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MIGRATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

The politically illiterate middle-class of the national capital region has blamed the role of caste for the "catastrophe in Bihar." They feel that by having voted Nitish Kumar back to power, the electorate in the state may have committed mass hara-kiri. The social media is full of inanities like comparisons between the Canadian cabinet and Bihar's council of ministers.

Before we discuss the role of caste, it would be worthwhile to let history judge whether Biharis had committed mass hara-kiri or given a lesson to the BJP at the Centre to get out of the campaign mode and move towards the serious business of governance. Coming to the question of caste, it does play a role in the electoral battles in the state. But is it that strong a factor in determining social relationships also?

Is it correct to say that Bihar has not gone liberal on caste matters merely on the basis of an electoral outcome? I largely disagree with the social belief that caste is fundamental to all social and political arrangement in the state. Social evils like caste discrimination have been part of the social fabric of almost all the states. However, there is no reason to single out Bihar.

It's true that social reforms movements from the medieval times have failed to erase caste contours. But the changing social needs of the 21st century have definitely left a lasting impression. Taking up the case of Bihar, where poor job opportunities and education facilities from the 1970s to the beginning of the 21st century ensured migration on a large scale, the changes in social relationships is there for everyone to see. The outwards movement of people from the state has proved to be the most important factor in making a dent into the caste super-structure.

While the outward movement did bring a certain amount of social exposure for migrants, it is the older generation among social elites, who are custodians of conservative societal norms, which has decided to cross the traditionalist medians. Three-and-half decades ago when my grand-mother passed away at her huge mansion in Patna, all alone, her death went unnoticed for few hours. She wouldn't allow anybody other than her Brahmin maid inside the bedroom.

Earlier this month when my mother bade goodbye to the world in the same house, where she too was living all by herself for a decade after my father's death, she had a retinue of attendants standing beside her to bid adieu. The end came suddenly to her, but her tribal-Christian maid ensured that she had a gulp of Ganga water before she passed out. My mother had tutored her all these years to give her basil leaves and holy water in her last moments as she did not expect her migrant children to be then present. My mother indeed had planned well as we were not there when she breathed her last.
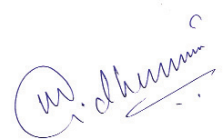
For my mother, Agnes, the maid, was the Annapurna, the Goddess who ensures food for all. Then there was the old-time chowkidar, Dubey Paswan. A Dalit daily wage earner, he kept night vigil at the house and ensured there were enough flowers every morning for her puja. He would give a miss to his daytime wage-earning job if he felt his service could be needed in the household. And her driver had ensured a 'safe drive' to each doctor she visited and got her pension renewed and bank passbook updated.

None of them were born in her immediate family. They did not belong to her caste or religion. But the four maintained a very strong bond. I wonder when sociologists and political scientists have written tomes on divisive trends due to prevailing caste system in Bihar, why no one bothered to examine such relationships built completely on humane and compassionate considerations.

The readers of the editorial can feel assured that my mother's is not an isolated case. Today in Patna, aged parents of migrant children have taken the lead in breaking social barriers and allowing people from communities other than their own into their inner apartments. Some may say that compulsions and needs of care in old age may have forced them to give up their conservative ways. This may be true, but nonetheless it indeed has started a trend of social inclusion.

This brings us to the point that if there are cases of such social inclusion available, whatever the compulsion, then why does caste continue to play such a dominant role in electoral battles. One of the reasons is the continuation of caste-based quota. According to sociologist Satish Deshpande, unlike development, reservations cannot remain blind to caste. There is a need to ask whether the social inclusion policy was stifling chances of any social bonding happening on account humane considerations.

Thinkers like Deshpande agree that we need to question the system with the redressal of caste inequality not because the reservation system is no longer needed but because it is no longer enough. If the premise is that quota has not served the purpose of ending caste inequality, then thinkers like Deshpande also need to find out what adverse effect it has had on the process of social inclusion. That would give us the complete picture. So let's leave Bihar to its own, it would certainly show light to rest of the country.

31 December 2015   **Sidharth Mishra**

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secretary's desk

Another eventful year for the Centre for Reforms, Development and Justice has concluded. It gives me great pride to present before you the October-December 2015 issue of The Discussant. This is the fourth and final issue of third volume. Thus we have successfully completed the third year of regular publication as an RNI registered quarterly periodical. We had received the ISSN accreditation a year earlier.

In this time and era when publication industry is increasingly coming to be controlled by corporate bodies, I reiterate, it's no mean achievement for a think tank, still trying to get a toehold to have managed to publish the journal regularly. In these times, The Discussant has come to be recognized as journal of honest endevour.

Towards this end I am greatly indebted to the body of intellectuals and well-wishers, who have always been forthcoming with their support both intellectually and financially. It's their love and patronage which gives us the strength to move on. I am happy to share with you that our online edition is crossing new frontiers and getting accessed from new territories, which gives our writers a global exposure unthinkable for any journal of our vintage.

This edition, like the predecessor issue, is extra-ordinary. It has attracted write-ups including detailed papers and research articles from people coming from different arenas. Their contributionsare in areas as varied as International politics, Disability and Media and Governance among others.

With Warm Regards,

31 December 2015

Dr Sanjeev Kumar Tiwari

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BLACK MONEY: DIFFERENT SOURCES, IMPACT ON ECONOMY AND THE GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

SHOMAILA WARSI*

ABSTRACT

The generation of black money and the revelation of staggering amounts held by Indians abroad in tax havens has in recent years become part of debates and discussions among members of civil society, academicians, politicians, judiciary, enforcement agencies etc. Continuing generation and accumulation of black money poses a grave threat to our economy and is likely to threaten the very security and survival of the country. It is the source and at the same times cause of graft, corruption and the debasing of social and moral values. A multi-pronged strategy, including joining the global crusade against black money, creating an appropriate legislative framework, setting up institutions for dealing with illicit money, developing systems for implementation, and imparting skills for effective action, is required to deal with the issue of generation of black money and its illicit transfer outside the country, and for bringing it back to India.

Key words: black money, tax havens, economy

INTRODUCTION

Black money is a term used in common parlance to refer to money that is not fully legitimate in the hands of the owner. In fact, several terms with similar connotations have been in vogue, including 'unaccounted income', 'black income', 'dirty money', 'black wealth', 'underground wealth', 'black economy', 'parallel economy', 'shadow economy', and 'underground' or 'unofficial' economy. All these terms usually refer to any income on which the taxes imposed by government or public authorities have not been paid. Such wealth may consist of income generated from legitimate activities or activities which

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are illegitimate per se, like smuggling, illicit trade in banned substances, counterfeit currency, arms trafficking, terrorism, and corruption. The "White Paper" on Black Money published by government of India defines 'black money' as assets or resources that have neither been reported to the public authorities at the time of their generation nor disclosed at any point of time during their possession. According to a report on black money by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), "Measures to Tackle Black Money in India and Abroad", the main method for generation of black money in India is through commercial tax evasion by under reporting revenues and inflating expenses adopted by a range of business entities. Some of this black money ends up in illicit financial flows across international borders, such as deposits in Swiss accounts. The illicit money transferred outside India may come back to India through various methods such as hawala, mispricing, foreign direct investment (FDI) through beneficial tax jurisdictions, raising of capital by Indian companies through global depository receipts (GDRs), and investment in Indian stock markets through participatory notes. It is possible that a large amount of money transferred outside India might actually have returned through these means. Thus in reality, a large portion of this money comes back into India by a process known as 'round tripping' i.e. the money that left the country and ended up in a tax haven is invested back into the country as 'white' money.

ESTIMATION OF BLACK MONEY IN INDIA

By its very definition, black money is not accounted for, thus all attempts at its estimation depend upon the underlying assumptions made and the sophistication of adjustments incorporated. Among the estimates made so far, there is no uniformity, unanimity, or consensus about the best methodology or approach to be used for this purpose. There have also been wide variations in the figures reported, which further serves to highlight the limitations of the different methods adopted. Government in the past formed various committees to estimate the quantity of black money like N. Kaldor committee,The Direct Taxes Enquiry Committee (Wanchoo Committee), .P. Chopra committee ,Gupta committee (Poonam Gupta and Sanjeev Gupta).The National Institute of Public Finance and Policy estimated that in 1985 amount of black money in India was nearly Rs. 1,00,000 crore, which is approximately 20 percent of the national income. In 1996, the estimated black money was believed to be more than Rs. 4, 00,000 crore (The Hindustan Times, January 20, 1997).

According to Global Financial Integrity (GFI), a Washington DC based organisation, from 2002 to 2011, developing countries lost US$ 5.9 trillion to illicit outflows. China leads the list with a loss of US$ 1.08 trillion from 2002 to 2011. India was the fifth largest country with cumulative outflows worth US$ 343.9 billion from 2002 to 2011, which they claim is a conservative estimate. These estimates do not include the movement of illegal money through the hawala system, smuggling and cross-border cash transactions? All of which are significant in the Indian context. GFI estimates that for every $1 that poor nations receive in foreign aid, $10 in illicit money flows offshore.

This movement of money out of developing countries, including India, is facilitated by a network of over 60 tax havens which enables setting up of benami trusts or corporations ensuring that the real owners of the business remain unknown. According to Tax Justice Network, an international coalition of researchers, the global super-rich have at least $21trillion hidden in secret tax havens at the end of 2012. A chain Email, which first started circulating on the Internet in early 2009, states that Indians have more money in the Swiss banks than all other countries combined. It claims that as per a Swiss Banking Association report in2006, bank deposits in the territory of Switzerland by nationals of a few countries are as under:

India, US$1456 billion, Russia, US $470 billion, UM, US$390 billion, Ukraine, US$100 billion, China, US$96 billion. An IMF study as reported by Rishi and Boyce (1990) estimated the flight of capital from India during the period 1971-86 at US$20-30 billion, or US$1-2 billion every year.

This estimate was later revised in 2001 to US$ 88 billion over the 1971-97 period, a sum that is roughly equivalent to 20 per cent of net real debt disbursements to the economy from 1971 to 1997. In February 2012, the director of the Central Bureau of Investigation said that Indians have $500 billion of illegal funds in foreign tax havens, more than any other country.

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According to White Paper on Black Money in India report, published in May 2012, Swiss National Bank estimates that the total amount of deposits in all Swiss banks, at the end of 2010, by citizens of India were CHF 1.95 billion (INR 92.95 billion, US$2.1 billion). The Swiss Ministry of External Affairs has confirmed these figures upon request for information by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. This amount is about 700 fold less than the alleged $1.4 trillion in some media reports.

In February 2015, Indian Express released the list of 1195 Indians account holders and their balances for the year 2006-07 in HSBC's Geneva branch. The list was obtained by French newspaper Le Monde and included the names of several prominent businessmen, diamond traders and politicians. The number of Indian HSBC clients is roughly double the 628 names that French authorities gave to the Indian Government in 2011.Indian government said it will probe this matter. The balance against the 1195 names stood at Rs. 25,420 crores . (about 4 billion USD)

FACTORS LEADING TO GENERATION OF BLACK MONEY

Higher Rates of Taxes: Higher rates of taxes has resulted a growing tendency of tax evasion among the tax payers. Tax evasion is common in income tax, corporate tax, union excise duties, custom duties, sales tax, etc. The high marginal tax rates of over 90 per cent in the early 1970s, often considered a major reason for tax evasion and generation of black money, were brought down subsequently and have been at around 30 per cent since 1997.These high rates, necessitated by contingencies like drought and war, when combined with the prevailing shortages, resulted in controls and licenses, and thereby provided further incentives for evasion of taxes. It was largely in this economic environment that generation of black money became highly prevalent and acquired serious proportions. Apart from that, the enforcement of tax laws in respect of income tax, sales tax, excise duty, stamp duty etc. is quite weak in India . This has led to enormous unrestrained evasion of taxes and piling up of black money.

MISUSE OF LAWS BY MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS

Economic liberalization reduced barriers for cross-border flow of goods and services and also led to relaxation of foreign exchange control. MNCs found new opportunities for tax evasion through tax havens, misuse of transfer pricing, and other sophisticated methods. Shell companies are being created to avoid tax liabilities. Globalisation reduced the cost of these sophisticated methods thereby facilitating generation of black money and its transfer across the border.

LAND AND REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS

Due to rising prices of real estate, the tax incidence applicable on real estate transactions in the form of stamp duty and capital gains tax can create incentives for tax evasion through under-reporting of transaction price. This can lead to both generation and investment of black money. The buyer has the option of investing his black money by paying cash in addition to the documented sale consideration. This also leads to generation of black money in the hands of the recipient. A more sophisticated form occasionally resorted to consists of cash for the purchase of transferable development rights.

BULLION AND JEWELLERY TRANSACTIONS

Cash sales in the gold and jewellery trade are quite common and serve two purposes. The purchase allows the buyer the option of converting black money into gold and bullion, while it gives the trader the option of keeping his unaccounted wealth in the form of stock, not disclosed in the books or valued at less than market price.

TRUSTS/NGOS

Taxation laws allow certain privileges and incentives for promoting charitable activities. Misuse of such benefits and

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manipulations through entities claimed to be constituted for nonprofit motive are among possible sources of generation of black money. Many bogus trusts and societies are created which become source for routing black money.

There are many other such ways which lead to generation of black money like manipulation of books of account, out of book transactions, creating parallel books of accounts, under-reporting of production, inflating expenses and lowering of profits, creating shell companies, public procurement, private education sector, bribery, kick-backs etc. Agricultural income which per se is exempted from income tax also is a major source of black money. People tempt to save taxes by showing income earned from other sources as agricultural income which leads to generation of black money. The election process of our country is also a big generator of black money.

Election campaigns run by the candidates for parliamentary or assembly elections or for any local bodies leads to routing of black money. A study by the Mumbai-based Centre for Monitoring Indian Economics (CMIE) found in 2006 that each parliamentary poll generates between $10.19 billion and $11.33 billion of black money. It will become a shocking and mind boggling figure and the black money so created will run into several crores of rupees if we also include the elections to the legislative assemblies of the states and union territories and the local bodies.

The transactions of cash made through the hawala route are also one of the greatest sources of creation and use of black money. The hawala transactions are common across our national and international borders where money changes hands through non-banking channels and thus goes unrecorded and becomes black money.

IMPACT OF BLACK MONEY ON THE ECONOMY OF THE COUNTRY

LOSS OF REVENUE TO THE GOVERNMENT

Taxes form the major source of revenue for the present day governments. Evasion of taxes have serious consequences for the economy's fiscal system. In long-run consequence of such revenue loss is to reduce the built-in elasticity of the tax system. To raise a given target of revenue the Government is obliged to depend increasingly on discretionary hikes in tax rates or to expand the array of taxes. This hurts the foreign as well as domestic investment. Direct Taxes Enquiry Committee in this connection mentioned "Black money and tax evasion, which go hand in hand,have also the effect of seriously undermining the equity concept of taxation and warping its progressiveness. Together, they throw a greater burden to the economy.

RISE OF INEQUALITIES

The black money creates inequalities among people. The excess of money leads to purchase of non- essential articles, which gives demonstration effect. The overall consumption pattern is titled in favour of rich and elite classes. A rise in the overall consumption on non-essential products leaves less resources for investment in priority areas. These distortions in the product-mix in favour of non-essential consumption have adverse effects on production and thus they distort the objectives of planning.

WRONG INFORMATION ABOUT THE ECONOMY:

The presence of black money in the economic system does not give true picture about the actual size of economy as black money remains outside the purview of the economic policies. The presence of black money casts doubts on the validity of the data on national income estimates, per capita income, and distribution of income, consumption, savings and investment. The economic planning losses it's worth, because they are based on macro-economic parameters which completely ignore the black money. It is difficult to form monetary and fiscal policies in the absence of the exact calculation of the black money and without bringing it in the accounting procedures of the government.

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BLACK MONEY RESULTS IN HIGHER TAXATION AND INFLATION

The government taxes the people to earn revenue for its expenses in order to balance the budget. It is but natural that if the black money circulating in the economy is brought back to the government's treasury, the government will have more money in its hand for its expenses and thereby the tax burden on the people can be reduced. Similarly the inflation results with too much money chase too few goods available in the market. The accounted money in the market is hyped by the figure of unaccounted money in the market and the actual money in circulation becomes much more to chase the goods produced in the country leading to higher inflationary trends.

INCREASE IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES

The ill-gotten money in the market results in all sorts of criminal activities that go on in the society including corruption of all sorts in the society. It encourages its illegal use especially during elections. The black money is used to support terrorist activities which undermine even the security of the country. The illegal money is squandered on large scale in clubs and hotels on all types of illegal activities including drug trafficking. Even murders are got done for political revenges where black money changes hands among the murderers and the people who engage these murderers to engage in these crime. It is said that money corrupts and the excess of it corrupts extremely. And it is more so when such excess money is in the form of black money.

The lavish and ostentatious way the hoarders of black money live in India and the wasteful expenditure they indulge in celebrating their social, political and even religious functions is a social crime even though the law does not take cognizance of it.

INITIATIVES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO CURB BLACK MONEY

The government has taken a number of steps to curb the menace of black money in the country, measures like deposit in the National Housing Bank in 1991, NRI foreign exchange remittance, issuing National Development Bonds in US dollars, controlling the election expenses incurred by the candidates, conducting searches, seizures, raids and other steps to plug loopholes in the tax administration etc. Government has established institutional framework do deal with black money. Institutions like Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), Revenue Intelligence (RI), Enforcement Directorate(ED), Financial intelligence Unit-India (FIU-Ind) etc are working to check the menace of black money. The government has also made amendments to Money Laundering Act, made corruption heinous crime and has also increased quantum of punishment for those involving in corrupt practices. The government has joined the global crusade against black money and has signed agreements with various countries especially tax havens to check tax evasion. The government also plans to make financial transactions in all areas and at all levels free of cash transfer by making them electronic to prevent generation of black money.

The government proposes to make electronic transactions and card payments compulsory for all government and government-owned organisations. The proposal also envisages offer of discounts on card transactions and cash benefits for users of electronic payment methods. It will be mandatory to settle transactions of values above a particular limit only electronically. To check the generation of black money the government recently approved the new Benami

Transaction (Prohibition) Bill 2015, which provides for stringent measures against violators. The bill provides for attachment and confiscation of benami properties and also fine with imprisonment. In the recent budget (2015),government proposed amendments in the Income Tax Act prohibiting acceptance or repayment of advance in cash of Rs20,000 or more for any transaction in immovable property, penalties of equal amount will be imposed in case of contraventions.

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SOME OF THE MEASURES TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT FROM TIME TO TIME ARE AS

LOWER TAX SLABS FOR ENCOURAGING VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE

In the early '70s, the tax rates were high that it encouraged many people to evade taxes. Since this became an evident reason for increasing black money, Government took steps to reduce the tax rates. The peak tax rate has been reduced to 30%. Custom duty, central excise etc has been reduced. Filing of income tax returns has been made very easy. E-filling has been made mandatory in number of cases. Government is increasingly relying on information and communication technology to reduce incentives for tax evasion.PAN has been made compulsory for doing transactions having substantial monetary value.

INTRODUCTION OF TAX DEDUCTION AT SOURCE (TDS)

Tax Deduction at Source aims at collection of tax at the very source of income. It is essentially a method of collecting tax which combines the concepts of "pay as you earn" and "collect as it is being earned." Its significance to the government lies in the fact that it prepones the collection of tax. The government of India has made TDS compulsory on various payments made. It has significantly reduced avenues for tax evasion.

AMNESTY SCHEME

The Amnesty Schemes, introduced by the Finance Ministry from time to time, allows tax defaulters to pay a tax, waiving the penalty and interest. Using these schemes, a defaulter could disclose their wealth and convert them to legal money. No more questions will be asked. These schemes help Government to rake up the taxes and bring huge amount to legal money back into the Indian market. Finance Minister Mr. P. Chidambaram while presenting 1997-98 budgets announced a Voluntary Disclosure Scheme (VDS). It yielded tax revenue of Rs.10, 500 crores? an unprecedented revenue gain from any VDS scheme launched since the independence.

SIT ON BLACK MONEY

The new government which which took charge in May 2014, in its very first Cabinet meeting decided to constitute a special investigative team (SIT) to dig out black money. The SIT is headed by a retired Supreme Court judge, M B Shah. The vice-chairman of the SIT is another former SC judge, Arijit Pasayat. It is assisted by the revenue secretary, directors of CBI, IB, RAW and ED, the CBDT chairman and an RBI deputy governor. The decision on the SIT is in compliance with the Supreme Court directive on black money.

The Supreme Court on 4 July2011, had ordered the appointment of a Special Investigating Team (SIT) to act as a watch dog and monitor investigations dealing with the black money which however could not be constituted. The Supreme court had given new government a week's time to set up an SIT.

