor, and the similarly transfixed oppressed\oppressor anywhere else in the world. (Guru, 2012) Dalitbahujan intellectual does not completely reject or outcaste non-Dalits from their struggles. Instead they invoke moral-ethical predicament to engage those willing to de-casteify and declassify, and willing to mount self-reflective internal critique of caste and its symptom, i.e. *dalitness*, the condition or social pathological state that thrives within 'upper caste' cognitive framework. Being cognizant of the systemic barriers to Dalitbahujan mobility, they want the 'upper caste' to stand with them against the 'upper caste system' without trespassing their right to have agency or dominating them. They make a moral demand from 'upper caste Dalit activist to break away from the structures that privilege them over the Dalits. In this regard, it is fair to state that the 'upper caste' representing the Dalit is a contradiction in terms and counterproductive. Therefore, Dalitbahujans demand for the creation of spaces whereby a Dalitbahujan herself could speak for herself. They believe that the roots of the denial of oppression, or for that matter casteism and widespread untouchability lies in oppressive structures of sanctified casteism. Therefore, they genuinely demand that the denial of casteism should be challenged and questioned, both by the Dalits and non-Dalits. Dalitbahujans want to expand and broaden their struggles on grounds of universal human values of dignity and respect.

II

Historical necessity to engage upper castes and focus the 'oppressor'

Despite the distrust over the 'upper caste' anti-caste agent, Dalitbahujan activists make certain epistemic allowances to engage 'upper caste' in Dalitbahujan intellectual and political assertions. With that background knowledge, and consciousness of being 'upper caste' having ability to move across spaces, I have attempted not to be naïve in making objective claims regarding Dalit oppression or caste assertions. I had to be very careful to meet the academic demand to generate scientific data as well as to satisfy Dalit activist's concerns and demands to subvert my own inherent caste privileges so that I could be

reckoned as contributing to their emancipation. Further, a jolting appeal to the consciousness of the potentially self-subverting 'oppressor' or the 'upper caste' is meant to contribute to the subversion of oppressive caste structures. The necessity to engage upper castes in Dalit assertions, or to allow them to make supportive knowledge claims without necessarily hegemonizing Dalit realms, can be justified on the empirical grounds such as the paradox of graded inter sectionalities, socioeconomic disparities between Savaranas and Dalitbahujan; The barriers to mobility across spaces; the limits of decasteification; The problem in critiquing caste and presenting Dalit caste in academia, fears of blames of biasedness and subjectivity, and the fears of biases and subjectivity of the 'upper caste' researcher, such as the fear of the appropriation of Ambedkar by Hindutva-Ashrafia ideologues, considered by Dalitbahujans as Brahminic in approach.

Dalit intellectuals and leaders have worked with non-Dalit even with Brahmins, or have allowed them to be their friends and supporters in their struggle against caste discrimination. For instance, Jyotiba Phule was constantly supported by his Brahmin friends Govande and Valvekar, both financially and morally. Muslim and Christian childhood friends too morally supported Phule during his school days (Keer, 1974; O'Hanlon, 2002). Borrowing theoretical insights from non-Dalit intellectuals also begins with Jyotiba Phule. He was influenced by Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine, an English-American political activist theorist, transnational human rights activist and revolutionary (Keer, 1974, S. 189; O'Hanlon, 2002). Similarly, Ambedkar was influenced by the ideas of John Dewey, an American pragmatist philosopher (Stroud, 2017; Mukherjee, 2009), and he continued to seek support from Baroda State, whose prince, Sayajirao Gaekwad III, was a Maratha Hindu. If someone from an 'upper caste' is committed to annihilate caste, she must be inducted in Dalit activist's team in manner that she could participate without hegemonizing Dalit space.

Any upper caste or lower caste non-Dalit activist or academician is welcomed and appreciated by Dalit academicians and activists, if they stand with Dalits, Dalit organizations, be led by Dalits in the struggle against casteism and to serve as a catalyst to bring about structural changes, socio-political and moral-ethical reforms. To quote a recent example, Shabana Ali, an upper caste Bengali Muslim Shaikh contested as a presidential candidate for BAPSA (Birsa Ambedkar Phule Students' Association) candidate as Presidential candidate in Jawaharlal Nehru University Students Union (JNUSU) elections in 2017 (Kumar A. , 2017). Usually such inter-caste engagement is understood as strategically necessary by the Dalit intellectuals and activists. However, Dalit intellectuals put a caution that 'upper castes' should not be allowed to hegemonize the essentially Dalit episteme grounded in Dalit lived experiences and alternatives. They keep reminding that without the necessary uplift of intellectual cadre from within Dalits, and without taking lead from established Dalit scholars and thinkers, particularly B.R. Ambedkar, the creation of emancipatory knowledge and agenda remains a mystery

of suspect and impractical. Dontha Prashant⁵ explained about how any ‘upper caste Hindu’ can engage positively with Dalits in their struggle against caste discrimination. In a reply to a question asked by an ‘upper caste Hindu’ student willing to join Dalit activists, he argued:

As an organization, what we believe is that if any person from ‘caste Hindu’ background, wants to join anti-caste movement, wants to join this struggle for social justice, what they need to understand is that whom they address becomes very important. We believe that those who are oppressed will speak about the exploitation. The oppressed should speak for herself (They have the experience to speak for themselves.). But at the same time if someone wants to join the cause, let them advocate the community from which they come from. For example, if you are from Brahmin, you must speak for the Brahmin (address to Brahmin). If you are Bhumihar, you have to speak for the Bhumihar. ‘The massacres you have done in Bihar, is not correct’. (Dalit Camera, 2017)

Hence, he suggests that each anti-caste activist must first engage with the casteism inherent in their own caste. Anti-caste activists, whether upper caste or Dalit, must critique their own caste location to become part of the larger Dalitbahujan struggle. It is assumed that the critique done from within any particular ‘upper caste’ against itself or against the whole hegemonic caste structure can make a difference. This stance is upheld by most of young Dalit bahujan scholars such as Shafiullah Anis, Dontha Prashanth and Gaurav Somwanshi, my cross border friends. They view it as a strategy to engage the ‘upper caste’ and to focus activism against the ‘oppressor’ instead against the ‘oppressed’. Gaurav Somwanshi alerts to the tendency of both upper caste and Dalit academicians to reify Dalit category, and use it as a ‘mascot’ for caste studies. Because of that, Somwanshi argues, “we tend to locate any problem or incapacity within ourselves, in our abilities, in our own capacity to be humans.” (Somwanshi, 2017) To undo or check it, like Shafiullah Anis, he wants to shift the focus on the ‘upper caste’, on Brahmanism or for that matter ‘Sayedism) that he thinks are primarily responsible for producing and reproducing casteism and Dalitness. Somwanshi argues, quoting Gail Omvedt that “Ambedkar, for example, would refer to himself as a “non-Brahman scholar”. He suggests that Dalit autobiographies should have been titled Brahmin-savarna biographies instead of ‘Dalit autobiographies’ to show ‘upper caste’ as the root of the problem. Such biographies should be “penned by people from oppressed groups where they would tear down the palaces of the *shastris* and landlords.” (Somwanshi, 2017) This approach shifts the focus from marking out the ‘untouchable’ to marking “the ones who were not ready to touch?” He complains that “Why is there no pressure on the Brahmin-savarna to speak of his or her regressive heritage before speaking authoritatively on what the problems of

⁵ Dontha Prashant was banned by UOH, along with Rohith Vemula and three other Dalit PhD scholars to stay out of hostel because of their stand for Dalit cause. He continues to struggle for Dalit rights and often features in different demonstrations and protests making speeches for Dalit rights. Both Dontha Prashanth and Shafiullah (Pasmanda Muslim from United Provinces, India), however, are not acknowledged as intellectuals in the mainstream.

every oppressed community are?” (Somwanshi, 2017)

The underlying suggestion for the ‘upper caste’ desirous to be part of Dalitbahujan circle is to begin listening to Dalits instead of telling Dalits what to do, and deconstruct casteism prevalent in their own community. As Khalid Anis Ansari also puts it in the context of Pasmanda Muslims, that “ It’s high time when the Ashraf champions should come out of their state of denial and start listening to what the *pasmanda* voices have to say rather than making shallow allegations” (Ansari, 2016) Shafiullah, however, goes one step further and gives similar suggestion to Dalit activist as well to focus on the oppressor, on the ‘upper caste’, study and observe their behaviour and expose their casteism. I, as an upper caste have applied this Dalitbahujan logic that sets parameters for engaging the privileged caste person; to critique my own caste location along with the whole caste culture and the dominant caste groups from the vantage point of Dalitbahujans. Shafiullah Anis sets up a useful criterion for the ‘upper caste’ to play emancipatory role for the oppressed (Pasmanda Dalit Bahujan). He argues that the ‘privileged caste’ individual "respecting the cause" of the oppressed does not make any meaningful change in the condition of oppressed or that of the oppressor. He argues that for the meaningful contribution by the oppressor community or the individual, the oppressor must ensure to satisfy following five queries:

- a) How many sites of oppression you have demolished with your efforts. (A mere acceptance of their existence doesn't mean anything. And it is your responsibility to take the bitter pill);
- b) how many privileges that you have earned by the virtue of your accident of birth have you shirked? (A verbal disassociation with that oppressor identity doesn't mean anything);
- c) Why do you still feel awkward on a critique of the identity that you are well aware of being oppressive?;
- d) Why do you feel a need be accepted as not belonging to the oppressor class without the demolishing the oppression?;
- e) Have you started from home, the nearest site where you can be most effective?

(ShafiullahAnis, Paradox of the Oppressed (part 4) Personal online communication, October 21, 2017)

Dalitbahujans want ‘upper caste to demolish the sites of oppression to prove that they are sincere to eradicate casteism. These sites of oppression may include everything that reproduces caste, class and gender inequalities, such as social structures that reproduce caste endogamy, capitalism, feudalism and patriarchy. They also want to ensure that the social organization, a company, any institution in which ‘upper caste’ person works must be held accountable by her/him for the caste-class-gender discrimination. Dalitbahujan expect that the ‘upper caste’ willing to join them as Dalit activists will make deliberate and explicit attempts to make those upper caste institutional spaces more egalitarian and caste neutral. For instance, it is considered highly egalitarian act if the privileged caste fellow marries from Pasmanda or Dalitbahujan communities.

Dalitbahujans contend that ‘upper caste’ scholars of caste studies merely give forth verbal condemnation of Brahmanism, and do not make sufficient sacrifices in terms of doing away their inherent caste privileges. Also talk about it, but did not shout against it as if they were also suffering. Hence, in terms of knowledge creation, Dalitbahujans want the privileged caste intellectual to study their own self, their own caste location and thereby deconstruct and subvert oppressor from within. They suggest the ‘upper caste’ scholar to articulate his/her own lived experience of an oppression and convince their own caste-class that they have done wrong and that they have make necessary sacrifices for the greater good of society. Hence, they self-reflectively suggest to shift the subject of enquiry from the oppressed to the oppressor, and engage the ‘upper caste’ as a site of study. A mere assumption of neutrality on the part of the ‘upper caste’ is not sufficient. ‘It is just a veil on caste’ as argues Shafiuallah. He asserts the upper caste to ‘accept the identity and fight from within’ beginning from family, doing away the dichotomy between the private and the public, including, for instance, sharing household work with females and promoting women's education. A Pasmanda Muslim will suggest the Ashrafia Muslims, for instance, to Sayed that s\he must critique his or her own castiesm or Sayedism, shrine culture, and suffer exclusion and ostracism without showing condescending or patronizing behaviour towards the oppressed.

Shared space and demands of ‘authentic’ Dalit experience

I myself, ethnically being a non-Dalit do not (or cannot) claim to represent (or fully grasp) the Dalit experience, but going by the theoretical line of Sundar Sarukkai who argues that in principle, “we can theorize about another person’s experience because there is a space within that experience which is not related to the experience.” (Sarukkai, 2007, 4046)” It is from here that I slightly depart from Gopal Guru and follow Sarukkai while agreeing with Guru to give epistemic primacy to Dalit, the subaltern or the one who rises up from the Dalit or the subaltern. Gopal Guru differentiates between mere ‘experience’ and ‘lived experience’. (Sarukkai, 2007, 4047) I argue that in practice a non-Dalit researcher or scholar can make limited claims to grasp and represent Dalit experiences unless she has inhabited the same oppressive space experiencing it both as the oppressor and the oppressed. Dalit activism as a process affords the shared space within intersecting nodes of Dalit and non-Dalit experiences such that a non-Dalit when acts with Dalit for Dalit’s rights and emancipation shared the Dalit’s experiences of activism and assertion. A Dalit cannot claim to have full ownership of Dalit activism for a part of activism is experienced by the ‘upper caste’ too, who either oppose or stand with Dalit activists.

It is also pertinent to explain here that the ‘moral authority’ must be distributed according to the empirical reality of graded intersectionality. Since there is not a single type of Dalit, and there is gradation within Dalits, as well as within upper castes, the caste-class-gender oppression is likely to be accordingly distributed all along continuum, thereby affording the space for all oppressed sections to make claims to have moral authority, with a sensitivity to the similar claims made those falling below or above them on the

continuum. This epistemic approach saves Dalitbahujan from essentializing Dalitness and broadens its political scope as well. In this manner, by letting a Dalitbahujan theoretician to theorize about Dalit 'being', does not foreclose the possibilities for a non-Dalit oppressed, or the well-intentioned de-castified upper caste.

A non-Dalit 'being' situated in the same space of experience, having shared graded oppression of a minor levels, if not that of essentially, authentically and deeply the most extreme oppression that the most oppressed Dalit may have undergone, can also critically look into Dalit's general conditions and can be a part of the Dalit struggle. (Guru & Sarukai, 2012; Guru, 2009) Appreciation of non-exclusivity of Dalit condition and the caution against ethno-centric emphasis on Dalit's understanding through and only through Dalit experience can save both Dalit and non-Dalit from repeating the mistakes of their predecessors.

From my own location as an engaged researcher doing action research in the field which is partly familiar to me being native of the same locality, I argue that Dalit subject or theoretician alone cannot tackle the problem of untouchability and caste discrimination and need to interact with and collaborate with non-Dalit anti-caste researcher or theoretician to understand and subvert both Dalit oppression and caste oppression in general. Certain Dalit activists fear that the tendency to out-rightly block the upper caste to intervene in Dalit struggles or to stand with Dalit cause may lead to the racialization of caste issue and further ghettoization of Dalits. I, therefore, intervene with Dalit activists at inter-subjective level, and become part of their struggle and shared experiences, thereby claiming to represent them to the extent both Dalit and non-Dalit share the common space and common experiences while as an engaged activist.

As discussed above, the upper caste and particularly the Brahminic hegemony over knowledge production has been picked up as one of the themes to contest Dalit rights to produce knowledge about their own lived experiences. This problematizing of 'upper caste' agent into Dalit life world makes it imperative for the 'upper caste' researcher to afford similar agency to Dalitbahujan activist instead of treating her as a passive object of study. I intervened with Dalits with the assumption that they have agency that can change the society, that they react to humiliation, and that they must have evolved their own social and political alternatives. It is from there that I mounted the Dalit critique, as it emerges from my activism and the analysis of reactions (assertions) of Dalits to oppression, the reactions that manifest itself in the form of struggle for identity assertions and construction for self-respect. In this manner, I generate the critique of these hidden, taken for granted hegemonic structures, narratives and episteme in Sindh, that instead of reducing or rather annihilating castes, seem to sustain it. As I have been actively engaged with Dalit activists in on and off the field, it was pertinent not only to understand their local political narratives, but also to correlate their narrative with the Dalit narratives elsewhere. Impressed by the ideological activism of a small group of Ambedkarites in Sindh, I constructed my own approach to situate myself within Dalit activism and analyse Dalit identity and politics in Sindh.

I initially entered the field as a focused ethnographer in a hurry to collect maximum data through audio-visual aids. However, after a year (around the middle of study), I got engaged initially with peasant activists working in Dalit communities and subsequently with Dalit activists themselves. I had sort of become one of them for 10 to 12 months and more. My research subjects were not illiterate or passive people in a remote village. I could not have written on casteism with confidence had Dalit activists not cooperated and collaborated with me. Dalit activists as well as their opponents formed one of the most informed and active section of Sindhi society. While writing and actively sharing information and literature on Dalits in social media, and during personal meetings, my research, its findings, utility or efficacy for Dalits and for Sindh or Pakistan was asked, questioned, critiqued, condemned and even supported by the activists on various occasions.

My engagement with Dalit activists as a Dalit activist was (and still is) of the nature that could sufficiently be called as the Dalit activist (a subject) with no choice to abandon or escape Dalit activism. The foundational role in the formation of Dalit Sujāg Tehreek locked me into committed political relationship that I had to attempt to break with conscious efforts to become an objective researcher, and sometimes to become the 'non-Dalit'. However, the greater portion of my social life and conscious being remained engrossed in Dalit activism during the past two years particularly from the beginning of DST.

The notion of 'space' in relation to Dalit self, assumes a pivotal position in the Gopal Guru's articulation of Dalit experience. (Sarukkai, 2012, 69-70) The space where Dalits stage their activism and assert their identities is dominated by non-Dalits. The Dalits, once silent and voiceless are now increasingly voicing their appeals, and engaging actively with the dominant oppressors and social structures in a fluid and processual space, a space as such afforded to them by modernization, democracy, globalization and technology that has further facilitated flow of ideas across locations.

With the theoretical deficiency in background, I should confess that at many junctures, I could not maintain my neutrality, and was explicitly acting like a domineering upper caste. This revealed to me several times and was also notified by Dalit activists when I manhandled some of them and resultantly they declined to cooperate. Certain other Dalit activists were extremely cooperative and always made efforts to mend my ways, assist me, and cooperate in data collection sharing every important piece of information. Despite all my sympathies for Dalits, I felt (and still feel) myself standing on the side of upper caste. I live and act like upper caste, and have not dispensed with any major caste privilege for the Dalit cause, except little social capital due to certain Sindhi nationalist and the Marxists friends' social boycott and anger, the fear of state's repercussions, and a fraction of epistemic violence and ridicule that a common Dalit usually experiences on daily basis.

With this inherent bias that is not easy to surmount at all, I chose to stand by those Dalit activists who were willing to use the term 'Dalit' for political reasons, and were striving

for Dalit rights. In this manner, I got positioned myself as one of the activists meant to bring relief to the Dalit agent, to give the agent an agency, and to think of Dalit as a subject in itself, for itself and not for me. Such an inter-subjective dialogical relationship, in its own way, was quite an exciting, energizing and empowering for me, personally, as well as for the Dalit activists. I was an upper caste, a privileged researcher but sympathetic towards Dalits, and concerned about their oppressive conditions. These credentials as an upper caste and the privileged from the landlord family made my research, activism and the ‘self’, the subject of critical enquiry. It kept me constantly on trial before Dalit activists and the Sindhi civil society. During the course of research, my credential and legitimacy to do collect data on activism, and to represent and stand for the Dalits, along with that of certain non-Dalit activists, was persistently questioned and ridiculed by several Dalit and non-Dalit activists.

I tried to minimize the gap between the Dalit political narratives and my ‘self’ as an upper caste researcher. I justified my claim to cooperatively generate the legitimate Dalit critique of Sindhi and Pakistani caste culture as one of the Dalit activists by attempting to internalise Dalit concerns, and by sharing the claims to generate knowledge in collaboration with the leading Dalit activists, from whom I learnt, and to whom I gave epistemic preference over my own biases.

This approach allows appreciating how the activist from within the oppressed sections would like to construct knowledge that could have transformative value at the same time. Following the activists from within the oppressed castes, increases the subversive potential of such knowledge production. Their acceptance of me as the legitimate researcher was a much needed booster. It satisfied my own worries as regards the limits of de-castification. They locate me within their ranks as the oppressed, the de-castified anti-caste activist. They see the subversive potential in and the invaluable intervention. Commenting upon my way of doing research, Faqir Jay, another pasmanda activist-intellectual, argued:

Till today caste research was done mostly by oppressor. Their research was some sort of Orientalism. But research by oppressed must be subversive. To quip Louis Althusser terms, research by Ashraf is ideological. Their production of knowledge is ideological. Knowledge we produce is scientific.

Conclusion

To sum up, to render my caste positionality legitimate vis-à-vis Dalit activists, I have attempted to follow and articulate Dalitbahujan narrative to check my casteist and patriarchal tendencies, and also because it helped me to synchronize local Dalit politics with Dalit ideology. At the very empirical level in the field, I tried to minimize the gap between the political narrative of Dalit Sujāg Tehreek, the Dalit forum that we collectively formed, and my own ‘Self’ as an upper caste researcher. I justified my research claims by attempting to internalise Dalit concerns, and by sharing the claims to

generate this report with the leading Dalit activists, as well as with Dalit academicians that I had the access to and with whom I interacted, from whom I learnt, and to some of whom I in fact gave epistemic primacy. I consider their role in the generation of this research report as vital as mine. I was the part of casteist culture of Sindh, had been involved in kinship and caste feuds, had personally suffered in the form of loss of my father's life, had remained under 'upper caste' Syed's hegemony despite the fact that I too supposedly belonged to 'upper castes', tried to be active for peasant rights, ended up being one of the anti-caste activist and attempted to nominally de-castify myself. Hence, although I cannot, and do not claim to have the deeper understanding of what Ambedkarites may call 'authentic' Dalit experience to speak for Dalits as Dalits, I do (and did) certainly share the space that lie within the authentic Dalit and the authentic non-Dalit continuum or intersects both the Dalit and non-Dalit spheres.

Since, I myself am not a Dalit, and taken as an upper caste, I cannot pretend here to have a lived experience of Dalit oppression, their experiences of humiliation or even their subjective understanding of their own assertions. My claims are limited to (a) my personal observations from 'upper caste' lens, (b) the purposeful inter-subjective interactions with Dalit activists (c) understood in the light of critical study of the history and historiography of Sindh. Hence, it should be clear that my position is not that of a foreigner or westerner engaged in an exotic exploration, but of a researcher who is exploring quite well-known normative phenomenon usually taken for granted in society. This study, hence, qualifies to be critical study of inter-subjective discursive practices (assertions) of Dalit and non-Dalit activists networked with each other in a particular social and political milieu. Nonetheless, I consider the role of Dalit intellectual activists connected to me, in the generation of this writing is as vital as that of mine, and this fact, I believe, then sets the limits of my Dalit critique. Hence, although I cannot and do not claim to have the deeper understanding of what Ambedkarite may call 'authentic' Dalit experience to speak for Dalits as Dalits, I do certainly share the space that lie within the authentic Dalit and non-Dalit continuum or intersects both the Dalit and non-Dalit spheres. This limitation then further delimits my interpretation of Dalit assertions, different narratives and discourses. Having this understanding in the background, while doing research on Dalits, it became increasingly evident to me that I have to engage with Dalit activist on three grounds;

- a) To make my research ethically justifiable in the eyes of larger intellectual Dalit community and to make my critique of casteism and "upper caste" acceptable to them. It did not mean to be compulsorily supportive of their activism, but to ensure that I do not hegemonize their activism by capturing the core of their forums and associations, and that I do not harm their struggles by completely misperceiving their motives and assertions. Dalit perspective was adopted with that same understanding, as point of departure, very much like any sociologist or anthropologists explicitly adopts or adapts functionalist, conflict or the Marxist perspective.

