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Editor

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Editor's Note

Today, the Northeast in general and Assam in particular are besieged by a host of burning problems that have put an effective hindrance to the overall development of the region. These problems principally encompass the escalating violence, militancy, mounting ethnic unrests leading to the preservation of parochial ethnic distinctiveness, natural catastrophes like environmental pollution, water contamination, mounting land erosion, rampant corruption and unemployment, dearth of food security, moral degradation, aggravation of law and order situation, unabated clamour for separate states within the country or without and many others. In fact, lopsided development in all aspects of humanity at large can be held accountable for the above mentioned problems. They therefore, invariably need innovative measures to be undertaken by the state authority that might be instrumental in finding out lasting solution. Nonetheless, what is more important to be noted is that the people themselves are responsible for triggering the multi-dimensional problems consciously or unconsciously owing to getting demoralised and de-valued. In view of this, it is imperative for re-shaping the mindset of the people, both the ruler and ruled in the form of making their activities moral-based and transparent which would definitely get manifested in socio-economic and political advancement. Of course, for this purpose a vibrant moral and social movement undoubtedly needs to be built up. Nonetheless it is all known fact that in a parliamentary democratic dispensation like ours, it is the political power which determines each and every aspect of the country's equitable development. It is therefore obvious that the ongoing politics of India at large including the Northeast characteristically needs to be re-framed and re-designed so as to make it people centric.

In the context of the state of Assam it may be said that amongst the above mentioned problems, violence and terrorism (inclusive of cross-border terrorism) have been prominent ones which are currently getting

escalated. The Government has hopelessly failed to tackle the same and find out an amicable and palatable solution since the militant outfits across the states of the Northeast region seem to be adamant to their professed demands. As a sequence, violence and counter-violence have resulted in human carnage by aggravating the overall situation to be hyper sensitive and tense. In fact, the innocent people are being made scapegoats and victims and the substantive problems have been left untouched and unresolved so far. Despite such circumstances, a ray of hope can be witnessed to be emerging principally because of the social movements spearheaded by a number of civil society organizations viz. the All Assam Student's Union, Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti and others. They have persistently been pressurising the political establishments by this way or that to find out an effective mechanism for a durable solution to the unresolved problems of the state.

However, the present volume of Journal of Politics have reflected the various aspects of socio-political phenomena taking place at the regional, national and international contexts. These might be instrumental in understanding the pressing issues and problems of the societies at various levels. I acknowledge my gratitude and indebtedness to all the contributors whose painstaking efforts have made it possible for me to bring out this edition of Journal of Politics.

Dr. Rudraman Thapa

THE PUBLIC/PRIVATE DICHOTOMY IN
INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE ACTION
IN ASSAM: AN ANALYSIS

Alpana Borgohain

The paper proposes to make use of the dimension of Public/Private Dichotomy as interpreted from the feminist perspective to analyse individual and collective action in the context of Assam, a state located in the Northeast of India.

As social scientists we understand the importance of the relation between theory and practice while trying to understand and analyse our social realities. In this interactive process very often, theory enriches practice and practice enriches theory.¹ This process helps us to understand the historical situation or context in which the study is made and to provide solutions for modifying or changing the situation. Antonio Gramsci, an Italian thinker, opined that it is only through the understanding of the historical circumstances in which the self finds oneself that the self can remake the surroundings and remake the self.² Thus the self and the whole are transformed in the process.

Laying down the theoretical framework:

The paper starts with the basic premise that *Patriarchy* is a socio-political reality that exists in all societies of the world and the state of Assam is no exception to it. However, certain contextual differences do exist in different societies, in different times and in the same society at different times. Patriarchy in the context of this paper is considered as a relationship between the sexes that is based on domination and exploitation. Patriarchies are also hierarchies based on unequal power relations which are oppressive.