TAX INFORMATION EXCHANGE AGREEMENTS (TIEA)

To curb black money, India has signed TIEA with 13 countries - Gibraltar, Bahamas, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the isle of Man, the Cayman Islands, Jersey, Liberia, Monaco, Macau, Argentina, Guernsey and Bahrain - where money is believed to have been stashed away. India and Switzerland, claims a report, have agreed to allow India to routinely obtain banking information about Indians in Switzerland from 1 April 2011.Apart from that government has signed Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement(DTAA) with nearly 72 countries to prevent tax evasion.

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THE UNDISCLOSED FOREIGN INCOME AND ASSETS (IMPOSITION OF TAX) BILL, 2015

A bill to deal with black money stashed abroad was passed by Parliament in the recent budget session, with the government warning those having such assets to utilise the 'compliance window' or have sleepless nights once the global automatic information exchange system comes into effect in 2017. The compliance window will provide an opportunity to people to come clean by declaring overseas assets and paying 30% tax and 30% penalty, totalling 60%. The penalty for non-disclosure of income or an asset located outside India will be equal to three times the amount of tax payable thereon, i.e., 90 percent of the undisclosed income or the value of the undisclosed asset. This is in addition to tax payable at 30%. (total 120%). Those who conceal income and assets, and indulge in tax evasion in relation to foreign assets can face rigorous imprisonment of up to 10 years.

CONCLUSION

Black money is a big menace to the economy of the country. It has literally given rise to a parallel economy and as a result the true economic potential of the country is overshadowed. The presence of Black money has given rise to inflation across almost all sectors of the economy thereby hurting the poor and marginalized disproportionately. Government in the recent years has taken number of steps to curb black money and has joined global crusade against tax evaders. Civil society over the years has become more aware as well as restless on the issue of black money which in turn has created enormous pressure on government to act and at the same time has given strong message to tax evaders to come clean on black money. The war against black money is on and only time will tell how much we succeeded.

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NORTH EAST IN THE PERIPHERY-MAINSTREAM DEBATE: AN OVERVIEW

DR. PAWAN KUMAR YADAV*

Northeast India is a region of diverse geographical features with a population characterised by diversity of ethnicity, language, culture, religion, social organisation and levels of economic development. At the time of Independence "Northeast" basically meant Assam and the princely states of Manipur and Tripura. In order to quell the various ethnic, cultural and political aspirations for self government among various tribal groups, new states were carved out of Assam. The notion was that such groups require representation in the democratic process and that once they have voice and representation in the parliamentary democracy, many of their problems would be abated. However, the fact is that the region is caught in a vicious cycle of lack of economic development and then military and the resultant violence further retard economic growth. Under the circumstances, it is natural to find the people of the region harbouring a sense of alienation from the Indian mainstream and feel neglected.

The most urgent task for the Indian government after independence was the consolidation of a new nation state. As national integration was the most pressing of the issues confronting the new sovereign state, any movement that might disrupt the process of integration had to be dealt with stringently, and in some cases oppressively. Any indigenous ethnic movement was considered as "anti-national" and became as such, it had to be suppressed. Suppression invited resistance and resistance was countered with more oppressive measures from the government, creating an antipathy among the people, and providing the groundwork for armed confrontation and, furthermore, a growing aspiration for an independent homeland.

The Indian government after independence was unable to sensitively respond to the intricate realities of the North East. Rather it seemed to follow the colonial policy of isolation and alienation, treating the North East differently from the other Indian states.[1] The Constitution promulgated in 1950 contained a special provision in the form of the Sixth Schedule for the

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administration of "tribal" areas that were meant to protect the tribal people who were living scattered throughout the country. The provision was applied to the ethnic groups in the hill region of the North East. Hereafter, state formation in the North East followed a process whereby the area once unified into Assam was separated and ultimately turned into a state.

The state of Nagaland was created in 1963 by joining the then Naga Hills district of Assam and Tuensang Frontier division of North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) or the present Arunachal Pradesh. In 1969, the Indira Gandhi government intended to fulfill the long standing demands of the hill tribes by providing them an autonomous state within the state of Assam covering all the autonomous districts of Assam, i.e., the Garo Hills, Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Mikir Hills, North Cachar Hills and Mizo Hills district. The Assam Reorganisation (Meghalaya) Act of 1969 provided Meghalaya, comprising the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills district and Garo Hills district, a semi-autonomous state which came into effect on April 2, 1970. Subsequently it became a fullfledged state of India on January 21, 1972 with the passing of North Eastern Areas (Re- Organisation) Act, 1971. The Government of India, in July 1971, offered the proposal of turning Mizo Hills into an Union Territory and the insurgent group Mizo National Front (MNF) was ready to accept the offer on condition that the status of Union Territory would be upgraded to statehood and therefore the Union Territory of Mizoram came into being on January 21, 1972 and subsequently the state of Mizoram was created on February 20, 1987. Even though the people of the NEFA did not voice for statehood, due to strategic reason the Indian government granted NEFA statehood by renaming it as Arunachal Pradesh in 1987.[2]

The concept of Northeast was formalised politically and the term became popular with the formation of the North Eastern Council (NEC) in 1971. Since its inception the NEC functions as a regional planning body for the whole northeastern states and thus it is the nodal agency for economic and social development of the region.

THE SCENARIO

There is a tendency by scholars and policymakers to club the whole northeastern states together as "Northeast" and use the term as an analytical category for the whole region. However, Udayon Misra points out that the use of the term "Northeast" is itself problematic as the region represents a varied cultural mosaic and has never considered itself to be one compact unit. He says, "One has to recognise that there are many different communities in the region and the dynamics of each single movement have to be taken care of, if any solution is to be achieved".[3] New Delhi has failed in appreciating the complex nature of the problem. "By bracketing the eight northeastern Indian states, with its diverse tribes, customs and cultures, into what is called the 'Northeast'; New Delhi tends to ignore the distinct identity and subnational aspirations of these ethnic groups.[4] Such clubbing together of the region, in an attempt to look at it as a single entity, has led to stereotyping of the problems that plague the area. The fact that each state has a different set of location-specific concerns and grievances often gets blurred in the scheme of things of policy framers and government leaders who are supposed to address these issues.

THE NORTHEASTERN REGION :INDIA'S POLICY PREFERENCE

Since independence the Indian government has adopted several policies towards the region. Many of these policies have changed in the past decades. Such policies were measures to solve the complex problems of alienation, insurgency, ethnicity/cultural identity and to bring about economic development in the northeastern region. The first one and half decade of India's policy towards the northeastern region can be described as "Nehru-Elwin policy" where quick administrative expansion associated with the revivalist protectionist approach towards tribal development in the hill areas was followed. It has accepted the right of tribals to retain their way of life and identity and has sought to integrate them through democratic means into the federal frame of the Constitution of India.[5] Therefore, the post-colonial Indian state followed the British policy of Inner Line Regulation within the Nehruvian policy framework, which ensures non-interference from the people of the plains and also carve out an area of unimpeded self-development for the tribes of the region.[6]

There was drastic change in India's policy towards the northeastern region in the early 1960s due to its defeat against the

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Chinese aggression in 1962. It was the first setback in India's foreign policy and changed the course of India's security and even foreign policy. This brought back the colonial approach considering the region as a "frontier" that needs to be protected and defended militarily.

In the aftermath of Indian independence many tribes of Northeast India started demanding various levels of autonomy and even secession from the Indian union. Thus, in the early 1970s there was a conception that the region "required political representation; the diverse tribal cultures and diverse sub-nationalities required participation in 'mainstream' democratic process".[7]

By the turn of the century the Government of India came out of its state-centric security approach and launched the second phase the Look East policy. In this new phase India is looking towards a partnership with the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nation) countries, both within BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) and the India-ASEAN Summit dialogue as, integrally linked to economic and security interests of the northeastern region.[8] The union government initiated dialogue with certain insurgent groups and also offered olive branch to all the remaining groups.

CONTOURS OF PERIPHERY-MAINSTREAM DEBATE

Northeast India, which occupies a remote corner of India, is one of the least developed regions of the country. This development begins with the region's initial absorption into the world economy as a marginal periphery, a part of frontier of the British rule and which eventually leads to the region's peripheral position within the Indian nation-state after independence.[9] The first Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru stated during the debate on the First Five Year Plan:

…it is admitted that there should be attempt to make every region, every part of India develop equally in so far as we can, and that we should remove the disparities that exist in India. There are some tremendous disparities. Some of our provinces, I would not name them, are extremely poor. They do not deserve to be poor.[10]

The lofty goals of the founding fathers of the Indian nation-state did not materalise even after sixty years of independence. Not only the northeastern states are far from being at par with other Indian states in terms of development, even within the region there is huge disparity. Although the northeastern region shares certain problems there are severe intra-regional differences on economic development. The plain areas of the region, which are also the centre of administration, are more developed than the hill areas. Not only the hills and valleys are at different levels of economic development; the urban and rural areas of the valley exhibit economic disparities.[11]

Even though the region is conceived as a tribal region, taking the region as a whole the non-tribal population is more than the tribals. The states of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland have tribal population as majority.[12] The region has a literacy rate of 65.77 percent as against the all India average of 65.2 percent. However, the literacy rate varies from state to state in the region from a lowest figure of 54.74 percent (Arunachal Pradesh) to the highest figure of 88.49 percent (Mizoram).

The similarities that exist between different states of the region should not overshadow the different stages of socio-cultural and politico-economic development.[13] Udayon Misra further observes. "The use of the illusive construct, the North-East, has not only led to discriminations in matters of financial allocation to resource rich and larger states like Assam, but more importantly, to serious administrative mishandling by the Centre of the complexities of the region. The tendency of the Indian State to treat this extremely diverse region as one unit has resulted in the growth of totally incomplete and often misconceived notions about the different states that make up the northeastern part of the country. Such monolithic conceptions about a region, which stands out of for its diversity of cultures and civilisations, would only help to nourish the biases and prejudices which have marked the Indian State's approach towards Assam and her neighbours since independence".[14]

There are two ways of looking at India's North-East and its periphery-mainstream tussle problems which have kept the

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region in ferment ever since Independence. The first one is that given the history and the circumstances so far the matters have been appropriately handled, the situation is manageable and there is no cause for worry. Another point of view is that the issues facing the states and the region after Independence have not been handled both at the level of states and the Union Govt. properly resulting in uncertainty, instability and continuing conflict; and that the internal dynamics and external dimensions have not been effectively addressed. Many status quoists and "pragmatic" practitioners of politics would embrace the first proposition fearing the unknown consequences of a change of course. Those who feel that the things have not gone on well during the last sixty four years and division and conflict define the current scenario, therefore, calling for a change in the course and terms of engagement between the states in the region and the role of the Union Govt. One can thus have his choice. However, one thing is unmistakable. A general sense of dissatisfaction pervades the political, economic and social environs finding expression in use or threat of use of violence to achieve political and social goals.[15]

Infact, sixty seven years down the line since Independence in the North Eastern states the problems of alienation, periphery-mainstream debate persist despite various measures and policies adopted by the central and state govts. Infact, the situation, claims of recent improvement notwithstanding, remains problemetic. From one insurgency till mid 1960's there are now more than dozen significant groups in operation. It is proof enough that there is a need not only for introspection but also shift in attitudes towards governance in the region in its various dimensions. Situation is complex and there are no simplistic solutions but a change of stance is implicit in the past failures. Conditions in Manipur and Tripura are difficult. We have to seriously look beyond the security paradigm to improve the situation and governance.

Before attempting any fundamental changes, an effort should be made to understand regional/state and local level realities and perceptions. On the eve of Independence, the govt. started with a handicap in that the British had restricted access to the region and we had no experience of its problems. Therefore, we went along with and reinforced the policies and methods of the colonial rulers e.g. the divisive concept of excluded, partially-excluded and inner line areas etc. found acceptance in schedule VI of the constitution.

Besides, the advent of Independence and partition creating East Pakistan, accentuated political aspirations and expectations and questions of ethnic identities on the one hand and disrupted centuries old economic and communication lines an activities on the other. These reinforced mindsets of isolation and neglect. These urges acquired differing directions and dimensions in various areas. It spawned a culture of competitive and overlapping politico-ethnic demands, misgovernance and corruption; use of idiom of violence to coerce concessions and finally to alienation and blame game of shifting the responsibility for all the ills and short comings to the central government.[16]

The result is that the present political and intellectual discourse is mostly mired in "negativism" and "grievance". There is no effort to look at the positives; encourage pride and self-esteem, and it readily embraces colonial theories like 'mainstream' and 'periphery', unrealistic ethnic views etc without subjecting it to critical intellectual tests. This kind of intellectual discourse needs close attention, because it tends to reinforce the sentiments of isolation, neglect and loss of self-esteem. It is time to discuss the steps and measures to improve the situation in all respects, including, attitudes, perceptions, economy and governance. Some measures may require a drastic shift, if the local level consensus can be built up, and new models can be attempted. Terms of engagement overall need change. Managing the present - ignores the long-term strategic imperatives.

It is also worth pointing out that micro level nostrums can follow macro-level initiatives. Some local experts feel that in the NE they are looking at limits of governance with security as the driving force. Maladministration and rampant corruption in the delivery system have thwarted the efforts of economic development, and ethnicity/identity related violence has not only created strong vested interests but also invested the governance with a security bias.[17] It is obvious, that we learn from our past mistakes and attempt new approaches, attitudes and models. However in democracy no sweeping changes are possible overnight. Change of course will have to be gradual and consensual. In order to succeed the bottomline should be that all changes and measures must be products of local level dialogue, consensus and agreements and not imposed from above. Association

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of civil society in resolving problems looks promising in Assam while in Nagaland it has received a setback.

The problems relating to governance and corruption and land security, need utmost govt., attention as these have contributed to the proliferation of ethnicity related demands and violence in the region. Growth and lack of infra-structure are two other inter related issues needing hard-nosed solutions. While ethnicity related problems need multi-dimensional/multistage tackling, involving patience and the civil society, those of bad governance and corruption need a determined approach of accountability and results.[18] There cannot be fit-all-sizes solutions to the periphery-mainstream tension, but some necessary steps can set the tone for change.

Some suggested measures and postulates may include:

a. The attitude of looking at the region as one regional entity should be given up and its multi-cultural identity should be given due recognition and respect. Infact the concept of North-East as a composite entity is resented in NE as a racial slur meant to differentiate their Tibeto-Burman and Austro-Mongoloid racial origins and features. They question why a `North-East' Policy'? Are there South, Northern and Western region based policies?

b. All the seven or eight states should be dealt with as independent entities; like other states in the country. A notion that they are 'special' should go. Common issues like power and communications etc. can be coordinated locally or by the concerned Central govt. deptts. as in other parts of the country. This will involve immediate abolition of the North-East Council (NEC) and the DONER. Sooner the better. They have neither delivered nor achieved anything of significance. Allegations of vested interests, nepotism etc., abound. Abolition of these intermediaries will also improve the state accountability in developmental activities and enhance their self-esteem. Besides each state has different problems and situations. Peaceful Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram cannot be clubbed with disturbed Manipur and Tripura.

c. Another related issue is to revisit the romantic vision of Verier Elwin in governance based on protection of the tribal cultures, population and areas from the "rampaging" plains people and their culture. Basic question is who protected the identity of such groups before the advent of British rule in 1826? In over thousand years of recorded history, none of them lost their identity or existence till the colonial rule introduced elements of dividing the hill tribes and plain tribes, and plains and others. It led to social distancing and mutual fears and apprehensions. The fact is that unlike other parts of the country the tribals in the NE have always been self-governing sovereign entities needing no protection. If Naga's own version of history is believed, others needed protection from them. Singphos, the smallest tribe in Arunachal has practiced Buddhism for centuries without any threat to its existence or identity. We need only respect the multi-cultural diversity of the region and get out of the "protective" mindset. It has only created vested and preferential pools of interest. Besides, most of the important groups like Nagas, Khasis, Mizos, Gams, Kukis, have embraced Christianity, modernity and education which has nothing to do with their old traditions and culture which we endeavour to protect. In brief they are capable of taking care of their own future and need no outside intervention to protect the romantic version of their culture and traditions. The present generation wants peace, progress and jobs. This trend and its implicit interdependence should be encouraged.[19] Vision projected should be of commonality of interests and not exclusivity.

d. A message should go that the centre is looking beyond the security paradigm. Recourse to violence will be dealt with sternly, but mostly by the state govt.'s and the police. For sometime, security coordination, due to prevalent culture of violence, will present a problem - but meeting this challenge should increasingly become a local responsibility, assisted by the centre to the minimum. Appointment of mostly army and police officers as governor's in the past was not a proper message. This should change. Similarly the current attitude of All India officers in the states, aptly described as "suitcase officers", should also be taken care of-rather sternly. There has been enough molly-codling.[20]

e. The issue of connectivity with the rest of country is real and has become an important psychological factor in the thinking of the region. Bangladesh govt. is unlikely to provide the, transport-corridor and the "Look East" intercourse will take time to acquire substance. The problem has to be addressed both at the physical and psychological levels. Its complex Security

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environment precludes fast growth of industries and entrepreneurship.[21] A well developed, Railways and road transport network within and outside can be the immediate possibility. Air connectivity has limitations and is mostly a psychological and elitist relief.

f. The states and societies in the region should be encouraged to resolve their identity/ethnicity - related problems by intra-internal dialogue and civil society interventions and not run to the Central govt. for solutions. It should be made clear that they have to find their own solutions and the Indian Constitution has proved inclusive enough to take care of all reasonable aspirations. In this tumult of grievances and demands little credit has been given to the accommodative culture of the Constitution, even indulgence to undeserving ones. This aspect needs highlighting and recognition. Despite exclusivist, ethnic demands there is considerable amount of commonality by way of language, folklore, traditions and cultural practices. There is an urgent need to recover the old sense of mutuality which pre-existed present fragmentation, mostly encouraged by colonial approach of divisiveness.

g. To take care of unique ethnic/minority issues every state govt. should constitute a bipartisan state level Social or Ethnic Councils as an advisory body consisting of civil society leaders to debate these issues and problems and find solutions. The centre should not view each ethnicity related assertion as necessarily secessionist or anti-national and intervene. We should encourage the civil society to deal with such problems.[22] The militant groups do not want such forums as it exposes their myth of popular support.

h. It is too late to jettison the schedule VI entities like the Distt. Autonomous Councils (DAC) etc. as these have over the period acquired strong vested interests and symbols of autonomy and "identity". There are presently ten DAC's under schedule VI and several under state laws in the region. However, the functioning of the DAC's should be closely audited for their relevance and effectiveness in addressing the local needs. If found wanting, it should be examined if their functioning can be altered to be lead agencies in for development work and implement the schemes like the Backward Distts Initiates (BDI) Rashtriya Sam VikasYojana, Backward Region Grant Fund, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Panchayat Raj Scheme etc. Implemented with local/state concurrence these may prove more effective, integrative and honourable. However the changes in the roles of DAC's will require local consensus as these have developed strong political vested interests, and an uneasy relations with the state political apparatus. Infact time has come to examine the very rationale of Schedule VI after creation of predominant tribal states like Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Arunachal Pradesh etc. It should be examined if these objectives can be achieved by the time tested methods of reservations on the lines of SC/ST reservations.

i. The ethnicity/identity related issues, have tended to acquire undue importance and influence. At the best the 'ethnicity' is a fluid concept and at the worst divisive and a blackmail. It should be seen and dealt with in perspective and in practical terms. While it should not be ignored, but it should also not be overplayed.[23]

j. As far as possible the central govt. should not get formally involved in negotiations with the secessionist and militant groups without clear terms of engagement. These are used to mainly gain legitimacy, breathing time to regroup and to undermine the rule of law and constitutionality. Even where it becomes necessary, e.g. Nagas and ULFA, etc. it should be made clear that.[24]

a) Negotiations will be with all factions of that particular society and the final agreement subject to the approval of the people with the consensus building amongst the civil society, and

b) If demands concern other ethnic groups or the states, then these must be resolved by mutual discussions and dialogue and the central govt. will not involve itself in such exercise.

BALANCE SHEET

The ethnic identity of the Northeast is invariably viewed in relation to what is called the 'Indian mainstream'. Obviously the idea of a 'mainstream' essentially implies that there are periphery or 'side-streams' which are not part of it. In this context the

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moment appeals are made for joining the mainstream the Northeast is treated as a side-stream which has to merge with the mainstream for its survival. This formulation further implies a relationship of superiority and subordination. When there are several streams some of them definitely emerge as dominant ones towards which other streams are expected to flow and with which they are finally expected to merge. In fact the term mainstream is exclusivist in nature. It implies that some other streams graduate to become part of it when they develop features commonly found in the mainstream.[25]

Under these circumstances when the mainstream becomes more structured and defined more and more side-streams may grow in course of time. However, the possibility of proliferation of sub-streams is greater in the multilingual, multiethnic, multiracial and multicultural societies like those of India.