- b) To meet that very requirement of Dalitbahujan perspective that demands to engage with Dalit activists as assuming the role of being one of the Dalit activists.
- c) That the critique of caste cannot be comprehensively (justly) done by the 'upper caste' researcher, if they do not engage with anti-caste Dalit activists to critique his or her own caste and the overall caste culture in which Dalit life-world is embedded.

From the above discussion, it can be summarized that the critical engagement of the privileged caste scholar in struggles of the oppressed is not at all blocked by the Dalitbahujans. Instead, socially and intellectually, aligning likeminded anti-caste activists from within 'upper castes' is deemed a political imperative, the counterhegemonic turn to abet further subordination *sanskiritisation* and *ashrafisation* of Dalitbahujan class, provided such critical engagements do not lead into the reverse, i.e., to establish the hegemony of the 'upper castes'. This epistemic approach, thus, affords inclusiveness and necessary assertiveness to Dalitbahujan narrative and saves both the 'upper caste' anti-caste activist and Dalitbahujan activist from being fixated into identity politics.

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Colonial Re-moulding and Subjugation in Sweeper Traditions: A Case of 'Engineering' of Balmiki Sweepers

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Abstract

The present paper is divided into three broad parts. The first part is largely a description of 'London Poor' covering various dimensions of their existence. The second part covers an analysis of their helplessness in the face of 'rules'. These municipal rules transformed these poor agricultural labourers into a community of scavengers in London. These English scavengers were titled 'Nightmen'. The third part of this paper deals with the colonial subjugation in British India of analogously classified people for the branding of sweeper identity. This study, by and large, will examine the process of superimposition sweeper identity on Balmikis in British India who had been historically engaged in sweeping–scavenging occupations as their caste-ordained role.

Introduction

Disease and illness was the primary cause of mortality among British troops both in India and England in the early 19th century and before¹. The summer season witnessed more deaths and diseases in London while these calamities came down in the winter. A panel of medical experts in the service of Honourable East India Company found links between human health and environment. They were notably Mr. Glaisher, Sir John Lawrence, Dr. Maclean, Dr. Falconer, Dr. Colvin, Dr. James Bird, Dr. C. Smith and Sir Renald Martin. They suggested that these problems occurred due to the terrible cause and effect of heat and moisture among the British and Indian population.

Since Daniel Defoe, a prolific British writer presented his eye-witness detailed account of the bubonic plague in London in 1665. He also noticed that the poor living in hovels suffered much than others from illness (Defoe, 2006).

The British government appointed officials like the justice of the peace, mayors, bailiffs

¹ Royal Commission on the Sanitary State of the Army in India (1863), p. x-xii; Dr. Leith's Report as to the sanitary condition of the Bombay Army (1865), p. 3-4; Observations by Miss Nightingale on the evidence contained in station reports submitted to her by the Sanitary State of the Army in India (1863), p. 14; Farr (1861), p. 473; Froggatt (2016); Blanco (1970), p. 260

and other head-officers to appoint examiners, searchers, watchmen, keepers, and buriers to mitigate the haunts of Plague. They ordered the victimized poor to shut off any communication to avoid infection. Shutting up poor in their own houses became a Parliament order in London on July 1, 1665.

London transformed into a horrendous region where the heaps of dead bodies were seen lying unburied. Dead-carts consisting of Bellman, Burier, and Coachman; were often seen carrying corpses. These cadavers were mercilessly huddled together into a common grave under the dishonoured state. The act of 1665 also sanctioned orders for sweepers to collect dirt from the houses and streets and carted away the domestic filth on regular basis. The condition of poor was pathetic, while the wealthy-ill had the watchman to take care. They had to retire themselves as wandering pilgrims in the fields or deserted places.

The British government experienced a heavy pecuniary loss in the 19th century. It observed that 100,000 British soldiers in the Indian army reduced to 9,604 in 20 years of service². And to maintain an army of 85,856 soldiers 10,000 annual recruits became essential. The main cause of decrement was sickness among the corps. Sickness³ was more responsible than death for the loss of a corp. The annual rate of mortality was 70⁴ per 1000 in the year 1863 (Farr, 1861:479; Vallee, 2006:416) while reduced to 1 i.e. 69 per 1000 in 1864. In the 19th century, England was facing, then, an inadequacy of sanitation and cleanliness due to industrial progress. Industrial revolution ameliorated the problem of insanitation in urban England. Similarly, the growth of population in Indian towns brought to fore a greater focus on unhygienic conditions of living. Migration of rural population to urban areas in search of living and employment we noticed much like Nandini Goptu (2001:3) did, the emergence of a new sort of profession that was forced onto the poor.

The urban space inhabited by the British witnessed a host of health problems for building a distinct sweeper identity in British India. Florence Nightingale⁵ was purposely called for by the British government on 11th October 1861 to prepare a report on the unhygienic conditions of the army in India. While reporting, she noticed that the problem of insanitation was widely common in India. She enormously reported on open cesspits, open drainages of privies and urinals ran on the surface, contents floating in narrow lanes and unavailability of sewers in hospitals and barracks in military stations. She found that impurities were all in all cleaned by hands. Due to insanitation, zymotic diseases were broken out. Death mortality among British Indian troops multiplied many folds. These deaths were a consequential monetary loss to the British government. A British medical officer, Sir Alexander Tulloch drew up a series of detailed figures. He brought them to

² Report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the sanitary state of the army in India: with abstract of evidence, and of reports received from Indian military stations (1864), p. 134

³ Ibid., p. 14

⁴ Ibid., p. 110, 125; Royal Commission on the Sanitary State of the Army in India (1863), op. cit., p.10

⁵ Observations by Miss Nightingale, op. cit., p. 14, 16

the public attention. He revealed that the loss of a soldier cost 100⁶pounds to the British Empire annually. He disclosed the chief causes of increased mortality and chronic illness. These were the mainly open cesspool, unmanaged filth, dirt and defective drainage system. It became too difficult to bear up the financial loss rapidly. Indian feudal elites too in the metropolis were pressurizing the government to formulate a satisfactory sanitation system to prevent them from the persistent growth of diseases. British officers like Mr. Clark, a municipality engineer and F. L. Brayne, Deputy Commissioner of Punjab had witnessed caste-based prejudices nurtured and practiced by Indian elites against the Bhishtees (a water-carrier caste) in Calcutta and Balmikis in Gurgaon (Nightingale, 1874:9; Brayne, 1929:10,11; Crooke, 1907:122). These elites in Delhi were Rais demanding rights to live in a clean city because they were paying octroi tax (Prashad, 2000:2). Oldenburg (1984: xv) described a similar situation in Lucknow. Not only a large number of English but the local residents because of insanitation also were dying due to diseases. Hence they began demanding improved sanitation system. Thus insanitation in metropolis and military stations and rapid economical loss constrained the urgency of mandatory sanitation to the British government. Consequently, the British government seriously urged to formulate new sanitary planning for India.

I

Description of London Poor

Wages paid to unskilled workers were very less in the countries like Russian, Warsaw, England, and Wales (Brown, 1977:104-106). Jeffrey Gale Williamson, an economist at Harvard University inferred that from 1880 the unskilled group financially declined in earning distribution (1980:462). Similarly British Economist, Henry Phelps Brown (1977:102) believed that industrial requirement and technical advancement were the two causes responsible for the poverty of unskilled poor. During early industrialization, skilled labor became the demand of urban production. Unskillfulness opened low paid job avenues for English poor. Henry Mayhew, a British journalist found them being categorized into major six⁷ genres. These were - Street Sellers, Street Buyers, Street Finders, the Street Performers, Artists and Showmen, the Street Artisans or Working Pedlars. For the present scholarship, the category 'Street Labour' found much appealing as it comprised scavengers and sweepers. They in English society were known by specific titles such as Scavengers, Nightmen, Flushermen, Chimney Sweepers and Sweeps/Sweepers.

Their morning meal was the leftover food. They usually lived in the cheapest and the filthiest localities in the British capital. The state of their children was as similar as their own. They did the same job as of their parents (Mayhew, 1861, 2: 143). These all information of London poor were drawn by Mayhew in London. According to the Census

⁶ Report of the commissioners (1864), op. cit., p. 22; Nightingale (1874), p.9

⁷ For detailed description of sub-categories of London Poor, see, Mayhew (1861), Volume 1, p. 3; Mayhew (1851), p. 29-30

returns of 1841, the population of inhabited houses (Mayhew, 1861, 2: 162) in London were 250,000 and at least 2,000,000 chimneys to sweep. He further critically studied the numerical accounts dealing with the respective heads of the dustmen, nightmen, sweepers, and scavengers. Though census recorded 1033 chimney sweepers and 254 scavengers and nightmen yet Mayhew firmly believed that these returns were preposterously incorrect (1861, 2: 162). He analyzed that Chimney- sweeper was a mixed category of 'masters' and 'climbing boys'. These London climbing-boys were real chimney sweepers. They were counted only 370 in 1841 for cleaning 2,000,000 chimneys. It meant that one boy had to clean 4500 chimneys at all. A similar corruption was also noticed with nightmen. The official tables showed that 63 or 64 gangs of nightmen were recorded in the census returns. They had been usually cleaning 4000 cesspools. These gangs were actually a cluster of 1800 people which consisting dustmen or nightmen or scavengers. But it didn't mention the numbers of its sub-category, dustmen.

Engels indicated that working need for physical survival fetched all skilled and unskilled to 'English Industry' in England. He wrote that "Most industrial occupations demand a certain skill and regularity, and for these qualities, which involve a certain grade of civilization, the rate of wages must be such as to induce the worker to acquire such skill and subject himself to such regularity (Engels, 1969:96)". The industrial workers were more prosperous than non- industrial laborers such as porter or hairdresser or washerman etc. Such skills had no value in the industrial trade. The conditions became excessively worse for agrarian labor because they were field workers. They used to perform agrarian activities like sowing; reaping and irrigating the fields chiefly in the countryside. Therefore they had to accept such occupations, which required physical prowess only. Moreover, they had least interest to change their lot (Mayhew, 1851:301). For their low prestige and low economic status, their unskillfulness was accountable. Unskillfulness was the root cause of their helplessness and poverty. And their non-skilled attitude was entirely worthless for industrial trade value (Engels, 1969:96; Mayhew, 1851:301).

Urbanization and Migration in Victorian London

London was popularly believed as 'dark' in the reign of Queen Victoria. There was a dark underside to this bustling town, which was the center of the largest empire in the world. It was overcrowded with slums and had an unsung, untalked of an underclass that worked hard to clean up the ever-dirtying town. It was an extensively populated parish, had wonderful architectural development. But growing of population made slums horribly overcrowded where people were residing in the worst unimaginable conditions.

The first country to experience rapid and large-scale urbanization was Great Britain. During the 19th century, the population outgrew very largely. C. M. Law, a former reader from the University of Salford observed census statistics on urban settlements in England and Wales, 1801-1911. He noticed major growth in urban population in London. The population of London had an absolute hike of five and a half million in the 19th century (Law, 1967:12). Basic sources like food and shelter became insufficient for growing

population. Insanitation, poverty, hunger, and unemployment increased many folds due to overcrowding. The major cause of migration was hunger (Tassenaar, 2000:466).

English economists such as George R. Boyer and Timothy J. Hatton and Jason Long scholarly discussed the problems of rural-urban migration. They unboxed that village population was flooding into the urban areas from the countryside. England and Wales in 1841, amazingly, lost (Boyer, 1997 A: 191; 1997 B: 705-706) more than four million people because of rural migration. During this century, the net migration to London calculated 40 percent larger. One of these economists revealed that it was discovered first time in the history of any large nation that more people lived in towns than in the countryside (Long, 2005:2).

Hard time such as lack of opportunity, hunger, and debts made them helpless and choiceless. Readily availability of sanitation jobs pushed a portion of field workers (Mayhew, 1861, 2: 137) into all sorts of sweeping and scavenging. Once they had been taken up their present occupation, had never been able to get away from it (Mayhew, 1861, 2:138). Poverty made them enough ready to opt the least prestigious occupations, which were both low paid and dishonored by other labor communities in London society.

Occupations and Wages of British Sanitation Workers

The least prestigious and low-waged-occupation in London were of Rivermen or Dredgermen, Mudlark, Dustmen, Carriers of cinders (Hillmen or Hill women), Shovellers, Sweepers, and Scavengers (Mayhew, 1861, 2:147-175). But Dustmen, Sweepers, and Scavengers were paid often high than the others. A Scottish economist analyzed the cause of motivational drift for such a dirty job. He wrote that “the ease or hardship, the cleanliness or dirtiness, the honourableness or dishonourableness of the employment” would affect the cost of labor (Smith, 1979:117). He understood that a handsome amount of money would depend on performing either highly prestigious or highly polluted work. It was so because such a work would face less room for competition. Less supply and high demand would affect the cost of labor. They were employed in the occupation of collecting dust from houses and cleaning of mud from streets.

The case of a nightman was absolutely different from the other scavengers. They worked under a private contract with the landlord. When the landlords required a manual cleaning of cesspits, they came to render their services. This was entirely different from a day labor, for which, the extra cost was paid. They in the day were employed as Dustmen for cleaning the houses and the streets. But the curiosity of extra earning compelled them to become Nightmen in the dark in London society. The peak hours of earning were autumn and summer because the intensity of heat and moisture stagnated the cesspits severely which caused severe zymotic diseases.

II

London Nightmen and Their Dilemma

The sanitary history of London had a pivotal point i.e. Cesspool. It was cleaned by a gang of nightmen comprising a Holeman, a Ropeman, and a Tubman in the night (Mayhew, 1861, 2: 451). It was a principal means of discharging waste removal in the urban. Until the mid-nineteenth century domestic refuse was collected in the cesspools (Allen, 2008:24) which were periodically emptied by Nightmen. Night-work in London strictly operated in 'Legal Hours'. It was, not before twelve at night, not beyond five in morning (Mayhew, 1861, 2:450). The British government had a specific reason for that. These cesspools were actually enclosed pits sunk into the ground and filled with every kind of filthy refuse. The Board of Health, Washington D.C. in 1822 made a list of filth. It included carcasses, dead fish or offal of fish, excrement or filth from privies or houses, foul or nauseous liquors or offensive matter from kitchens, yards or houses, tan yards, stagnant water in ponds, gutters or sewers, foul hog sties, vegetable matter in a state of putrefaction etc. (Crane, 2000:22). Since this, all had been stored under the cesspits, which periodically emptied, by nightmen. Therefore this missionary work was brought into operation by the government unquestioningly only in the night when the city was in deep slumber. Not only had the British government in London but in South Australia also passed a Parliamentary order to govern the Nightmen in Adelaide.

'Proposed Laws' for Nightmen

The 'Corporation of Port Adelaide' declared municipal laws⁸by which nightmen were governed in South Australia. These laws clearly stated that the license should bear the authentic and valid description of the nightman. It might be carried and produced whenever required by any authority while performing any sort of cleaning business. The legal hours in the 'South Australia' were slightly different than London. It was eleven in the night till five o'clock in the morning. This time was fixed to clean any privy or cesspool or night-soil. The cart or vessel of every nightman would bear the name 'Licensed Nightman' with white letters on the black background. These would be on the right and off the side of the cart. Two lamps, one at rear and other at the front side would be affixed while using the cart in the night by the licensed nightman. These lamps would bear the number assigned to the nightman and should be visible clearly in the night. The night-cart would be watertight and free from leakage, spilling, slopping, splashing and drooping. If any nightmen or driver misrepresented the particulars and descriptions to any of the corporation's authority would liable to pay penalty. The 'Corporation' significantly interpreted that the person who would remove or assist to remove any kind of foul or offensive matter or refuse would be understood a nightman. To penalize a nightman for his errors maximum ten pounds were decided if found forfeited.

⁸SouthAustralia:ProposedBy-Laws-CorporationsofGawler,Jamestown,andPortAdelaide, p. 1-2

Sudden Death by Asphyxiation

Edwin Chadwick, an English social reformer clearly highlighted the deaths, caused due to manual cleaning of cesspools. The reasons were fairly well advocated by Michelle Elizabeth Allen. She found that the noxious fumes were generated while the filth underwent in the process of decomposing inside the cesspit. These cesspits when opened; caused instantaneous death by asphyxiation (Chadwick, 1842:44; Allen, 2008:27). Gradually these cesspools began to vanish when the London government launched sewer system showed its drastic impact.

London Sewers and London Authority

The Londoners witnessed a revolutionary change in the mid of 19th century. It was a network of sewers, which pushed all types of refuse out of the city. The man who changed the history of London was Joseph William Bazalgette. Gordon Charles Cook who had expertise in 'Hygiene and Tropical Medicine' recognized him, the father of London's sewerage system.

It was noticed in the 19th century by the members of London's parliament that the stench of refuse became intolerable. They began to pressurize the government to find some effective solution to stop the growing stench. Emily Mann, sub-editor of 'Saturday Guardian' explained the drastic condition of Parliament House of London. He wrote that in the hot summer of 1858, the hideous stench of human excrement rising from river Thames and seeping through the hallowed halls of Parliament House finally got too much for Britain's politicians. The lawmakers agreed that an urgent action needed to purify London from "evil odour" that was commonly believed to be the cause of disease and death (Mann, 2016). To solve this problem, two⁹parliamentary debates, published by Hansard, were conducted. The first was between Mr. Brady and the Prime Minister Lord John Manners on the miasmatic state of the river 'Thames'. The next debate was between Mr. Mangles and Lord John Manners on the subject 'State of the Thames'. These proceedings evidently verified the growing filth and its hazards for the British population.

The discussion of systematic cleansing of London was in fact begun in the early decades of the 19th century. Lee Jackson unearthed this early cleansing phase from 1801 to 1820 (2014:3-4). He observed that London became a center of slums suffering from Typhus. The public health and comfort were in danger due to emitting smoke from factories and furnaces. Water closets containing human excrement were regularly fed into the Thames via the main drainage. Many diseases such as Cholera, Typhoid, Bronchitis and other pulmonary diseases were spread due to water pollution and dirty water supply. Dr. Farr and Dr. Snow recorded 53,293¹⁰ deaths from cholera in England in 1849. Adam John Hart Davis (Halliday, 2009: Foreword) wrote that infant mortality reached its peak in 1830 because of dirty water.

⁹ June 11, 1858; Mr. Brandy, Vol. 150, CC 2113-4; June 18, 1858; Mr. mangles, Vol. 151, CC 27-40

¹⁰ Report on the mortality of cholera in England, 1848-49, p. xxiii

A panacea to counter the great stink of old dirty London was discovered by the chief engineer of the Board, Joseph William Bazalgette. He was proposed to build a huge underground sewage system for London. (Cook G., 2001:803). The layout was drafted in a meeting held at the Institution of Civil Engineers on 14 March 1865 by Bazalgette. He revealed that deaths due to diseases among troops were exceeding more than the deaths originally met from the wars (Bazalgette, 1865:3). Friedrich Engels by citing 'Manchester Guardian', July 31st, 1844 unlocked official tables of mortality of the year 1843 (1969:111). He disclosed that 67,812 poor workers were dying annually out of 2,172,506 in English cities especially in Manchester and Liverpool. These cities were kept under unsanitary conditions. In 1844 a report was prepared. It had six objectives¹¹. The first significant objective was to find the causes of diseases among the inhabitants. An English physician P.H. Holland while investigating Chorlton-on-Medlock, a suburb of Manchester studied death rate among the third class¹² of the streets. Engels (1969:111) counted their death rate. It was 68 to 78 percent among the inhabitants of low rented houses to whom Mayhew identified as London poor.

After the beginning of underground sewer system, Edwin Chadwick, William Farr, John Simon, Florence Nightingale and other compatriots publicly advocated denouncing the collection of filth in cesspools (Halliday, 2009: Conclusion). According to Michelle Allen (2002:386), the planned sewerage system, government legislation and the promoters of public health were equally accountable for vanishing cesspools. The London government shaped few sanitary legislation in 1848 such as Public Health Act, Nuisances Removal and Diseases Prevention Act and Metropolitan and City Sewers Acts. These laws in London's history placed citizens under the legal obligation of channeling domestic waste into the city's sewers. Thus, the main drainage system channelized the city's refuse out of the city and made the cesspool no longer in used. Thus the memories of nightmen of old London were imprinted in the British chronicles forever.

III

But, in case of Britain's colonial country India, the grip of scavenging-sweeping identity made its hold more tightly than ever. Scavengers and sweepers had become the colonial necessity to keep metropolis and military stations sanitized. The sanitary workers were notified purposely out of Indian caste-cluster. To find a scavenging-sweeping community, the English government had to understand the Indian society. A scholar of British colonialism in India brought forth the notion of customary village structure purposely. To him, India's traditional societies, their pasts, complexities could be understood deeply by studying their customary behaviour (Cohn, 1961: 241).

¹¹ First Report of Commissioners for Inquiring into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts (1844), p. ix; Snow (1855)

¹² First Report of Commissioners (1844), op. cit., p. 205-207

Colonial understandings of India's Village Society

The British government analysed that the category 'occupation' was the most complicated subject to deal because the means of livelihood for landless labourers in India were seasonal¹³. They were noticed to keep on shifting their occupations. They worked as field labour at one time, an earth digger at another time and again a porter, salt-petre worker, paddy-husker, palki-bearer, firewood collector etc. The castes of Brahman, Barber, and Dom were performing different occupations than their caste ordained role. Since the working classes were listed under the single¹⁴ head in Europe; instructions were passed in 1891 to list them under single specified occupation in India for the purpose of government services.

The colonial administrators while exploring the social history of Indian castes in India found a 'patron-client system'¹⁵ in Indian villages. The British Empire now insisted on identifying as the sovereign overlord. They then spent considerable time trying to define proprietorship and ownership over land (Roy, 2000:83-6, 90-5, 102-4; 2013:38). In this whole process of identity formation, the existing traditions were reinvented (Sharma M., 2004:5) to structure a visible shape of Balmiki sweepers.

Colonial Engineering of Balmiki Sweeper

Insalubrious state of military cantonments, native bazaars and towns, high rate of mortality among troops and great prevalence of zymotic diseases augmented the demands of health workers in British India. Purposely scavengers and sweepers were recruited. The British officers traced poor landless caste that was in large numbers¹⁶ in Punjab. It was quite interesting to share that the street labour of London also constituted a large body in London (1861, 2:159). These poor were called Chuhra¹⁷ in Punjab. They were found muddling in different layers of occupations and performing different jobs in villages. Chuhra of hills and plains were known by their subcategories. He in hills¹⁸ was called Dumna or Dum or Domra while in plains¹⁹ 'Athri' and 'Sepi'. They in hills were chiefly dealt with making sieves, winnowing fans, fans matting, grass rope and string and the other vessels, baskets, screens, furniture and ordinary articles made of bamboo. 'Athri Chuhra'²⁰ in Sialkot district was an agricultural serf of the zamindar. He was entirely

¹³ General Report on the census of India, 1891, p. 189

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ It was 'Jajmani' in the north whereas 'Padiyal', 'Paniwallu', 'Mirasi', 'Balutadari' and 'Maland' in the south of India. See, Wiser (1936), p. 2-11; Mayer (1986), p. 364-66

¹⁶ Gazetteer of Sialkot District 1894-95: 98; Ibbeston (1916), p. 290

¹⁷ Chuhra word is a synonym used for Balmiki caste. They, in a large number, work as sweepers in municipalities, bazaars and in houses.