Here the powerful tries to exploit the powerless. Like Karren J. Warren we accept that all *social isms of domination* like sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism as well as naturism are Patriarchies.³ In Patriarchy, Women are viewed and interpreted in terms of a Male-dominated society and its interests. Women's lives are governed by a concept of power that controls and subordinates women, their rights, behavior pattern, physical movement, thinking process, etc.

Patriarchy is also considered by a section of the feminist theorists as a hegemonic system based on both consent and force. Voluntary spontaneous consent is cultivated through subtle means like customary practices and traditions, social norms and codes, historical evolution, socialization processes, social expectations and control over individual's aspirations.⁴ At other times patriarchal control is also perpetuated through open regulations and even violence.⁵ Hence, patriarchy is a very strong system which has been able to consolidate itself. Feminism believes that in the ultimate analysis *Patriarchy* is a form of violence against women as it suppresses women's rights and advancement and denies justice and equality to women.

Patriarchy obtains consent through the process of *socialization* which creates *Genders*- boy /man and girl/woman –who are assigned certain roles and status and are expected to inculcate gender traits called masculinity and femininity respectively. The traits of masculinity and femininity are located on the conceptual basis of value dualisms which are disjunctive pairs in which the disjuncts are seen as oppositional (rather than as complementary) and as exclusive (rather than as inclusive), and as value hierarchies, i.e., spatial up-down metaphor, which attributes higher value (status, prestige) to that which is higher.⁶ Frequently cited examples of these hierarchically organized value dualisms include reason/emotion, mind/body, culture/nature, human/nature, and-man/woman dichotomies. These theorists argue that whatever is (historically) associated with reason, mind, culture, human (i.e., male) are men. This sexist socialization process also ensures that girls are socially conditioned to be soft, weak, meek, obedient,

submissive, dependent, indecisive, loving, caring, sharing, nurturing, compassionate, and so on. Boys on the other hand are socially constructed to be strong, confident, independent, ambitious, aggressive and career oriented. In this way, the conscious as well as the subconscious of the genders are socially constructed to make them fulfill the needs and interests of the family, economy, society and the state.

Related to the concepts of Patriarchy and Gender the Feminist perspective has also developed the concept of *Public/Private dichotomy*, the origin of which can be traced to the thought of Friedrich Engels and which was later developed by the Marxist Feminists. Engels in his work- *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*-analyses how the biological, sexual division of labour along with the origin of private property, the family and the State necessitated the dichotomy between the Public (society and state) and the Private (family).⁷ In this separation of space men were assigned to the Public space and women were assigned to the Private space. Carole Pateman insists that, the Public/Private debate is ultimately what the Feminist movement is all about. Populations are distributed, divided and disciplined via roles specific to Public/Private space, according to where their presence is permissible or forbidden. Feminists discovered in this Public/Private formula of modernity the attempt of Liberal Patriarchal culture to divide the spaces on the basis of gender.⁸ The public private distinction makes women to belong to the private world, which leads to the marginalization of women. Both traditional and modern societies consider women as representative of nature that needs to be controlled and transcended. They are of the view that women's relation to the social world i.e. public must always be mediated through men's reason. They assume that women cannot develop the political morality required of participants of civil society.

Women find the private space too rigid and oppressive. Women experience that their freedom in this sphere does not exist. On the contrary, men who are dominant in the private sphere, demand that the private be a place of both personal privacy and unconstrained patriarchal power. In

this context, it may be noted that Feminist theorist Kate Millett opined that the Relationship between the sexes is Political.⁹ In other words, the Personal is Political. Thus both public and private are conceived in terms of the rational and autonomous individual, who is competitive, rational, self-interested and ignores his/her familial, social constitution and emotional ties. This specification refers to a masculinist view of human nature but not to actual subjects. These dominant spaces—Public and Private—has no place for traditional feminine traits. A Woman in order to be competent in the public sphere thus has to adapt herself to masculine traits, which are not her own. This may inhibit the free development and expression of a woman's personality. However, it may be noted that the complete separation between the public and the private does not exist in all times and in all societies. Women of the private space are also invited to enter the public space to fulfill the needs of the Economy, the Society and the Polity on different exigencies.