It is argued these days that there exists a dominant national group in India which is identified as a Hindu-Hindi community besides several other smaller linguistic, cultural and religious groups. This dominant national group comprising the Hindi-speaking/knowing states of north and central India is acknowledged as the largest single block of states with Hindu-Hindi as a major concern. It is this large block of states that is considered the Indian mainstream which represents the heartland of India. Such a formulation denotes relations of dominance and dependence. Although the idea is not always based on a reality of discrimination and oppression of one region by another, in reality more often than not it is created to express one's distinctiveness under the condition of identity politics.[26]

I would like to conclude this discussion by rejecting the idea of the great Indian mainstream as the historical periphery of the Northeast is hardly represented in it. The demand to join the mainstream has almost always been a call for the negation of the periphery. The underlying idea behind such an understanding is to pressurise the smaller identities to assimilate with the larger whole.

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DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT COMMUNICATION FOR RURAL INDIA

(*A study of villages of district Begusarai and Munger in Bihar over the use of media and development support communication in the dissemination of information in rural areas*)

AJEET BHARTI*
SARVESH DUTT TRIPATHI**

ABSTRACT

In times when a happy population is participating into various movements related to certain national issue via social media on 3G speeds, there is another part of the population which cannot afford to have a radio or subscribe the newspapers. There are people in villages which are denied information meant for them, on purpose. These 'ignorant' citizens have gradually lost the hope of any kind of development when they either don't have access to information or are denied information or there is an absence of a proper development support communication.

Present paper is an attempt to explore the various communication channels/media that the government uses to make various development related information available in rural areas. The study was conducted to know why the government uses a certain kind of media and whether or not it solves the purpose. It further tries to know the opinion of the rural population on what should be the media to solve the issue of information poverty and what are the reasons that are working as roadblocks.

The study was conducted in four villages from two districts, Begusarai and Munger, of Bihar. These two districts were (in fact, Begusarai was a part of Munger till 1972) the first districts to see any kind of industrial developments in the state. These two districts are among the top three in terms of highest per capita income in the state.

The selection of villages were on the basis of general demography of the said villages and all vary from each other. Two

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villages have very limited access to main town area and other two are closer. One of the village is populated by only Scheduled Caste citizens. One of the villages, Babhanagama, is among the most flourishing and aware villages of the district (the cooperative dairy received the prestigious Prime Minister's award of excellence in 2010).

The results proved that the approach of government in dissemination of development related information is totally wrong. The sample was decided on the basis of considerations of caste, occupation, literacy and income so that all kinds of citizens are covered.

The demography of villages from one small area to another differ drastically and hence the media to address the information dissemination should be selected accordingly. Some villages don't have any access to electricity, some doesn't have schools and a huge population is illiterate, some villages have caste issues which block the flow of information.

The study is an eye opener to the local administration, in particular, and state and centre in general where the approach of information dissemination is irrational.

In a diverse nation such as ours, where fundamental and infrastructural need of a large rural population is still ignored for various reasons, this paper brings about the fact that unless related authorities get to know the situation first hand and make decisions accordingly, spending billions of rupees won't solve any good purpose. Present paper can be a relevant source for researchers, students, media professionals and policy makers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Information poverty and the forced divide between the information seeker and the information is one of the biggest hurdles in the course of development of any society. Unless there are efforts made to tackle this 'invisible and soft' poverty, any kind of economic, and hence an overall development is impossible.

Development support communication acts as a bridge between the governmental funds and the execution of policies at the intended place. Media makes the people aware of various welfare policies that can benefit the common population. Media is as vital part of the development process as the policy makers and the beneficiaries of the policy themselves.

Forsythe[1], (1996), talks about the objectives of development journalism and talks about how media as a tool can effectively be a participant to the developmental process. The objectives are as follows:

1   Its objectives are to investigate, analyse, interpret, and to commit itself to development;
2   It should give an accurate development information that facilitates the development process;
3   It should aim at promoting mutual understanding between the leaders and the people by carrying policy and other messages of the state to the people and relaying people's needs and aspirations to the state;
4   It has to motivate people and policy towards what people need, and to stimulate people for the maximum participation in development.

Media has a big role to play in this regard, but it has to search the ways to reach the right mass through right medium. India is a vast landscape and so is the need of the media users. There is a huge chunk of people who are deprived of any kind of information because of various reasons. The reasons may be from economical to political.

There are places where the income of the population is not much even to feed themselves twice a day leave alone the 'luxury' of listening to a radio or subscribing to a newspaper! There are masses which are denied the 'information' on purpose. In the villages of Bihar, which is the area of study for this project, there is a section of the society, incidentally, lower caste people, who are left uninformed 'on purpose' regarding the policies of government.

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The local administration which is to empower the poor and to help the government reach them effectively, is making planned efforts in the opposite direction! The 'aamsabha' which is to inform all the citizens about the policies and schemes of the government and to discuss with the local people and the end-beneficiaries are seldom attended by the common people.

The reason varies from a) being passive, b) left uninformed, c) not using the right medium, to d) corruption. There is a need of change of approach from the side of the government in framing the policies and its implementation. What is the use of spending thousands of crores of public money which ultimately does not reaches the actual target?

There are many roadblocks in the conception and execution of any development communication policy. According to Habermann and De Fontgalland[2] (1978), the difficulties in the adoption of a viable development communication policy have to be simultaneously analysed at the horizontal and vertical levels. The horizontal level consists of diversified institutions such as government agencies, semi-governmental offices (e.g., rural extension service), independent development organizations, and private media outlets, which are all active in communication.

The coordination of these institutions becomes a major item of a meaningful development communication policy. The vertical level is defined by the need for mutual information flows between the population base and the decision-making bodies.

On this level, even more institutions are involved because of the local and supra-local administrations that are active in handing out directives and in feeding back reports to the government. Coordination of development communication initiatives becomes a more difficult task on this level because, with the exception of government extension bureaus, no institution is really prepared to pick up information from the grassroots levels and feed them back meaningfully to the national administration.

This absence of feedback is the next part of the problem, what is/can be the right kind of media in the above landscape? The villages as the sample areas in two cases are quite backward in nature. Bahadurnagar from Munger district and Madhusudanpur from Begusarai district are both river side areas with very limited or no connectivity from the main land. They have no electricity, no proper roads and transportation and are 35-40 kms away from the main market. The daily need of information is satiated through the word of mouth in general unless someone is a subscriber of any kind of media.

The poverty is so much that even the upper caste people are unable to afford a TV or subscription to a newspaper. The lower caste is sizeable in number but is extremely poor and passive. Poverty and passivity has a relation in these areas. This passivity has taken a long time to develop. Being denied the right to know what policies are for them and further being denied the benefits of the schemes or 'promised but forgotten purposefully' have taken its toll over a long period. That particular mass has decided or convinced itself to better keep themselves away from 'these' things and that they have nothing to gain from the government.

The information poverty will only be reduced when the government chalks out a different strategy for each type of mass. Generalisation of areas in India is a blunder where even a district has multiple demographic areas. Unless there is a proper planning and knowledge of the problems of a particular area and the best way to deal with it, there are less chances that it will help.

The problem with the government is that sitting in AC chambers of planning branch and deciding what can be done for an area of Bihar or any state is in itself illogical. Lack of physical infrastructure limits the penetration of media in these areas.

Government will have to devise innovative ways and will have to weigh the chances of reviving traditional practices to disseminate information. The real issue is to keep pace with the world at the political and technological level and carry that downwards to the 'aamaadmi'.

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One of the glaring issue that came to light during the study was that of identity denial. Denying identity is one of the main problems with the neglected lower caste people of the area of study. There is a ward in a village, Madhusudanpur, where many citizens (can they be called one?) are not listed in voters' list and hence there are no programmes and policies which can benefit them. This is a class who is denied any kind of information, uninformed of any 'gramsabha' or any development work that may concern them.

The district administration in tandem with the media can chalk out a comprehensive strategy to teach and educate the mass about the developmental information. The need is to give access to information in the convenient way, in their language at affordable or free price. Most of the respondents had access to information from human and not any other equipment.

The local administration will have to find out how different stakeholders can work in tandem to better the plans of the government. It may be opinion leaders, panchayat members, ward commissioners or the mukhiyas themselves. For this a stakeholder analysis can be done.

Where several groups of stakeholders are involved in the policy process, a stakeholder analysis can provide a useful policy definition tool. Stakeholder analysis has been mainly concerned with policy-making.

Crosby[3] explained that stakeholder analysis has emerged as a range of methods and approaches to analyse the interests and roles of key players in a specific policy domain. The notion of "stakeholder" has been defined in the literature in different ways depending on the goal of the analysis, the approach that is adopted, or the policy area.

A stakeholder in an organisation, according to Hannan and Freeman[3], is any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives, while other authors limit the notion of stakeholder to only those actors that can affect the issue at hand, and not necessarily those who might be affected by it.

For instance, Brugha and Varvasovszky[3] defined stakeholder as "individuals, groups, and organizations who have an interest (stake) and the potential to influence the actions and aims of an organization, project, or policy direction."

This is the point where administration can take a cue. The common men are more comfortable in their ignorance yet they have time to condemn government. Though negative, yet it is time that government devices a way to clear and conquer this ignorance. Unless this is done and information is fed to the actual beneficiaries the exchequer will keep reaching the wrong persons.

There are certain solutions to this problem of information dissemination. The government can aggressively campaign regarding the Right To Information Act 2005 and teach the general mass to use it. This will reduce corruption. There is another aspect to this that villagers will never use it because of fear, at the same time we must realise that there are always people in the powerful lot too who opposes the misappropriation.

The use of traditional media like street plays, song sequences, informal chats at chaupaal or public places by opinion leaders, dedicated radio programmes are some of the ways to feed information. There is a need of brain storming at intellectual level with the help of a human to another. The ways to convince will have to be made simpler and merely publishing posters and advertising in newspapers or district headquarters or making radio programmes won't help.

There is no logic in spending huge sums of money in transit advertising where the man in Delhi Metro becomes happy after reading about government's "Bhara NirmanYojana". Rather it should be diverted to traditional ways of information dissemination like using a "Dholaha" (drummer), street plays etc.

There is a demand to create an "information centre" in the panchayats whose soul work should be to tell people about any kind of policy that is for them. This idea was given to me by the respondents who claimed that they needed a dedicated channel to let information flow to them. They condemned the theory of local administrators who, according to them, "don't consider themselves any less than the Prime Minister of the nation" when elected. When the one among the same society starts letting a feeling creep in him/her the negativity comes and purpose of empowering the mass gets diluted.

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The general mass of the areas of study are in distress and the actual persons have been denied their right to get what is targeted to them. District administration will have to device ways to reach and there has to be a way to address the issue of accountability.

The corruption and denial or blocking the information is no less than a crime and it somewhere attacks the fundamental right of a citizen to have a decent living. It's a question of human rights and denial of information, as Rogers say, is a road block on the road of economic development. Unless the information poverty is tackled, economic stability for a nation is a distant possibility.

1.1 Purpose of study

● To know what are the communication media utilized by the government to address the people of rural area for their upliftment.
● To know what kind of communication is targeted to address which type of rural community and the related type of developmental sector.
● To know which type of medium is the most effective in each sector? Is it mass communication or development support communication which is more effective?
● To know the limits that prevent people from either participating or getting benefits of the various plans/schemes/policies run by the government or NGOs.

1.2 Research questions

1. Do you know that government makes and runs programmes and schemes for rural people?
2. What medium/media do you use for getting any kind of news/information?
3. From where do you get to know about these programmes/schemes?
4. What is the knowledge that you received from any of these medium/media?
5. Have you ever taken benefit of such scheme? If yes, name the scheme.
6. If you wish to be a part of any scheme/programmeswho do you approach for more information on it?
7. Should the government try harder to make the information reach to the people? If yes, how?
8. Has any NGO ever brought any development scheme in your area? If yes, which scheme?
9. After having any information regarding schemes etc., have you ever shared it with your neighbours or friends?
10. Does any discussion related to schemes regarding development of village area take place in PanchayatBhawan? If yes, how do you get to know about it?
11. What is the best medium/media to effectively disseminate developmental information to the right person according to you?
12. Do you know about the Right to Information? If yes, have you ever used it to know about the amount of money involved or to check the quality of material used in the developmental policies/schemes concerned to your area?

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are many theories, findings, various articles published on internet and in books and research papers which give an insight into development journalism in general and rural developmental issues and use of various media in particular. Here are a few excerpts from various sources which has given me some understanding on the topic and the ways to analyse the collected data.

In 1972, Nora C Quebral[4] coined the term "development communication", who defines the field as"...the art and science of human communication linked to a society's planned transformation from a state of poverty to one dynamic

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socio-economic growth that makes for greater equality and the larger unfolding of individual potentials."

Rivers[5] (1973) states that the primary duty of the press is that of a broker of information which it should gather from the halls of government and disseminate it among the people, then further carry their reactions and take it back to the people. In this way the role of media in the course of development becomes vital to any kind of developmental process. The media should act like a reminder and check list for the government as well as the society so that the wholesome development with ample participation of people is ensured.

The importance of interpersonal communication in the Indian communication landscape has been highlighted by **VS Gupta[6] (2004)**. He states that interpersonal communication has always had a socialising dimension, encouraging work, harmonious group living, banding together in the struggle against natural forces and in collective decision making.

Interpersonal communication best suits the Indian villages where mass media is unable to reach in the way it should. Be it scarcity of resources or the limitations of infrastructure, the mass media many times don't reach the end users of government policies. Here interpersonal communication helps a lot. Word of mouth and instant feedback with mind boggling discussions provide a great insight to the common man who is impaired in understanding the literary lingo of the press.

VS Gupta[6] further speaks about the communication system in the People's Republic of China where the mass media works through a complex web of interpersonal channels and groups, feeding people with information they need and at the same time can feedback to the party cadres. On the same lines he further quotes Schramm as under, "Only when communication can build itself into the social structure, is it going to show any real hope of extensive results. Only when can media channels can mix with interpersonal channels and with organisation in village, are you going to have the kind of development you will like."

He further advocates the use of traditional media in the rural developmental process. He states, "Traditional performing arts are functional and interpersonal, have a contextual base and would be able to carry the message of change development and growth." At the same time he makes us aware that the creativity and innovative talent at this level is missing in the governmental organisations and that's why, according to him, productions remains essentially ineffective.

Dr. MS Swaminathan[7], speaking on "Our Agricultural Future" in 1973 (which holds true even today), remarked that though the new technology is becoming available but the mechanism to transfer it to the illiterate and small users in an effective way does not exist. He further adds that, ironically there is a global communication network which makes various findings in this area available to the world as soon as it gets there but In India we are yet to device a method to reach and understand the needy, poor farmers who could be benefitted from it. There is an urgent need to develop such a communication network in our country where media helps the rural mass to understand and extract the maximum benefit from the available technology.

A paper from Food and Agriculture Organization[8] (FAO) on the fact that for the development of any human being communication (of any kind) is the key. A decisive role can be played by communication in promoting human development in today's new climate of social change. As the world moves towards greater democracy, decentralisation, and the market economy, conditions are becoming more favourable for people to start steering their own course of change.

Further explaining the point, it states that how communication is vital to stimulate their awareness, participation, and capabilities. Communication skills and technology are central to this task, but at present are often underutilized. Policies are needed that encourage effective planning and implementation of communication programs.

An article, "Can media catalyse India's development?" published on an online magazine, www.indiatogether.org[9] suggests that how media can be a tool to recharge and fasten the course of development in any region. It talks about the civil servants and media and their importance in the development of society. It says, "Media and civil servants are uniquely

and strategically placed to bring about a change in the lives of people, especially the marginalized and by making the development process more inclusive of the concerns and needs the people, particularly the underprivileged.

…For media-persons too, it is important to remember that eye-candy is a poor substitute for substantive engagement of the public good. Skill certainly matters. Especially when reporting on poverty and hunger, keeping individuals and their struggles or successes at the centre of stories arouses understanding and empathy in readers that policy reporting alone, though important, may not. We must report on progress and failure towards development goals fairly and repeatedly, but always with the knowledge that the reporting must enrich the humanity in each of us. The good society should challenge our minds and our hearts"

Further in the same regard the **United Nations' secretary general, Kofi Annan[10], (2000)** identified some of the challenges facing the humanity at large at the start of the 21st century in a report to the Millennium Conference:

1 Reducing the extreme poverty faced by 1.2 billion people who live on less than $ 1 per day
2 Improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020
3 Ensuring that all children complete primary education
4 Reducing HIV/AIDS infection in young people by 25 per cent by 2010
5 Preserving forests, fisheries, and biodiversity
6 Reducing the threat of global warming by reducing of 60 per cent emissions of carbon and other greenhouse gases
7 Controlling the water crisis
8 Defending the soil
9 Preventing conflicts

These areas are a must to be looked by the media while covering developmental issues and media should act as the eyes of the establishment if it is unable to see it. There are grave concerns which come and remain unnoticed and hence not taken care of. The media as a whole should, in compliance with the government, device ways to reach out to the people and help both, people as well as government, to make the developmental policies and schemes successful.

A paper[11] titled "The Government Development Communication Initiative: A Response to Democratic Communication and Citizen Participation in South Africa" talks how the various factors affect the process of development. It states, "Development communication is envisaged as a response to particular historical, social, and economic factors that characterize freedom of access to information and citizen participation. This includes socio-economic problems such as high levels of poverty and unemployment, low standards of living, poor access to basic services, remote settlement patterns, lack of access to technology, lack of information, poor health services, lack of education and skills, and lack of infrastructure."

JS Yadava[12] in his essay, Role and Development of Rural Press in India, writes about the pathetic nature of the rural press in India which, though, has more than 300 farm periodicals registered yet the coverage of the topics are limited to well to do farmers, officials etc. they seldom give any importance to the common farmer's problems. The same is the condition of small newspapers which had the circulation of less than 15000. These newspapers, instead of writing about the local issues, they tend to get into yellow journalism. Not all the newspapers are such but even if some are making noble efforts; either they don't have enough circulation or any interesting material which can benefit general public.

Seeing a better picture to the story he states that if the rural press is taken care of and if advancements are made adequately this will strengthen the democracy and usher an era of social and cultural change thereby "facilitating safe transaction into 21st century, not as two distinct entities- 'Bharat' and 'India' but as a united and strong India."

Daniel Lerner[13] (1958) in his book, The Passing of Traditional Society, saw the problem of 'modernizing' traditional societies. He saw the spread of literacy resulting from urbanization as a necessary precondition to more complete modernization that would include participatory political institutions. Development was largely a matter of increasing

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productivity. And to increase this productivity one must aspire, and it must begin in the psyche of the people. Hence, it is basically "Psychological"

According to Lerner, development failed to occur because peasants were unable to empathise or imaginatively identify with the new role, and to change. Every change in society must originate and begin in the hearts of the people. If the people would like to change, only then the development would begin. What is required is that some means of providing such people with clues as to what better things in life might be. Lerner saw the media as filling this need of promoting interest among the people for a better life. Not only that, he saw the media as machines, inspiring people for better things in life. He said 'empathy" endows a person with the capacity to imagine himself as proprietor of a big grocery store in a city, to wear nice cloths and live in a nice house, to be interested in : what is going on in the world; and to : get out of his hole

He pointed out to the correlation between economic productivity and the media provisions in different countries in support of his theory. The richest country had the most newspapers, the radios and so on, and the poorest, the least.

Everett M. Rogers[14] **(1983)** approached this with a perspective that had much in common with Lerner, but differed with him somewhat in emphasis. He saw the diffusion of the new ideas and their practice as a crucial component of the modernization process. According to him, "the mass communication influence appears to operate by a 'two step flow' process through awareness of the mass media, development of favourable attitudes and adaptation by inter-personal channels, particularly, "opinion Leaders".

It has been found that when a message is propagated, a segment of the population adopts it, and develops a positive attitude towards it. This can happen in the case of a product, fertilizer, seed, ideas etc. Then, the people who adopt first, directly shape the positive attitude of others who remain indifferent to the message .This is true in places where information and literacy levels are low. Simple people would like to get confirmation from the people living in their proximity. Rogers called it "Diffusion of Innovation"

3. METHODOLOGY

The research design of this project is *descriptive & analytical* which will help in getting the interpretations of data collected. The response collected through schedule needs thorough analysis to achieve the objectives. There are not only apparent but hidden and interpretative findings too which will come out after thorough analysis and description.

For the purpose of the study, a random sample survey was conducted in the four villages - Babhanagama, Chhapki, Bahadurnagar and Madhusudanpur from the districts Begusarai and Munger- of Bihar. To ensure equal participation of every member in that universe structured schedule was prepared and collected from the respondents.

Social strata, geography, occupation, caste, income and education were considered for the collection of data from the above-said regions. A total of 1350 respondents (all male) were interviewed to gather responses which constituted 12% of the total male population and 20% of the eligible respondents (over the age of 18) in the month of April-May 2010.Method of sampling was grid method. For this purpose, a chart was prepared on a paper in which lane-wise household demarcation was done and every odd household was selected for data collection.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Findings:

1. The most effective type of communication for dissemination of any information in general and development information in particular is Interpersonal communication in the rural India.
2. Use of common media like radio, newspaper or TV is not effective in rural areas as they cannot fathom the limitations of language, literacy and affordability.