¹⁸ Gazetteer of Kangra District, p. 85

¹⁹ Gazetteer of Lahore District, p. 52; Gazetteer of Sialkot, op.cit., p. 85; Gazetteer of Gujranwala District 1893-94, p. 82; Gazetteer of Jullundur District 1904, p. 153, 169; Gazetteer of Lahore, op.cit., p. 144-45, 149, 52-53

²⁰ Gazetteer of Sialkot district, op.cit., p. 98

employed in the fields. But ‘Sepi Chuhra’²¹ was the scavenger of the house and the cowshed. He was the domestic worker who made cow dung cake and took care of cattle. He was village messenger too. He was known ‘Kamin’²² in the Montgomery district. In Gujranwala district, he was named ‘Khula Sepi’²³ or ‘Sepi Chuhra’. He in plains made winnowing pane, grass thatch to cover carts. Crooke (1890: 37) caricatured them as houseless sweepers and barefooted wanderers. They were seen working on grass and straw, cleaning and sharpening swords and cutting woods. British officers like Enthoven (1987: 104), Rose (1911: 182) and Briggs (1920: 57) were absolutely puzzled as to how many of them should be classed scavenger and agriculturist under official tables. The vagueness in their occupations became the hurdles in their official recruitment. Even Chamar who was another version of Chuhra recorded as a domestic servant by Briggs while 78% of them were engaged as farm labourers.

The Census Commissioner in 1891 forwarded his argument to solve this Chuhra puzzle. He suggested that the occupation assigned to a caste by tradition understood for the present denomination²⁴. The Census Superintendent nominated occupational categories to the caste groups²⁵ in some provinces like Bengal, Madras, Rajputana, and Punjab. Similarly, Provincial Superintendent of Census Operations (Punjab) enlisted Balmikis, sweepers by occupation²⁶. After constructing sweeper identity, an epoch began to craft many extensive studies in 19th and 20th centuries which helped in accepting Balmiki, a sweeper caste. In this range, the specialized ethnographic works were – (Youngson, 1907; Rose, 1911; Bains, 1912; Crook, 1896, 1907, 1890, 1897; Dowson, 1928; Enthoven, 1987; Hutton, 1969; Ibbeston, 1916; Macdonell, 1897, 1912; Nesfield, 1885, Latham, 1859; Risley, 1892, 1915; Rose, 1919, 1911, 1914; Russel, 1916; Tod, 1920; Briggs, 1920; Temple, 1962; Strickler, 1926; Greeven, 2010). The aims of such ethnography were quite clear. Ibbeston in his magisterial tone wrote (1916: v, original preface) that “their ignorance of the customs and beliefs of the people among whom they dwell was surely in some respects a reproach to them; for not only does that ignorance deprive European science of material which it greatly needed, but it also involved a distinct loss of administrative power to themselves.”

Conclusion

Breaking out zymotic diseases, numberless deaths, pecuniary loss both in India and England forced the British government for remedial actions. Consequently, a cleansing campaign began in the 19th century in India. It was inspired by few prominent motifs of the Empire. First was to neutralize the pecuniary loss due to high mortality among troops. The second was to eulogize the Indian elites by cleaning the metropolis. The prominent

²¹ Ibid

²² Gazetteer of Montgomery District 1898-99, p. 102

²³ Gazetteer of Gujranwala District 1936, Vol. XXIV-A, p. 160

²⁴ General Report on the Census of India, 1891, p. 188-89

²⁵ Census of India, 1901 (Volume 1, Part I), p. 192-93

²⁶ Census of India, 1901, Volume xvii, p. 358

British motif behind these objects was financial gain. To achieve them, they needed a huge number of scavengers and sweepers. The British government purposely conducted a number of anthropological studies in the different parts of India to understand its social system. They now unscrupulously by copying the rural customs and traditions of rural poor engineered one community of sweepers. They recognized this sweeper caste, Balmikis.

The existence of nightmen vanished from English society when cesspits became useless. But the scavengers in India since the societies of 'Chatur-Varna' to 'Post-Modern' consistently were engaged in the disposal of dirt and filth. They were intentionally converted into a class of sweepers and scavengers for British interests in India. The rulers timely had given up their old name and prescribed new name. Their history began with Manu's Chandala or Pukasa in Vedic India. They were renamed Mehtar in Muslim India. The British Raj affixed them with a prolific title, Balmiki. But they were retained in the business of cleaning lavatories, manholes, sewers, gutters, sweeping houses, and streets. Their social ranking remained lower than the lowest as was in their pasts.

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Representing Identity Crisis in Islamic Society: A Study of Tehmina Durrani's *Blasphemy*

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Abstract

This paper aims to shed light on the identity crisis of Muslims as reflected in Tehmina Durrani's novel Blasphemy. It brings into consideration the Islamic concept of identity so as to underscore the pseudo-Islamic concept of identity in which Muslims are trapped. Drawing upon Qur'an and Hadith, the paper seeks to throw light on the false rituals of Muslims which breed pseudo-Islamic identity among Muslim community. It endeavours to highlight as to how clash of civilizations, blind belief, and ignorance contribute to the discourse of identity crisis. The paper also seeks to unearth how colonialism takes shape of the clash of civilizations, and how does it give rise to identity crisis. It also explores author's use of the concept of Jahalia(Blasphemy 103) to understand what she proposes to imply and how is it linked to the crisis of identity. The paper sets to provide the description of the shrine so as to throw light on the anti-Islamic spirit of worshipping shrine which leads to Shirk and Shirk in turn leads to the crisis of identity among Muslims. An attempt has also been made to understand the author's understanding of Islamic identity vis-a-vis pseudo-identity of Muslims so as to dispel the uncertainty looming large upon the identity of Muslims in Muslim societies in the present context of the world.

Introduction

Tehmina Durrani, a fiery feminist, an acclaimed advocate of democratic thinking and above all a realist in literature hails from Pakistan. She is an autobiographer besides being a novelist whose works bear witness to the seemingly perennial issues paralysing the Pakistani society. *My Feudal Lord*(1991), *Blasphemy*(1998), and *A Mirror to the Blind*(1996) are some of her literary works. This paper considers Tehmina Durrani's depiction of identity crisis in *Blasphemy* for an in-depth analysis and understanding of what she implies through identity crisis and the resultant impact. Identity is one of the major issues in Tehmina Durrani's *Blasphemy*. The novelist depicts protagonist (Heer) and the major characters in *Blasphemy* as experiencing acute identity crises. This paper explores how these characters, in many cases, lose their identity and experience some crises in one way or the other. Besides exploring S. P. Huntington, Erik Erikson for a meaningful understanding of identity, this paper goes on to unearth Tehmina's concept of identity (Islamic) and its application in the *Blasphemy*.

Defining Identity

Contextualizing the concept of identity is a horrendous task because, it is a multidimensional word with varied implications and its implication often keeps on changing. The formation of identity follows a complex process and is dynamic in nature. Erik Erikson wrote extensively about identity formation and crisis. He proposes a life-span model of human development, which includes eight successive stages. Each stage has a role to play in the development of identity. However, the present study looks into the age of adolescence for a meaningful understanding of identity formation and crisis. Erik Erikson, the psychologist, says that the formation of identity takes place during adolescence called “Identity versus Role confusion” (Erikson 1968:135). Hence, identity comes into being with the resolution of confusion between identity and role. Although, he dwells upon “Identity versus Role confusion”, he never intends to limit the formation of identity. Instead, he says that the formation of identity depends on the context, situation, and relation to others. While asserting identity as being affected by the society, belief system and environment in which adolescents live, Erik Erikson concludes that the process of identity formation can’t be comprehended thoroughly until the related fields are brought under consideration (Erikson 1995:114). In common parlance, identity symbolises a quality which distinguishes a particular people or group of people from others. Huntington, on the other hand, says that identity at any level can be defined in relation to others (Huntington 1996:129). Both scholars maintain that identity is a discursive phenomenon that is the shifting locus either of the individuals or of the civilization. Huntington further brings in the debate of divergent fault-lines in order to classify Islam into one homogenous identity. These two debates, however, undermine the basic tenets of Islamic practices which gives a unitary identity to Muslims world over. For example, Tawheed (Oneness of Allah (God)) declares that no entity other than Allah is worthy of worship. Tawheed is a unique religious concept pertaining solely to Islam. Tehmina Durrani reciprocates the ideals of Tawheed in her work as she develops critique of Pir Sain who reinterprets the concept of Tawheed as per his conveniences.

Many people erroneously equate religious identity with other cultural and spatial identities which is against the spirit of any given religion. Many also argue that cultures are linked to the soteriological roots which is a fallacy in its own sense. Both ideas germinate because of too much emphasis on the political indoctrination of religion. As far as religious identity is concerned, Erikson says religious identity is an identity in itself; nevertheless it could be interrelated with numerous kinds of identity. Therefore, he agrees that religious identity works as a supporting factor for various kinds of ego identity. He opines that making religious commitment is an integral part of identity formation for many people, since it provides salient ideologies for youth to adopt (Vogel2015:17). This idea of Erikson is based on the social context, for social context is necessary for the

development of identity. Religion is one of the tools which shape the society and society in turn shapes the religious identity of the individual. Apart from Erikson, Huntington also looked at the various factors of society responsible for giving rise to identity. Having considered various factors, he found that the ideological [Communist, Democratic, Secular] based identity is no longer strong enough to hold people together, and therefore it gives way to cultural and civilizational based identity (Huntington 1996:1). He is of the view that the classification of society after the fall of ideological based identity is being done in line with ethnicity, civilization, and religion. Consequently he comes to a conclusion that apart from culture and ethnicity, religion also plays a vital role in the formation of identity (98). His observation on Islam made him declare Islam to be a form of identity for Muslims. That's why he argues: "Muslims in massive numbers were simultaneously turning toward Islam as a source of identity, meaning, stability, legitimacy, development, power, hope, hope epitomized in system "Islam is the solution""(109).

Identity: its Implication in Islam

Islam has an altogether different and distinct view about identity. Islamic belief foregrounds the fact that if a person professes that there is no god but Allah (God) and Muhammad is the final messenger of God and his acts are in consonance with Islamic preaching, he/she is entitled to be identified as Muslim. Race, colour, language, ethnicity, gender, country and the like does not qualify a person to be called a Muslim unless he/she professes the Oneness of Allah and Prophet hood of Muhammad. Succinctly, Islam seeks to create a static identity; therefore the identity here does not keep on changing rather it is static. The holy Qur'an ordains:

Say: "O people of the book! Come to common terms as between you and us: That we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than Allah. "If they turn back, say ye: "*Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims* (bowing to Allah's will)". (emphasis added) (Qur'an 03:064)

The creation of static identity for Muslims failed utterly despite Islamic effort to establish the same. Static identity refers to the firm Islamic belief in the Oneness of Allah (God). This came into being with the advent of Islam. Before the advent of capitalism, Islamic world was governed by Caliphs or Ijtihad (Jurisprudence). However, as many Islamic sects gyrate to distinctive interpretations, 'static identity' could never become a fecund dream. The concept of Shirk (polytheism) is harangued multifariously in different sects of Islam; some see it as divine solace expunging corporeal sins. Shirk was a ubiquitous practice during Jahalia (Pre- Islamic era connoting ignorance). This failure led Muslims into the complex web of identity crisis or in the word of Huntington "torn" identity.

Defining Identity Crisis

The term identity crisis was coined by Erik Erikson. This phenomenon is not new rather it has a long historical background. It has been present in the world right from the very beginning of human existence on earth but it got its unimaginable currency in the Post-modern era. According to Erikson identity crisis means failure to achieve ego identity during adolescence. Erikson in his book *Identity: Youth and Crisis* says if “Identity versus role confusion” remains unresolved, it gives rise to multiple confusions which in turn lead to identity crisis. Identity crisis experienced by different people has been a pretty old phenomenon; however, it came to receive unprecedentedly increased attention as a disturbing social issue during the cold war period. Huntington felt the heart of time and remarked: “The 1990s have seen the eruption of a global identity crisis. Almost every-where one looks, people have been asking, “who are we?” “where do we belong?” and “who is not us?” (Huntington 1996:125). Thus, Huntington takes a holistic view of identity crisis.

Various factors contribute to Identity crisis in person or groups of individuals. However, one of the most important reasons for the crisis of Muslims’ identity within the circumference of Islam is the after effect of colonialism. Apart from the Clash of Civilizations, other reasons like ignorance and blind clinging to beliefs, Pseudo-Islamic practices give rise to identity crisis. Identity crisis among Muslims is an explicitly visible issue, since Muslims are often seen perplexed about their ideals and ideology. The issue of Muslims’ identity crisis has been brilliantly detailed by Huntington in his book *The Clash of Civilizations*. Regarding colonial after effect upon Muslim society, he says that the once colonised people are still carrying the colonial legacy of their colonial masters. The remnants of colonialism are still haunting the lives of the natives. Having looked at the plight of the natives, Huntington remarks: “In the current world decolonization has occurred and colonial wars of liberation have been replaced by conflicts among the liberated people” (Huntington 1996:33). Therefore, people are still caught in the neo colonial web which appears in the clash between Western and Islamic civilization. This clash contributed much to the identity crisis of Muslims. This clash subjected Muslims to Western domination and imposition. In the words of Huntington: “The west, is the only civilization which has substantial interest in every other civilizations or religion and has ability to affect the politics, economics, and security of every other civilization or religion” (Huntington 1996:5).

Further the people of the West lure natives saying they are the best and their civilization and religion are projected instrumental to their success. They lured natives saying: “To be successful, you must be like us; our way is the only way” (Huntington 1996:73). There are natives who did come under the western allurements and endorsed their perspective

and even embraced it. They even advocate their fellow natives to join them. As Huntington says: “Some attempt to emulate the west and to join or to bandwagon with the west” (29). Apart from them there are others who are conscious of the move of the west and they even think that they are being emasculated from their faith and identity. “In a very fluid world, people are seeking identity and security. People are looking for roots and connections to defend themselves against the unknown” (126). Huntington makes it clear that there is an urge in men/women today to know their root.

Sensing the insecurity, the Muslims seem to be in search of some ways to overcome this complex web of identity crisis. This propels them towards religion to secure their identity of being Muslims. “People rally to those with similar ancestry, religion, language, values and institutions and distance themselves from those with different ones” (Huntington 1996:126). To their utter disappointment they found themselves in clash with those from whom they distanced themselves. Instead of getting hold of identity, their problem mounted further. Huntington rightly remarks: “Identification along one dimension may clash with those along a different dimensions” (128):

Tehmina Durrani in her novel *Blasphemy* deals with identity and its crisis at length. She refers to different types of identities. She, as it is crystal clear, is concerned with the identity of Muslims as a whole. She is of the view that many Muslims call themselves Muslims just because they obey certain rules of Islam and are born to Muslim parents and brought up in Muslim society. Durrani is critical and sceptical about such Muslims and wonders whether they are really Muslims. The uncertainty Muslims experience today about their identity is the result of the clash of Western and Islamic civilization. This clash is not new rather it is an extended version of colonialism. The clash brings to light that the Muslims are still caught in the complex web of colonialism. As Durrani says: “Although the British had left, we are still suffering in the hell they had created” (*Blasphemy* 89).

Clash of Civilizations as the Source of Identity Crisis

The colonial masters after the Second World War hit upon some tactics to continue their exploits in the decolonized nations. Therefore, the dethroned colonizers left their agents like Pir Sain who appears as the ‘protector’ of Islam in *Blasphemy*. These alter egos like Pir Sain work on the bidding of their colonial masters and further the project which they (Colonial Masters) themselves failed to achieve. Such a proposition might sound absurd but the author herself emphasized the relationship and explicitly shows the link between British rulers and the local agents of colonial masters. ‘It was during the early days of British rule,’ Toti continues, ‘the foreigner faced constant problems with the stubborn-natured natives whose simple mind dared to take on powerful rulers but accepted the access of their local masters. The landowner cashed in on their temperament and used the

poor to blackmail the foreigners. Extracting grants and allowances for themselves, they swore on their children that they had nothing to do with the intrigues (*Blasphemy* 86). The colonial masters did succeed in their plan; since their agents are turning the goal of the masters into reality quite skilfully. There is an explicit evidence of this type of clandestine design in Durrani's *Blasphemy*. The entire novel revolves round the shrine and its caretaker Pir Sain. Taking advantage of the Muslims' infinite respect towards shrine, colonial masters had it built to have hegemonic sway over the natives:

When foreign eyes fell on Babaji's grave humming with stories of miracles, it struck them that they could control the area through the magnetic appeal of a shrine. Therefore, the little mound of the earth was rebuilt in marble, and enclosed in a circular room decorated with painted tiles. Tall green and gold minarets are appeared on the roof to attract people from far away. Adjoining it, a mosque was constructed. (*Blasphemy* 87)

This is the most manifest reason the author gives herself. The hidden motive of the colonisers, according to Durrani, was to strip Muslims off their identity by creating agents to protect and cater to the interests of the colonizers. However, it needs to be reiterated that Muslims are monotheistic in their faith. Monotheism means having faith in one Allah (God). Islam ordains unflinching faith in Allah and that all power and might belong to Him alone. Worshipping God in ways other than this amounts to idolatry. The holy Qur'an reads: "For ye do worship idols besides Allah, and ye invent falsehood. The things that ye worship besides Allah have no power to give you sustenance: then seek ye sustenance from Allah, serve Him, and be grateful to Him: to Him will be your return" (29:17). Equipped with the knowledge of the noble teachings of the Qur'an, the author is utterly astonished to see Muslims praying and beseeching others (dead Pirs in shrines) besides God. In *Blasphemy*, Durrani depicts Pir Sain who encourages people to worship the shrine besides Allah, thus subverting the monotheistic concept of Islam. In this context Huntington's statement can be invoked: "The west's universalist pretensions increasingly bring it into conflict with other civilizations, most seriously with Islam and China" (Huntington 1996:20); The West thinks its civilization and religion universal to that of Islamic faith and civilization so they seek to enjoin their faith and civilization upon Muslims. The west does not approve of monotheistic faith of Islam, since it does not come in line with their polytheistic faith. Therefore, with the purpose of homogenization they are seeking to replace the monotheistic faith of Muslims with their polytheistic faith or Trinitarian doctrine.

This is the primary objective of the west behind encouraging the shrines. A Pir was appointed to the shrine so that the native people could listen to Pir. Durrani points out the same in *Blasphemy*, "The key to the shrine was handed over to the Pir and the people's fates were sealed" (87). At the same time the shrine starts getting certain attributes

leading to its high esteem in the minds of people professing the religion. The followers of the religion bow their heads down in front of the shrine and ask for forgiveness from the person who is already dead. In this way the Pir instilled a sort of idol worshipping spirit in the people. The novelist refers to this practice, “Middlemen and salesmen had converted Muslims into grave worshippers” (*Blasphemy* 103). Islam describes such ‘worship’ as *Shirk* (Associating partners with Allah (God)). Like Tehmina Durrani; Maududi also highlights the issue of *Shirk* in his book *Let Us be Muslims*. Falling in line with Tehmina, Maududi writes: “Are not hundreds of idolatrous and polytheistic belief prevalent among you- ideas totally opposed the *Kalimah* Tayyibah? Are not the heads of Muslims being bowed down before object other than God” (Maududi 1985:83)? Such pseudo-practices of Islam give the message to the outside world that Islam too is a polytheistic religion. This misinformation is due to the pseudo-Islamic practices by ‘Muslims’ and this puts a question mark on the monotheistic identity of Muslims across the world. It can be argued that such self created practices have led to identity crisis of Muslims who apparently seem to be branched out to polytheistic faiths. Islam has no role in this kind of practices being undertaken by some of the ‘Muslims’. Instead, the Qur’an stringently warns those who are involved in *Shirk*: “Allah forgiveth not that partners should be set up with him; but He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth; to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin Most heinous indeed” (04:48). Thus, Durrani draws attention of the readers to what Islam actually teaches and what the self- styled protectors of Islam reduced the religion to.

Lack of Knowledge and Adherence to Blind Belief Lead to Identity Crisis

Tehmina Durrani has a conviction that ignorance, lack of education and adherence to blind faith contribute to the loss of identity of the Muslims in the society as she describes in *Blasphemy*. The novelist sees no reason for Muslims to remain in the dark because their religion instructs every Muslim to earn knowledge. The very first verse of the holy Qur’an which was revealed to the Prophet is about earning Knowledge: “Proclaim (or read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created-” (96:1) Hence, attaining knowledge is one of the parts of Islam itself. Harun Yahya, while referring to morally ignorant people, says: “People may claim to be devout, but if their faith is on hearsay knowledge and handed down superstitions, they are still spiritually ignorant because they are not living by Qur’an’s moral values and have not yet correctly understood the faith revealed by Allah” (God) (Yahya 2006:28). The Qur’an vividly describes such believers as ‘lacking in wisdom’ (05:103). It is lack of knowledge that propels people trust Pir and shrine and equates them with God without realizing that such trusts introduce pseudo-Islamic practices. The holy Qur’an refers to such ignorant lots:

Yet there are men who take (for worship) other besides Allah, as equal (with Allah). They love as they should love Allah. But those of faith are overflowing in their love

for Allah. If only the unrighteous could see, behold, they could see the penalty: that to Allah belongs all power and Allah will enforce the penalty. (02:165)

Thus, it becomes evident that in Islam God only deserves reverence and worship as the supreme Power.

Durrani emphasizes the fact that the followers consider Pir to be infallible and are ready to follow his footsteps all the time. She laments that the practitioners of the religion fail to rationalize the Pir's claims, in the light of what the venerated Qur'anor Hadith have to ordain. No matter how religious a Pir/ self-styled defender of religion he might appear to be, no matter how devout and conscious of Allah he might claim to be, he is no more than an idolatrous in God's judgment. The Qur'an reveals how hypocrites like Pir as described in *Blasphemy* have adhered to the same deviant conception and passed it on from one generation to another:

Those who give partners (to Allah) will say: "If Allah had wished, we should not have given partners to him nor would our fathers; nor should have had any taboos." So did their ancestors argue falsely, until they tasted our wrath. Say: "Have ye any (certain) knowledge? If so, produce it before us. You follow nothing but conjecture: You do nothing but lie. (6:148)

Durrani argues that characters like Pir play the role of God and mislead the ignorant and the spiritually unequipped and immature common people. Therefore, she says, "consider, Pir, to be a direct link between the Almighty and the wretched, people believed that his intervention could even alter what Allah had fated for them. That made them worship him" (*Blasphemy* 61). This form of reverence amounting to 'worshipping something/someone other than God' leads its practitioners out of the fold of Islam. Islam firmly believes that no one can be equated with God. The followers of Pir in their efforts to please and appease him divinise and deify him and ascribe quality to him which belongs only to God. Thus, the practitioners lead themselves to serious crisis of their own identity. Durrani avers that the crisis of identity in the Islamic society is largely the outcome of the obsession of the clergy, ignorance of the common people and dependence of people on the clergy for interpretation of the holy text.