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3. Opinion leaders or "other person? with information on developmental aspects of an area and government policies are the most trusted source of information in the villages with limited connectivity and media exposure.

4. Government should device new and effective mechanism with innovative ways to cater to the information need of the village people as the tried and tasted ways have failed.

5. Traditional ways like information in the language of the mass, one to one discussions, frequent gram sabhas to attract participation from the people is the need of the hour.

6. Loudspeaker announcement is the best possible way to communicate about the policies of government in rural areas as it is cheap, breaks the language and literacy barrier, audio medium, doesn't require active participation and can reach anywhere in the area.

7. Government must make better efforts to educate the rural masses about Right To Information as these people are not even aware of this fundamental right.

4.2 Analysis

Question 1: Do you know that government makes and runs policies and schemes for rural people?

Though, as the graph shows, each one of the respondents replied in affirmative but the fact is that they had to be told what does policies mean. After some convincing and brainstorming, a good number of them were able to understand what does these policies mean and how many are concerned to them. In total at least 20 policies/schemes were listed in the BDO office but the most of the respondents were aware of only a few.
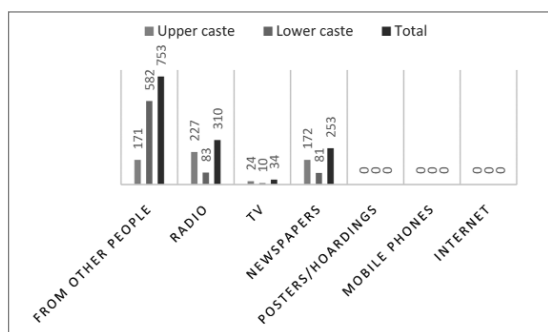
Choosing this question itself is an irony but the facts behind the graph revealed that government machinery is a failure in this regard when a number of people are not even aware of the word "Yojana" (policies/scemes)? The reasons are many, as already discussed in the introduction. From lack of innovative ideas to corruption in local governance to negligence and passivity are some of the major reasons for this failure.

Question 2: What medium/media do you use for getting any kind of news/information?

More than half, **55.77%, of the respondents relied on "people"** who have access to information. These 'people' are the ones who either have access to newspaper or visit main town frequently or are like 'opinion leaders' in the area.

Almost 23% of them had an access to radio and another 19% had newspaper to read. Here access doesn't mean they owned a radio set or newspaper. The ownership is limited to only certain individuals who allow others to listen or read out of friendship or generosity etc. Access to TV is very limited in all the four villages. The reason is lack of infrastructure. Even if they buy one they won't be able to watch it. Two villages have no electricity at all and another two gets a total of 3-4 hours of electricity daily.

As the graph says, access to information from all kinds of media is maximum to the upper caste people and lower caste people, for the lack of resources, poverty etc. have limited access.

Question 3: From where do you get to know about these policies/schemes?

The trend here again swings towards the 'opinion leader' or 'any other person' who is neither a local elected representative nor any government appointed person. 64.74% of the respondents relied on 'other people' to know about

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the schemes and policies of the government. Of this 64.74%,81.23% approaching the 'other person' are from the lower caste. **This also says that interpersonal communication is the most effective way to communicate any information to a mass which is poor, illiterate and doesn't understand the language of media.**

Radio with just over 8% came after newspapers. There are dedicated programmes on radio in the noon hours from the regional station Patna. Though the content of the programme is good but the listening audience is almost absent!

Newspaper is second with 13.77% respondents having an access to it. Newspapers are full of advertisements of these policies. Still as there is no access or readership, the public money is almost being wasted. Readership also depends upon the literacy of the population. The profile of the respondents for literacy is as follows:

Majority of the population, 478, is just not able to read. This speaks about the government's lack of proper planning and where the funds for advertisements should go!
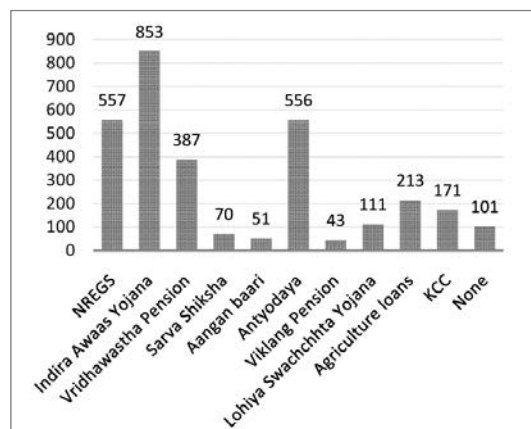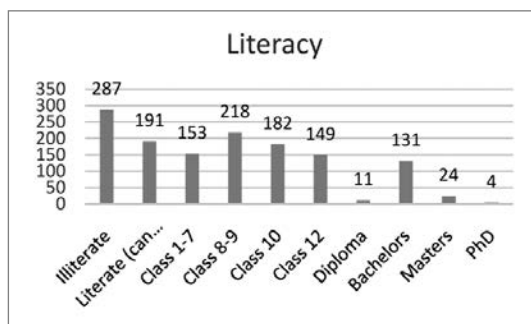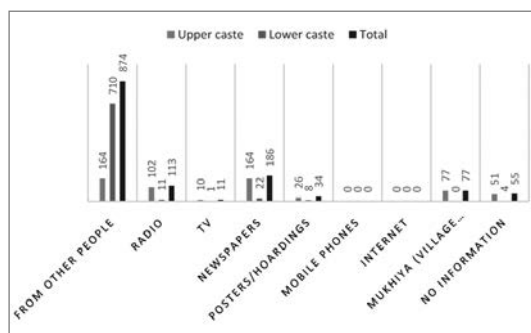
Incidentally, just 77 of the respondents had access to the 'Mukhiya' or the 'Pradhan' for these information. This again speaks a lot about local representatives on whom the onus of information dissemination is and how many have an access to them.As told by many of the respondents, the 'Mukhiya' at the place of being one of them becomes 'someone' the moment he is elected. He is no more a normal person but for getting a small work done he/she takes too much time and 'money' too. So the information source which should be primary and leading the chart comes last. This speaks a lot about the failure of machinery and lack of accountability from the side of district administration in particular.

Question 4: What is the knowledge that you received from any of these medium/media?

This question is related to people's reception power and pattern. After being exposed to different kind of information sources, they are asked about what are the policies that they have just heard irrespective of being a user/beneficiary of that. The retention is not limited to one scheme rather the respondents were told to remember as many as they have ever heard.

Indira AwaasYojana, one of the oldest schemes, comes first in retention with 853 people having heard the name. As it was the oldest so without many clues etc. the respondents were able to recall it nicely.

At second, with 557 recalling the name, came the schemes related to the BPL (Below Poverty Line) and Extremely Poor people, Antyodaya Yojana. He respondents called it by various names like, Laal card, Peela Card, free ration etc.

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556 of the respondents were able to recall the NREGS (National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme). Vridhawastha Pension Scheme was at the fourth in retention with 387 persons.

Other schemes like Viklang pension, Kisaan Credit Card, Badh Kshatipurti Yojana, Annapurna, Angan Vari etc. were the least known.

Question 5: Have you ever taken benefit of such scheme? If yes, name the scheme.

In this case too, there are respondents who are part of more than one scheme. So the percentage is not given and just the numbers are provided.

More that 43% of the respondents, 586 of 1350, are either not qualified enough (according to their elected representatives) for any policy (which is an irony) or not concerned due to take benefit from it. 274 of them are from the upper caste and 312 from the lower caste which has its own reasons like, 'no one hears', 'there are lots of complications involved', 'I am asked to give bribe' etc.

NREGS, surprisingly, in a village with so much poverty and so much need of development, was availed by only 117 of them. There are reasons to it. Corruption is one of them. The 'Mukhiya' who is responsible to allot the 'job card' allegedly makes many of them on non-existent names, or gets it forcibly signed by the villagers, had a tie up with bank officials, produces the passbook to them and gets all the money drawn from the bank on the name of villagers. The actual names get only a fraction of money, as low as Rs. 10 out of prescribed Rs. 112!

An NGO scheme, LohiyaSwachchhtaYojana, was the most availed scheme in one village, Bahadurnagar. Under this scheme NGOs made lavatories for each family who applied for it. In this they had to give a part of the amount to the NGO and rest was funded by the government. However as seen, the walls of the toilets were 3X3X3 in dimension making the user visible enough even while he/she is sitting inside! Again a failure on ground as no one is aware of the actual dimension on paper!

Other schemes were very marginal in use. Either a limited number of them had availed it or nobody was qualified enough to get them.
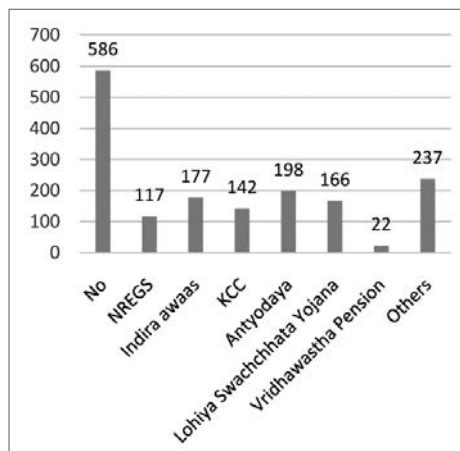
Question 6: If you wish to be a part of any scheme/policy who do you approach for more information on it?

Again the importance of interpersonal communication and role of opinion leader comes to view. 35.7% agreed to approach the 'other person' and another 31.6% relied on their friends for more knowledge.

That means unofficial means of information like 'friends' or the 'other person' who anyhow has the knowledge of the policy is much more helpful then the efforts that government is applying!

Mukhiya, BDO office and local representatives all combined are 24% only. So the mechanism of government or at least the thinking that local administration takes care of the dissemination is not rational by this data.

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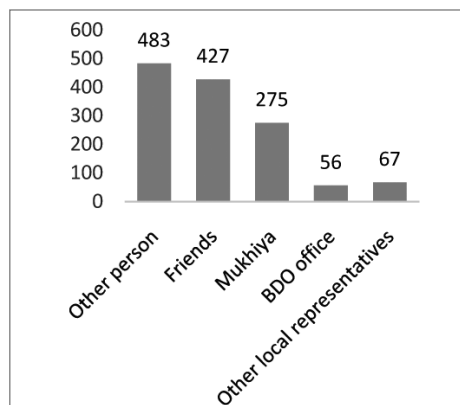
Question 7: Should the government try harder to make the information reach to the people? If yes, how?
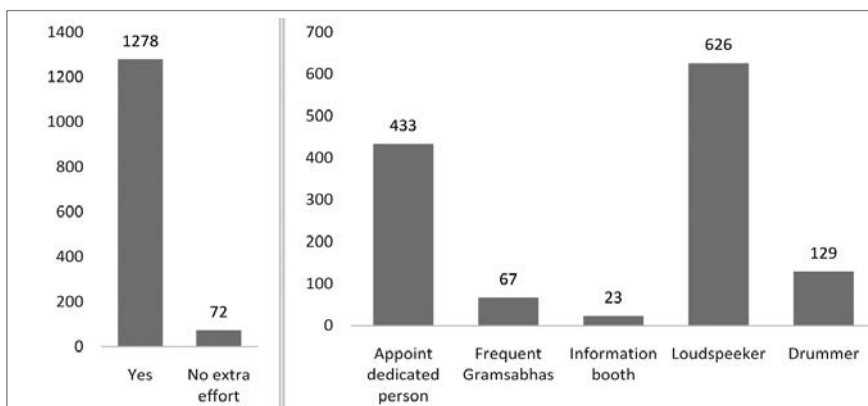
Majority of the respondents, 94.6% (1278), agreed that the government needed to work harder to make these policies reach the rural population. However, a small percentage of them had an opinion that it should not try harder rather think about bringing accountability to its own effort at the block and village level.

Among the 1278, who agreed that the government needed to try harder, 48.9% were in favour of loudspeaker announcements in the village. The logic behind this is that the loudspeaker announcement doesn't need being literate, it can come to any corner of the village, people can listen to it sitting in their homes etc.

This speaks two things about the nature of the rural population, 1. they are passive: they want someone to come and tell them while they sit in their homes; 2. they want it simplified: the nature of the population is such that they are unable to get the complicated language that the advertisements use. Moreover, they don't have access to other media as well. So loudspeaker is a medium that suits this demography and population profile.
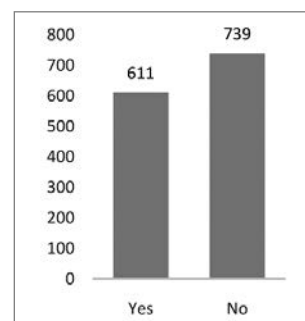
The second option which a good number of people, 33.8%, suggested was, "appoint a dedicated person" for door to door information dissemination. This again speaks of passivity as well as the helpless situation where their own representatives have gone out of reach.

They argued that information is non-information if it is not easily understood.

Almost 10% (most of them from lower caste and illiterate) asked for the old practice of 'drummers' visiting important places of village, drumming and then telling the gathering about any new thing.

Six persons were in favour of frequent Garmsabhas or village gatherings which as the data in the question no. 10 shows that they seldom take place. The person favouring these village gatherings said that this practice will make the local officials more transparent and accountable. This will benefit the area as a whole by allowing the common mass to participate in the process.

A small section of respondents, which included a panchayat samiti member, believed that there should be an 'information booth' in each of the panchayats whose soul work will be to take care of all the policy/schemes' related information. It should have people appointed to tell the people about any policy, educate them in their language, simplify the process to them and collect their opinion as well. This sounds reasonable as many of the respondents already agreed to having a dedicated individual for information dissemination, so this can be said to be a better and structured way of solving the problem.

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Question 8: Has any NGO ever brought any development scheme in your area? If yes, which scheme?

The question was asked to obtain information about the penetration of NGOs in rural areas and their work. All the villages had been visited by NGOs for LohiyaGrameenSwachchhtaAbhiyaanin which government funds a part of the sanitary installation and remaining cost is covered by the individual. However, as already stated earlier, it is not a success as the dimensions of the toilet are 3X3X3 in feets. So, even when an individual is sitting inside he/she is visible. The privacy is not there. For this the villagers had either make the adjustments by putting a thatch wall and roof or raise the structure to 5-6 feet. The wall is just brick thin and the reservoir is not a tank but made of some 15-20 cylindrical vessels of one feet each piled over one another. Though a basic structure, still it is a welcome step in village where sanitation is a huge problem. Ladies have to wake up early enough to visit the open fields in dark wee hours so that no one spots them.

45.2% (611) of the respondents had the knowledge of the NGOs visiting the village where as the rest had no knowledge of it. They thought whatever programmes are there they are all by the government itself.

Lohiya Grameen Swachchhta Abhiyaan was the only scheme that the respondents remembered till date.

Question 9: After having any information regarding policies etc., have you ever shared it with your neighbours or friends?

As expected, all of the respondents agreed that they shared any knowledge that they acquired from any source regarding any policy concerning to them. This speaks about the nature of the rural communication in India. The village is a unit small enough where everybody meets everybody, everybody knows everybody. This nature makes the information dissemination simple and effective.

Interpersonal discussion or one to one talk is far better than any media explaining it dryly. The proximity and the flow of information is better than any other medium. The queries are solved in the best possible way. If the person explaining, has the information to satiate the receiver, well and good, if not he/she may refer him/her to another who has more knowledge and is approachable.

This point is coming again and again that interpersonal communication is the most effective in this kind of demography where poverty, lack of infrastructure, and very limited transportation facilities are available.
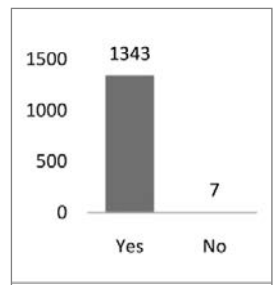
Question 10: Does any discussion related to policies regarding development of village area take place in PanchayatBhawan? If yes, how do you get to know about it?

This question was targeted to know the efforts made by the local administration to invite the common people in the process of development. This includes general discussion on any work to be carried out in the village, suggestions and brainstorming, level of involvement required, decision for the best place for a work, the issues of transparency and accountability etc.

It was astonishing to know that majority of respondents agreed to the fact that there are NO such discussions ever! More than half of the respondents, 57%, said that they had no knowledge of such meetings as they had never known of such village gathering or Gramsabhas.

34% said that it takes place once in a long time which ranges from 6 months to 3 years whereas the provision is to hold Gramsabhas every three months. Here is another side of story, one Mukhiya (in fact the husband of actual Mukhiya
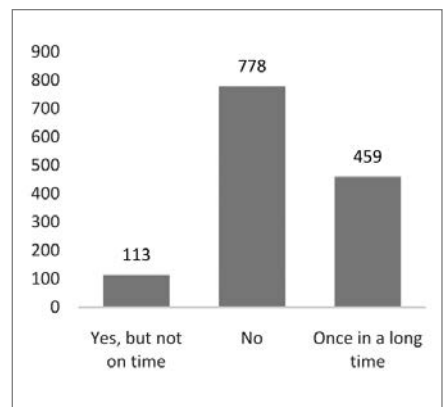
of Babhanagama who is a lady) said that he uses loudspeaker announcement to invite all the villagers to the common place but they seldom turn up.

There is a provision that if a certain number of individuals do not reach the place in the first meeting, the resolutions and policies will be automatically passed in the next meeting with whatever presence at that time. And as evident from the passivity of the villagers mixed with indifference and anxiety with their representatives, they never turn up in good numbers. They neither have zeal of participation nor are required or motivated by their leaders.

Remaining 8% claimed that they knew there was a meeting but after it was over. They said that they were left uninformed on purpose.

A large chunk of the respondents who said they didn't know of meetings also claimed that they were not informed so that they could not participate and make problems by questioning the working of the local administration. There was a whole ward in village Madhusuadanpur of BhavanandpurPanchayat, Das Tola (a ward inhabited by Chamaars(cobblers)) who claimed that they were kept uninformed of any such policies whereas they are the ones who should get the maximum of the policies. Loudspeaker announcement never reaches them, Gramsabhas are never conducted in their presence, the administration is inaccessible because of caste and poverty.

These are some of the problems in the rural level where accountability is required. After all development for whom, who is the actual end user, for whom are the policies made and who are 'actually' getting benefitted?

Question 11: What is the best medium/media to effectively disseminate developmental information to the right person according to you?

103 of 135, 76.4% agreed that loudspeaker announcement was the best medium to advertise and disseminate the information in the rural areas. Loudspeaker breaks the barrier of the language as it will be handled by one of 'them' only. It doesn't require any special ability to receive the message as it is an audio medium. It is cheap and reaches everywhere. Given these benefits there is no doubt that loudspeaker is best suited for the rural population.
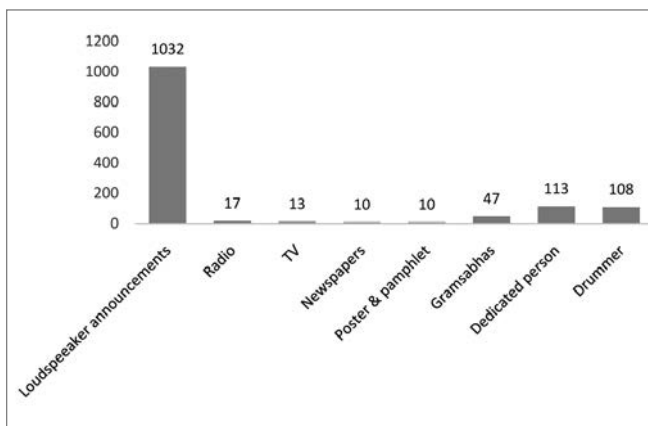
Almost 8% were in favour of appointing a dedicated individual to go door to door and make them know about the policies that concern them. Same percentage of people were in favour of a drummer to beat the drum at important locations of villages and yell out the policies in the local lingo. Almost all the person choosing this option were illiterate and from lower caste. This speaks of the rural mindset where the way of delivering information is still arguable which ranges from radio to drummers!

3.4% were in favour of frequent Gram Sabhas with serious participation from common people and motivation from the local representatives telling them the benefits of participatory approach.

All other media like TV, Radio, Newspapers, posters and pamphlets had almost no supporter with less than 2% agreeing to their use as the best medium.

Question 12: Do you know about the Right To Information? If yes, have you ever used it to know about the amount of money involved or to check the quality of material used in the developmental policies/schemes concerned to your area?

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This question was intended to know about the awareness level of the respondents regarding one of the fundamental rights i.e. Right to Information. The results were not good as 94.3% had never listened this right ever in any language. The rest knew about it but most of them had no knowledge about what was it.

77 of the respondents who said yes to the question had no or very limited knowledge of the RTI Act 2005, they just heard the name. Only four of them had ever used it to obtain information. After being told what is this and how it can be used to check corruption and bring transparency in execution of policies all of them shown some happiness that something exists which can create problems for wrongdoers.
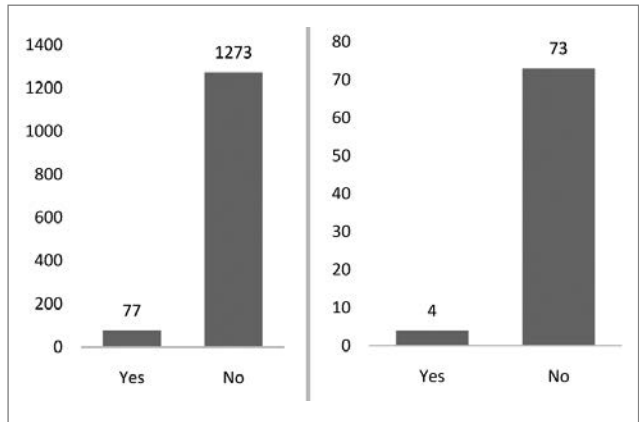
Almost all the respondents, both individually or in groups, were educated about the way to use RTI and showed enormous zeal in learning it. They had no knowledge of it as the government never tried to tell them in their way. Government rather focussed on electronic advertising as well as news bulletins.

This again might be the hidden policy of the administration to let the people empower on paper but in actuality keep them uninformed. Government has limited this to the intelligentsia to discuss the possibilities and outcomes and use it in the areas where it is needed but in lesser amount.

Had the government educated the people in the right earnest, the corruption and inadequacies will reduce on its own. The villagers were delighted to know that there is actually something which can be used against the mukhiyas and other representatives. It is a shame for the government that a tool to empower and check corruption at the village level where, as an MP accepts, only 5% of actual amount reaches the right person, is not even known… leave alone knowing how to use it.

This has to be the top priority of the government to make at least more than half of the people aware of RTI and the rest will learn by itself.

5. THE SAMPLE/POPULATION PROFILE

5.1 Sampling

A pilot study was conducted to know the basic understanding of the population. It was observed that females, in general, were either completely ignorant of the schemes or were reluctant to talk. The reason varied from social stigma to the fact that it was usually the males that headed the decision making of the household.

Adult females rarely fraternise in the said villages and even if they do it is not for news exchange related to government policies. Even if there are plans concerning directly to women, it is their male brother or husband who receives them on her behalf. Another point is the fact that males in the villages have the better exposure to information as they participate in informal gatherings and can approach the concerned representatives for information.

Convenience sampling was avoided to have any kind of bias and so, purposive sampling was done.

300-450males from each of the four villages namely, Ratanman Babhanagama, Madhusudanpur, Chhapki from Begusarai and Bahadurnagar from Munger were chosen as the samples from the state of Bihar. The sample size was 1350 which consisted of people from the age group of 18-114. The average age of the sample was 43.67 years.

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The sample was chosen on the basis of demography, geography, occupation and caste. Demography and geography gave variety to the data and representation from four areas that were all different from each other in terms of connectivity to the town, availability of basic infrastructure like roads and electricity etc.

The caste factor was taken in consideration on the hypothesis that the local politics and corruption is very rampant in the villages of Bihar and the people from backward caste seldom get their due and there are efforts made to not to let them know about various plans and schemes.

The reason behind choosing only males is the fact that the females are generally either ignorant of these governmental policies and schemes or they are not concerned at all.

5.2 Population:

Village	Total population	Male population	Total voters	Male voters
Babhanagama	3,000	1,700	1,200	700
Chhapki	1,800	950	400	270
Bahadurnagar*	10,700	5,800	6,800	4,200
Madhusudanpur	6,000	3,400	2,800	1,600

Bahadurnagar's total population is around 20,000 and so it has two panchayats in a single village. Here the population given is that of KutlupurPanchayat area which covers half of the village.

All figures are approximate and not exact

5.3 Sample profile (Total: 1350):

5.3.1 Caste equation:
Bhumihar& Brahmin: 594, SC and OBC: 756

5.3.2 Annual Income:
NA: 1217 (did not disclose or weren't ready to call that income),
Below Rs. 10000: 22, Rs. 10-50000: 87, Rs. 50-200000: 24

5.3.3 Occupation:
Agriculture: 708, Carpenter: 33, Labourer: 322, Vet Doctor: 11, Unemployed: 87, Chowkidar: 2, Ex armyman:2, retd. Govtemp: 36, Traveller: 3, Milk production: 18, PDS distributor: 4, mason:15, Teacher: 3 (pvt), rikshaw puller:23, cobbler:7, Potter:7, Student: 9, Barber: 10, Shop Keeper:27, Homeopathy Doc: 5, flower work: 15, medical stores: 3

5.3.4 Lower caste and their occupation:
Lower caste:756
Labourer: 434, agriculture: 114, Unemployed: 36, traditional work: 131, Rikshaw puller: 23, Shop Keeper: 18
5.3.5 Education:
Illiterate: 287, Literate: 191 (can sign only)
Class 1-7: 153, Class 8-9: 218, Class 10: 182, Class 12: 149
Diploma: 11, Bachelors: 131, Masters: 24, PhD: 4

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6. DISCUSSION

Conclusion

Several factors determine the overall development of any area like literacy, education, knowledge, understanding, exposure to media, curiosity to know and desire to develop among others. All these factors are interrelated. Literacy is one of the primary requirements as it leads to a series of changes in individual. It makes one receptive to words which directs the mind towards education and hence on a path to knowledge of anything and further helps in developing an understanding on that.

Though literacy is not a primary concern yet it has big role to play. Education means the ability to empower oneself with any kind of information. The rural mass is in the need of education on the government policies and schemes. The planning and money is one part of the process but the execution and desired results depend upon the fact that whether or not the actual user receives it.

Government lacks and have failed in this regard of educating the mass about its endeavours. There may be crores of rupees and thousands of employees and local representatives invested in the execution of a plan but the ground reality is that people don't even know the names of the policies leave alone being a part of it! There is a need to disseminate the information which is productive to the rural and hence national growth.

The growth, in economic terms, won't take place unless information starved lot is exposed and invited to be a party to the development process. For the nation to develop it is a necessity that small units which make the nation should develop with intellectual and physical participation of the concerned individuals.

A mukhiyacannot decide what is good for the village sitting alone with a group of individuals. The need for inviting voices and suggestion with all kind of oppositions make any project better. The need is to bring people for whom the development is and motivate them to realise that it is actually for them so they need to participate. Unless the common man comes and shares his/her views the development can't be wholesome.

Apart from the participatory approach which is missing in the villages of study, there is a need to change the information delivery structure. As the villages are poor, cut off from main city area and lack proper infrastructure to support media usage, the government must look for the alternatives. Alternatives can be charted out on block or district basis. The more pinpointed is the classification the more diverse will be the development.

The district administration should prepare plans to reach the people of one type of village in one way and other in the other. The data should be prepared regarding the education, media exposure and the best type of medium to cater information for each area and information dissemination should start accordingly. If an area is literate enough and has access to newspaper with a good amount of readership, one of the possible ways to educate people on development policies should be to advertise in simple language about the policies of government. Whereas if the villages are cut off with no electricity and road connectivity, where the access to market is very much limited and the village is poor and backward, the best way is to rely on primitive ways and traditional media like Dholaha (drummer) or drama and songs or use of loudspeakers to tell people in their language by going to their place.

The focus should be to bombard the passivity of the villagers and let them get rid of it. Whatever be the reasons of the passivity, unless that goes, participatory approach will not work. Common mass has a tendency to keep away from complications and it behaves as if there are complications everywhere. There is a need to convince and simplify the message and make them knowledgeable enough so that they understand for themselves that participation will be benefitting to them as well.

There is a need to rely more on one to one interaction even in a gathering. The village mass being heterogeneous in nature have different demands of information. There are certain who are reluctant to enter any domain of information, some want to know everything, some need to know only those which will benefit them directly and some has other

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motives as well. So these have to be taken care of.

It is a long process and will take a good amount of time but development doesn't take place overnight. Slight change in the attitude of government and slight motivation from the local administration as well as opinion leaders will do the trick and catalyse the process.

Another aspect is the refusal of information to a certain class on purpose. This is something which is a severe concern. Whatever be the reason, hidden agenda of the local representatives or wrong intentions to exploit the rules made by government, there is a need to check it. The representatives do not invite the villagers in a meeting knowing the fact that diverse opinion may lead to curbing of their intentions and may well work against their motif. If a person wishes a certain road to pass in front of his/her house and is a good friend of mukhiyaor any elected member, the road goes that way irrespective of the need of the village.

Another aspect is that the rule for gramsabhasis that if a certain number of participation is not there in resolution to a declared proposal on any given day, in the next meeting it will automatically be passed with whatever presence is there. So the representatives don't bother about informing people and people too are not bothered to attend.

The amount released from the government for various policies from health, infrastructure, education, to employment or environment is huge but actual end that it meets is thinkable. If someone applies for Indira Awaas he/she will have to give the brokerage of almost half the amount to various places and then will not have enough amount left to make a room out of it. Whole purpose of the scheme is defeated! Same is the case with almost all the policies.

The knowledge of policies in a simple way and availability to all is the need. Raising yellow hoardings near district headquarters and giving advertisements in local newspapers will not bring development; the need is to search for the right medium for the right area which varies everywhere.

Radio was good medium but the listenership to developmental programmes has declined due to entertainment based programmes. People tend to listen to songs and they are least bothered about the development programmes. So there is a need to reassess the feasibility of such used and overused ideas which no more work.

The panchayat samiti member's office can let you know about more than 20 policies for each village but the average awareness in the villagers is two policies that too only names! What is the need of these local representatives who becomes an outsider to his/her own society and whose own people sense a distance from him/her?

As John Lee[15] puts his point, "The implementation of communication policies and practices requires joint action among those involved in the social, economic, scientific, educational, and foreign affairs of each country. Their role is not to be conceived as a superpower set up to control the media. They can be successful only in constant contact and consultation with the communicators and the citizens whose direct participation in the formulation and implementation of communication policies and plans is both essential and vital. Today, the decision makers and the citizens of these countries cannot but pay close attention to the role that communication currently plays in society, and explore how communication may best contribute to all aspects of human and national development."

Information has to be sent across in an effective way after due consultation with all the stakeholders and studying the areas individually. The formulation of policies needs to be done in accordance of the different demands from different villages/societies. The government can make sure that information reaches the lowest common denominator in his/her way of understanding.

Information even in worst possible way empowers people. This empowerment leads to discussions and brainstorming which further creates a debate and logical conclusions come out. There is a need to feed those who are the victims of this 'invisible and soft' poverty. The moment of knowing brings a certain sense of power and confidence in the individuals. There is a need to bring that moment to the ignored and starving lot. The national development depends on these individuals who have no access to information.

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The time they will start knowing and questioning and hence participating, the nation will itself take off on the course of development. The need is to search for the right kind of fuel and the right approach to fly.

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INDIA-US RELATIONS UNDER LEADERSHIP OF PM MODI

MADAN YADAV*

INTRODUCTION

Under Dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Modi, discourse of India-US relations breaks all previous barriers of diplomatic crisis after he first visited United States in September 2014. Dynamic interactions between an elected popular leader of the largest democracy with leader of the most powerful democracy of global politics have changed the symmetrical image of previous regimes relations in the context of bilateral cooperation.

This visit was unique, because before becoming Prime Minister of India, Modi was barred from receiving a visa to visit U.S. But, Obama Administration was rolling out red carpet as a leader of emerging great power in global politics in 2014[1]. Prime Minister Modi offered an opportunity for reset in bilateral relations. The personnel bonds between both leaders and serious efforts to overcome past differences can be remarked that "beginning of beautiful friendship[2]".This visit was the India's commitment to forge an enduring partnership with U.S.

It was the historical diplomatic signal to cultivate the comprehensive strategic engagements after President Barack Obama accepted the invitation of chief guest on the eve of Indian Republic Day in January 2015. Modi has outlined the new vision of India-US relations after visit of Obama on the eve of India's republic day in January 2015. President Obama is first American President to attend India's Republic Day event since its independence in 1947. This gesture showed the importance of each other in the international politics in the era of globalization.

India and U.S relations is based on shared democratic values and enhancement of bilateral, regional and global common interests for the "global strategic partnership" in the 21st century. Prime Minister Modi also expressed his view in interview with CNN regarding this bilateral relation as "The oldest democracy of the world and the largest democracy in the world are natural allies. Our ties have deepened. India and U.S are bound together, by history, by

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culture. These ties will deepen further"[3].

   Prime Minister Modi remarked that this bilateral relations will be follow under the new motto " Chalaein SatH Sath: Forward Togather We Go". This philosophical approach of relation coined on the eve of Prime Minister Modi's first Summit with President Obama in Washington D.C in 30th September 2014[4]. The perspectives and priorities of two democracies under leadership of Prime Minister Modi and President Obama have changed the concerns in terms of regional and global common challenges.

End of Cold War era with Collapsed of Soviet Union has changed the dynamics of international order in the context of international relations. India had followed the market reforms policy based on the economic liberalization since 1991; it was the paradigm shift of Indian economic diplomacy to enhancement of cooperation with major global powers. 9/11 terror attacks has changed the dynamics of this bilateral relations. India was among the first states, which supported the President Bush's efforts to elimination of terrorism in Asia as well as around the world.

India is a largest democracy, responsible nuclear power and leading potential global power in international politics. United States has emerged as one of largest trading partner and significant sources of FDI in India.

India -US relations have been analyzed through political, economic, security, social, cultural perspectives in the post Cold War era under dynamic leaderships of NDA regime. Indo American relations has guided by the national security, regional security complex, balance of power and economic development, which is necessary for the betterment and amelioration of the people.

This bilateral relation has been guided under framework of cooperation includes trade and investment, education, science and Technology, cyber security, space technology, clean energy, health, transfers of strategic technology, military industrial complex, challenges of environment and climate change, anti terror efforts in the era of multi polar world politics.

India's national security interests, global power aspiration, economic and commercial ties including nuclear deals, counter balance the Chinese and Pakistan influence in the region will be bridge of cooperation between two dynamic democracies in the global politics. American strategic assessments of India and Indian subcontinent, Cold confrontations among Washington, Beijing and Moscow, regional economic and geopolitical interests in Indian subcontinent as well as in Asia will force US for strategic engagements with India in the 21st century. India and U.S will work together to build "Community of democracies" by sharing experiences among democracies for political evaluation of Asia. India's emerging capacity in terms of markets, human capitals and vibrant democracy will change the face of global economics and politics.

The September 2015 visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the next milestone for the enhancement of strategic cooperation between India and U.S as global natural and indispensible partner of international relations of 21st century.

This visit focused on the sphere of cooperation in digital economy, renewable energy including all strategic issues. He also addressed the Indian-American Community in the Silicon Valley at San Francisco[5].

INDIA -US RELATIONS: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Dynamics of Cold War prevented the comprehensive engagements including active political and diplomatic cooperation between New Delhi and Washington.

American President Roosevelt had tried to pressurize United Kingdom (UK) to move India towards goal of independence. Important officials of American administration including Cordell Hull, Harry Hopkins etc were sympathetic towards Indian aspirations. American Ideals have been continued inspired the western educated Indians, who were the leading leaders of Indian freedom movement[6].

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The Founding fathers of Indian constitution inspired from American constitution and Political system, so they borrowed ideas from the American constitutional experiences. The Preamble, fundamental rights and federalism are among noble ideas having direct assembled to the American constitution[7].

The Bad Monsoon Conditions in 1950-51 forced India to approach the American administration with request of long term loan for purchase of essential food grains. But, Truman Administration extended loan with political condition by demanding repayment of loan in the form of strategic materials.

Political and Security relations between India and America strained particularly India's stand over the Korean Crisis and Communist China under Republican President Eisenhower. India refused to join American support security design 'South East Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in 1954, and Bagdad Pact (later CENTO) in 1955 against anti Communist alliance especially Soviet Union (USSR). India followed the path of 'Non Align Movement' (NAM) along with third world countries during Cold War era. Pakistan joined the America led military alliances which entitled her to receive military assistance from US. This led active concerns of Pakistan support to Kashmir issue in UN and various international forums. US allies like U.K, and France supported US view over Kashmir to isolate India in favour of Pakistan in UN Security Council. While, Soviet Union had supported India due to its geopolitical considerations in Asia[8]. American policy makers supported India during 1962 War with China. India-US relations were again strained during Pakistani aggression against India in 1965, also in Bangladesh War in 1971 and the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

The end of Cold war and Indian's economic reform opened the doors for American's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India. US's commercial interests looks India as big emerging market in 21st Century, it enhanced the commercial and economic cooperation between both countries in the mid of 1990s[9].

Post Pokharan -II , America put economic sanctions on India. But , negotiations and dialogue between Strobe Talbott and Jaswant Singh were the successful attempt of India's world views. Twelve round of nuclear dialogues between Indian External Minister, Jaswant Singh, and the US Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talboot, provided a framework of reconcile of outstanding conflicts issues like Nuclear security, non proliferationetc[10].

President Clinton's visited to India in March 2000 post Pokharan Test was the landmark achievement in the cooperation of Indo- US relations. President Clinton visited India after President Carter in June 1978. It was turning point for enhancing the India-US ties in the beginning of new millennium. President Clinton clearly mentioned that no mediation regarding Kashmir issue. It was diplomatic achievements for India on U.S stand on Kashmir during Cold War era. Clinton administration also stressed that democracy is the crucial factor in the promotion of peace[11].

To strengthen the bridge of India-US relations , Prime Minister Vajpayee paid a reciprocal visit to Washington on September 14-16 , 2000. Vajpayee outlined the dramatic support of US led Global war against terrorism post 9/11.

ECONOMIC AND TRADE RELATION

India is second fastest emerging economy after China, while US is largest economy in world. India is one of favorite destination of American FDI.

There are several dialogue mechanism for enhancement of economic and trade cooperation. India and U.S has decided to established an Investment Initiative, with special focus on FDI, portfolio Investment, capital market development, and financing of infrastructure. American companies will leading partners of 'smart cities' projects[12].

Energy Dialogue including civil nuclear deal, oil and gas, sustainable development and climate change are important components. India and US are enhancing cooperation and dialogue through high level climate change working Group. Both have signed MoU between US Exim Bank and Indian Renewable energy Development Agencies

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(IREDA) including $1 billion financial supports for India's transition to low -carbon economy. India -US bilateral merchandise trade during the period January to October accounted to $55.86 billion with trade surplus of $ 20.97 million in favor of India[13].

DEFENCE AND STRATEGIC CO-OPERATION

The India -US Defense Policy Group (DPG) - moribund since 1998 Nuclear test and American sanctions -was revived in late 2001. US administration was agreed for the defense Cooperation with after 9/11. India and U.S signed the ten year defense pact outlining planned collaboration in the multilateral operation, defense trade, transfer of technology, co -production and collaboration related to missile defense in 2005. While U.S views that defense cooperation with India in the context of "Common principles and shared national interests[14]".

Defense relations is one of the significant pillar of strategic cooperation between both countries with signing of "New Framework for India-U.S Defense Relation" in 2005. This agreement intensified the cooperation in the field of defense trade, joint exercises, collabartion in maritime security and counter piracy etc. India and U.S have established a Defence Trade and Technology Initiatives (DTTI) for the tranfere of technology, exploring possibilities of co-production and co development with strategic value. The first meeting of DTTI held in September 2014[15].

Framework of the Indo-US Defence Relations was signed in June 2015, which has based on the previous framework to guide the bilateral defence and strategic partnership for next ten years. This agreement reflects their long term strategic convergence and shared national interests.

India and U.S have differences over regional security issues including Post Afghanistan 2014, cross border terrorism, troubled relations of Pakistan , emerging China, Afghanistan crisis post 9/11, South China Sea disputes including Kashmir issue are difficult task for American leadership.

PM MODI VISIT TO US IN SEPTEMBER 2014

Prime Minister Modi visited U.S in September 2014 after assuming the office the Prime Minister in May 2014. This visit happened after the controversies over trade policy, criminal charges against the Indian diplomat in Washington and resigned of the American diplomat in New Delhi during the last year of the previous government in India.

PM Modi and President Obama made serious efforts to reset the relations in "Joint Statement" . Both leaders extended commitment for wide range of cooperation including Afghanistan crisis, defense, intelligence, counter terrorism, space exploration and science.

It was first time Indian PM and American President wrote a joint editorial in the leading newspaper "Washington Post" as "Forward Together We Go-Chalein SatH Sath". This was part of the vision statement of the India- US strategic partner.

'Madi Son Square Garden Pitch'- where the Prime Minister addressed the Indian American community. U.S President Obama remarked about this public diplomacy as "rock start performance' at Madison Square[16].

CONCLUSION

Prime Minister Modi led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) era has created the sustainable and productive foundation for comprehensive engagements between India and U.S in last one year; 9/11 terror attacks, 26/11 terror attacks, and initiatives for civil nuclear cooperation has changed the dynamics of the security concerns in Indian subcontinent. Indo-U.S led "Global common vision" in the context of economic and security will be the new pillar of global politics in the era of multi polar world.