Pir Sain is the antagonist and the husband of Heer (the protagonist) who pretends himself to be a great religious person. Pir Sain's claim of being a Muslim and the protector of Islam is entirely hollow and misleading because his practices are at variance with Islamic teachings and match the practices of the age of *Jahiliyyah*. The author rightly says: "They led us back to the time of *Jahalia* (sic.), back to the conditions our prophet had freed us from, back to the very reasons that had called for Islam" (*Blasphemy* 103). There is visible mismatch between his external and internal behaviours—a feature commonly found in hypocrites. Outwardly he behaves like a devout Muslim to impress the masses

but inwardly he is worse than a rogue: “He practised another religion” (83). His attire and lip services paid to Islam amass a great number of followers who revere him. These people consider Pir to be the mediator between people and God. They are unaware of the fact that they are straying themselves away from Islamic path and are treading the path of *Shirk*. The author hinted at this faulty belief of people in the novel: “Considered to be a direct link between the Almighty and the wretched, people believed that his intervention could even alter what Allah had fated for them. That made them worship him” (*Blasphemy* 61). The call of Almighty in Qur’an: “. . . for We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein” (50:16) does not make any difference to them. In Islamic terminology such Muslims are far from being Muslims in the Qura’nic sense.

Durrani foregrounds Pir Sain’s pretension of being a ‘devout’ Muslim. However, soon after it comes out to light that he is only a namesake Muslim who is trying to lead Muslims back to the age of *Jahiliyyah* and is responsible for generating identity crisis among Muslims to a great extent. The protagonist Heer herself comes into conflict with Pir several times and condemns the evil practices of Pir and also highlights the Islamic injunctions side by side. Heer is of the view that Pir is an imposter who abates people and leads them astray. Being true to the colonizing master’s hidden design, Pir only distorts the teachings of Islam to cater to the interest of the master. The protagonist emphasizes that Pir is not guided by Islamic teachings rather he is a slave to his own evil inclinations. For a person like Pir, religion is merely a tool to exploit the opportunity and satisfy his own whims. Hence, his own desires likes and dislikes become his god. Therefore, she says that Pir “had reduced Islam to fit into the palms of pygmies” (*Blasphemy* 103) and suggests people to “be Muslims” (91). The common people hold Pir in high esteem, since they are ignorant of the evil nature and evil design of Pir; it is Heer who brings the true nature and design of Pir into light and says: “He is not a Pir. He is a devil” (*Blasphemy* 73).

Conclusion

Thus, Tehmina Durrani draws a sane and logical conclusion that Pir Sain along with his followers deviated from the true path of Islam involving themselves in the most heinous sin of *Shirk* in Islamic parlance. The novelist exposes the shallowness of Pir’s claim to be a true Muslim and reinforces the conviction of a visionary that such hypocrites stand as a stumbling block on the way of proliferation of the actual teachings of religion. She espouses a strong belief that Islamic society ‘sans’ such self-styled spiritual leaders would usher in a new era of spiritual growth for Islam and its followers.

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“The edge is what I have”: The Existentialist notion of Edge and Abyss in Theodore Roethke’s Poems

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Abstract

In the poetic oeuvre of Theodore Roethke (1908-1963), the image of the edge becomes symbolic of man’s perilous condition. Some of Roethke’s poems remind the reader of Nietzschean philosophical metaphors of flight and abyss. Standing on the edge of a cliff always creates anxiety for the one who stands there as well as to the beholder. The personae of some of his poems move towards love, understanding, and happiness, if transiently, after standing perilously close to an abyss. This paper is going to show some of the poems of Roethke in which the motifs of edge and abyss are predominant and how in this age sans faith, Roethke feels that one needs to delve deep into the ‘divine’ abyss to perceive the true essence of the soul to live our lives with renewed fervour, force and focus.

Edge is almost a constant motif in American poet Theodore Roethke’s poetry. Roethke (1908-1963) saw himself as standing on the verge of an abyss, and in his poetic oeuvre this image becomes symbolic of man’s perilous condition. The speakers of his poems often exist in a state of uncertainty and anguish bordering on total despondency. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), the quintessential American philosopher proposes that “there are two absorbing facts: *I and the Abyss.*” (Bloom 2006: 17). Though Roethke’s first three collections, viz, *Open House* (1941), *The Lost Son and Other Poems* (1948), and *Praise to the End* (1951) rarely mention the motif of edge and abyss, his later volumes make use of this leit-motif profusely. We are going to see in the poems discussed below how despite images of edge and abyss, the narrator implores us to introspect and take an optimistic view of life.

Some of Roethke’s poems remind the reader of Nietzschean philosophical metaphors of flight and abyss (*Abgrund*), and Roethke’s vision of history is, like Nietzsche’s, deprived of any privileged moments that could function as provisional centres. Nietzsche believes that the demise of the divine could be the opportunity for the emergence of a being which derives the meaning of its existence from within itself and not from some authority external to it. If the meaning of the human is derived from God then, with the universe being empty, man *cannot* take the place of the absent God. This empty space can only be filled by something greater and fuller, which in the Nietzschean jargon means the greatest unity of contradictory forces. That is the *Übermensch* (Overman) which for Nietzsche signifies the attempt towards the cultural production of a human being which will be

aware of his *dual* descent – from animality and from rationality – without prioritizing either one, but keeping them in an *agonistic* balance so that through struggle new and exciting forms of human existence can be born.

Nietzsche opines in his book *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) that “Whoever fights monsters should see to it that he does not become one himself. And when you stare for a long time into an abyss, the abyss stares back into you.” (Nietzsche 2002: 69). In this statement, Nietzsche is expressing the familiar occurrence of being absorbed by fears, darkness, and even our own thoughts. In life, people often find themselves confronted with situations in which they must face certain evils in their life. If one seeks to fight the “monsters”, then one should not do it using their methods, or one will be as evil as the thing one wants to destroy and if one surrounds oneself with negativity, one will be fully frustrated. In terms of staring into the abyss - and the abyss staring back at you - the unconscious “abyss” stands for the parts of ourselves that we fear to face. When the abyss stares back at us - it stares at the feebleness of the conscious ego that thinks it can see, understand, or control the abyss. When the conscious ego (persona) stares at the inner self (abyss), the inner self-stares back at the conscious ego.

This abyss represents a void or lack that has been underpinning metaphysical or ontological premises. It can be understood as relating closely to the concept of foundations or grounding. It is interesting to notice the etymological similarity between ‘Grund’ (ground) and ‘Abgrund’ (‘abyss’). (Heidegger 1985: 194). The abyss signifies a destabilization of the possibility of a foundation or basis which might serve as a platform from which to build; it connotes the absence of precisely such a ground upon which structures might be erected, a void or emptiness which precludes the possibility of a firm space from which to begin such construction. This abyssal condition is closely related to the concept of *aporia*. As Richard Beardsworth explains, “Aporia comes from the Greek *aporos*, which means without passage or without issue. An aporia is something which is impracticable. A route which is impracticable is one that cannot be traversed, it is an uncrossable path. Without passage, not treadable.” (Beardsworth 1996: 32).

Nietzsche’s challenge to metaphysics can be read as an unveiling of the abyss which had always been lurking at its core. The impossibility of bedrock upon which to base value-laden knowledge, and the contrasting constitution of such claims, reflect a lacuna residing at the core of metaphysics. In Nietzsche’s words, in this condition man is like a rope stretched between the animal and the Superman – a rope over an abyss. It is a deadly crossing, a dangerous wayfaring, a dreadfully trembling and halting. (Nietzsche 2006: 25-6). The abyss will look into us and cause us to rely on only what we have inside--our intuitions, our basic instincts. If one is a weak person inside, then the abyss will turn us into a monster. But if one can be the *Urbemensch*, the person who can act according to his intuition alone, then the abyss can set us free.

Roethke is often grouped under Confessional Poets along with Robert Lowell, Allen Ginsberg, Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath and others. Influenced by William Wordsworth, Walt Whitman, and William Butler Yeats, he explores the inner depths of the psyche and

captures the associative movement of the mind. It might be the reason why the theme of abyss recurs in his poetry. Heidegger explains:

The word for abyss – *Abgrund* – originally means the soil and ground towards which, because it is undermost, a thing tends downwards. But... we shall think of the *Ab-* as the complete absence of ground... The age for which the ground fails to come, hangs in the abyss... In the age of the world's night, the abyss of the world must be experienced and endured. But for this it is necessary that there be those who reach into the abyss (Heidegger 2001: 90).

There are few poems of Roethke in which the motif of edge and abyss is predominant: “Old Lady’s Winter Words”, “O Thou Opening, O”, “Elegy for Jane”, “Four for Sir John Davis”, “The Dream”, “The Swan”, “The Dying Man”, “First Meditation”, “I am Here”, “In a Dark Time,” “The Abyss,” “The Tranced,” “Journey to the Interior,” “The Long Waters,” “The Far Field,” and “The Reply”.

In “Old Lady’s Winter Words” (from *The Waking*, 1953), the narrator is joyfully stands on a rock and feels the distance between him and the Sun: “Once I was sweet with the light of myself, /A self-delighting creature,/Leaning over a rock,/My hair between me and the sun”(CP, pp. 99-100). Leaning over a rock always presupposes an imminent danger. Another poem from this collection, “O Thou Opening, O” is a brilliant and beautiful conclusion or the protagonist’s journey to maturity, a joyful affirmation of life. In this poem the narrator is obsessed with depth and height: “The Depth calls to the Height/--Neither knows it./ those close to the Ground/--Only stay out of the Wind”(CP, p. 93). The speaker declares that light is the essence of the heart of darkness: “The dark has its own light” (CP, p. 94). So, the narrator intends to convey that even darkness gives us glimpse so that we can march forward.

In “The Dream” (from *Words for the Wind*, 1958), standing on the edge of a cliff, he tosses a stone and listens to the sound of its plunge in the depth below: “I tossed a stone, and listened to its plunge” (CP, p. 115). By doing so, he wants to posit his sense of uncertainty and doom. Different aspects of death haunted Roethke, for example, physical non-being in “The Dying Man” and psychic non-being in “The Abyss”. In “The Dying Man”, the narrator sees a man walking across an edge, but fearless: “...there was another man,/Walking the edge, loquacious, unafraid” (CP, p. 149). So, his fearlessness even at the face of danger is emphasized here.

Standing on the edge of a cliff always creates anxiety for the one who stands there as well as to the beholder. Kierkegaard (using *nom de plume*, Vigilius Haufniensis) in his noted book *The Concept of Anxiety* (1844) comments that anxiety/dread/angst is unfocused fear. Kierkegaard uses the example of a man standing on the edge of a tall building or cliff. When the man looks over the edge, he experiences a focused fear of falling down, but at the same time, the man feels a terrifying impulse to throw himself intentionally off the edge. That experience is anxiety or dread because of our complete freedom to choose to either throw oneself off or to stay there. The mere fact that one has the possibility and

freedom to do something, even the most terrifying of possibilities, triggers immense feelings of dread. Kierkegaard calls this our “dizziness of freedom” (Kierkegaard 1980: 47).

In the title poem “The Far Field” (from *The Far Field*, 1964), the narrator examines the existence of the crabs. The trembling water deposits the sediment at the beach and the crabs take sunlight near the edge: “And the crabs bask near the edge,/The weedy edge, alive with small snakes and bloodsuckers,-” (CP, p. 195). In “The Long Waters”, the narrator laughs heartily after getting back from the depths of water. He sees himself as a completely transformed being: “I, who came back from the depths laughing too loudly,/Become another thing”(CP, p. 192).

Roethke feels that human beings are left with only the brink. In his poem “In a Dark Time” (from the section “Sequence, Sometimes, Metaphysical”, included in *The Far Field*, 1964), the speaker declares: “The edge is what I have” (CP, p. 231). This theme is often repeated in Roethke. The personae of other poems move towards love, understanding, and happiness, if transiently, after standing perilously close to and looking out over an abyss. The substance of this abyss, this “dark time”, is the fear of personal extinction and the horror of alienation in a world in which the individual has lost communion with any transcendental reality. The abyss however comes to emblemize man’s positive fall: “Indeed, the divine abyss becomes for Roethke a symbol of man’s fortunate fall” (Heyen 1969: 1051). The man then experiences the edge: “The edge of heaven was sharper than a sword;” (“The Tranced”, CP, p. 229).

The significant poem “The Abyss” (anthologized in his *The Far Field*, 1964) serves as a striking summary of Roethke’s mysticism, as the fruition of his mystical studies. In no poem does he so clearly dramatize the mystical journey of the soul from darkness and conflict to divine light and peace. Roethke presents in this poem a dramatization of the mystical movement towards, into, and away from the divine abyss, the dark that glows with creative love. A precise identification of this voice is neither possible nor necessary. The voice says that the stair on which the speaker is poised rises to “nowhere.” This suggests, then, that to go anywhere at all, the speaker has to step downwards, towards the abyss. The descent into pain and humiliation, the Purgative Way, is anticipated here (Heyen 1969:1054).

Roethke’s references to the abyss are not only literal and mystical but also biographical. Roethke in the commentary speaks of autobiographical origins and anthropological overtones instead: “As a child, I was always a passionate cave- and path-watcher, curious as to where things led. The cave and the winding path are older than history. And the edge-the terrible abyss-equally old” (Mills1968: 51). His search in the dark abyss is less for personal identity than it is for the defining characteristics of the human condition--man’s nature and the limits of his understanding. His later poems, especially, establishes the idea that the deepest gulfs of the soul are illuminated when one journeys out of the superficial self to the interior self, i.e., the true self that when once awakened, has the ability to commune with God. Hence Roethke can fearlessly say, “I live near the abyss, I hope to stay / Until my eyes look at a brighter sun ...” (“The Pure Fury”, CP, 134).

Another poem “Journey to the Interior”, anthologized in his *The Far Field* (1964) recalls the earlier descents into infernal regions and becomes, as it were, a temporary detour in the long journey out of the self. As Roethke puts it:

In the long journey out of the self,
 There are many detours, washed-out interrupted raw places
 Where the shale slides dangerously
 And the back wheels hang almost over the edge
 At the sudden veering, the moment of turning (*CP*, p. 187)

The night has always been a mysterious time for things to happen. The night is the time for fairies, it is when man changes into werewolf, and for Roethke it is a time when one can tap into the spirit world. In this last section Roethke describes the physical body being separated from his spiritual self and he also describes what he now knows because of his transcendence: “on one side of silence there is no smile; But when I breathe with the birds, the spirit of wrath becomes the spirit of blessing” (*CP*, p. 189). Roethke embraces the dark side of the universe, believing that self-affirmation demands a confrontation with non-being. This is the stage Underhill often calls Purgation, which involves a “deliberate recourse to painful experiences and difficult tasks” (Underhill 2002: 205). The effort recalls the lost son’s earlier descent into infernal regions of the unconscious mind. (Parini 1979: 141).

In most of Roethke’s poems, the speakers undergo a strong sense of despair. Commonly defined as a loss of hope, Despair in Existentialism is more specifically related to the reaction to a breakdown in one or more of the “pillars” of one’s self or identity. If one has done something that goes against his moral ethics or has done something to compromise his basic values, one finds oneself in despair. That human life is basically meaningless, finds ample expression in Albert Camus. A principal theme in the novels of Camus, is the idea that human life is, objectively speaking, meaningless. This results in absurdity which can only be overcome by a commitment to moral integrity and social solidarity. According to Camus the absurd is produced via conflict— a conflict between our expectation of a rational, just universe and the actual universe that is quite callous to all of our expectations.

Because of the world’s absurdity of the world, anything can happen to anyone, at any point of time, and a tragic event could plunge someone into direct confrontation with the Absurd. The notion of the Absurd has been prominent in literature throughout history. Soren Kierkegaard, Franz Kafka, Fyodor Dostoevsky and many of the literary works of Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus contain descriptions of people who encounter the absurdity of the world. The struggle between courage and despair expresses itself in multifarious manifestations. A full description of it would have to cover large fields of human, psychological, and sociological behaviour. The strife between courage and despair deals with many layers of consciousness: “It would have to deal with conscience,

with the subconscious and the conscious, with the will to death and meaninglessness, and with doubt and guilt. But all this is an expression of human servitude — of the personal and social distortion of the human spirit.” (Tillich 1939: 213-4).

What sets the Existentialist notion of despair apart from its dictionary definition is that the Existentialist despair is a state one is in even when one is not overtly in despair. This issue of nothingness finds ample expression in Existential theories. One of the tenets of Existentialism is the encounter with nothingness. With the loss of God’s omnipresence, nature and the universe have been emptied of reason, meaning, order, purpose, and love. Existentialist writers often portray a person confronting the abyss, the probable meaninglessness of the universe and their own actions within that universe. This existential crisis is often a test of a person and the courage s/he maintains.

The notion of the Absurd contains the idea that there is no meaning to be found in the world beyond what meaning we ascribe to it. This meaninglessness also encompasses the amorality or “unfairness” of the world. This contrasts with notion of *karma*—ways of thinking in which “bad things don’t happen to good people”; to the world, frankly speaking, there is no such thing as a good person or a bad thing; what happens happens, and it may just as well happen to a “good” person as to a “bad” person. We tend to think that God will provide justice to all: those who did detestable things on earth are going to be damned after death and who did commendable job on earth, are going to be praised in the life after death. But any such idea is irrelevant in the present scenario as “God is dead” (Nietzsche 2008: 108), to borrow Nietzsche’s phrase in his *The Gay Science* (1882). All we need to do at this hour is to strive forth to make our life meaningful.

The problem is that while our shadow or inner self is also necessary to the formation of our existence, we end up denying its existence, or at best fearing it. That denial causes problems, because the dark and dormant side of ourselves contains not only what we consider negative traits but also our latent talents and gifts. We all have powerful creative energies locked inside; to deny them is to deny the possibility of wholeness. Like sick men in hospitals, we are taken away from bed to bed, from one folly to another; and it cannot signify much what becomes of such stupid, comatose creatures, lifted from one bed to another, from the nothingness of life to the nothingness of death (Emerson 2003:172).

“The Shape of the Fire” (1948) illustrates Roethke’s attempt to achieve this psychological balance by exploring both psychic states. The regression to childhood, where the line between the conscious and unconscious is blurred, is Roethke’s starting point in his quest for himself. His use of preconscious imagery as signposts for his own identity is what characterizes his poetry. The dreamlike imagery represents a night journey; an exploration of the interior of the country also represents a descent into his unconscious. The water, the cave, the elemental natural images are indicative of birth, rebirth, and the depths of the mind all at once. Thus, the poem moves between conscious and unconscious states in order to achieve this archetypal spiritual wholeness.

Roethke believed “that the spiritual man must go back in order to go forward”(“An American Poet Introduces Himself and His Poems”, presented as a BBC broadcast, July 30, 1953; reproduced in *The Echoing Wood*, La Belle Jenijoy, p. 46). This is reflected in his poem “In a Dark Time”(1964). The title alone leads the reader to think that the poem is going to be a depressing poem. After reading it, it is apparent that the poem is, in fact, not a depressing poem about a dark time, but rather a paradoxical poem about how things need to be looked at.

Roethke’s narrator sometimes becomes a stoic and expresses his eagerness to be on the land of the dead: “I do not laugh; I do not cry; / I’m sweating out the will to die” (“Meditation in Hydrotherapy”, *CP*, p, 248). Here, the narrator is taking a stoical stance and considering to take the final plunge from the edge of existence. The poem explains the narrator’s treatment for his depression, leaning towards suicidal tendencies. This short poem describes a treatment the narrator is undergoing for suicidal depression — soaking in a warm bath for hours each day. Camus in his *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942) addresses the question of suicide. According to him, the morally valid and positive response is to continue living.

So, we find anxiety running through the poems mentioned above. It is the common usage that the word “anxiety” is applied about the external panic-stricken phenomena like social anxiety, economical anxiety and overall global anxiety, or about the inner condition of panic concerning a certain situation such as fear, consternation or solitude. But by Kierkegaard “anxiety” (angst) is considered as something quite different from these, rather regarded as a special determination peculiar to the human spirit. The state of mind which hovers on the abyss and realizes the horror of nihilistic freedom— that nothing is real and anything is possible — is what Kierkegaard calls Dread (Angst). It is not merely a simply negating and repulsing state of panic, but it also brings resistance and colours of optimism.

Roethke was directly or indirectly influenced by Camus’s, Nietzsche’s and Kierkegaard’s ideas. An individual becomes truly aware of his/her potential through the experience of anxiety. Anxiety can also be a recognition or realization of one’s true identity and freedom. In this age sans faith, Roethke feels that an individual needs a dark, inscrutable and mystic way to perceive the true essence of God. It is possible only when he/she delves deep into the ‘divine’ abyss and experiences the true nature of it. It can be argued that though this abyss represents a vacuum or lacuna, it has always been reinforcing the attempt to posit universal or essential values on it, and that it is precisely this lack which may be properly mobilized to call for an endless resistance to unsettle the totalizing claims of ontology. Some moods, such as ‘abyss’ (Nietzsche), ‘anxiety’ (Kierkegaard), and ‘absurdity’ (Camus), are especially important for the above discussion because they have the capacity to shake us out of our everyday complacency and self-deception by disclosing the fundamental freedom and finitude of our situation. This, in turn, allows us the opportunity to be honest with ourselves and live our lives with renewed passion, intensity, and focus.

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Equivalents in Translation: The Case of Gandhi

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Abstract¹

Schopenhauer argues that there is nothing like an exact equivalent from one language to another, the reason being that in every language one “thinks” differently. Schopenhauer’s simple yet profound proposition has important consequences for translations, particularly in humanities and social sciences. Theoretically this proposition could explain why Gandhi was distrustful of English equivalents of some terms he had coined. Gandhi is known to have translated his writing from Gujarati into English and he also translated some texts from English into Gujarati. He was seeking through translations a dialogue with his own people as well as with the Western world. This paper takes a look at the intricacies of translations with some examples from Gandhian philosophy like satyagraha, itihās and daya.

The German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) was not a translator or a theoretician of translation studies in the contemporary sense of the term. However he made some significant observations on translation practices in his essay “Über Sprache und Worte” (rendered in English as “On Language and Words”) in his book *Parerga und Paralipomena* (1851). Schopenhauer’s love for the language of antiquity made him choose this Greek title which basically signifies: appendices and omissions. *Parerga* would be ideas supplementary to the main body of his philosophical thought and *paralipomena* includes ideas that were somehow left out or they did not get the attention they deserved in his philosophical writing. The first part of the book *parerga* contains a collection of six long essays and the second part *paralipomena* contains thirty-one short literary and/or philosophical reflections on life. The essay “On Language and Words”, in the *paralipomena* section, begins by pleading the case of language studies. It advocates the study of multiple languages – Schopenhauer was thinking primarily of the classical languages – as an important aspect of education and intellectual development. In German it is called *Bildung*, from the verb *bilden*, to build or develop. For Schopenhauer language is not just a vehicle of speaking and communication. It is also, and at times primarily, a vehicle of *thinking*. The knowledge of multiple languages could enlarge one’s horizon of thinking and make a person more open to new ideas. Schopenhauer knew Greek, Latin,

¹ This paper was presented in the conference “Translating/Trans creating the Cultures of Existence” in Department of English, Jamia Milia University, Delhi, 24-25 Nov 2016

French, Italian, Spanish, English and of course his mother tongue German. He quotes liberally from these languages in his writings, a delight for some readers and an irritation for others.

Further in the essay, this polyglot in 19th century Germany reflect son the problematic of the inevitable but futile chase after equivalents. Based on his knowledge and experience with so many languages, Schopenhauer argues that there is nothing like an exact equivalent from one language to another, the reason being that in every language one *thinks* differently.² This simple yet profound dictum has important consequences for translation practices, particularly in social sciences and humanities. Schopenhauer elaborates this with a geometrical metaphor: Languages are not concentric circles. They are intersecting circles.³ This implies that there is some overlapping of signification, but certain nuances specific to a language and the universe it contains in itself remain untranslated and untranslatable. From this it follows that there is at the most an approximation of meaning conveyed through the so called equivalents. Yet one who interacts with a foreign language is invariably always translating with equivalents in his head, knowingly or unknowingly. In case the translation is too exact and word-to-word, the result sounds forced, stiff and unnatural; a free translation on the other hand can be, at best, what Schopenhauer calls in Latin *a peu près*, an approximation, which is also false. This dilemma leads him to a rather scornful conclusion:

*“Eine Bibliothek von Uebersetzungen gleicht einer Gemäldegallerie von Kopien.”*⁴

A library of translations is like a gallery full of imitations. (my translation).

With this biting criticism of translations Schopenhauer confronts his generation of Germans that, according to him, is not keen on learning classical languages, taking the easy way out i.e. reading translated versions of classical Greek, Roman and Sanskrit works in German. Schopenhauer insists that there can be no short cuts in acquiring knowledge. He compares translations from classical languages into modern languages to “chicory coffee” that can at best be surrogate to the original. During Schopenhauer’s time, German was struggling to establish itself vis-a-vis French and Latin. Schopenhauer himself wrote in German and it is not as if he himself did not read translations. He admired, e.g. the Vedic texts *Upanishads* that were accessible to him only through a translation, in fact a translation of a translation. These Sanskrit texts had been translated into Latin by a Frenchman from a Persian translation that had had been commissioned by none other than the Mughal prince Dara Shikoh in 1657. Yet Schopenhauer remained steadfast in his loyalty to the languages of antiquity. The last point he makes is that prose translations can at least be attempted, but poems are impossible to translate. They can at

² Schopenhauer, Arthur, “Ueber Sprache und Worte.” in Störig, H.J. (ed.): *Das Problem des Übersetzens (The Problem of Translation)*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchhandlung, 1973, 101-107, here p. 103. English rendering is of the present author.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

best be recast into new forms, a dubious undertaking according to Schopenhauer. The essay hence appears to be a polemic against the praxis of translation. It is understandable why theoreticians of the post modern university discipline of translation studies mostly ignore Schopenhauer's essay as the ravings of an eloquent but disgruntled philosopher.

Finally he returns to the point where he started, i.e. the encounter of a being with languages other than the mother tongue. Instead of focussing on equivalents, that is learning new words in the foreign language, Schopenhauer suggests that we should be acquiring concepts and ideas of the foreign language. Schopenhauer thus pleads for *erwerben* or acquisition of concepts rather than words which take you into the *Geist* i.e. the spirit of the source text and its language.

I

This brings me to the next part of my paper on Mahatma Gandhi and his take on translations. Gandhi's interest in translations stems from his desire to explain his philosophical and political thought to colonized India and also to communicate the same to the Western colonizers. He strove towards a fruitful dialogue with his own people as well as with the Other, i.e. the Western civilization and translations were a means to this end. I need not reiterate the importance Gandhi attached to 'means' vis-a-vis the 'end'. This is well known and well documented. Gandhi developed certain concepts that were intrinsic to his philosophy of life and living. He realised that the translation of these concepts into other languages was a tricky affair as equivalents are often inaccurate and inadequate and Gandhi being Gandhi, he could not accept any dilution of his convictions.

Gandhi knew Gujarati (his mother tongue), Hindi and English. He also tried to learn Tamil, Telegu, Urdu and Bangla in order to connect with the Indian masses but he never really mastered these languages. On the day he was assassinated, he had taken lessons in Bangla.⁵ Gandhi took a great deal of interest in the translation of his writings and whenever he was sent to jail, he made the most of his time in the prison by writing and translating. His forays into translation started early during his work in South Africa as a barrister, when he translated English legal documents into Gujarati for his clients and also for mobilising the Indian community in Johannesburg against some laws that were discriminatory in nature, specifically for the Indian-Gujarati community settled there. Gandhi translated John Ruskin's *Unto This Last*, some works of Tolstoy (*What is Art?* and *Letter to a Hindoo*) and Plato's *Apology* into Gujarati for the Gujarati section of his newspaper *Indian Opinion* that he brought out in South Africa from 1903 to 1915. He also translated *Bhagavad Gita* into Gujarati. Some translations were from also from Gujarati into English. E.g. he translated his book *Hind Swaraj* into English. Gandhi's translations from Gujarati into English and from English into Gujarati enabled him to reach out to his countrymen as well as to communicate his concepts to the Western

⁵ More in Suhrod T, "Reading Gandhiji in Two Tongues." *Summerhill. IAS Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1-2, (2008);10-17.

colonizers in the language they knew.

This is reflected in the choice of texts for translation. Plato's *Apology* e.g. is translated because Socrates' decision to drink the cup of poison instead of escaping from the prison quietly, as his friends and well wishers suggested, dovetails closely with Gandhi's idea of truth and resistance. Truth, we all know, is a key word in the conceptual world of Gandhi. Socrates is for Gandhi a martyr to the cause of the sacred truth. Socrates was accordingly for Gandhi a "soldier of truth". Gandhi's celebrated autobiographical work *The Story of my Experiments with Truth* (1927) emphasises the scientific nature of his experiments with truth. In fact truth is often written with a capital "T" in his works. The resistance Socrates offers to his detractors is for Gandhi nothing short of *satyagraha*. Similarly Ruskin's *Unto This Last* "brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation" in Gandhi's life. "I believe that I discovered some of my deepest convictions reflected in this great book of Ruskin, and that is why it so captured me and transformed my life", wrote Gandhi in his autobiography.⁶ In Gujarati Gandhi gave it his own title *Sarvodaya* (the welfare of all), hardly an equivalent of the English title that draws on biblical references.

II

As an example of the problematic of equivalents I take Gandhi's philosophical concept Satyagraha that he also developed as a political means to an end. Again the emphasis is on *Sat* i.e. truth. *Satyagraha* was to become Gandhi's way of life, his *Weltanschauung* that he practiced till the last moments of his life. This concept was born when the young Gandhi was still struggling to develop a novel method of protest in South Africa. Together the composite Sanskrit word *sat + agraha* refers to a polite insistence that truth and justice must prevail under all circumstances, even at the cost of suffering of the Self. Satyagraha is a form of resistance that uses the 'force of truth' or as Gandhi wrote in *Hind Swaraj* (1908) "soul force" rather than "body force".⁷ It was first rendered as "passive resistance" by the English newspapers in South Africa and this term is also used in the English translation of *Hind Swaraj*. Initially Gandhi did not pay much heed to this translation but gradually he realised the negativity that "passive resistance" was communicating, for it gave the impression that Satyagraha was a weapon of the weak, the poor and numerically few i.e. a minority.

This was indeed the opposite of Gandhi's conceptualisation of Satyagraha as a powerful method of resistance, superior to all violent means of protest. Gandhi was convinced: "Without drawing a drop of blood it produces far-reaching results."⁸ Later on in British newspapers Satyagraha was sometimes rendered as "civil disobedience" or literally as "fidelity to truth" (*The Times*). Gandhi sometimes used the term "love force" in English but all in all he was now conscious of the problems related with approximations in

⁶ Gandhi M.K., *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, trans. from Gujarati by Mahadev Desai, Delhi, Adarsh books, 2014; p 261.

⁷ Gandhi M.K., *Hind Swaraj*, Delhi, Rajpal, 2015, p. 64.

⁸ Ibid. p .67

translations and their consequences. He realised the constraints of transfer of a concept from one language to another. An exact equivalent to Satyagraha in English was lacking, in fact there could not be an equivalent as Gandhi was to quote Schopenhauer “thinking” in his own spiritual and philosophical tradition. Finally he circumvented the search for an English equivalent by using the original term as such in later texts written in English.

Similarly Gandhi could not find an English equivalent for his concept of *Swaraj*. Home Rule, Self Rule and Independence were suggested and also in use in the English print media but Gandhi could sense a lack. *Swaraj* for him was not so much about transfer of political power from British rulers to Indians but it meant a whole “way” of governance, rooted in the Indian spiritual traditions. No wonder, after independence of India from the British, Gandhi gave a call for a real *Swaraj*. His book *Hind Swaraj* rendered in English bears the original title without any attempt towards translation. According to Tridip Suhrud in his article “Reading Gandhiji in Two Tongues”:

“He [Gandhi] faced this difficulty while translating the *Hind Swaraj* into English. He translated the title as Indian Home Rule. It was a poor substitute for *Swaraj*. In fact, in the book he had argued against the desire to have mere Home Rule. Throughout the translation he stayed with the term *Swaraj* in English. The fact that independence, freedom and home rule were not *Swaraj* for him is also borne out by the fact that after India became independent in 1947 Gandhiji called upon the people of India to strive towards real *Swaraj* and advised the Indian National Congress to strive for *Swaraj*.”⁹

The concept of Satyagraha comes up again in the context of another term *Itihas*. Gandhi insisted that *Itihas* is not History in English. He wrote an account of Satyagraha in South Africa giving it the Gujarati title *Dakshin Africa Na Satyagraha No Itihas*. Its English equivalent would have been: A History of Satyagraha in South Africa. In the translation carried out by Govindji Desai and approved by Gandhi, the title was rendered as “Satyagraha in South Africa” eliminating the word *Itihas*. In other words Gandhi rejected “history” as an equivalent of ‘itihas’. History was for Gandhi an essentially Western concept, a linear chronology of wars and rulers. History in the Western sense narrates the story of wars and not peace. I quote Gandhi in *Hind Swaraj*: “History, then is a record of an interruption of the course of nature. Soul-force (Satyagraha), being natural, is not noted in history.”¹⁰

Interestingly some English translations by Gandhi himself also turned out to be inadequate. The concept of *daya* was rendered in English as “pity” (*Hind Swaraj*) and this created an embarrassing confusion in some other related concepts as well. Let me explain. Gandhi coined in the 30ies anew term for the *Shudras/Achuts*, the lowest in the hierarchy of caste system that was subjected to centuries of discrimination and

⁹ Suhrud T., “Reading Gandhiji in Two Tongues.” *Summerhill. IAS Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1-2, (2008), p. 16.

¹⁰ Gandhi M.K.: *Hind Swaraj*, Delhi, Rajpal, 2015; p. 64

humiliation. Gandhi's new nomenclature was *Harijan* (nearest English Equivalent: Children of God). His good intentions however backfired. This euphemism, parental and patronizing, was considered extremely provocative by the community that it was supposed to help out of stigmatisation. Gandhi was translating his conceptual world of pity, truth, justice and spirituality within the same language. His conceptual world of pity / love was, as I said, rejected outright by the community itself which could not relate with what it considered a condescending construct of its misery. Pity cannot be a substitute for social justice.

The English word 'love' is not an equivalent of *daya*. *Achut* translated into *Harijan* simply did not work. In fact its impact was counterproductive. Later on the community took to Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar's term *Dalit* (in English: The crushed) and this term has been widely accepted all over, in Indian languages as well as in English and also in other languages as such. This example is a translation at a different level, within the same language. Some may object that this is not really a translation and one can debate this. Translation is a term used for many transfers e.g. a novel is translated into a film; an artist or a designer translates his ideas into a painting or a chair. Goethe translated Sufi ideas into his own poetry after reading a German translation of the *Divan* of the Persian Sufi poet Hafis. In the classical European tradition the term 'translation' was used for transfer of ideas into a text.

I return to and end with Schopenhauer. He maintained that in different languages one "thinks" differently. But then Schopenhauer lived in Europe where states were mostly monolingual and their languages defined them. The last example I have quoted of *Harijan* vs *Dalit* shows that even in linguistically and culturally related languages people can sometimes think differently, for their conceptual worlds are different.

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Naxalism in Odisha: Influence of Naxalite Movement on the Tribals of Kandhamal

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the tribal perspective of the Naxalite Movement in Kandhamal district of Odisha. Naxalite insurgency started decades ago, which affected the nation in a disturbing manner and continues to do so till this day. The tribal belts of Odisha are the most agitated regions due to the clash of interest between the government and the purposes of this movement. The residing tribals in these areas directly and indirectly are constantly linked to the movement in any and every violent event that takes place here. However, on each occasion the damages are continuously borne by these tribals. This paper aims to present information collected from the tribal respondents through interviews. Naxalite movement according to the tribals and how has the movement affected these tribals, being the inhabitants of the Red Corridor. Outlook of tribals towards Naxalite movement is the crux of this study and to provide a clearer picture of the rural population; whether they support the movement or the efforts of government in the development; damages or reparations.

Naxalism or Naxalite insurgency is a generic name given to one of the persistent conflicts between the government of India and the rural or tribal population that claims to fight for its rights on the basis of a sort of Marxist understanding. The primary objective of this paper is to represent the outlook of the tribals towards the ongoing Naxalite Movement in Kandhamal district of Odisha. Kandhamal consists of maximum tribal population which is affected by left-wing extremism or the Red Corridor, a region in the east of India that experiences considerable Naxalite-Maoist insurgency. The villages of Kandhamal are backward in aspects referring to illiteracy, poverty and overpopulation. Transportation facilities are minimum, as the area is full of hilly ranges and ghat roads, one of the suitable reasons for the Naxalites to operate and many of the comrades are supposed to be natives of these villages.

As the study focuses on the tribal standpoint on the Naxalite movement, this paper aims to interpret information collected first-hand from tribal respondents through interviews conducted in nine villages of Kandhamal. These villages are, Daringbadi, Dasingbadi, Brahmunigaon, Tiangia, Tikabali, Dighi, Raikia, Bandabaju and Lokebadi.

The original 'naxals' are by now history, where, the leaders, the organizers, the backbone and the continuity of the movement used to be the revolutionary intellectuals. The

Naxalites take their name from the incident that took place at Naxalbari in May, 1967 as a clash between the police force and a group of armed peasants in an obscure corner of West Bengal. In subsequent years it became a vision for all those challenging the might of the Indian state and claiming a Marxist ideological basis for it. "Naxalism" today is a challenging problem in most of the tribal areas particularly in the state of Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal. The state governments have enacted several laws to empower themselves to combat Naxals (Dixit 2010:22). The West Bengal Government enacted the West Bengal (Prevention of Violent Activities) Act 1970 to arm itself to repress the uprising. No particular act has been enacted so far specifically to counter the Naxal Movement, but various 'anti-terror' acts have been used to curb Naxal violence and too often, to target sympathizers by stamping them as Naxalites.

In this paper we wish to examine the Naxalite movement in Odisha from the perspective of a social movement. The social conditions pressed for a change, the Naxalite movement became the manifestation of the desire to change. For the purpose of this paper we shall take recourse to the now well-established four-stage understanding of social movements (De la Porta & Diani, 2006; Macionis, 2001; Hopper, 1950; Miller, 1999):

- *Emergence*: identifiable variously by a social ferment, expressions of discontent and unhappiness over a specific policy or social condition
- *Coalescence*: characterised by a more identifiable sense of discontent, identification of certain agent that is responsible for creating the conditions which people dislike, and the identification that the discontent is socially rooted, widespread enough. It becomes more organised and develops a strategic outlook.
- *Bureaucratization*: when the movement acquires a trained and specialised set of individuals that can take care of the fundamentals of the movement including filling the gaps when common enthusiasm inevitably decreases. A movement that fails to bureaucratise stands a higher chance of dissolving out.
- *Decline*: This is the most complex stage in which the decline can be an indicator of either the success or the failure of the movement, its co-optation or repression by those it seeks to change.

History of Naxalite Movement in Odisha

May 1967, is taken to be the birth of the Naxalite movement. By November 1967, comrades from Odisha, along with Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, and West Bengal combined, and set up the All India Coordination Committee of Revolutionaries (AICCR) within the CPI (M).¹

Soon, a peasant movement in the Gunpur Sub-division of the then undivided Koraput

¹ Hindustan Times (Sunday, 19 Oct 2014). Retrieved from - <http://www.hindustantimes.com/news-feed/nm2/history-of-naxalism/article1-6545.aspx> Accessed on - August 15, 2014

district, under the banner of the Communist Party of India (CPI) indicated the beginning of Naxalism in Odisha. The northern region, sharing a border with Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, and the southern region neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, with a large tribal population, came under the influence of Naxalism.

After Mazumdar's death in 1972, there were many twists and turns in the course of the movement, as the party split. Due to the revolutionary leadership and charismatic appeal of Nagbhushan Pattnaik, the Naxalite Movement got recognition in Odisha. Since then, the Naxalite movement has been dynamic and continues to be, posing a serious challenge to the authorities of the state and creating a discourse of emancipation in the locality.

Present Situation of Odisha Naxalism

Till 1997, the Naxals did not target any attack on the State Government. It was limited to the protest movement on different problems of the tribal people. In December 1998, the Naxals made their first attack in Malliguda and Janbai where two policemen died and arms and ammunitions were looted (Dash, 2006: 36). Another incident in the same year befell when the Odisha Police informed the Andhra Pradesh Police about four Naxal women who were hiding in Gata village of Rayagada district and as a result of which the Andhra Police attacked and killed them. Thereafter, 13 Naxals were killed in the same district.

From 1998 to 2001, the Naxals were involved in loot and violence in Gajapati district. In 2000, the *Lok Guerilla Senawas* set up and activities were intensified in Gajapati district. In March 2001, two persons died and in August, five policemen died due to attack on Kalimela and Mottu Police Station in Malkangiri district. Arms and ammunitions were looted from both Police Stations. In July 2003, due to landmine explosion, 10 policemen died in Malkangiri district (ibid). These incidents indicated the severely provoked Naxals and their vigorous start of the movement in the Southern districts of Odisha.

Naxal activities began in the Odisha-Jharkhand border area in April 2003, when Naxalites of the MMC (Maoist Communist Centre) looted approximately 550kgs of explosives in the Sundargarh district of Odisha and sneaked into the Saranda forests in West Singhbhum district of Jharkhand. Later, on 20th April of the same year 3 houses were set on fire in Karnapada village of Jharkhand, 2.5kms away from Odisha border.

On 24th of October 2016, *The Hindu* newspaper reported that 24 members of the banned CPI (Maoist) were killed in an encounter with the combined team of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha police force near Jantri in Malkangiri district of Odisha, a few kilometres away from the border with Andhra Pradesh. Some high-ranking Maoist leaders, including Uday and Chalapati who carried huge bounties on their heads were suspected to be killed in the encounter. In the same year (2016), a local newspaper also reported in later November that the naxals have made an effort to push back to mainstream politics through Panchayat election to be held in 2017, by making threats to kill anyone who voted in the upcoming elections in Malkangiri

These incidents were just some of the manifestations of the Naxalite movement in Odisha. The state, being one of the poorer states in India is very rich with natural resources. It has some of the largest deposits of good quality bauxite. On the one side the state has witnessed massive industrialization, on the other there is a crisis in the tribal areas. Some of them are a part of this struggle and some are the victims of this movement.

Dilemma of the Tribals

It is not clear to what extent the entire rural and tribal population supports the movement or the efforts of the government for development. Kannabiran, Volga & Kannabiran (2005:1311) state that, if one were to argue that there are costs that must be paid in the struggle for the betterment of the human condition, the costs that dalits and tribals bear is disproportionate to any improvement in their condition. In the Tribal Agency of Andhra Pradesh, it is the tribals who bear the cost of state violence and repression, irrespective of whether or not they believe in the goals of the Naxalite movement. Then there are some who are killed by Naxalites for being a part of the 'ruling classes'. On the other hand, the government oversees the position in which the tribals are caught up in and instead labels them only from the standpoint of their place of residence or nativity where they are used as counters in politics.

Eynde (2001:11) characterizes several reasons for why the Naxalite conflict provides an ideal testing ground for the theoretical arguments set out in the theoretical framework. First, information is important in this conflict. Maoists and the Government clearly compete for civilian collaboration. While certain officials deny the existence of informers (possibly in an attempt to protect civilians from reprisals), the Government openly offers substantial rewards for tip-offs that lead to the death or arrest of Maoists. Certain state governments (possibly with the support of the Centre) are thought to have encouraged civilians to join militant groups that help the police to collect information and assist them in operations. Finally, the state governments have also rolled out several programmes to encourage low ranking Maoists to surrender and provide information. In line with the theoretical framework, the Naxalite groups react to these attempts to elicit collaboration (or desertion) by explicitly threatening to kill or destroy the property of police informers:

“The CPI-Maoist reportedly issued a press release at Chintapalli village in the Visakhapatnam District, blaming the Police for turning the Girijans (local tribals) into informers by spending huge amounts of money and warned that the properties acquired by the surrendered Maoists, after taking up the job of Home Guard, would be destroyed [...]” (SATP Timelines, Andhra Pradesh, 2007)

Another detection made by researchers was a report by a group of intellectuals and activists who went as part of an independent fact finding mission to Dantewara district in Chhattisgarh. Sagar (2006:3177) devised a writing in *The Hindu*, where E. A. S. Sarma, former secretary to the government of India, who was also part of the same fact finding team to Chhattisgarh mentioned earlier says: During the last two decades, the Maoists

gained a mass base among the Adivasis by taking up cudgels on their behalf against corrupt government functionaries, exploitative traders, and moneylenders. The trouble began for the Maoists when they started dismantling the traditional political structures of the Adivasis at the village level and began tinkering with landownership. Those that did not belong to their “sanghams” in the villages were considered anti-Maoist and dealt with firmly, sometimes brutally. The headmen of the villages and others intimidated by the Maoists, along with the non-tribals, started grouping together and working out ways to sabotage the Maoists’ efforts.

In connection to the exploitation of the Adivasis in Andhra Pradesh, Sarma (2006:1435) states that, the Adivasis of AP are facing an additional threat. Almost four decades ago, looking for an opportunity to “wage war” against the “evils of the established state”, the Naxalites from West Bengal shifted their operations to the tribal tracts of Srikakulam, the northernmost district of the state. The continuing exploitation of the Adivasis in that district and the utter indifference of the state agencies to their problems offered an excellent opportunity to the Naxals, who readily took up their cause and mounted aggression against the state. Any sensible government would have promptly responded to the impending crisis and addressed the cause, rather than the effect, of Naxal violence. Unfortunately, the state’s response was to treat the whole matter as a routine “law and order” problem. As far as the Adivasis are concerned, the government was never serious about evicting encroachers from their lands or prohibiting middlemen and moneylenders from their hamlets. If they were to look to the extremists for help, they would be branded as having leanings towards the “Naxals”. Then, they would be subject to the wrath of the police. On the other hand, if they were to turn to the government for protection and help, they would be suspected by the extremists to be police “informants”.

In a war, of the naxals against the government, the most fatalities that are faced is by the tribals who are in the middle. These are the ones who are stuck in a difficult position trying hard to make their conditions improve whether from Naxalite movement or from government. Either ways they are subject to suffer loses. The naxals would not spare them if government’s side is chosen and if they choose to support the movement, the wait for success is long-term with uncertain returns.

Theoretical Understanding

The study grasps its construction with the sociological theories which provide an understandable depiction of social movement, the product of repression, consciousness, struggle and conflict. Hence, various theoretical interrogations have been preferred to transmit the study.

Social movements are generally analysed within the framework of collective behaviour [(Blumer, 1957; Smelser, 1962) cf. Judge, 1992:2]. Judge (1992:2) points out that “most of the definitions of social movements include ‘change’ as an essential ingredient. But there are differences of opinion about the nature of change intended and the change actually brought about. However, there seems to be a consensus on the view that a social

movement is directed towards changing the present state of affairs in the social order". The tradition of analysing social movements in sociology is enveloped in the study of the processes of social change.