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TOURISM AS A LEISURE IN INDIA

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Key Words: Tourism, Leisure, Indifference Map

Leisure is defined asa time when people are not working, studying or sleeping, the choice they make about what to do with their spare or 'leisure' time.The impact of globalization, privatization has made today's man work more like a machine, especially in urban areas. In an attempt to outperform them, they are always in competition with one another eventually in this process, most often they are in competition with an unknown opposition. Most of the times, they are fighting with themselves. Also they try to prove themselves the best even to those who are indifferent to this self employed contest; in other words the common man lands up in cut throat competition with that group of individuals who is not even a part of the rat race. It is well understood that the knowledge of time management and utilization of energy in the planned direction would serve the humankind with great peace and satisfaction. Besides, more Leisure time will be available to the people to fulfill or indulge in the desired activities. Spending of the leisure time relaxes all the reflexes of a human body and at the same time energizes the physical and mental aspects. Evidences show that spending one 's leisure time into the activities like tourism, skiing, paragliding, playing games on camisoles, gossiping, shopping, snorkeling, spending time with the family, watching movie or television etc prepares the individual for an advanced psychological strengthening and stress free life.

The most important benefit of availing the leisure time into 'n' number of activities leads to sound health and well being of an individual.

There are mainly eight components of leisure activity:

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1) Tourism; traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment either domestically or internationally for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes

2) Arts and Entertainment; that includes spending free time visiting museums, theatres, art galleries, cinema halls

3) Sports and Physical recreation; going to sports complexes, stadiums thereby involving oneself into activities like swimming, football, tennis, squash, athletics, etc.

4) Home based leisure activities like watching television, listening to music, sleeping, lazing around, reading, playing games on camisoles, etc.

5) Dining out to satiate the taste buds with different cuisines of different localities. This becomes all the more interesting when an individual moves out with his/her own group of friends as they get relaxed and ample time to gossip.

6) Visiting friends/ relatives house as socializing helps in venting out the suppressed emotions, eventually rejuvenating the mind of an individual to face head on with enough enthusiasm the new upcoming challenges and rigors of daily life.

7) Spending time with family and children.

8) Country side recreation like trekking, rock climbing, horse riding, golfing.

Satisfactions attained by the people opting for tourism as a way of utilizing leisure time, is tried to be explained by the help of an established economics theory of Indifference Map. An Indifference Map is a set of Indifference curves {I C}. An Indifference curve represents all those combinations of two goods/commodities (measured in units form) that give the same utility/ satisfaction to the consumer .Here the two goods are Tourism taken on X axis and Leisure activities taken on Y axis. Since all the combinations on an IC curve give the equal satisfaction to the consumer; he will be indifferent between them that mean it will not matter to him which one he avails. In other words, it can be explained that all the combinations of two goods lying on an IC are equally preferred to a consumer. Higher IC curve (IC2 > IC1) implies more combination of two goods X and Y and eventually a consumer would prefer IC2 than IC1 as it is bound to give him more satisfaction than the latter. Similarly any combination of two goods on IC2 gives the same amount of satisfaction to the consumer. Time is a constraint and hence the available leisure time to involve in tourism and other leisure activities will be limited to the consumers/ people. Say the available time in units is 7, the person can spend his time for tourism as one form of the leisure activity and other leisure activities except tourism to the maximum extent of 7 in toto.
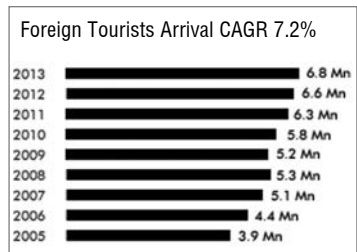

Greater the amount of leisure time an individual is able to spend more time on tourism.

INDIFFERENCE MAP: X axis denotes Tourism and Y axis denotes Other Leisure Activities
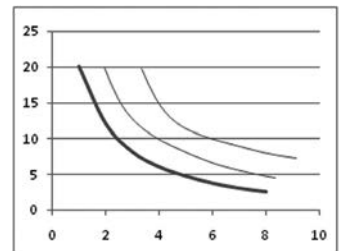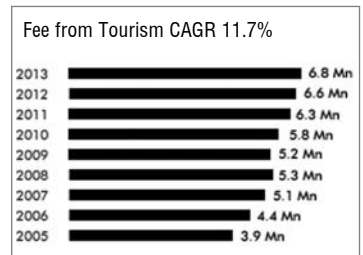
According to United Nations World Trade Organization 'Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.

Today Tourism is considered to be a growth engine as it is the largest service industry in India with a contribution of 6.23% to the national GDP. It plays a major role in generating a great deal of employment opportunities at a large scale. This fact is supported by the statistics that in India every one million invested in tourism

Foreign Tourists Arrival CAGR 7.2%

Year	Value
2013	6.8 Mn
2012	6.6 Mn
2011	6.3 Mn
2010	5.8 Mn
2009	5.2 Mn
2008	5.3 Mn
2007	5.1 Mn
2006	4.4 Mn
2005	3.9 Mn

creates 47.5 jobs directly and around 85-90 jobs indirectly. In comparison, agriculture creates only 44.6 jobs and manufacturing a mere 12.6 jobs. Moreover tourism is the third largest foreign exchange earner after gems and jewellery and readymade garments*. During the year 2011 Foreign Tourist Arrival (FTAs) in India were 6.31 million with a growth of 9.2% over 2010. FTAs during 2012 were 6.65 (provisional) million with a growth of 5.4%, as compared to the FTAs of 6.31 million during 2011. While the domestic tourist visits during the year 2011 were estimated to be 851 million, showing a growth of 13.8% over 2010**.

Fee from Tourism CAGR 11.7%

|	
2013	6.8 Mn
2012	6.6 Mn
2011	6.3 Mn
2010	5.8 Mn
2009	5.2 Mn
2008	5.3 Mn
2007	5.1 Mn
2006	4.4 Mn
2005	3.9 Mn

Tourism is an important sector of Indian economy in terms of the contribution made to the country's Foreign Exchange Earning(FEE).

*Source: Kurukshetra, May 2012, Vol.-60, No.7, p.1.
**Source:India, Ministry of Tourism, Annual Report 2012-13.

15.3% ■ Domestic spending ▨ Foreign visitor spending 84.7%

The studies show that in terms of expenditure the expected share of spending by the domestic tourists is 15.3% and that of foreign tourists is 84.7%
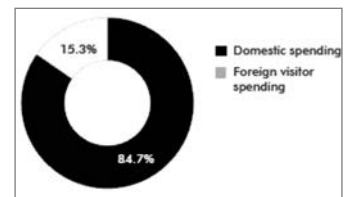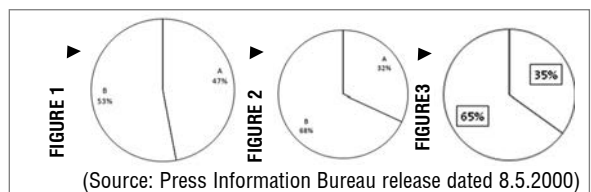
The Indian Government is taking all possible measures to promote tour & tourism considering the significance of the tourist inflow, like providing Visa on Arrival (VOA) of five years duration with multiple entries, carrying a stipulation of 90 days for each visit, has been introduced on a pilot basis for the nationals of the 18 selected countries.

Much has been achieved by way of increasing trains and railway connectivity, four-laning of roads connecting important tourist centres, increasing air seat capacity to important tourist destinations along with the discount being offered in the non peak seasons to increase the air traffic. Also more heritage hotels are being added to the hotel industry and paying guest's accommodations are encouraged*.

This article primarily focuses on the Indian citizens that use Tourism as a means of Leisure activity. Since an Indian tourist visit the foreign land mainly for tourism and relatively in lesser percentage for the business venture; it is important to understand that people prefer the varied tourist's spots as per their economic conditions. The amount spent on foreign tourism is very small in comparison to the tourism expenditure made by the Indian people to different places of India. The tourism concept also includes pilgrimage, relatives function, medical tourism, small business assignments as well as academic and sports activities.

In order to study what people think of tourism as a medium to spend their spare time, a primary data was collected on the random sample basis from the people of middle income group who were self decisive in deciding their leisure activity without any pressure or guidance from the other people. The methodology used was a small questionnaire. The sample size of n=100 was taken. The sample selected was well aware about the concept of leisure time and the activities comprised along with tourism. The data was depicted through pie diagram. It had the following outcomes:

The **figure 1** shows that out of a sample size of 100; 47% of the population prefer spending leisure time in tourismvis a vis other leisure activities. This might be the reason that people in the metro felt themselves tired with the busy life schedule and prefer to opt for a break from their routine.

Figure 2 shows that though 47% of the population of

FIGURE 1   FIGURE 2   FIGURE3

B 53%   A 47%

A 32%   B 68%

35%   65%

(Source: Press Information Bureau release dated 8.5.2000)

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the people is in favor of spending their free time on tourism, its only 32% of the entire population that is able to execute their planned thought of tourism. Reasons could be varied and many. The foremost being the pocket size of the earning customer.

Figure 3 represents that the 35% of the entire population is of the opinion that tourism is the best means of using the available leisure time and energy over sleeping, reading, shopping etc. Study shows that the reason of the discrepancy could be the lack of resources like time, finances, children issues, family responsibilities etc. And at times the illness in the family also add to the woes of the people's inability to do so.

The analysis of the data reveals a lot of mismatch between what the citizen of India thinks and actually how he behaves, when it comes to the real time execution of the plan of spending his leisure time on tourism. India which was once known worldwide as a 'golden bird' has altogether a different story now. India is a developing country. The socio economic conditions of the people here vary. It's a land mainly inhabited by the middle income class. Indians still follow the Joint family system and as a part of the inherited tradition believe in saving more for the unforeseen circumstances rather than spending the entire income on the relatively expensive mode of leisure activity i.e. tourism. He is the sole bread earner of the family and at the same time highly progressive in his outlook. With the increase in his income, his propensity to consume also increases though not in the same proportion. An individual is wise enough to prioritise his needs no matter for that very reason if he has to forgo his own desires. Apart from meeting day to day expenses, he also has an objective of owning a house of his own .The beauty of diverse cultural tradition of Indians still lies in the concept of Joint family system. Besides the merits the joint family system has its own set of problems. Being a sole bread earner of the family, an individual has to take care of the needs of his old ailing parents, their exorbitant medical expenses, and the rising educational cost of his dependent children apart from meeting their never ending demands. The income, the resources are limited but the expenses and the associated responsibilities are much. The other side of the coin is that there may be enough disposable income with the other set of rich class but they fail in their endeavour to use tourism as a form of leisure activity because of ever growing business needs or may be at times the children's'/ family responsibility take an upper edge over their leisure time.

Tourism probably has an upper stake in the mind set of Indians, but other leisure activities also play a vital role in rejuvenating the people for better output. Leisure time is realized very precious with globalization. People realized the importance of leisure activities. They especially focus on this aspect not only to groom their life, but also use it as a tool for healthy body and mind as well as for energising themselves.

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THE CONCEPTS AND MAGNITUDES OF DISABILITY:
AN ACCOUNT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS IN INDIA

NIRAJ KUMAR SINGH*

INTRODUCTION

Disability is a broad term with different meanings for different people. Type and degree of disability vary from person to person. "A person who has physical, sensory or mental impairment which substantially limits a major life activity has record of such impairment and is regarded as having such impairment"(Baquer, 2000, 67). Many definitions have been advanced, founded on diverse value of theoretical underpinnings. Bio-Medical approach focuses on functional impairments. The psychological approach defines disability from the point of view of social stigma and adjustment. The economic vocational approach considers the employment problem of differently abled. System analysis approach considers the problem of social vacuum and also advocates the planning management and evaluation of services with changing of developmental needs. Minority group approach compares differently abled person with minority group because they also faces similar problems as encountered by religious and ethnic minority such as social discrimination, segregation, isolation etc. Human rights approach regards equality of opportunity while socio-political approach considers disability emanates primarily from the failure of structured social environment (Karna, 2001).

It is well known that a majority of differently abled young persons have been excluded from educational, economic, social and cultural opportunities (Groce, 2004). Differently abled persons are generally amongst the poorest of the poor. It has been documented in several research studies that living in poverty increase the likelihood of suffering from physical or health impairment; differently abled persons generally experience higher rates of poverty than the able bodied (Yeo, 2001). Poverty is both a cause and consequence of disability. Poverty and disability reinforce each other. It increases the vulnerability among them (DFID, 2000). Differently abled persons are the most oppressed and marginalised section in every country. They are

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deprived of all opportunities of socio-economic and political development mainly because they have minimal share in access to basic facilities like health, education and employment. It is noted that around seventy percent of the differently abled persons are unemployed and the rate of their employment is falling down radically in India (Chaudhari, 2006).

Women with disabilities in India experience two-fold discrimination due to prevalence of traditional gender roles and expectations. They are twice to three times more likely to be victims of physical and sexual abuse than women with no disabilities (Mehrotra, 2004, p.5640). Women with disabilities in many regions of the world suffer from this double discrimination (Nagata, 2003). Differently abled females are generally married to relatively older men and that has lead to higher rates of incidence of widowhood among them. Persons with disabilities are considered ineligible to marry those without disabilities unless compensated with huge dowry.

The case of women with disabilities is noteworthy as their literacy rates are more likely found to be lower than even their male counterparts on account of double discrimination that they suffer, on the grounds of both gender and impairment. The differently abled persons are more likely found to be out of job and families with a differently abled member are often worse off than the families with a non-differently abled member. This leads to lower employment and incomes.

It has been found that children with disabilities were less likely to start schooling than the children without disabilities and they have lower rates of retention and promotion rates in schools. In order to have children with disabilities in schools, which has been emphasized as a part of inclusive education, there is an urgent need to reform the education system and make it more inclusive (WHO, 2011). It is important that state-wise strategies on inclusive education of children with special needs are made more precise and effective in order to create favorable learning atmosphere for them. UNICEF (2003) has estimated that globally about seventy percent of children with disabilities, including those with mild mental retardation, can attend regular schools. In India, only three to four percent of children with disabilities have access to education with or without support services (Narayan, et.al, 2006).

THE CONCEPT OF DISABILITY

Persons with physical anomaly or deformity or some kind of handicap were termed as crippled for centuries. The term 'crippled' and its synonyms imply some sort of social stigma. There are various kinds of disabilities and as many causes intended of disabilities. Many persons have been suffering with disability since birth; however, others turn out to be differently abled in later phase of life. Numerous disabilities are disguised in nature and not as obvious as epilepsy or haemophilia. Consequently, finding a consensus on the diverse and often varying definitions of disabilities has never been an easy task among the scholars.

Disability is generally taken for granted as the functional limitation of ordinary activity, whether that activity is performed alone or with others. In a social context disability displays defined positions or statuses of differently abled persons. The differently abled persons attract some kind of attention from rest of the population because of the position that they occupy in that particular society. There are societies across the world where mild forms of sub-normality, schizophrenia or infirmity are not identified as disability especially in the old age.

The most important difficulty in understanding the magnitude of disability is created by the indiscriminate use by scholars, of terms like 'disabled', physically handicapped, physically or mentally challenged, impaired etc. There is utter lack of consensus about which one of these definitions should be accepted. "Some writers have tended to use the terms 'disabled' and 'physically handicapped' interchangeably even in the same article while others define disability as the biological component and handicap as the social component"(Hamilton, 1950, p.17).

The most acceptable and satisfactory definition of the term 'disabled' has been put forward by the United Nations (UN). This integrated definition is contained in the Declaration on the Right of Disabled Persons (1975), which defines the term 'disabled' "as any person unable to ensure by himself or herself, wholly or partly, the necessities of a normal individual

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and/for social life, as a result of a deficiency, either congenital or not, in his or her physical or mental capabilities" (Leandro, 1993, p. 123).

The word 'differently abled' have been used instead of 'disabled' because it gives positive connotations than the later one. Initially, both the terms were used as synonyms where 'differently abled' does not stand for 'having different abilities'. More specifically it means 'lacking expected abilities' but later it was realized that disabled persons may be endowed with different abilities than able bodied such as Stephen Hawking. He can't speak and move but can produce better model of origin of universe and concept of time and space than many able bodied. Brail and sign languages are the effective tools of visually challenged and communication disability respectively but most of us can't understand their languages. People with disabilities exemplify the best of the human spirit. There are no people with disabilities, but people with different abilities, said Khalid Malik, United Nations Resident Coordinator in China. Their rights shall by no means be ignored, disrespected or not fulfilled.

DISABILITY AND HEALTH CARE:

Health of the population is directly related to economic efficiency, educational status, accessibility to basic health services, political stability, and socio-cultural development. Five major childhood conditions that have been held responsible for 21 percent of all deaths in low and middle-income counties are diarrhea, acute respiratory infections, malaria, measles, and pre-natal conditions.

Immunization programmes have yielded significant changes in child health in the last few decades. Nevertheless, at least 2 million children still die each year from diseases for which vaccines are available at low cost. According to the WDR 1993, injury is the fourth important cause of death after heart, cancer and respiratory infection diseases in developing countries and the third in developed countries. Interestingly, the share of injury in total deaths, in contrast to diseases, does not differ between developed and developing countries (share of communicable and non-communicable diseases are 5 and 87 percent respectively in the developed and 41 and 51 percent respectively in the developing countries) (Gumber, 1994, p.3).

The ill health disproportionately affects the poor, leading to higher morbidity and disability. The physical body is the poor man's asset, ill health due to disease or injury triggers a chain reactions loss of work, deprivation of earnings and expenditures that poor are forced to pay for private sector. A recent World Bank study (2002) analysed that 40 percent hospitalized persons barrow money or sell their assets to cover expenses and 35 percent fall below poverty. Their deprivation and vulnerability make them poor and ill more often. "The proportion of total death caused by communicable diseases (including maternity and nutritional deficiencies) continues to be unacceptably high at 42 percent (of the 269 million DALYs lost, communicable diseases account for 50.3 percent". (Mishra et.al,2003, p 2).

Figure: 1.1 : Vicious Cycle of Poverty/Disability for Persons with Disabilities
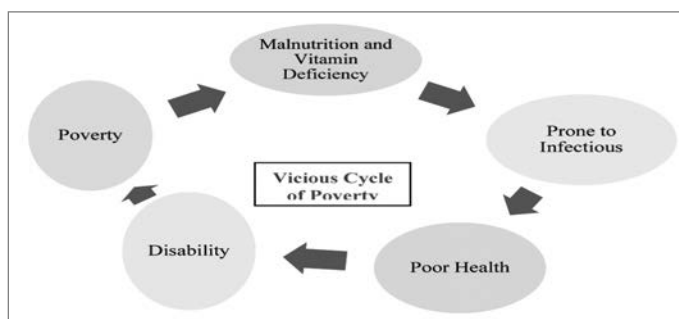
Source: Based on Yeo, R., & Moore, K. (2003) Including Disabled People in Poverty reduction work: Nothing about us, without us.

Locomotor disability is directly associated with polio-virus. The only reason for its existence is insufficient universal coverage. Prevalence of tuberculosis is estimated to be almost four times higher among the persons living below the poverty line than the better off. Malnutrition is estimated to be the single most important risk factor for diseases, being responsible for 16 percent of the global burden of disease in 1995, measured in DALYs. Malnutrition, either in the form of protein-energy, malnutrition or micronutrient malnutrition, primarily of iron, vitamin A and iodine, often contributes to premature death, poor health, blindness, growth stunting, mental retardation, learning disabilities and low work capacity. Protein Energy Malnutrition (PEM) is major cause of incomplete physical growth. However, consequences of disease, infections may in many environments, contribute more to malnutrition than dietary inadequacy.

The infant mortality, child mortality and maternal mortality are more likely to be found highest among the poorest of poor and among the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (SC/ST). These larger sections of populace has been suffering from disease (communicable and non communicable), malnutrition and other disability related issues. The situation has arisen mainly because the government has largely remained ignorant about public heath in general and the differently abled persons particularly in India. This is the reasons policy makers could not evolve any comprehensive scheme for rehabilitation of differently abled persons. "The bulk of the immunizations had been provided by the government, with nearly 80 percent of urban doses and 90 percent of rural doses accounted for by the public sector. However, the proportion of total doses received from the private sector was increasing in economic status. The share of scheduled castes and tribes in total inpatient days related to childbirth of 12 percent are much lower than their share of children of 31 percent" (Mishra, et.al, 2003, p73).

In India, government spending on health is somewhat smaller in comparison to the World average but still quite significant. The concern for equity is clearly brought out in various health policy documents. For instance, the Bhore Committee Report of 1946 recommended, "No individual should fail to secure adequate medical care because of the inability to pay for it"(Jeffery, 1988, p102). India is also a signatory to the Alma Ata Declaration of 1978, which aimed at 'Health for All' by the year 2000 (Mishra, et.al, 2003). But the target could not be achieved so far because of absenteeism, inefficiency, lack of capital infrastructures, and other intrinsic problems of public health. There has been also diversion of allocations from infectious diseases to family welfare programmes and this has also contributed towards an increase in the number of differently abled.

ENUMERATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY IN INDIA

The history of enumerating the differently abled persons in India dates back to 1872, when the first census was conducted under the British rule. The questionnaire of 1872, called the House Register included questions not only on the physically differently abled but also the mentally differently abled persons and persons affected by leprosy. However, this practice was discontinued after the 1931 census.

The reintroduction of disability census in 1981, after a gap of nearly 50 years, was an opportune time as the United Nations had declared the year as the 'International Year of the Disabled'. The Census of 1981, recorded 11,18,948 from rural and 1, 49,547 differently abled persons from urban areas, which was found to be much smaller than the estimates presented in unofficial documents. The data of 1981 Census for differently abled persons created a lot of confusion about the actual number of differently abled persons in India. The Ministry of Social Welfare requested the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) to devote 37th round in 1981, especially for collecting data on disability, to clear the air of confusion created by the census data. Subsequently, because of the inadequacies in data collection for differently abled persons in 1981, the Census discontinued disability question again in the 1991

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Census. The 58th round NSSO 2002 reveals that there were 13.67 million differently abled persons in 1981 and 16.36 million differently abled persons in 1991.

The NSSO 47th round in 1991 collected data for physically and sensory differently abled persons in terms of four broad groups namely visual impairment, hearing impairment, speech impairment and locomotor disability. The locomotor differently abled constituted 55.33 percent while the visual, the hearing and the speech differently abled persons constituted 24.79 percent, 20.06 percent and 12.17 percent respectively in 1991.

The NSSO 58th round in 2002 also covered mentally differently abled persons in addition to the above mentioned four disabilities. Visual disability was further categorized into the blind and the low vision groups. Similarly, mentally differently abled persons were categorized into mental retardation and mental illness groups. The NSSO 58th round data depicts 57.50 percent differently abled having locomotor disability, while 10.88 percent were blind, 4.39 percent had low vision, 16.55 percent were hearing impaired, 11.65 percent had speech disability, 5.37 percent were mentally retarded and 5.95 percent were mentally ill.

The incidence rate of differently abled persons has declined from 90 to 69 in the rural areas and from 83 to 67 in the urban areas during 1991-2002. Declining incidence rates depict that significant healthcare measures are in place especially among infants and children for control of polio and other communicable diseases which were responsible for disabilities in later stages. The incidence rate of differently abled women also recorded declining trends in 2002 as compared to 1991, but the decline was more in case of urban areas as compared to the rural areas.

According to Census 2001, as an estimated 21.9 million population accounting for 2.13 percent of the total population of the country, suffer from physical or sensory disability. Disability has rural-urban differential as larger section of population living in rural area are affected by various type of disability because of high morbidity rate in rural than urban area, lower accessibility to health facilities, immunization, antenatal care, malnutrition, and less availability of sanitation and safe drinking water. More than 74 percent of differently abled population lives in rural area.

CONCLUSION

The methods of disability prevention could be numerous and varied. Prevention of disability can be achieved through certain measures such as community education, early detection, awareness generation campaign, genetic counseling and so on. Immunization, antenatal care and malnutrition are also strong variables in determining disability in rural and urban India.

Social discrimination is one of the most noteworthy predicaments experienced by persons with disabilities. They comprise of that marginalised section of society which does not have easy access to health, education, employment and rehabilitation amenities. Despite government efforts, a large section of differently abled persons are living in degenerated and inhuman conditions. It has been found that social discrimination, unfairness, conflicts, and poverty leads to disability. Medical research has indicated that there is a close association between disability and prevalence of infectious diseases.

Disability is a social fact and therefore a strong correlation can be established between poverty and disability. The women, children, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are more likely to be found among the most vulnerable sections of the society in India. Disability among women should not be seen in terms of their numerical strength alone but should also be analysed in prevailing socio-economic structure. Many women are discriminated because they are women. Literacy among persons with disabilities was found to be considerably lower in comparison with the rest of the population.

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FROM 'LOOK EAST' TO 'ACT EAST' POLICY:
INDIA'S ASPIRATIONS OF A GREATER GLOBAL ROLE

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Jawaharlal Nehru, immediately after the Indian independence, envisioned a greater Asia with ties that would develop in future between South and South East Asia. Jawaharlal Nehru in his book, "The discovery of India", 1944, wrote,"The Pacific is likely to take the place of Atlantic in the future as the nerve centre of the world. Though not directly a Pacific state, India will inevitably exercise an important influence there. India will also develop as the centre of economic and political activity in the Indian Ocean, South East Asian upto Middle East. India will have to play a very great part in security problems of Asia and the Indian Ocean, more especially of the Middle East and South East Asia".India's 'Look East'Policy (LEP) could, thus, be seen as the unfolding of his vision in contemporary times. It was a move to discover the long cherished political, economic and socio-cultural affinities - a vision of Asian Community.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked the end of the Cold War and the world order that anteceded it. The geopolitical tensions leading up to the 1991 Gulf War deeply affected India's economy, bringing about economic recession and an acute balance-of-payments crisis by mid-1991. This crisis drove India to search for economic opportunities in more dynamic parts of Asia. The dynamics post the era saw a swift global reconstruction. United States of America became the most powerful country in the world and China emerged as the face of the 'East', a once underdeveloped country was on the path to becoming a global super power. In a world that was rapidly globalizing, the 'Look East' policy was a course correction in India's foreign policy. It was formally launched in the 1990s by the Narasimha Rao-led government when India sensed the change in the locus of world economic power from the 'west' to the 'east' as necessitated by the evolving geo-politics and trends in the Asia-Pacific. The aim was to revive political ties, forge regional security cooperation and develop economic

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linkages by increasing integration with Southeast Asia. Over the years, India joined ASEAN-led arrangements such the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADDM+) as also ASEAN-India Annual Summit and the East Asia Summit (EAS) which has institutionalized India's association with Southeast Asia.

The 'Look East' policy had been a major part of India's international engagement since its economic opening in 1991. Having received bipartisan support from successive Indian governments, the policy had evolved from economic and diplomatic engagement with Southeast Asia to broader security and defence ties across the whole Asia-Pacific. In recent years, India has signalled a willingness to play a greater strategic role in the region, deepening links with such partners as Japan, Vietnam, and Australia. The policy has been driven in part by India's strategy of external balancing against China, but has also been motivated by India's desire for a greater global role and its rise as a trading nation.

The Narendra Modi-led government which came into power in 2014 has accorded high priority to India's 'Look East' policy. During his opening statement at the 12th ASEAN summit in November 2014, he underscored the importance of the 10-nation ASEAN bloc in a new era of economic development, trade, investments and industrialization. He made known to the world that India is not merely 'Looking East' but is now 'Acting East' as well, thus, revising the title to 'India's Act-East Policy'. This phase was also characterized by an expanded definition of 'East' extending from Australia to China. There has been a consensus in India cutting across the political spectrum in support of the revision of the 'Look East' policy.

INDIA'S NORTHEAST IN ACT-EAST POLICY

The Look East policy was driven by three specific factors. The collapse of the Soviet Union created a strategic and economic vacuum for India, and the end of Cold War bipolarity reduced the relevance of India's non-aligned stance. Second, China's opening just over a decade earlier prompted India to reach out to Southeast Asia to avoid falling into a subordinate political and economic role in the region. India was also driven by a desire to develop and stabilize its fragile North-eastern states, which were in the midst of insurgency. As four of the North-eastern states share a 1643 km long land border with Myanmar, they are critical to overland connectivity with Southeast Asia. India, therefore, needed to integrate into the global economy, and the dynamism of India's eastern neighbours made Southeast Asia an attractive place to start.

The commonalities of India with Southeast Asia are many compared to the dissimilarities. The region shares cultural and religious values, and forms a large collective weight of the global population with a similar demography. These similarities create a ground to work together towards a peaceful and sustainable future and people-to-people exchanges. The renewed policy also points towards the strategic importance of India's Northeast region. Political isolation over the years exacerbated the socio-economic issues of the region vis- a- vis the rest of country. Northeast India as a gateway to Southeast Asia can augur well with the strategy of economic development in this region, the issues of internal and border security, and the question of socio-cultural identity. The Northeast region has the potential to play the arrow head role in evolution of the 'Look East- Act East Policy', and in fact it would not be wrong to say that looking and acting east will begin from here. South Asian states such as Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan are so closely linked with Act East policy that they also need to be considered as part of the policy. India's North-eastern states cannot be easily accessed from the mainland without Bangladesh's cooperation, so positive relations with India's South Asian neighbours will be crucial to enhancing its land connectivity with Southeast Asia. In addition, since becoming Prime Minister, Modi has advocated a 'Look East, Link West Policy' pointing to a broader Indo-Pacific conceptualisation of India's region.

CHINA AS A FACTOR IN ACT-EAST POLICY

India's increased engagement with the region is driven by the impact of China's rise on both its bilateral relationship and the broader evolving security dynamics of the Indo-Pacific. China's presence in the Indian Ocean has increased significantly in recent years, made easier by its relationships with Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and others. China has a legitimate

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interest in protecting its trading and energy lifelines, with 70 per cent of its oil supply and almost 80 per cent of its total trade being shipped through the Indian Ocean region. However, China's presence in the region combined with its increasing assertiveness along its disputed border with India has given rise to the perception of 'strategic encirclement' within the Indian strategic community. According to Indian Home Ministry figures, the number of alleged Chinese border transgressions doubled from 2011 to 2012, and, in August 2014, was on track to exceed the levels of previous years. India's focus on building economic and security relations with key partners in East and Southeast Asia can be seen to be part of an external balancing strategy in response to these concerns. However, India's strategic engagement with its Asia-Pacific partners reflects both its competition with China, and its ambitions for a greater global role. It is in India's interest to see a multipolar order in Asia, but India's motivation for engaging with the region exists independently of its relationship with China. India has shown a desire for a greater role in Asia, including as a security provider. India has in the past been careful to avoid the perception that it is attempting to contain China or intrude on China's strategic space, as the swift demise of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue and India's reluctance to speak out on the South China Sea have demonstrated. As such, it is likely to cautiously expand its influence in the region, while attempting to avoid overt rivalry with China.

As China's relationships with India's neighbours in the Indian Ocean deepen, the strategic relevance of India's own connections with neighbouring Asian states in the Pacific Ocean will likewise grow. Importantly, China's assertiveness, particularly in maritime territorial disputes in the East and South China Seas, is prompting Asia-Pacific nations to look to India to play a balancing role; demonstrated by the accelerated outreach to India by states such as Japan and Vietnam. With almost 55 per cent of India's trade transiting through the Malacca Straits, India does not want to see these crucial waterways dominated by a strategic competitor. Indian P.M. Narendra Modi's intention to transform the Look East policy to 'Act East' can find its expression by focusing initially on relations with India's South Asian neighbours, its commitment to pursue economic growth and a more ambitious foreign policy will lead to an increased eastward focus.

INDIA-ASEAN ENGAGEMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Two decades on, engagement with the Asia-Pacific has become an integral component of Indian foreign policy with bipartisan support. In 2003, the geographic focus and agenda of the policy was significantly expanded to include Australia and East Asia, as well as broader economic and security issues. Look East, thus, developed into a multi-pronged strategy involving many institutional mechanisms at multilateral and bilateral levels, economic links, and defence engagement. India's trade with North and Southeast Asia now represents about a quarter of its total trade; outweighing that with the United States and the European Union. China has become India's top trading partner, with bilateral trade growing from roughly $US7 billion in 2003-2004, to $US65 billion in 2013-2014. In the same period, two-way trade with ASEAN member states has grown from approximately $US13 billion to $US74 billion, making its trade with the region as a whole even more significant than with China.

Commerce, Culture and Connectivity are the three pillars of India's robust engagement with ASEAN. In the economic arena, the India-ASEAN relations are poised to scale new frontiers. The two sides are expected to sign an India-ASEAN FTA in services and investments soon. This will complement the FTA in goods which was signed in 2009 and has led to a quantum jump in bilateral trade, which is hovering around US$80 billion. The two sides are now confident of scaling it up to US$100 billion by 2015 and double that volume by 2022. The two-way investments are on an upswing: ASEAN investments in India over the last eight years amounted US$ 27.9 billion, and Indian investments in ASEAN reached US$32.4 billion. During her visit to Singapore in late 2014, India's foreign minister Sushma Swaraj articulated the need for an Act East policy forcefully: "Look East is no longer adequate; now we need Act East policy".

Connectivity, physical, institutional and mental, remains the enduring agenda of the India-ASEAN engagement. India has been in the forefront of pushing a host of trans-national projects that seek to weave the region together in an intricate web

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of road, rail and maritime links. The completion of the Tamu-Kalewa-Kalemyo sector of the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway is poised to create a new dynamic in India's multi-faceted ties with the region. With the new Indian government focusing with renewed vigour on spurring the economic uplift of India's north-eastern states, the gateway to ASEAN, enhanced connectivity promises to unleash a new prosperity in this region. In the days ahead, enhancing shipping and air connectivity will be major focus areas.

Setting new benchmarks for this blossoming relationship, India has set up an Indian mission to the ASEAN in Jakarta, and has set up an ASEAN-India Centre which is housed in New Delhi. Capacity-building, developmental cooperation and the burgeoning knowledge partnership are key facets of what experts are calling India's 'Enhanced Look East' policy.This is reflected in India sharing its expertise in capacity building projects in Southeast Asian countries through the three funds - the $50 million ASEAN-India Cooperation Fund; the $5 million ASEAN-India Green Fund; and the ASEAN-India Science and Technology Fund. India plans to set up four IT Centres in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam. India is also set to launch a Tracking and Data Reception Centre in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, which would make remote sensing data available from the RESOURCESAT and OCEANSAT for applications in disaster management and mineral exploration for ASEAN countries.

MODI'S ACT EAST POLICY: PRAGMATISM MUST PREVAIL

Elected with the largest electoral mandate in over 30 years, the government of Narendra Modi has an exceptional opportunity to transform India into a serious strategic player in East and Southeast Asia. While early foreign policy decision-making pointed to a prioritization of relations within South Asia, the Modi Government has since demonstrated its intention to pursue a more ambitious foreign policy agenda, including carving out a greater global role for India. Early interactions with East and Southeast Asia have been positive, and partnerships with Japan, Vietnam, Australia, ASEAN, and Indonesia hold particular promise.

India has been pursuing closer engagement with the Asia-Pacific for over two decades now. In order to be transformative, however, the Modi Government must look beyond what has already been pledged to pursue serious and deep strategic partnerships throughout the region. This seriousness would be gauged through a number of indicators. On the political level, there would need to be greater engagement with East and Southeast Asian partners, and greater diplomatic resourcing throughout the region. There would also need to be more active involvement in relevant multilateral institutions, such as the East Asia Summit, ASEAN Regional Forum, and APEC, to which India has applied for membership. On the economic front, it can be expected that India's trade engagement with existing East and Southeast Asian partners will continue. But the extent to which India is willing to liberalize its domestic restrictions to allow greater levels of foreign investment will be a clearer indication of India's commitment to strengthening relations with the Asia-Pacific, particularly with regard to Japan. Finally, a key indicator will be enhanced defence cooperation and assistance, including joint exercises, defence transfers, and financial or technological assistance. Conclusion on the sale of advanced weaponry to the region, and naval cooperation, particularly in trilateral arrangements, will be of particular significance. In recent years, it is clear that India's engagement with East and Southeast Asia has been driven primarily by the challenge of responding to China. As such, the kind of regional relationships pursued by the Modi Government will be affected by the way China's ties with India and its other neighbours continue to develop. Should China persist with its current accelerated rate of incursions along India's disputed border, or should China's presence in the Indian Ocean acquire a significant military dimension, India is likely to pursue a deeper relationship with critical partners such as Japan, Vietnam, Australia, ASEAN, and Indonesia. Similarly, should China's assertive behaviour in maritime territorial disputes in Asia continue to be regionally destabilising, it can be expected that states in East and Southeast Asia will look more seriously towards India to assume an influential role in the region's security architecture. India's evolving relationship with the United States will also influence its engagement with East and Southeast Asia, given the continuation of

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America's critical role and its stake in the region's security. The United States has for some time expressed a desire for an enhanced global role for India. The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, drafted at the peak of India's economic ascendancy, recognized that India would be likely to assume a more influential role in global affairs, and contribute to Asia as a net security provider in line with its growing military capabilities. As US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton encouraged India "not just to look East, but to engage East and act East," a sentiment that has continued to be echoed by senior officials in the State Department more recently despite India's subsequent economic slowdown. A closer US-India relationship will be likely to result in more active Indian involvement in East and Southeast Asia.

CONCLUSION

In its first months since assuming office, the Modi Government signalled its intention to pursue serious engagement with the Asia-Pacific and prioritise high-level interactions with China, ASEAN, Singapore, Vietnam, Japan, and Australia. Modi's overwhelming electoral victory has not only afforded his government the opportunity to pursue a serious strategy in the Asia-Pacific, but has enhanced the perception of India as an attractive security partner in the region. Deeper engagement with the region will align with Modi's intentions to revitalize Indian economic growth and carve out a more prominent global role for India. In addition, prioritizing relations with India's East and Southeast Asian partners will fulfil India's broader strategic objectives of balancing against China's increasing presence in the Indian Ocean. China's assertive stance in its border dispute with India and maritime territorial disputes in the Asia-Pacific is increasing the relevance of a stronger Indian presence in the region. If it is able to carefully manage Chinese sensitivities, cautious Indian engagement has the potential to act as a stabilizing force in the region. India under Modi will likely pursue a more ambitious role in East and Southeast Asia centred on practical partnerships with Japan, Vietnam, and Australia, and multilateral engagement with ASEAN. India's partners in the region can expect greater Indian involvement in multilateral maritime security initiatives, particularly in the areas of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, transnational crime, and joint bilateral naval exercises. Accordingly, Australia and other partners should encourage a more active Indian role in regional multilateral institutions in order to support its foreign policy reorientation towards the region. However, India will be unlikely to engage in any security initiatives that could be perceived as threatening or containing China. In the near term, it would not be realistic to expect India to take an active position on East Asia's maritime territorial disputes, beyond its declared support for principles such as freedom of navigation. In the past, India has neglected to articulate a clear vision for its strategic ambitions in East and Southeast Asia. Historically, it has suffered from strategic timidity and poor defence planning that has impeded its ability to integrate itself into the Asia-Pacific. To establish the seriousness of India's commitment to the region, the Modi Government must demonstrate that 'Act East' is more than just a rebranding of an existing policy. In order to preclude further inertia, India will need to move quickly to outline a clear agenda for deepening economic, institutional, and defence links with the region that go beyond what has been pledged by previous governments. If the Modi Government is able to achieve this, then India has the potential to assume a role as a consequential strategic player across the wider Indo-Pacific.

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DEVELOPING THE AFRICAN CONTINENT: INDIA'S AFRICAN POLICY

SANDEEP KUMAR PATEL*

The Hopeless Continent' once referred by the prominent magazine 'The Economist', now has changed in recent years. The strengthening of democratic governance and economic growth across Africa is a new phenomenon. Africa as a land of opportunity and the next frontier of growth, India's African policy and as a development partner in Africa should be re-examined and rejuvenated. Historically, India's Africa policy has been supportive for the struggle against decolonization and racial discrimination. Later, the Bandung Afro-Asian conference in 1955, Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) and a New International Economic Order (NIEO) brought India closer to the countries in Africa. Thus, ideological, political and economic issues have guided India's relations with Africa. Following the economic liberalization reforms in 1991, India started pragmatism in its foreign policy.India has used economic diplomacy as a method of wooing the African countries.

India's engagement with African continent stands both at a bilateral and regional level. India has opened dialogue with the regional economic communities and has acquired observer status in the regional organizations such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Apart from this, India has launched an integrated 'Focus Africa'programme in 2002-03. The main objective of the programme was to increase the interaction between the two regions by identifying the potential areas of bilateral trade and investment. In 2008, India institutionalized the relationship with Africa by organizing the "India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)." The second summit in 2011 at Addis Ababa expanded this cooperation. The New Delhi Summit, 2015 is significant in the context of the evolving development partnership, trade and investment ties and the scope for convergence on peace and security issues. The Indian strategy aims to have a balance between India's growing commercial and strategic interests in Africa and its traditional policy of empowering Africa.

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AFRICA AND INDIA DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

African states have historically been the victim of abusive behaviour from external powers and aid given by them has done little to improve African countries' fate. In recent past Africa is looking elsewhere, realizing inspiration from emerging countries such as India, China and Brazil who have successfully transformed their economy. India's development partnership is unique as it is based on a consultative model and is driven by African needs. India's initial role as a development partner to developing countries, particularly in Africa came in the form of Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme, first initiated in 1964. Such an initiative that focused on capacity building and technical expertise amongst African countries, earned India a reputation on the continent.

India's desire to share its knowledge and experience and skills with African countries is significant. The ITEC initiative has focus on training, deputation of experts and implementation of projects in African countries. Project assistance, which accounts for 40% of the annual ITEC programme budget, allows India to demonstrate the skills, technologies and human resource capacities acquired in the course of its own development. The major focus of project assistance to Africa is agriculture, as it has provided Ghana, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Mali with equipment and expertise for agricultural use.

Other important areas of cooperation under ITEC are vocational training in small-scale industries and entrepreneurship development in Senegal, and Zimbabwe etc. As the ITEC division explains 'India is not a rich country and cannot offer grants-in-aid to match those of the developed countries. It does, however, possess skills of manpower and technology more appropriate to the geographical and ecological conditions and the stage of technological development of several developing countries.'

Human resource development and capacity building have been in the forefront of India's partnership with Africa. Annually, over 1600 officials from sub-Saharan Africa receive training in India under the ITEC programme and more than 15000 African students study in India, while Indian engineers, doctors, accountants and teachers are present across Africa. The partnership in human resource development has been augmented by the 'Pan-African e-network project'. The project seeks to bridge the digital divide between India and 53 countries in Africa through tele-medicine and tele-education. At present, 23 countries are part of this ambitious initiative, which focuses on empowering the people of Africa through information and communication technologies (ICT).

The India-Africa engagement has transformed from mere 'commodity trading ties' to an economic partnership, where government and industry finance and invest in capacity building in Africa. Export-Import (EXIM) Bank has supported Indian companies that implement infrastructure projects. For example- a transmission system, rehabilitation and maintenance project in Zambia; a contract for multi-product pipeline project in Sudan; transmission line projects in Algeria, Tunisia; and the construction of cyber towers in Mauritius. India is involved in a railway rehabilitation project in Angola, and engaged in agricultural projects, including the supply and installation of agricultural machinery in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Chad, Senegal and Gambia. India is participating in energy transmission and distribution projects in Ethiopia and Rwanda and rural electrification in Mali and Mozambique. Indian Line of Credits (LOCs)is being used to set up cement plants in Djibouti and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Another area of engagement is the renewable energy partnership. As there is a global focus on clean energy resources, India has been involved in solar energy projects in Africa. In Mozambique, India helped in set up the first solar panel production factory. India has trained Mozambican technicians in India.

UN's Millennium Development Goal (MDG), which targets 'Achieving Universal Primary Education' is matters of concern in Africa. As the saying goes in Africa "To assist an African child in education is to assist Africa", so India has a lot to offer in terms of innovative education approaches such as tele-education, which could further develop a skilled labour force in Africa.There exists limited infrastructure, staff deficit and administrative hurdles in higher education. The continent is 'youth dividend'; therefore a proper higher education could change the fate of Africa. Through the Pan-African e-network project various universities has been selected from Africa (Ghana, Cameroon and Uganda etc.) and India. Many African students

studying in India have been awarded scholarships by the Indian government.

One of the most significant forms of Africa-India partnership has been the offer of concessional credit under the Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme (IDEAS) for implementing a range of projects as per the economic and social priorities of African countries. In the last decade, a total of almost US$ 9 billion in concessional credit has been approved for nearly 140 projects in more than 40 African countries. So far nearly 60 projects have been completed across a range of sectors. Apart from this, India has also pledged to set up nearly 100 Indian Africa Training Institutes across the continent.

India has taken several steps to enhance development cause in Africa, including the Focus Africa Programme and the Techno-Economic Approach for Africa-India Movement (TEAM-9) initiatives. The Focus Africa Programme initially focused on sub-Saharan Africa, with emphasis on seven major trading partners in the region: Ethiopia, Tanzania, Nigeria, South Africa, Mauritius, Kenya and Ghana. The scope of programme was broadened in 2003 to add 17 other countries, including some from North Africa. The TEAM-9 initiative was launched in 2003 having a view to enhance commercial relations with countries in the West Africa region. It is a special cooperation model between eight West African countries and India.

India's current development cooperation practice has earned criticisms also in Africa especially in Ethiopia. The headline 'Indian land grabs in Ethiopia' shows dark side of India-Africa cooperation. Indian investors have put money in the controversial projects. Some Ethiopian civil society groups claim it as a dispossession of land for profitable gains for Indian investors. India proudly boasts to be the world's largest democracy and a responsible power. So, it came as a shock that India would be associated with such conduct.

To conduct its economic diplomacy cum south-south cooperation as a development partner in Africa, India's development assistance is vested in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Unlike India, China has a comprehensive model of cooperation between ministries and a department exclusively dedicated to foreign aid. Therefore, compared to China's development assistance India needs to pursue a more effective cooperation approach.

INDIAN INVESTMENTS IN AFRICA

India's private sector actors drive much of India's increasing presence in the continent. Though India is a profitable market, the current sluggishness in India's economy has encouraged Indian enterprises to look elsewhere. Thus commercial interests, opportunity for growth and the diversification of investment are the catalysts for India companies. However, issues of poor infrastructure, lack of access to finance and trade and logistics hinder the desired outcome. Therefore, impediments and current strategies have to be addressed in order to harness the unprecedented opportunities that Africa presents for Indian companies.

Indian investments are found in a wide array of economic sectors. Kirloskar Brothers and Water and Power Consultancy are involved in water management projects across Africa. Tractor manufacturers such as Mahindra and others, corporate houses like Dabur and Tata Coffee have also ventured into the agricultural sector. Majority of African countries are looking for food security by replicating the Indian 'green revolution model'. The Indian companies have presence in African secondary and tertiary industries. The Tata Group is represented in the engineering, chemicals, services and ICT sectors. In the power sector Indian companies such as Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), and Suzlon Energy etc. have plans to invest in the African alternative energy sector. In the IT sector, the National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT), Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), and Infosys have entered the African markets. Reliance Industries has a strong presence in telecommunications. BhartiAirtel Limited has acquired the African assets of Zainmobile communications company. In the automobile sector, Tata and Mahindra's presence in several Southern African countries including South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland and Zambia are remarkable. Similarly, major pharmaceutical companies (Ranbaxy, Cipla and Dr Reddy's), consumer products firms (Emami and Marico), construction firms (Punj Lloyd and Shahpoorji Pallonji) have invested in African countries. The metals conglomerate Vedanta Resources has invested more than $750 million in Zambian

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copper mines. Arcelor Mittal has launched a $1 billion iron ore-mining project in Liberia. Tata Steel has invested $850 million in a ferro-chrome project in Richards Bay, South Africa.

The initiatives of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) and CII are significant. A CII-Exim Bank Conclave on 'India Africa Project Partnership' is a valuable platform to enhance the roles of private and public sector actors in Africa. These conclaves serve as a meeting ground between decision makers and industrialists from African countries and heads of Indian companies involved in various projects in Africa. In the New Delhi conclave in 2014, which was largest ever India-Africa business meet, 630 overseas delegates discussed over 500 projects close to $70 billion. Africa-India trade has multiplied in the last 15 years and doubled in the last five years to reach nearly US$ 72 billion in 2014-2015.

The operations of Indian enterprises are often compared to those of Chinese enterprises in Africa, however such comparison is problematic given the differences between Indian enterprises that often are privately owned and less integrated compared to Chinese companies. Chinese companies operating in Africa are often collaborating with the Chinese government. Those companies are aggressively outbidding their competitors. Such a strategy has encouraged Indian multinationals to call for closer cooperation with the MEA.

ENERGY AND SECURITY ISSUES

Access to Oil and Gas is one of the main drivers of India's increased presence in Africa. Due to the political upheaval in the Middle East and volatility in West Asia, India will have to increase oil imports from Sub Saharan African countries that includes Nigeria, Angola, Algeria, Sudan and the Congo that currently supply 20% India's fuel imports.

Currently, India is the third largest consumer of energy in the world. India's growing energy needs have pushed it towards energy cooperation with the African countries. Indian oil companies are actively looking to acquire overseas assets. For example, the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Videsh Limited (OVL) has invested in equity assets in Sudan, Ivory Coast, Libya, Egypt, and Nigeria etc. Reliance have also invested in equity oil in Sudan, while Essar has procured exploration and production blocks in Madagascar and Nigeria. India recently completed a $200 million project to lay a pipeline from Khartoum to Port Sudan in the Red Sea. During the 2009 India-Africa Hydrocarbons Conference, India identified five main areas of cooperation with African countries: buying more crude oil from Africa, investing more in upstream on bilateral basis, exploration to source more liquefied natural gas from Africa, making available India's skills, talent and technology in cost-effective ways, and supporting community development programmes in Africa to ensure inclusive growth.

However there are some challenges that India faces in the West African region, i. e. security and stability issues. In Africa, India largely acquires oil from Nigeria, which are facing two security crises-one internal and the other external. Nigeria's internal security crises refer to the violent Islamic organization known as Boko Haram. The strength of this violet outfit has threatened oil production through vandalizing of pipelines and hindering further oil exploration. The piracy on the other hand poses the external security concerns. In recent years piracy in Africa has been gradually shifting from East African region to the West African region. So the scenario looks grim for Indian energy security, but this also presents an opportunity for India. India has a vast experience as part of the UN's peacekeeping efforts throughout Africa. Additionally, India's defence capabilities and familiarity with wide ranging security concerns would empower African countries to address piracy. India currently keepsdefence cooperation and training programmeswith various African countries.

Southern African countries including Angola, South Africa, Mozambique and Tanzania are rich in natural gas and oil outputs. India's state-owned OVL has been proactive in venturing in offshore gas fields in the region. But the recent gas discoveries in Tanzania have increased tensions in the region. The locals, who are economically marginalised are involved in the anti-pipeline protests. In this context, India can provide assistance through collaboration with the national government in natural resource management and could facilitate by providing economic opportunities for locals. In addition, India can give training to security personnel through the already present Indian naval presence in Southern African countries along the

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Indian Ocean.Thus, India should consider initiating economic diplomatic strategy consisting of maritime defence cooperation and innovative infrastructural financing mechanism.

CONCLUSION

India has been unable to articulate and translate its appeal to Africa, although it keeps potential and values in stimulating development and economic growth across Africa. Therefore, a few policy recommendations can be suggested in advancing its relations with the continent.

The IAFS could serve as an outstanding platform for Africans to gauge India's development cooperation priorities in Africa. It needs to be a platform actively promoted as the premier space where India and Africa's leaders meet and engage with public and private actors on the progress of India and Africa. Unlike, the past two IAFS, the recently held Summit seems to be a milestone, where all the countries of African continent participated in the event. However IAFS has been an underutilized platform. The lack of clarity on the progress is worrisome. India's foreign aid policy is largely perceived as ambiguous. If India were to execute an exciting agenda in Africa, it has to work on a robust agenda through various platforms, numerous high level events and the media.

India appears to view Africa as a possible source of raw material and energy sources to support its industrial growth. The recently launched "Make in India" programme aims to make India a manufacturing hub. Towards this purpose the focus on Africa would be a sustainable attempt for Indian perspective.

India's development cooperation to Africa is unclear whether it is facilitated through the MEA or the Development Partnership Administration (DPA). Therefore, a clear separation between the ministry and the agency should be defined as it obscures where responsibility lies. The MEA should produce a comprehensive white paper, which details India's objectives in Africa, the value of India-Africa cooperation, and a set of targets of deliverables to African states. The MEA and the DPA should act with greater coordination with Indian embassies across Africa, so that it could enhance India's understanding of the regional contexts and desires that India could possibly supply.

India needs to strengthen cooperation with Indian private sector actors in Africa. Furthermore, coordination between them should not only apply to bilateral interests with particular African countries but should also be applied in Africa's regional and continental governance frameworks.

To address looming naval security issues that threaten energy supply, India should strengthen naval defence cooperation especially with West African states.

A Human Resource Development policy in relation to Africa should be formulated, so that education deficit in Africa can be reduced. India has many tertiary institutions that focus on primary areas crucial for Africa's development especially, in terms of vocational and technical skills. Encourage the study of India or South Asia across African universities; for this an Education Council could be a prominent step.

The Indian Diaspora in Africa, share a fascinating history of mobility. The large diaspora community stretches from Southern Africa to the East Africa. They have succeeded in many areas, garnering positions in politics and being industrial magnates. Around 3 million People of Indian Origin (PIO) presents an interesting opportunity for India to lobby and encourage greater interaction between Africa and India. However, to collaborate with local PIO's needs careful sensitivity to local and regional contexts. For example, due to the historical tensions between the black population and Indian population in many East African countries, PIOs tend to be apolitical and largely limited to establishing and running small to medium sized enterprises. Although in some countries like South Africa,they are politically more visible.

In essence, India has plenty to offer to Africa and Africa too has much to offer to India. If already present connections are strengthened, and challenges are effectively and substantially addressed, mutually beneficial outcome can be advanced.

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TALE OF THE TALLEST

He was often called "a right man in a wrong party", but the label, though snappy, couldn't have been more wrong. AtalBihari Vajpayee never repudiated his political past or moorings and instead tried to make his party as broadbased and inclusive as possible in line with his country's diversity.

In politics, apart from his impressive, impassioned oratory and stellar parliamentary career, he was always known for never bearing a grudge, being respectful but never being overawed by even titanic figures, and considerate and conciliatory towards his opponents.

As one story goes, Manmohan Singh, then finance minister, was roundly upbraided in the Lok Sabha by Vajpayee on some issue and was so upset that he went to Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao to submit his resignation.

A canny Narasimha Rao defused the situation by calling up Vajpayee to request he talk to Manmohan Singh and mollify him, which the Bharatiya Janata Party leader was only glad to do.

That was Vajpayee's enduring and endearing characteristic, as this much-needed biography of one of the tallest and well-regarded leaders of free India brings out.

Vajpayee, who began his political career when Jawaharlal Nehru still strode large, had plenty of respect for the prime minister but was never afraid to confront him in parliament, and tales of Nehru praising Vajpayee to visiting foreign dignitaries are well-known. One incident that may not be that known is recounted in this short but incisive narrative by journalist-cum-author Kingshuk Nag.

In the 1962 general elections, the Congress decided to ensure Vajpayee's defeat in Uttar Pradesh's Balrampur constituency and even roped a noted Bollywood personality (no one glamorous but rather the cerebral Balraj Sahni) to campaign for its charismatic candidate, Subhadra Joshi. Nehru however refused all entreaties to campaign there, to avoid taking on Vajpayee directly, whose interest in foreign affairs he admired. (She won, by the way)

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Publisher: Rupa Publications
Price: ₹395
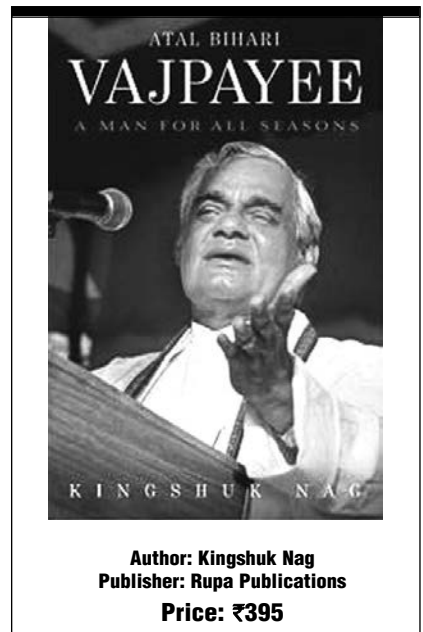
Vajpayee had dubbed Indira Gandhi Durga in 1971 and admired her courage but was strident in his opposition towards her drift towards authoritarianism which culminated in the Emergency. It is a telling point that she had consulted him before "Operation Bluestar" - though she didn't end up following his advice not to go ahead.

And he was both personally and politically brave - as this book reveals, he was one of the few politicians to confront anti-Sikh rioters in November 1984. On November 1, Vajpayee, who came out after hearing a commotion outside his official residence, dissuaded a mob from attacking a Sikh-owned taxi stand, and stood there till they dispersed.

As prime minister, he tried thrice to make peace with Pakistan, and succeeded, to some extent. He also took some visionary steps for resolving the vexed issue of Kashmir, which he had first hand experience of, as Nag notes, right from the start of his political career when he was aide to Jana Sangh founder Syama Prasad Mookerjee.

But as this brings out, Vajpayee's biggest legacy will be his pragmatism, especially not to abandon successful or necessary policies of past governments, ability to withstand pressure from extreme factions of his party and skill in forging political consensus, and ushering in a new paradigm of coalition politics - and see the first such government complete its term.

This biography, which on the whole presents a balanced view (sympathetic at times but never gushingly adulatory), deals with both Vajpayee's personal and political life. His feud with Balraj Madhok over heading the Jana Sangh, his poetry, his foster-family may be known, but less known might be incidents like his (unsuccessful) petition to the Lok Sabha speaker in 1980s for removal of Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, otherwise a close friend, on the grounds that a RajyaSabha member with no power to vote on financial bills had no moral right to the post!

Conferred the nation's highest awards - the Padma Vibhushan in 1992 (by a Congress government) and Bharat Ratna in 2014, Vajpayee only lacked one more tribute - a nuanced biography and Nag, who has penned books on the Telangana agitation, the BJP's rise, and a biography of Narendra Modi, has filled the gap. It may not be a definitive account but is definitely a vivid picture of this fascinating man.

Courtesy: IANS

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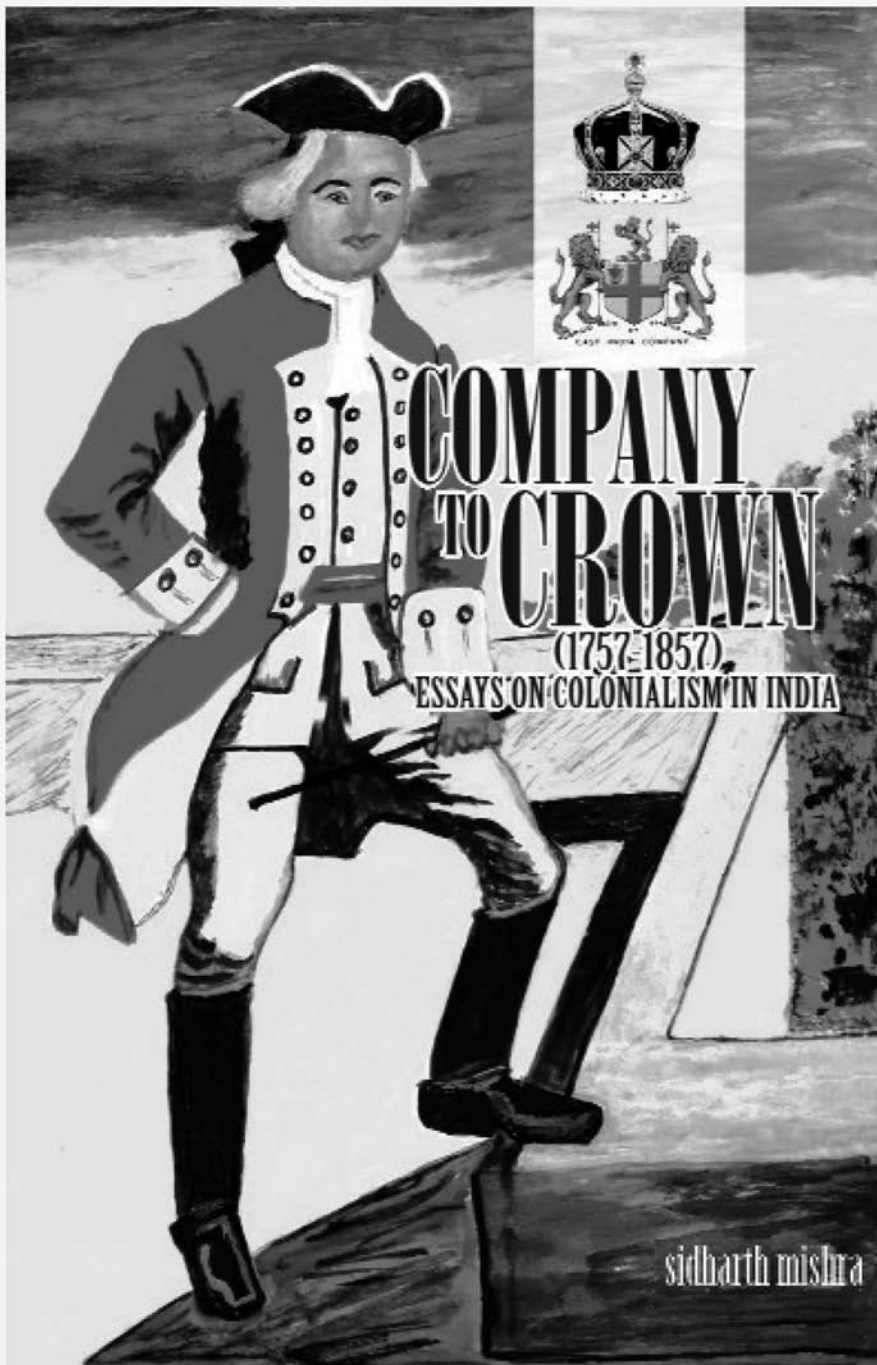
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