The plausible situation is 'Entfremdung', Marx's another term to indicate Alienation. "It is the activity or process by which someone becomes a stranger to himself (Aron, 1965:147&148). Another credible explanation for social change can be the process of mobilization. Mukherji (1977:39) points out that many kinds of mobilizations of groups and collectivities take place, but they represent a wide variety of social phenomena. Mobilisations generally refer to situations where an affected group is brought into action. "It is the process whereby people are prepared for active service for a cause which they see as consonant with their own interests . . . Mobilisation is in this sense the opposite of apathy or inaction" [(Wilson 1973 : 89)cf. Mukherji, 1977:39].

The Communist Manifesto is a propaganda pamphlet in which Marx and Engels presented some of their scientific ideas in collective form. Its central theme is the 'class struggle'. All history is the history of class struggle: free men and slaves, patricians and plebeians, barons and serfs, master artisans and journeymen – in short, oppressors and oppressed – have been in constant opposition to one another and have carried on an unceasing struggle, at times secret, at times open, which has always ended with a revolutionary transformation of the whole society or with the mutual destruction of the warring classes. Human history is characterized by the struggle of human groups which will be called social classes, whose definition remains for a moment ambiguous, but which are characterized in the first place by an antagonism between oppressors and oppressed and in the second place by a tendency towards a polarization into two blocs, and only two (Aron, 1965:116).

The existence of classes is connected only with certain historical phases in the development of production, the class struggle leads inevitably to the dictatorship of the proletariat, and this dictatorship is, in turn, merely a transitional stage in the abolition of all classes, in the realization of the classless society. Therefore, Marxian analogy is highly influential, sufficing a derivation with an adequate justification to the study, providing and enabling logical understanding for social change and movement in the society as a form of necessary measure.

Socio-economic background of the area

The tribals of this area belong to "Kandha" tribe and the chief language spoken in this community is "Kui". "Kui" is used only for verbal communication among the tribe but has no script of its own, hence, 'Odia' script is used for writing purposes, being the regional language of Odisha.

In this study, the total respondents interviewed were eighty in number out of which 41 male and 39 female respondents were interviewed (**Table - 1**). The respondents chosen, were of age 18 years and above in order to understand the cause of the research and aptly provide relevant information. There is a higher share of frequencies in the age range 28 –

37years, 18 – 27years and 38 – 47years (**Table – 2**). These groups consisted of members who were residents of the villages in Kandhamal. These tribals provided relevant information associated with the study and were mostly found gathered in groups where they discussed various issues of the village in the evenings, after work. A clearer understanding would be possible with the help of the following tables.

Table - 1: Sex Distribution of Respondents

SEX	FREQUENCY
Males	41 (51.25)
Females	39 (48.75)
TOTAL	80 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey

Table – 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

AGE RANGE	FREQUENCY
18 – 27	17 (21.25)
28 – 37	23 (28.75)
38 – 47	17 (21.25)
48 – 57	11 (13.75)
58 – 67	9 (11.25)
68 – 77	3 (3.75)
TOTAL	80 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey

In the population studied, there were 70 Christians and 10 Hindus (**Table – 3**). In this primarily tribal area, there were only a few households belonging to General category. According to Census 2011², the total number of households in Kandhamal are 1, 72,022 and only Rural households comprise of 1, 55,256 (100%), out of which number of Schedule Tribe Households consist of 85,464 (55.04%), Schedule Caste Households with 25,181 (16.21%) and Literates with 44,611 (28.73%). Under the category of Literates lie, Institutions (both public and private), Government Institutions, Industrial Institutions.

² Source – Census of India 2011, Odisha: District Census Handbook, Kandhamal (Retrieved from - www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/dchb/2121_PART_B_DCHB_KANDHAMAL.pdf) Accessed on – July 21, 2017

The Kandhas³ are nature-worshippers and believe in a sacred place they call 'PenuBasa'; the earth is worshipped as a goddess and is called 'DharniPenu'. In the course of time, a majority of the Kandhas adopted Hinduism as most of its practices diffused well with tribal culture. In the old times, the Kandhas are known to have practiced human sacrifice or 'meriah' to appease their gods when the ritual was first discovered by the British in 1835. The tribals still continued these ritual practices even after constant opposition from British government, after which force had to be used in 1920. It is around the same time when missionaries entered Kandhamal and established schools and churches. Many tribals converted to Christianity with the missionary influence and have been practicing the religion ever since. As a result, there are mainly two religions practiced in the area of study i.e., Hindus and Christians.

In the 2011 Census⁴ report, it is evident that the Hindu population is comparatively higher than any other religion practiced in the area of study. Christian population is less than half of Hindus in Kandhamal district. But in this study, since the villages visited were randomly selected, there were higher number of Christian respondents easily found and who were further more accommodating to be interviewed. Therefore, the frequencies of Christian respondents is found to be higher than Hindus.

Table – 3: Religious Distribution of Respondents

RELIGION	FREQUENCY
Christianity	70 (87.50)
Hinduism	10 (12.50)
TOTAL	80 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey

Marriage takes place at early age in this region. 71 out of 80 respondents of our study were married. 32 out of the 80 respondents were unschooled and 21 had completed higher secondary education, 6 were under-graduates and just one had completed post-graduation. There are very few schools in these villages and in addition poverty which leads to discouragement of family members who want their children to join in household work and daily wage labour cultivating the fields. The following tables (**Tables – 4 & 5**) provides an easy understanding of the above mentioned data.

³ Source – Pandita, Rahul. (August 17, 2016). 8 Years After Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati's Killing, Kandhamal Is Still A Ticking Time Bomb, Firstpost. (Retrieved from - <http://www.firstpost.com/long-reads/8-years-after-swami-laxmanananda-saraswatis-killing-kandhamal-is-still-a-ticking-time-bomb-2-3274766.html>)

Accessed on – July 21, 2017

⁴ Source – Census of India 2011, Odisha: District Census Handbook, Kandhamal (Retrieved from - www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/dchb/2121_PART_B_DCHB_KANDHAMAL.pdf)

Accessed on – July 21, 2017

Table – 4: Marital Status of Respondents

MARITAL STATUS	FREQUENCY
Married	71 (88.75)
Single	6 (7.50)
Divorced	2 (2.50)
Widowed	1 (1.25)
TOTAL	80 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey

Table – 5: Educational Qualification of Respondents

EDUCATION	FREQUENCY
Unschoolcd	32 (40.00)
Primary	12 (15.00)
Middle	8 (10.00)
Higher Secondary	21 (26.25)
Undergraduate	6 (7.50)
Post-graduate	1 (1.25)
TOTAL	80 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey

The data in **Table – 6** shows 80 respondents belonged to 80 families that between them had a total of 330 members. 116 were students, 59 unemployed, 55 housewives, 36 farming, 36 wage labourer, 8 teaching, 7 self-employed, 5 government sector job, 5 private sector job and 3 clergymen. The students were economically dependent on the family. The clergymen serve as pastors in the local churches. Some of the housewives also work outside as daily wage labourers to contribute to household expenses. The other family members of the household are either farmers or labourers which is found in most of the households and other than the primary occupation, several of them in the village are skilled in farming.

Table – 6: Occupation of Family Members

OCCUPATION	FREQUENCY
Student	116 (35.16)
Unemployed	59 (17.87)
Housewife	55 (16.68)
Farming	36 (10.90)
Labourer	36 (10.90)
Teaching	8 (2.44)
Self-employed	7 (2.12)
Government sector	5 (1.51)
Private sector	5 (1.51)
Clergyman	3 (0.90)
TOTAL	330 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey

More than half of the households studied were unable to reach an income of 50,000 in a year and only some are able to earn 1, 00,000 annually. The members of these households are basically landless labourers who work for daily wages. As reported by the respondents, it is difficult for them even to accommodate two meals in a day. Hence, it can be implicitly understood that the area has very few job opportunities. Other frequencies found in the table are in the lower ranges who, in one way or another make a modest living.

Table – 7: Annual Household Income

ANNUAL INCOME	FREQUENCY
1 – 50,000	45 (56.25)
50,001 – 1,00,000	15 (18.75)
1,00,001 – 1,50,000	6 (7.50)
1,50,001 – 2,00,000	4 (5.00)
2,00,001 – 2,50,000	2 (2.50)
2,50,001 – 3,00,000	1 (1.25)
3,00,001 – 3,50,000	2 (2.50)

ANNUAL INCOME	FREQUENCY
3,50,001 – 4,00,000	1 (1.25)
4,00,001 – 4,50,000	0 (00)
4,50,001 – 5,00,000	1 (1.25)
Data Unavailable	3 (3.75)
TOTAL	80 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey

Notion of Naxalism and Effect of Violence

With reference to the Naxalite movement, the tribals were interviewed on the notion they had about Naxalism as a concept. A simpler approach was attempted for the tribals by asking questions like, who the Naxalites or Maoists are, and Naxalite involvement in the violence that have taken place in these villages.

We found that 92.5% of the total respondents did not know what the concept of Naxalism or Maoism was, and 4 out of 80, i.e. 5%, a very scarce number of tribals actually comprehend to the questions related to Naxalite movement.

Table – 8: Understanding of the Concept

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY
Yes	4 (5.00)
No	74 (92.50)
Data Unavailable	2 (2.50)
TOTAL	80 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey

On the other hand, when asked about who Naxalites were, there were various explanations of their own which was interpreted by these tribals. 23.75% say that the Naxalites “Fight for Prosperity and Defend the Villagers”, 22.5% have an opinion that they “Help the Needy Villagers” and 15% look up to the Naxals as “Punishers of Wrongdoers” and “Help Restore Peace and Harmony”. Out of the over-all, three respondents said that the Naxals are “Members of CPI (Communist Party of India)”. There were another 28 respondents who did not answer on this particular aspect, as some had trust issues and some were afraid that they might be interrogated.

Table – 9: Who are Naxalites?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY
Fight for prosperity and defend villagers	19 (23.75)
Help the needy villagers	18 (22.50)
Punish offenders	7 (8.75)
Help restore peace and harmony	5 (6.25)
Members of CPI (Communist Party of India)	3 (3.75)
No Response	28 (35.00)
TOTAL	80 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey

From the data available, it is quite evident that most of the tribal population possess positive remarks about the Naxalites. Although a slight number of tribals did not speak openly about the matter, neither did they pose negative remarks. The silent attitude directs into various possibilities, such as, the endangerment to life or the lives of their families, due to a gap in trust towards an outsider of the community or suspicion of whether there is some kind of involvement of the authorities or spy working for police.

In 2008, there was a Communal Riot between Hindu and Christian communities, which took place as a result of an incident involving the killing of a popular Hindu, priest named Swami Lakshmanananda Saraswati. It was supposed that Naxalite forces killed the priest and the augmentation of the riot became severe after the assassination took place. Many Christian houses were devastated, burned to ashes and the villagers had to run away to take shelter in the top hills to save their lives. With reference to the riot, few questions were framed to review the clearer picture of the Naxalite involvement of the whole matter. More than 60% of the respondents had encountered serious damage in their households and livestock. As most of the tribals are either farmers or wage labourers, they found it very difficult to survive without a job and were economically starving. Although, provisions were made by the government but it was not satisfactory as several of them said, but 43% admitted to government aid. Camps were opened for shelter and food supplies along with protection of armed forces from government, along with it, some were provided with compensation for damages. On the other hand, few confessed that they were provided help by the Naxalites who had extended a helping hand during a time like that.

Table – 10: Respondents who Faced Damages

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY
Yes	
• House burnt	6 (7.50)
• House broken	10 (12.50)
• Assets taken away	9 (11.25)
• Assets damaged	21 (26.25)
No	34 (42.50)
TOTAL	80 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey

Outlook towards Naxalites and Tribal-Naxal Relationship

The existent nature of the tribals towards the Naxalites and the movement is the crucial segment in this study which would also provide transparency about the Tribal-Naxal relationship. The Naxalites claim that they are on a movement. In this context, 66.25% agreed on the statement and claim that they realise the cause of the movement. With respect to their claim, the tribals gave the explanation that the movement would bring development in the rural areas and job opportunities may come up for the unemployed. They understand that the fight is against the government which has provided minimal attention so far, for these obscure areas, which is a fair reason for the tribals to rest their hopes on this movement.

Table – 11: Present Existence of the Movement

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY
Yes	53 (66.25)
No	10 (12.50)
No Response	17 (21.25)
TOTAL	80 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey

Table – 12: Inclination towards the Movement

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY
Yes	
• Improvement of Rural Areas	8 (10.00)
No	
• Uninterested and Disassociated Outlook	10 (12.50)
• Halt in Violent Incidents	6 (7.50)
No Response	56 (70.00)
TOTAL	80 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey

The others who showed a disassociated outlook towards the movement are were the ones who have a neutral stance on the issue and few also posited that the violent ways of the Naxalites must be negated, rather a different approach should be adopted by the Naxals which would maintain harmony and not bloodshed.

Findings and Conclusion

Naxalite insurgency is an ongoing social movement in the country since decades and poses the biggest threat to the nation. The movement is actively making headway in the state of Odisha which competently excelled in framing a problem in the rural areas. The tribal patches are the supposedly affected regions due to the clash of interest between the government and the aims of this movement. The objectives were outlined with respect to the influence on these tribal masses. Theoretical framework was delineated for the assessment of perceptions and provides denotation to the concepts. To understand the cause and effect of the movement, contributions of Karl Marx i.e. Alienation and Class Struggle were associated. The research confronted abrupt limitations which was inevitable in any research work obstructing the vision of achieving the aims and objectives of the study. The concepts were discussed maintaining awareness of the application in this study conducted in contemporary state of affairs. Their depiction nevertheless restores the clarity of prominence in this paper.

Information gathered from the tribals in the research represents the inferences of the population studied. Socio-economic and demographic profile of the respondents was depicted, which balanced the equation between male and female respondents. Age distribution was again evenly composed for valid responses. Christians out-numbered Hindus in religious distribution, as the area is concentrated with majority of Christian population. Education level is poor due to which employment opportunities are less and maximum involvement in farming is observed with which the respondents are content. This is another factor for early marriages and more number of offspring leading to

scarcity of fulfilling the average needs of household, as the household size was detected more than five members in higher ranges. Greater frequencies were also witnessed in the category of unschooled. It was realised that number of unemployment is elevated and respondents mostly have acquired odd jobs like daily wage labourers or farming. A small amount of adequate jobs are found and maximum household is frequently seen with income below 50,000 per annum.

The respondents are barely clear about the concept of Naxalism, but almost negligible have spoken negatively, rather maximum of the responses are positive. And none of the respondents have disclosed the involvement of Naxalites in the 2008 riot. During the scenario more than half of the respondents have suffered damages out of which 11 respondents have not received government aid for recuperating from the damages. There are still sufficient number of villagers who have not emotionally recovered and are terrified of the past events.

The attitude towards the Naxalite movement is not observed as a negative approach from the respondents, although they have not openly discussed on the matter. Only 8 respondents who actually support the Naxals have admitted inclination towards the movement and maximum did not respond to the question openly. More than half percentage of the respondents agreed on the statement that the Naxalite movement is a struggle against the government. Among the tribals who have answered to the question, half of them think the movement will sustain and the other half think it will not. Speaking of the success, only 9 respondents are positive and maximum are confused. Out of the respondents eight have said that they have encountered the Naxalites in the group meetings in the village, which is again a quite risky affair to admit.

Table – 13: Success of the Movement

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY
Yes	9 (11.25)
No	3 (3.75)
Lack of Knowledge	68 (85.00)
TOTAL	80 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey

Naxalite movement has been growing spontaneously in the tribal belts of the country which is a challenging problem in the contemporary days. It is still uncertain about the expiration of the movement, as the Naxalites have been adopting various strategies to sustain the ongoing unrest. The tribals are standing in the middle ground who are affected in this battle between the government and Naxalites. As the study concentrated solely on the outlook of the tribals, it is evident that the tribals are the real sufferers in this war and from time to time witness grave reparations whenever the violent situation demands.

Table – 14: Interaction with Naxalites

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY
In Group Meetings	8 (10.00)
No Interaction	66 (82.50)
No Response	6 (7.50)
TOTAL	80 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey

The continuity of the movement paves way for researchers to investigate and explore further, understanding about the condition in the current times and in future days to come. Therefore, as long as advanced research is attempted the awareness of the state of affairs would intensify.

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Muslim Identity and its Constraints

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Abstract

The question of “identity” has now become defining research focus of contemporary scholarship both in India and abroad. It is largely because of the strong political articulation of certain religious, linguistic, caste and gender identities that dramatically altered the terms of public discourse in post-Independent India. It is in this background, a conceptual understanding with practical nuances of ‘Muslim identity’ is strongly needed. It becomes more relevant when we see that a certain section of Muslims express the apprehension of losing their existential relevance with the dominant emergence of right-wing politics in India. It is often highlighted by them that there is a serious threat to their very identity. In view of this growing perception, this paper aims to delve into the question of ‘Is there a threat to Muslim Identity in India?’ In the process, this paper also looked into multiple other questions like is there anything called Muslim Identity? Is there any threat to Muslim identity in India? If yes, what are the sources of threat?

Introduction

The question of “identity” has now become defining research focus of contemporary scholarship in almost all areas of humanities. It is largely because identity has now become more articulate, political and thus demands recognition. It is now determining the social meanings of an individual’s experience. It is in this background, a conceptual understanding with practical nuances of ‘Muslim identity’ is strongly needed. It becomes more relevant when we see that a certain section of Muslims express the apprehension of losing their existential relevance with the dominant emergence of right-wing politics in India. It is often highlighted that there is a serious threat to the very identity of Muslims in India as the culture of religious sensitivity and togetherness are badly compromised. In view of this growing perception, this paper aims to delve into the question of ‘Is there a threat to Muslim Identity in India?’ In the process, this paper also looked into multiple other questions like is there anything called Muslim Identity? Is there any threat to Muslim identity in India? If yes, what are the sources of threat?

Contextualisation of the Issues

For most of the Muslims, growing up in India with a sense of Muslim identity is not only a source of pride and joy, but also of great strengths, warmth and confidence. They do not find any conflict in their Muslim identity and being patriotic towards their own country. They have always cherished a sense of pride in themselves that they are living in a country where they are not only 14.2 per cent (Census of India, 2011) but also adding

colour to the multicultural set up of India. Historically, culturally, politically and economically, Muslims as the largest minority have contributed meaningfully in shaping and nurturing the very 'Idea of India' (Khilnani, 1999). Muslim ancestors despite maintaining their individual community identity absorbed themselves with neighbourhood culture of other communities and thus strengthened syncretic tradition of India.

But gradually, it was realised that the exclusive sense of belonging with Islam has created the perception of distance and divergence in the mind of other group of people who carry different religious identity. The very identity of 'Muslim' was problematized and subjected to brutal manipulation by the increasing dominance of right-wing forces, globally, nationally and locally. Religious polarity is deepened and the chances of dialogue between different cultures have been postponed due to the malicious generalisations about Muslims. Undoubtedly, Muslims have now been a special object of opprobrium and disproportionate hostility. Most notably and sadly, as a part of right-wing design, Muslims are now made the sole object of the process called systematic and deliberate 'Othering'.¹ They are not only alienated and made insecure but also generalised as backward, dangerous, polygamous, anti-national, terrorist, Pakistani and so on. With intent to bring accuracy, a whole range of symbols, myths, rhetoric, data, media reports, pamphlets, meetings, handbills, posters, novels, rumours, gossip, institutions and personalities were deployed to make sure that Muslims can never be a loyal citizen of India and thus they should be dealt strongly. As a result, Muslims and their religious identity, Islam has become the victim of circumstances and hostile perception.

Locating Sources of Threats

Who are to be held responsible for the growing melancholy of Muslims in India? Holding any single factors responsible would be a travesty of justice. In all probabilities, there are multiple sources which are causing pressures on the Muslims. For the convenience of clarity, I identify them as external and internal sources. All those factors that are affecting Muslims from outside are taken as external sources. The factors that are intrinsically part of the community but affecting the very identity of Muslims are taken as Internal Sources. Thus, this paper is divided into two parts. First part deals with the external sources while the second part deals with the internal sources of threat to Muslim Identity.

I

Threat To Muslim Identity: External Sources

Islamophobia, Cultural Violence and Muslim Identity

The most dangerous challenge to Muslim identity is posed from the cultivated sense of Islamophobia as a part of West's strategic design to export fear, prejudice, hatred and dislike against everything Islamic and Muslims across the world (Ali *et al*, 2011). From the past two decades, we are witnessing an explosion of cultural violence against

¹ I am using the term "othering" in the sense of classifying an individual, group or community in somebody's mind as "not one of us".

Muslims and the symbols, directly or indirectly linked with Muslims (Gallup Poll, 2016). In the process, ‘terrorism’ has lost its independent existence and transformed permanently with a label called “Islamic”. It is now widely circulated that the identity of Islam as most latest, modern and peaceful religion is nothing but farce. Here, India is no exception. We have already seen as how a cadre of religious-cum political bigots got a larger hearing on the question of inter-religious marriages in India and referred it as a part of Islamic agenda to transform India into a Hindu Rashtra through ‘Love Jihad’ (Punwani, 2014). Significantly, these illustrations are well comprehensive of an attempt to cast instant generalisations not only on inter-religious marriage but Islam as a whole; which through the course of time remain absolutely unverifiable.

Similarly, in an attempt to cast hasty generalisations, extravagant statements are made by the rightist to create disproportionate demographic anxiety among the poorly informed Indian clientele. While doing so, all norms of rational sensibility are suspended when the marginal growth of Muslim population is portrayed as minoritarian conspiracy to turn India a “Muslim Rashtra” through the repeatedly deployed clichés of *Ham Panch Aur Hamare Pachees*, *Love Jihad*, Polygamy, Conversion, Infiltration and what not; which through the course of time remain absolutely unverifiable (Alam, 2015). It becomes all the more catastrophic when the best possible means like newspapers, pamphlets, meetings, handbills, posters, myths, rumours and gossip are deployed to keep the “Muslim alarm” effectively operate in public domain. Even the social networking sites and platforms are flooded with videos and warnings instructing Hindu community about this so called demographic alarm.

While carrying this legacy, polarity is also engineered across India over the issue of ‘cow slaughter’. To serve the purpose, cows have emerged electorally ‘holy’ animal (Alam, 2017). Though, it is disproportionately senseless. On a closer look, you will find that every aspect of Muslim identity and its related symbols are problematized including personal laws, Parda system, Urdu language, Madarsas, Azaan, religious procession, festivals, Skull Cap and so on. Sadly, the problematisation of Muslim symbols is not with a purpose to address the problem but to polarise the consciousness of the people and reap electoral dividends.

Institutional Disregard

There is an institutional disregard for Muslim identity as they are not treated as equals with their fellow citizens. It can be seen on the failure of the State to address their social, educational, political and economic backwardness. It is despite the fact that the socio-political, economic and educational state of Muslims was already made public due to the empirical findings of the Sachar Committee (2006), Rangnath Mishra Committee (2010), Kundu Committee reports (2014), regular Census data, and National Sample Survey Reports. There are enough empirical support to suspend the Muslim appeasement logic like abysmally low literacy and education, poor and disproportionate representation of Muslims in governmental and private jobs from class I to class IV services, non-disbursal of bank loans, non-recognition of Muslim SC/ST, poor condition of Muslim areas, lack of

basic amenities in the Muslim dominated areas, questioning the sanctity of minority institutions like AMU, Jamia Millia Islamia and many more, discrimination in grants and aid to minority based institutions and so on. In fact, the much hyped ‘appeasement’ logic is just to perpetuate fear-psychosis among Muslims so that they may not emerge as a ‘demanding’ citizen of the country. Will India progress if its 14 per cent population remain socially, educationally and economically remain backward?

We have also noted the fact as how the State tried to rename the cities, streets, institutions, policies denoting Muslim name/symbols into Hindu name/symbols (Subramanian, 2016). The institutional violence can be noted in its systematic effort to revise and change the texts and syllabus of history and social sciences wherein the focus is to erase those references which intends to glorify Muslims and their past (ToI, 2015). The recent focus of promoting hyper nationalism through legislations and policy decisions is also a case point to understand the growing situation quite unfavourable for all but for Muslims, the most.

Physical Violence

The physical security of Muslims is still a concern. There is constant communal violence with an active/passive support of the State and its agencies to target Muslims. It can be seen in 500 communal incidences in Uttar Pradesh including Muzaffarnagar and Bijnor (Indian Express, 2017). Muslims are not able think beyond ‘physical security’ despite endemic poverty, illiteracy, poor health, rampant unemployment etc. Ironically, Muslims are forced to react on symbolic-cum- emotive issues like Triple Talaq, pork in Mosque, Love Jihad, Population Jihad so that the most relevant issues of their bread and butter are effectively sidelined.

Mediatisation of Muslims

Another important factor is the mediatisation of Muslims and their issues in a very negative sense of the term. In fact, both global and national media (print or audio-visual) is selling ‘majoritarian victimhood’ often portraying Muslims as the perpetrator of violence. Stories are cooked. News is manufactured. A priori Trial took place. Lies are hyped. Sensationalised reporting on communally sensitive incidents telecasted 24x7. In a word, objective media, fair journalists, effective reporting and transparent circulation has become the things of the past. In a completely nonsensical ways, Islam, Muslims and its symbols are stereotyped for the right wing consumers to polarise the consciousness of majority against Muslims.

Deliberate Othering of Muslims

Paradoxically, Muslims are deliberately treated as monolith group to suit their proposition of Islam as a religion encourages procreation to help the Muslims take political control of India in the forthcoming 100, 200 or 300 years. It is being carefully orchestrated by the right wing ideologues that Muslims as a part of their grand design of “Muslim India” practice polygamy, avoid family planning and breeds like rabbits, discourages women literacy, oppose Uniform Civil Code, wages *love jihad*, promote

conversion and infiltration. The logic of individual preference, caste, class and other socio-economic dynamics of population growth are smartly neglected because of the electoral compulsions and their non-suitability in terms of consolidating Hindu votes. On the contrary, polemics like Sakshi Maharaj, Yogi Adityanath (now CM of Uttar Pradesh) and Sadhvi Prachi and many other hardliners like VHP activists are given free hands to aid their classical malicious generalisations against Muslims to mobilise the majoritarian passions and that too for electoral gains alone. Is this a cost which India required to pay for governmental resurrections?

II

Threat To Muslim Identity: Internal Sources

There number of internal factors which are equally responsible for challenging the Muslim identity. Let us examine few of them.

Illusions of Muslim Monolith Identity

The monolith identity of Muslims is under stress. Politically and even otherwise, Muslims in India are approached as a single monolith community against the socially diverse character of other religious communities that are largely and deeply divided on multiple lines. The monolith generalisation of the community is often drawn from the shared faith, fundamental acts of worship, marginality and external polarity. Nevertheless, Muslim community like all other religious communities is heterogeneous and divided along cross-cutting lines of sects, sub-sects, class, caste, region, topography and languages.

In India, the sectarian divisions are strongly visible in terms of them being categorised as Shia and Sunni. The division is not only social but also there are a much nuanced differences in the principle and practices of Shia or four schools of Sunni jurisprudence (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi and Hanbali) and their sub-sects like Wahabi, Ahl-e-Hadith, Deoband, Barelvi but also the cultural pattern of each of these categories do not match with what is stated as monolith Islamic. Apart from this, there is miniscule presence of Ahmadiyahs and Sufi sects. Taking ‘class’ as a tool, Muslims could also be categorised in terms of high, middle and low income and status group with mutually exclusive interests and deprivations. The diversity among Muslims along linguistic lines could also be easily verified and so are the regional variations from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from across the countries and continents. Most significantly is the division among Muslims on the lines of caste with similar experiential positioning and hierarchical ranking. The segmentation of Muslim community could be seen in three caste location: Ashraf (high caste), Ajlaf (Shudra), Arzal (Ati-Shudra/Dalit) (Anwar, 2000; Falahi, 2006). In nutshell, if we look closely, the religious identity is of secondary importance in the socio-cultural and economic life style of these diverse groups with conspicuous lacking of uniform community sentiment as Muslim alone. There are differences on many practical and

ritualistic aspects of their faith including what ought to constitute an essential aspect of Islam and what not.

Divided Understanding of Muslim Issues

There is nothing called a uniform and consensus voice on Muslim issues including Uniform Civil Code, Triple Talaq, role of women, caste and so on. For instance, three decades after the intense communal mobilisation against Shah Bano judgment in 1985, the ghost of Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is again back with much vigour and energy to deliver not only electoral gain to right-wing political parties but also to divide the Muslim identities and their opinions. Nobody is ready to have rational arguments. On the other hand, most of us are only busy in keeping this agenda alive rather solving it. It must be noted that the opposition to UCC is based on assumptions and apprehensions about the possible anti-Muslim character of the law and that too without raising the epistemological questions as what ought to be the meaning, nature and content of the so called UCC. Rhetoric and counter rhetoric were at play to keep the issue alive without bothering about its relevance and the invisible cost.

Crisis of Leadership

No doubt, there is a crisis of effective leadership who can effectively articulate the demands of Muslims. There are multiple issues here. First, Muslims have too many leaders but no effective leader. Second, Muslims accept an imposed leader rather producing one amongst us. Third, Muslims enter into a blame game when a leader whose name is Muslim specific does not speak on Muslim issues as they cherish the wrong proposition that Muslim leader should speak on Muslim issues only as if he/she is not the leader of the country.

At the same time, certain Muslim representatives look unfavourably upon Muslim community after being elected. Sometime, the voices of Muslim representatives are silenced by pressure to conform to the existing party platform as party soldiers. The cost of having diverse opinion is either expulsion from the party or the total marginalisation within the party. As a consequence, Muslims of India feel disenfranchised in political decision-making due to the so called Muslim representatives who either “do not” or “failed to” serve as the delegate of the community in the political arena. It must be argued here is that even the proportionate Muslim representatives in the political bodies will not guarantee the effective negotiation of Muslim interest as any attempts of such kind will easily be dismissed by the establishment as communally divisive. Thus this fact lend support to the argument that in the absence of comprehensive framework, political participation of Muslims to ensure their representation in national, state and local bodies will not lead to improve the conditions of Muslims because the representation is not translating into the participation of decision-making processes. Surprisingly, even the institutions like Minority Commission, Ministry of Minority Affairs are reduced as “talking shops” without any clear competencies and are set up as empty symbols of inclusiveness and failed to protect the rights of religious minorities. Regrettably, this

should not be the case. The role of Muslim based organisations, institutions, media houses, civil society groups, activists are not properly channelized in promoting the cause of Muslims. Those who do their work with utmost sincerity are now subject of either state scrutiny, or communal labelling.

The Political Insignificance of Muslims

Most significantly, Muslims are not able to emerge as political weight in India despite the fact that in 90 of India's total 675 districts, Muslims are more than 20 per cent (Census of India, 2011).² Majority of these districts are ill famed for socio-economic and educational backwardness. Let us take the case of Muslim electorates of Seemanchal, a north-eastern region of Bihar where more than 45 per cent Muslim population spread across the four districts of Araria, Katihar, Kishanganj and Purnea. Despite giving many chief ministers to Bihar like KedarPandey and Bholu Paswan Shastri and the affiliations of political elites like M.J. Akbar, Shahnawaz Hussain and Tariq Anwar, Seemanchal is ill-famed for socio-economic and educational backwardness, poor road, rail and communication network, supplier of labour force, flood ravaged districts, absence of large and small scale industries, substantive decline in the production of jute, tea and banana, marginal urban space and so on.

Electoral relevance of the Muslims also lies in both deep and dispersed concentration of Muslim electorates in parliamentary, state and local constituencies. There are 100 Lok Sabha constituencies across the country where Muslims constitute more than 20 per cent. In the 720 of the total 4121 Assembly constituencies of India, Muslims are in decisive number. In other words, Muslim electorates are in good position to turn the fate of candidates and parties in good number of constituencies with slight swing in their voting pattern. In the present competitive political situation, this is a big reason for any political party to worry about. But they do not vote en bloc. Neither, they intend to. They are as fragmented as others are and thus the idea of a strong sense of belonging with Muslim alone loses its relevance.

Equally, Muslims are participating in the electoral process not only as a religious community but also as diverse entity. Political parties have started taking care of this phenomenon while selecting the candidates in Muslim dominant constituencies. Similar is the case seen Muslim voting a candidate exclusively belonging to their own community if the political situation is not polarised in the state election or the concerned constituency. The noteworthy instances are the intense socio-political competition among diverse Muslim groups like Surjapuri in Kishanganj, Kulhaiya in Araria, Angika and Sabjifarosh in Purnea and Shershahvadi in Katihar. It is no coincidence that competing political parties for Muslim votes have often taken note of these traditional cleavages in this region. Here, our argument is that Pasmanda Muslims are consistently working hard to successfully mobilize their subjugated political psyche into a dominant, inevitable,

² Calculated from *Census of India, 2011*.

unavoidable and irresistible political force in India.

Political Parties and Muslim Response

Unlike the past, the political parties are showing a greater willingness to reach out to Muslim voters in contemporary India. What is ironical is that majority of the political parties are approaching Muslims only as monolith voters as it suits their agenda. The voice of diversity among Muslims is deliberately unheard because of the 'cost-benefit calculation' of political parties. For instance, recognising equal diversity among Muslims would defeat the 'Hindu monolith' agenda of the right wing parties like BJP and Shiv Sena. These right wing political parties highlight anti-Muslim wedge issues-for example, Muslims' alleged slaughter of cows, love jihad, population jihad, the renaming of a town with a Muslim origin name with an "authentic Indian" (i.e., Hindu) name, taking a Hindu procession route through a Muslim neighbourhood, or disputing the status of a plot of land claimed or occupied by Muslims to polarise the Hindu voters and potentially rally a large proportion of Hindus to their side and thus defeat the political articulation of low caste to attain the winning margin.

Similarly, the so called secular parties also maintain strategic silence on caste and class diversity within Muslims because of the fear that Muslim votes would turn 'expensive' as they will supposedly demand share in distributional benefit of socio-economic justice for similarly placed castes and class of the Hindu community. In a word, Muslims are conditioned not to demand anything but 'physical security'. It is reflected in the poor performance of Muslims on most of the development indices pronounced by the latest survey report of 68th round of the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) and 2011 Census.

Here my contention is to argue that Muslims had always been 'low cost' voters because of their habit to vote for the so called secular parties. In return, as argued, the so-called secular political parties have treated them not more than a strategic junior partner in the overall framework of large-scale mobilisation of low castes groups in the state. Thus, parties are competing for Muslim support not only because of the number of votes Muslim can deliver but also on a very low cost when compared with the demands made by other groups within the majority community. As a result, the political parties try to woo Muslim voters as they are far less demanding than other segments of the population.

Conclusion

Now we have reached a point where there stands a need to evaluate the Muslim identity dispassionately. We need to understand that the empirically designed strategy of rightist to exploit the fear of the banal masses is nothing more than a political gimmick to attain winning margin in the competitive electoral politics of India. In addition, once politically relevant right-wing fanatics are now becoming politically un-employable and thus disenchanting on the changing focus of India and Indians seeking "development". Their

uncontrolled and hasty invocation of religious-wedge issues is largely an attempt to regain their power positions. Government acts in concert with right wing polemics by giving clandestine support to their mobilisational tactic using religious-wedge issues merely to divert the national attention from the substantive issues and to avoid the social audit of its performance on account of the lofty promises made at the time of election. Most importantly, round the year elections in country like India either of Panchayat, Municipal Corporations, State Assemblies, Lok Sabha Elections, by –elections have created further burden on the right-wing organisations to constantly produce and reproduce religious sign, symbols, issues which can successfully be used to polarise the voters and help them attain the winning margin in the election. The advantage with the invocation religious-wedge issues are its utility across the time, region and place. In simple term, the communal conflict in any city, district or state will have universal appeal and impact the consciousness of people more or less uniformly.

If we wish to see the essence of integrity remains the same in both the majority as well as the minority groups across nation, we need to postpone the communal polarisation for quite a longer period of time by holding the elections of all bodies including Panchayat, Municipal Corporations, State Assemblies, Lok Sabha Elections, or by –elections at one particular period of time. A much needed gap of five years between the elections will give us enough living space to bridge the differences along religious lines. We should not allow the diversity of India completely dissolved into uniform communal thinking of rightists.

I aim to argue that if we ultimately go with the utilitarian value of ‘cultural autonomy’ for Muslims minorities in majoritarian world, the similar autonomy should be accorded in favour of those individuals and groups within minorities who for any reasons want to seek remedy from the state and judiciary as a citizen of the country.

It is often been aired that the interest of Muslims could be promoted and protected only through Muslim specific parties and institutions. It is also argued that the experiment like Indian Union Muslim League of Kerala, All India United Democratic Front of Assam and All India Majlis e-Ittehad e-Muslemin of Hyderabad should be repeated across India. Nonetheless, it is a difficult proposition to believe that Muslim interests could only be represented by Muslim candidates and Muslim exclusive parties alone. It has never been in the past and will never be in future too. Muslims have understood this clearly which is clearly manifest in their habitual allegiance to secular parties and voting in favour of candidates known for secular credential.

Another situation is the political participation of Muslims in the activity of civil society organisations to articulate their opinion to influence the political decision-making on matters related to Muslim minorities. Ironically, Muslims are marked by their least participation in civil society organisations due to the conspicuous absence of Muslim exclusive civil society groups for long. However, the recent time witnesses the rising formation of Muslim interest groups and civil society organisation. There is also a strong

need to participate in the cross-sectional civil society organisation to channelize the rational demands of the community to influence the decision making process.

There is also a need of the hour to maximise the informed participation of Muslims in almost all walk of institutionalised and non-institutionalised platforms not as politically inert community but more as equal and sovereign citizens of India to influence the decision-making in the best and rational interest of the community and country. It is because the pervasive socio-economical and educational marginality of Muslims cannot be effectively tackled, unless the community actively partake and influence the political decision-making process of the country.

There is also a need to press for special protective measures for the disadvantageous section of Muslim society like Pasmanda Muslims who are substantially excluded from the socio-economic benefits offered by the political system due to two extreme: one is because of their religious identity and second is because of their caste identity as demonstrated in the findings of the several national and state backward class commission as well as Sachar Committee, Rangnath Mishra Committee and Kundu Committee reports. In this regard, campaigning for Muslim reservation would be a difficult proposition. Instead, community should be mobilised for inclusion of more similarly placed Muslim castes in the OBC lists and the amendments in the Presidential Order of 1950 issued under Article 341 of the Constitution to identify the existence of Dalit Muslims extend the benefit of SC and ST reservation to *Arzal* Muslims the way it was extended to Sikhs and Budhist's low castes converts through subsequent amendments to the 1950 Presidential Order in 1956 and 1990 respectively. The demands made by Ajlaf and Arzal should be not be rejected on the ground of being divisive and ant-Islamic as it has nothing to do with religion per se but with external manifestation of social reality which aims to benefit not only Pasmanda Muslims particularly but also the overall Muslims as it will improve the socio-economic and educational index.

Apart from special protection, the focus should also be on demanding favourable schemes, policies and programmes so as to improve the livelihood of Muslims. It may include the creation of better health facilities, educational institutions, large and small scale industries, vocational training centres, road and transport facilities and so on in the Muslim concentrated districts. Let the Muslim community work more in monitoring and highlighting the so called flag-ship programmes for Muslim development and demanding more resources for its effective implementation. The community should focus on creating critical intellectual mass to work for itself. It will help the Muslims in more substantial terms.

Conclusion:

Let me conclude by stating that the political energy of the Muslims expressed through political participation is to be utilised to overcome their overrepresentation in the ranks of the poor and the economically vulnerable and their underrepresentation in the ranks of all

public services— administrative, police, military, and diplomatic. In a word, Muslims as a whole need to realise that the minoritarian politics have only placed them in a communal situations and thus they need to explore the tools and technique of post-minority politics not only to preserve their identity but also to gain share in the national resources of the country as equal citizen.

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India's Geostrategic Stakes and Security Concerns in Afghanistan: An Overview

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Abstract

India has multifaceted interactions with Afghanistan since times immemorial. Both countries had strong connections through cultural linkages and trade ties. Despite geographical contiguity, a wedge was created between Afghanistan and India by the then British Empire and Tsarist Empire for their respective vested interests. Partition of India in 1947, though broke this geographical contiguity but despite this and brief interludes, India and Afghanistan have enjoyed a very vibrant and healthy relationship over last few decades.

This paper is an attempt to map out the manner in which India has engaged Afghanistan economically, politically and socially. Afghanistan's stability is important for India's own security and Indian stakes and security concerns in the region cannot be under stated. In an effort to bring out India's stakes and security concerns in the region, this paper underlines the structural factors, where India and Afghanistan have mutual concerns and which determine India's response to the changing strategic environment in Afghanistan. All these factors have been included in the paper and delineation of trends in this bilateral relationship in the matrix of international relations has been attempted.

Introduction

Afghanistan, today a war torn and politically instable country in South Asia, was once known for its rich culture, stories of Kabuliwala, flourishing of Buddhism before the advent of Islam etc., has been largely governed by its own tribal code i.e. 'Pukhtunwali Code' (A code of conduct for the Pushtuns, largest ethnic group of Afghanistan) . Since almost last four decades or more, this tribal state is known for various awful reasons impinging on the security and stability of the region. The landlocked state of Afghanistan, also known for being the centre stage of the 'The Great Game' of the 19th and first half of 20th century, has now acquired the branding of being the, 'hotbed of terrorism', growing 'Religious Fundamentalism', part of 'Golden Crescent' famous for Drug Trafficking, 'Kalashnikov Culture' and so on. After September 11, 2001 incident of twin tower terrorist attack in US which had its roots in Afghanistan, the country became the first battleground of the U.S. led 'Global War on Terror' when the Taliban government refused to turn over Osama Bin Laden and other Al Qaeda members. The security situation still continues to be grim in this terrorist infested state posing various challenges and even opportunities for cooperation in India Afghanistan relations.

India and Afghanistan have enjoyed a strong symbiotic relationship based on historical and cultural connections. This relationship has not been a hostage to the governments in power at either New Delhi or at Kabul and has its foundations in the historical contacts and exchanges between the people. Relations between the people of Afghanistan and India can be traced back to the Indus Valley Civilization. Post a brief occupation by Alexander and a much longer occupation by Seleucid Empire, the region known today as Afghanistan was ceded to the Indian Mauryan Empire as part of an alliance treaty. The two key factors which have single handedly helped two countries to come close are Indian military's non-involvement in Afghanistan's internal affairs throughout its troubled past and non sharing of a common boundary.

In modern times, India has been the only South Asian nation to recognize the USSR supported Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and also provided humanitarian aid to President Najibullah's Government in Afghanistan. After the withdrawal of Russian forces, India supported the coalition government that took control, but coming into power of an Islamist Militia, The Taliban, resulted in breaking of contacts. The destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha monuments, large scale atrocities and landing of the hijacked Indian Airlines Flight 814 at Kandahar were instrumental in India becoming one of the key supporters of the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance. Post the US invasion of the country, India has contributed immensely towards the cause of Afghanistan. India established diplomatic relations with the newly elected democratic government, provided aid and has actively participated in the reconstruction efforts.

This paper attempts to map out the manner in which India has engaged Afghanistan economically, politically and socially. Afghanistan's stability is important for India's own security and Indian stakes and security concerns in the region cannot be under stated. In an effort to bring out India's stakes and security concerns in the region, this paper underlines the structural factors, where India and Afghanistan have mutual concerns and which determine India's response to the changing strategic environment in Afghanistan. All these factors have been included in the paper and delineation of trends in this bilateral relationship in the matrix of international relations has been attempted.

Unfolding Scenario: A Country in Transition

At the close of 2014, NATO delegated security responsibilities in the country to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), paving way for launch of new NATO-led mission, "**Resolute Support**" with effect from 01 January 2015. Some 12,000 personnel from both NATO and partner nations have been deployed in support of the Resolute Support Mission (RSM), with responsibility of NATO being solely to train, advise, and assist the ANSF. On the political front, the national unity government is facing unprecedented challenges due to ethnic linkages of President and the Chief Executive. Developmental assistance in Afghanistan is also on downward spiral as NATO forces are being withdrawn and other international priorities like Syria, Yemen & ISIS are overwhelmingly gaining prominence. Economic growth is expected to fall dramatically even as the government struggles to sustain spending on reconstruction projects. The

international community pledged over \$100 billion between 2002 and 2012, but for the period of 2012-2015 it only pledged around \$16 billion, and seeks to sustain support levels of the past decade “only through 2017” to cover short-term fiscal gaps.¹

As International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) started de-inducting from the war ravaged country, serious doubts have been raised with respect to its future stability and security. Lack of political clarity in the Afghan leadership, the numerous non-state actors, the neighboring countries and regional entities with their conflicting interests and stakes render it extremely difficult to arrive at a reasonably accurate prediction of Afghanistan's future.

Assessing India's Engagement

India's engagement with Afghanistan has been multifaceted since antiquity. British Empire, in order to obviate India's vulnerability to invasions through Afghanistan, endeavored to develop the country as a buffer zone between India and the Tsarist Empire. Post-Taliban period in Afghanistan has provided opportunities for India's extensive association in the realm of state-building, economy, reconstruction and development. As opposite to a traditional approach adopted by the traditional donors, India has gone for a divergent approach by opting for demand-driven method for providing assistance to the Afghan people, i.e. infrastructure development, capacity building, local economic development, agribusiness, education and empowerment of women, local government and election process. India's programmes in Afghanistan cover four broad areas – infrastructure projects, humanitarian assistance, small and community based development projects, and education and capacity development.

Political Engagement

India's stand on the Afghan reconciliation process has been very clear since the beginning – It has to be both initiated as well as led by Afghanistan. However, competitive regional political dynamics have ensured most of the initiatives toward political settlement and agreements have been foreign initiated. Simultaneously, India has also been left out of some of the major initiatives such as the Turkey-sponsored meeting on Afghanistan in January 2010² and further marginalized in the London Conference on Afghanistan in 2010.³ At bilateral level, India has engaged Afghanistan in the state-building process. Building of Afghan Parliament is a key testimony to Indian commitment towards Afghanistan political stabilization efforts. India has been at forefront in facilitating the election process and has provided EVMs and trained staff. Indian commitment and initiatives towards Afghanistan political settlement can be gauged from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech in Afghanistan. He stated, “*The Atal Block unites us in spirit, because Atal means hero in Pashto and in Hindi it means to be firm. It captures the spirit of Afghanistan and of our friendship. This Parliament Complex is a small tribute to your progress as a nation and a democracy. And, it will stand as an enduring symbol of the ties of emotions and values, of affection and aspirations that bind us in a special relationship.*”⁴

Military Co-operation

India has enhanced its military aid to Afghanistan by breaking its age-old tradition of not providing lethal military equipment with a country facing internal turmoil as seen in Sri Lanka's conflict with the LTTE. However, recently India transferred four Mi-25 Attack Helicopters and three HAL Cheetah Light Utility Helicopters to the Afghan Air Force, which will significantly improve their fire-power in their fight against Taliban.⁵ India is also actively considering to fund the purchase of spare parts for the Soviet-era military equipment of the Afghan National Security Forces. Apart from this India allows for Afghan Security Forces personnel to attend various military training and instructional programmes at Indian Military establishments. India has also been supplying non-lethal military equipment to Afghanistan including Logistics vehicles.

Reconstruction and Development

India has always preferred to be involved in the development of 'soft power' assets in Afghanistan keeping with its commitment for building peace and stability in that country. As brought out earlier reconstruction and development have been focus areas of India's engagement in Afghanistan. Indian commitment to Afghanistan emanates from the belief that inclusive development is essential to establish a viable and peaceful statehood in Afghanistan. Major improvements have happened in Education, public health and infrastructure sectors, and India's assistance in these areas has been considered crucial by the people of Afghanistan as well as the international community. In a reply to a starred question in Lok Sabha in 2014, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj provided the details of projects undertaken by India in Afghanistan and expenditure incurred on them.⁶ Some of the major projects undertaken by India in Afghanistan are listed below.

Figure 1 Showing Various Projects undertaken by Indian Government in Afghanistan

Project Details	Year	Amount Spent (In Rs Crore)
Reconstruction of Salma Dam Power Project (42MW) in Heart Province	2011-12 to 2014-15	601.6
Reconstruction of 215-km long Delaram-Zaranj road.	2009-10	600
220-kV/202km Pul-e-Khumri-Kabul transmission line and Chimtala sub-station at Kabul.	2005 to 2009	478.72
Wheat to Govt. of Afghanistan	2011-12 to 2014-15	476.5
Construction of the Afghan Parliament Building at Kabul	2011-12 to 2014-15	260.2

Project Details	Year	Amount Spent (In Rs Crore)
Small Development Projects (SDP I&II) in Afghanistan	2011-12 to 2014-15	104.8
Doshi and Charikar Power Project	2011-12 to 2014-15	74.9
Restoration of Stor Palace in Kabul	2012-13 to 2014-15	17
Setting up of an Afghan National Agriculture Science and Technology University in Kandahar, Afghanistan	2013-14 to 2014-15	4

Source: *Ministry of External Affairs, India*⁷

Strategic Partnership

In order to ensure security situation in Afghanistan, it is imperative that social and economic development takes place concurrently in Afghanistan. India has accurately assessed this aspect and accordingly its strategy towards Afghanistan has been socially and economically driven. The Strategic Partnership Agreement, signed between two countries in 2011 also echoes the important drivers of economic and social development - trade & economic cooperation and capacity development. Indian assistance to the country has touched just under \$2 billion, making it the fifth largest bilateral donor after the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan and Germany and the largest non-traditional donor. Indian assistance basically comprises of humanitarian assistance (such as food aid), infrastructure projects and capacity building. India provided Food assistance to primary school children and construction and rehabilitation of schools (321 Million Dollars).

The construction and improvement of 218 km long Road axis Delaram – Zaranj by Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in south-western Afghanistan, is a key link to Iran's Chahbahar Port via Afghanistan's garland highway, linking the Afghan cities of Herat, Kandahar, Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif. As per a trilateral agreement, signed amongst India, Iran and Afghanistan in 2003, Iran built a highway from Chahbahar (a Port City of Iran) upto Afghanistan border and India developed a road connecting Delaram (border city of Afghanistan) to Zaranj (Capital of Nimruz province of Afghanistan). India's major economic objectives include - increase trade with Afghanistan and through it with the Central Asian Republics (CARs), increase Indian business investment in Afghanistan, assist Afghanistan to develop its natural resources.

Map showing Delaram-Zaranj-Chabahar Road



Source: Google Maps⁸

Economy

Indian efforts have been to engage Afghanistan on economic front and tap huge potential for business and trade opportunities. India has singularly played a significant role in Afghanistan's economic reconstruction committing and delivering upwards of \$2 billion distributed between humanitarian assistance, rebuilding infrastructure and human resource development. In surveys year after year, India has been described as "the friendliest country." The amount of aid has increased nearly 80% from Rs 327 crore in 2011-12 to Rs 585 crore in 2013-14.⁹ Bilateral trade has also seen an upward trend.¹⁰ This has been possible because of a special and mutual understanding and trust between these two nations about the emergence of Afghanistan as an independent, sovereign, stable, plural and moderate country.

India's Stakes and Security Concerns

As has been seen, India is deeply involved in the development and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan for quite some time now. The security situation in the country and the neighboring region has serious implications for India. This paper attempts to delineate the stakes and security concerns of India as existing in the region.

India and Afghanistan- Pakistan a Factor

Pakistan has for long acted as a difficult and disruptive neighbour and in a bid to restrict and contain India's influence there, has sought additional leverage in Afghanistan by cultivating radical groups within Afghanistan as proxies and therefore continues to be ensnared in – at the same time also augmenting—Afghanistan's instability. Pakistan fears

both a strong Afghan government closely aligned with India, potentially helping encircle Pakistan, and an unstable Afghanistan that becomes—as has already happened—a safe haven for anti-Pakistan militant groups and a dangerous playground for outside powers. When India, initiated re-building of ties with post-Taliban Afghanistan, it was taken as a strategy to undermine Pakistan and its interests in Afghanistan. But of late, Indian engagement is increasingly being seen as an essential. On 27 March 2009, when US President Barack Obama unveiled the new Af-Pak strategy, he called upon powers like India, Russia and China to collaborate with the US in combating terrorism in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In identifying the borderlands between Pakistan and Afghanistan as the single most important threat to global peace and security, arguing that Islamabad is part of the problem rather than the solution, and asking India to join an international concert in managing the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, US has made significant departures from its traditional posture toward South Asia.

On its part India has also increasingly realized that Pakistan has a 'special interest' in Afghanistan and it can't be negated. Accordingly, the main driver of Indian policy has shifted from an anti-Pakistan strategy towards a desire for stability in Afghanistan. Therefore, Indian strategy in Afghanistan is recommended to be more focused towards preventing the return of an Islamist/Taliban government, which could provide strategic depth to Pakistan and augment its interests in South Asia in general and Kashmir in particular. It is any way, more important than cultivating a government in Afghanistan that leans towards New Delhi more than Islamabad.

Re- emergence of Taliban

Afghanistan has been a cradle for rise of Taliban, with active connivance of a section of establishment in Pakistan. Indian relations with Afghanistan went on an upward spiral only after downfall of Taliban, much to the chagrin of Pakistan. Now that ISAF has pulled out from Afghanistan and efforts to delineate a distinction between good Taliban and bad Taliban are underway, India is clearly apprehensive of Afghanistan becoming a center of radical ideology and violence again. Indian concerns are to address significant and persistent security concerns that emanate from Afghanistan, as well as from Pakistan. Most of the terrorist organizations, to include Harkat-ul-Jihad-Islami (HuJI), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), Harkat-ul-Mujahideen/Harkat-ul-Ansar (HuM/HuA), and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) have varied training facilities in Af-Pak region and enjoy varying degrees of closeness and affinity with Afghan Taliban. India dreads Afghanistan again becoming a terrorist safe haven.

As India has cautioned time and again, that re-emergence of Taliban in Afghanistan is detrimental to not only Pakistan, but would eventually and inevitably affect India and spread further to other countries – Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and even Myanmar. Such a development would not only undermine the stability of the Afghanistan, but also the entire Central Asia-South Asia-Southeast Asia belt.¹¹ Indian thought process and security concerns were also echoed in UN when India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN) stated in July 2008 that 'security within Afghanistan, and coordinated

efforts to stop terrorists from operating with impunity beyond Afghanistan's borders must be the paramount priority of our collective efforts in Afghanistan'.¹²

Taliban – ISIS

Though Taliban and ISIS are separate identities with distinct background philosophy and agenda, but presence of ISIS fighters in Af-Pak region has not been a recent phenomenon.¹³ As on today, the Islamic State appears to be in a direct competition for recruits, financing and ideological influence of the Afghan Taliban, but India has to adopt a very cautious approach towards the potential for ISIS to merge with the Taliban in the future and play a greater role in Af-Pak. This scenario assumes all the more importance keeping in view the recent threats of ISIS emergence in India.

Countering the Notion of Strategic Depth

In 1893, the British, represented by Mortimer Durand, forced the then Afghan Emir Abdur Rahman Khan to accept a dictated boundary between Afghanistan and Pakistan (then "British India"). The British had intentionally designed the border, to divide the Pashtuns, thereby keeping Afghanistan weak and a perfect "buffer zone" between the encroaching Russian Empire and British India. Afghan rulers since Abdur Rahman have almost universally rejected the "Durand Line". The deal sanctified Britain's control over its Pashtun possessions by dividing Pashtun tribal areas and the Balochistan region. In the process, the Durand Line politically divided ethnic Pashtuns and Baloch who lived on both sides of the border.

The concept of strategic depth has been tried to be explained through a host of instruments by Pakistan – Creation of an Afghanistan-Pakistan federation - Grand confederation of like-minded and territorially contiguous Muslim countries, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey -Prevent encirclement by India and a Soviet-backed Afghanistan - Strategic Depth (trade-off between space and time) - Strategic Depth (Without Control). Indian concerns and strategy has been to counter Pakistan's very flexible but constant and flawed concept of strategic depth, which has been effectively exploited by Pakistani establishment for domestic consumption.

Drug Trafficking

In one his statement, Assistant Secretary of State of United States said that, "Opium is a source of literally billions of dollars to extremist and criminal groups... cutting down the opium supply is central to establishing a secure and stable democracy, as well as winning the global war on terrorism."¹⁴ As NATO/ ISAF troops pullout from Afghanistan and local law enforcement agencies ill-equipped/ untrained and underfunded, opium production looks set to increase even further. The opium production in the war torn country touched new highs in 2014.¹⁵

India's peculiar geographical location has juxtaposed it between the Golden Triangle composed of Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand, and the Golden Crescent composed of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran. These two locations primarily account for the vast

majority of the world's heroin, with Afghanistan itself accounting for approximately 75 percent of the world's supply — due to a combination of political instability, widespread corruption, and the ideal mixture of climate, soil, and terrain to cultivate opium poppy, the plant from which the drug is made.¹⁶ According to Indian estimates, pure heroin costs Rs 1-2 lakh per kg in Pakistan. The cost doubles to Rs 3 lakh a kg after it crosses the border to pay for the risks involved. From Punjab to Delhi, the cost reaches Rs 8-10 lakh a kg and further doubles to Rs 16-20 lakh a kg in Mumbai. Concerns of India therefore are to pay greater attention to drug trafficking, as majority of proceeds generated are used to fund activities of extremist Islamist terror networks. This is also an area where India has a broad overlap of interests with the troika of the US, Russia and China, which can be leveraged by it in forms of multilateral cooperation.

Access to Central Asia

Though India has traditionally enjoyed great affinity with Central Asia, but despite close historical & cultural contacts, the relationship did not progress to the desired extent. Lack of direct access and security concerns in Afghanistan have inhibited realization of optimum potential of this relationship.

The region of Central Asia is endowed with significant hydrocarbon and mineral resources. Kazakhstan is the largest producer of uranium and has huge gas and oil reserves as well. Similarly, Uzbekistan is also rich in gas, and is an important regional producer of gold along with Kyrgyzstan. Tajikistan has vast hydropower potential besides oil deposits, and Turkmenistan has the fourth largest gas reserves of the world. Geographically, the strategic location of these countries makes them a bridge between different regions of Asia and between Europe and Asia. Although the significance of the region in India's economic and energy security is clear, lack of direct surface connectivity has been affecting the economic engagement.¹⁷ In order to obviate very obvious Pakistan factor, in its quest for access to Central Asian countries, Afghanistan is an important link for India. As is evident the stakes for India, in Afghanistan are quite high.

Energy and Mineral Resources

The United States has discovered nearly \$1 trillion in untapped mineral deposits in Afghanistan, far beyond any previously known reserves and enough to fundamentally alter the Afghan economy and perhaps the Afghan war itself, according to senior American government officials. An internal Pentagon memo, for example, states that Afghanistan could become the 'Saudi Arabia of lithium,' a key raw material in the manufacture of batteries for laptops and Blackberries."¹⁸ On the other hand, Central Asia contains vast hydrocarbon fields both on-shore and off-shore in the Caspian Sea and is home to an approx 4 per cent of the world's natural gas reserves, and approximately 3 per cent of oil reserves. In its quest for Central Asian energy, India has signed a deal with Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkmenistan in Dec 2015, to launch the 1,814km Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline, named after the countries it is

designed to cross. In the words of President of Afghanistan, "TAPI will revive Afghanistan's importance in the region... This is a national and regional project to defend Afghanistan's future generations."¹⁹ The strategic significance of the project for India cannot be understated. TAPI project has a potential to be a game changer in regional geopolitics and regional economic integration. Turkmenistan has committed commercial reserves of about 14 trillion cubic feet for the pipeline, which on ground translates into feeding 14 million standard cubic meters a day (MSCMD) of gas to Afghanistan and 38 MSCMD each to India and Pakistan. As significant transit revenues are involved, the TAPI Project can substantiate 'Connect Central Asia' policy of India in a significant manner, while at the same time augmenting prospects of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a sub set of the Chinese 'One Belt One Road' project.

Soft Power Projection and Demonstrate Global Interests

Australia India Institute, Melbourne, in Sep 2011 organized a two day conference titled - *The Reluctant Superpower: Understanding India and its aspirations*. This conference examined India's economic growth, growing military might, and overwhelming demographic dividend, huge and successful Diaspora – and concluded reasons for India's reluctant superpower ambitions. When this template is replicated in Afghanistan, it is evident that - no other country enjoys greater soft power than India, in Afghanistan. Indian influence percolates almost all aspects of the daily lives of Afghans. India is a most favored and preferred destination for education, medical care, and tourism for Afghans. Afghanistan's strategic importance to India's geopolitical aspirations is very well pronounced. Till date India has been a hesitant Soft Super Power in Afghanistan. Time has come for India to exercise its enormous soft power in Afghanistan and build upon the good rapport already established. New Delhi has to shed its tag of reluctant super power and claim its due place and ensure that through its engagement with Afghanistan, certain strategic outcomes are realized to include - democratic pluralism, political stability, rule of law, economic integration with the rest of the world, and a foreign policy, which is not dictated by its immediate neighbors to serve their vested interests.

CONCLUSION

India's security and strategic interests lies in the strong and stable government in Afghanistan. The unique geo-strategic location of Afghanistan positions it as a viable land bridge to Central Asia, Iran and Afghanistan's energy resources. India has supported all efforts towards improving the security situation and providing good governance. Efforts of India towards sustained reconstruction and concerted socio-economic development will assure that, India's stakes in the region are looked after. A good relationship with Afghanistan does not imply squeezing Pakistan from the west. India is keen to have a government in Afghanistan that is not anti-India and that does not support or promote terrorism in India, and helps promote economic relations with it and the Central Asian Republics. With its traditional good relations with Afghanistan, India can contribute significantly in the reconstruction efforts.

Indian efforts will find active support from the US as it sees India as a viable counter to Chinese attempts to expand their footprint in Afghanistan and by extension, with the CARs; and also because the Indian involvement in the various sectors promotes an enduring environment of peace and stability in Afghanistan. Moreover, Afghanistan geostrategically is at the centre of four civilisations, the Chinese, the Indian, the Central Asian and Persian. It has emerged as the centre of gravity in the so called 'new great game' of the region which revolves around mainly four things namely resources, ideology (spread of Radical Islam), Terrorism and Drug Trafficking having the potential to destabilise the region.

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Book Review

Following Forkhead Paths: Discussions on the Narrative (eds)

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Debashree dattaray, Epsita Halder, Sudip Bhattacharya. Setu Prakashani: Kolkata. 2017. Pages-1-317

The book expands the purview of narratives, fosters academic discussion and gives rise to a new direction in scholarly engagement. This edited volume presents sixteen well-researched scholarly articles by renowned academics and researchers, grouped thematically into five sections. Enriched with an introduction that locates ‘narrative’ as a genre in its historical and critical context, this volume edited by Debashree Dattaray, Epsita Halder and Sudip Bhattacharya attempts to throw light on narrative as memory and history, sexual difference and the narrative, gestures as narrative, science, empiricism and myth and new media and the narrative. This volume showcases the varied and vibrant corpus of writings on narrative, clearly charting a vigorous, mature and inclusive tradition of narrative writings following forkhead paths.

Covering a wide trajectory of representative writings on narrative from the early period to the contemporary and scrutinizing a vast array of genres---the search for identity, creative freedom and literary space, self-discovery and new media. The essays in this collection are particularly commendable for their new and innovative perspectives. The essays not only emphasize the heterogeneity of the writers but also their interconnectedness.

In the first section Peter Keegan’s paper entitled “On Changes in New Zealand Maori Narrative: How an Indigenous Culture Engages the Modern World” traces a trajectory of the Maori narrative in Aotearoa/ New Zealand. This essay a cutting-edge research of the transformation as well as remaking of the Maori narratives in order to strengthen their cultural identity and reconfigure their past marked by violence, suppression and encouraged leadership by leaders like Tawhiao (1860-1894).

Dharamsing Teron in “Mosera Myth of Karbi Migration Memorizing History/ Historicizing Memory” discusses ‘Mosera’—one of the most ancient narrative traditions of Karbis in Assam. Historicizing the cultural memory of migration Teron skillfully connects the Mosera narratives to present day Karbi Anglong’s struggles for sovereignty. There is a curious and interesting interrelationship between history, memory and fiction.

Debarati Chakrabarty in “Memory and History in Fiction: an Analysis of Bangla Written Narratives in the Aftermath of partition of India”, discusses the voluminous narratives on Partition, with particular reference to east Pakistan (not Bangladesh). She has shown that ‘trauma’ and ‘nostalgia’ are intertwined in the framework of nationalist ideologies and national histories. Her answer to the continuing debate on ‘unofficial’ or ‘parallel’ history is simple: narratives which can be differentiated on the basis of gender, class and caste constitute ‘unofficial’ or ‘parallel’ history. Prajna Paromita Podder in “Native Place on the Other Side of the Border: Identity and community”, delves into the inner diversity, plurality and recurring motifs of memory vis-a-vs the fluidity of partition narratives. Urmi Tevar in “A Portrayal of the 19th Century Reconstructed from Four Significant Gujrati Travelogues” builds the bridge between a nation in flux, with the new forms of knowledge thus weaving together national culture and identity.

The next section Sexuality and Narrative makes us think beyond the traditional. Both the essays in this section are narratives of self conscious acts of liberation. Sayan Bhattacharya in his essay has claimed a space for alternative sexualities. Rajlaxmi Ghosh’s article also deserve special mention. The third section deals with how the reading of gesture points out the impossibility of silence. Gesture is a body space and Gesture studies has captured the imagination of the intelligentsia. As a result International Conference of Gesture Studies held in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1998. Much has also been said and written under the rubric of International Society of Gesture. Nilanjana Deb’s essay entitled “Reading the Body: A History of Ideas on Gesture” is a thorough analysis of the study of gesture in Western philosophical and religious traditions. Her in-depth analysis of ‘narratives of gesture’ from aboriginal Australia and the first Nations in Canada, makes this volume a veritable archive of scholarly material for future research, an indispensable critical resource on narratives. Debaroti Chakraborty’s “Thinking of Indian Modernity : A meeting of Rabindra-Nritya and the classical idiom of Bharatnatyam” takes us through a narrative from *angika* to the *vachika*. Dheeman Bhattacharyya in his essay entitled “‘The Spirit Lives in the Mind’: Multicentric Narrative Memory in the Rez plays of Tomson Highway and street plays of Budhan Theatre”, re-examines the narrative memories of indigenous groups of Cree and Chara. He reaffirms that space is a category and body is part and parcel of performing ‘bodies in dissent’. However his essay is more of a deliberation than an essay.

The following section ‘Science, Empiricism and Myth’ shows us that narratives have essentially become part of the human psyche. In search of its roots we have to concentrate not only on narratological theorization but on human evolution. It is a rather complex procedure which involves two mutually incompatible areas, science and

empiricism and myth. Anirban Das's essay on "Notes Toward A Gathering : Sciences and Methodologies" focuses on the thin line that exists between science and science methodologies. In his essay entitled "The Literary, the Comparative and the National: Some Conjectures" Sourav Kargupta focuses on the subtle differences that lie between the literary object and the object of experimental science. He therefore proposes a critique of an "encyclopedic model" of Comparative Literature. Ritu Sen Chaudhuri's essay entitled "Reading Ajantrik: Talking Technicity" harps on the idea of "thinkability" of technology. The sad story of humanization of machine or mechanization of human by Subodh Ghosh, *Ajantrik (The Pathetic fallacy)* (1940) was made into a film by the legendary filmmaker Ritwik Ghatak in Bangla and released in 1958.

The concluding section New Media and narrative focuses on the overdependence of modern men on World Wide Web. This section therefore deals with aspects of new species of narration and narrativisation. The essays basically foreground the idea of computerization or digitization, on how in the twentieth century we have moved from books to movies, from telephones to televisions. The trajectory of narrative brings us to an interesting junction where traditional forms of media such as newspapers, radio and television have been replaced by new media. The transition from Web 2.0 to 2.0.1 is a leap into the future. The narrative is the career of human knowledge hence new media is carrying that human knowledge to explore new fields of technology. Madhujā Mukherjee in "Mediated Narrations: Contemporary Bollywood films and the Digital Interface" explores how new media communications and media convergence have given birth to newer forms of narrative conventions. She asserts that today "the very materiality of cinema has transformed from celluloid to digital, or from a chemical composite to virtual, resulting in radical changes in the modes of production, circulation and reception as well as forms, narration and process of image making". The essay expands the purview of analytical research on new media. Koel Mitra's essay on "Digital Collaboration and the New Writing: On Possible Paths of the New Narrative" traces the various ways of Digital Collaborative Authorship and its impact on "New Narrative". Her purport behind this paper is "to show the privileged creators of earlier narratives, that what a wide range of scope opens up for the uninitiated writer simply by allowing her to edit a web page in an open source platform". The book is very well edited, the production quality is good, but there are some serious typographic errors like in page 73 "actualfact' the" in page 102, "and one" to point out a few. The book will be useful for the students and research scholars interested in the study of narrative.

FORM - IV

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2. Place of Publication : Panjab University, Chandigarh (India)
3. Periodicity of its Publication : Biannual
4. Publisher & Editor-in-Chief's Name : Ronki Ram
Nationality : Indian
Address : Shaheed Bhagat Singh Professor of Political Science, Panjab University, Chandigarh
5. Printer's Name : Jatinder Moudgil
Nationality : Indian
Address : Manager, Panjab University Press
6. Names and addresses of individuals who own the newspapers and partners of share holders holding more than one per cent of the total capital : Panjab University, Chandigarh

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Panjab University
Research Journal (Arts)

Volume XLV

No 1

January-June 2018



Editor-in-Chief
Ronki Ram

Editor
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Panjab University
Chandigarh (India)