Women's Collective action in Assam - an analysis:

With the above theoretical framework an attempt has been made to analyse women's collective action in the state of Assam during the period of the Indian national movement. Nineteenth century women of Assam were assigned and belonged to the private space limited to the four walls of the house. However, the colonial encounter which brought about western education helped initiate the Indian Social Reform Movement. Its indirect impact on Assam was mediated through the efforts of a few Assamese youths based in Calcutta, who in a way, inspired the women of Assam to make their entry into the public space and made them feel the need to get organized. The encounter also helped in the formation of an Assamese middle class with some aspirations for Assamese Nationalism. However, the first attempts at collective organization in Assam took place in 1915 at the local level, i.e., five years after the formation of the Bharat Stree Mahamandal at the national level. The first women's association in Assam was formed at Dibrugarh, called Dibrugarh Mahila Samity under the able leadership of Srimati Hemoprova Das.¹⁰ It is to be noted that this early

attempt at organization was not as a branch of any provincial or national organization. This organization was formed by the women themselves without the help of men at the local level. This local level organization set the pace for the formation of more such local Mahila samities in places like Nagaon, Tezpur, etc.¹¹ Initially their activities were limited to the towns gradually they started their activism in the villages. Thus it was an attempt at mobilization from the towns (urban areas) to the villages (rural areas). It was only in 1926 that the Assam Pradeshik Mahila Samiti was formed at the provincial level.¹² By 1930, the local Mahila Samities were linked up as branches of a single organization-Assam Mahila Samiti.¹³ Thus the first attempts at organization by women in Assam started from the local to the provincial level or from the bottom- up. The objective or goal of these Samities were nevertheless social, cultural and welfare and were an extension of women's private roles to the public space. The Krishak sabha and the Chatra sabha also helped organize Mahila sabhas at the local village levels to which active women leaders like Chandraprova and others were invited and local Mahila Samities were formed. Thus women were mobilized under the banner of Mahila samities by men for the needs of nationalism. Moreover it can be said that Mahila Samiti did not have any independent role. For the needs of nationalism women's co-operated not as equal members of the national congress but as helpers.

During the non-co-operation movement of the Indian nationalist struggle, the Mahila Samities in Assam were very active. On the invitation of the Assam Pradesh Congress, M.K. Gandhi visited Assam on 18th August 1921.¹⁴ Like the rest of India, Assam in the 1920's was also a traditional society. In spite of this fact, on the invitation of Gandhi women of Assam broke tradition and came out of their private homes in larger numbers to participate in the 1921-1922 Non- Co- operation movement. In 1921, Gandhi said, in our struggle there is no place for brute force- I need the co-operation and support of Soul force symbolized by women.¹⁵ Thus in a patriarchy, the earliest passage of women from the private realm to the public realm took place on the invitation of a man who was the indisputable leader of the movement. However this participation too was

gendered. In a Traditional Patriarchy, women did not have a self identity and had an identity determined by their relation with men. Thus initially it was the women related to men as mothers, wives, daughters, nieces, sisters-who could break the glass ceiling to participate in the Non Co-operation movement in the tradition bound Assamese society. The participation was mediated by men for the needs of men and directed by men.

In January 1921, under the leadership of Torunram Phukan's wife, Bidyutprobha Devi, women of Guwahaty decided to violate sec 144 by holding a protest rally. When M.K.Gandhi became aware of this move he immediately directed the women not to engage in such violations of the law but to involve in organizational and awareness activities.¹⁶ This initiative of Gandhi can be interpreted as the traditional nationalist patriarchy's responsibility to protect the chastity of women in their struggle against the colonial patriarchy.

Gandhi during his visit also witnessed and appreciated the weaving skills of Assamese women and requested them to help the nationalist struggle under the banner of the national congress to carry out the Swadeshi programme- Boycott of foreign cloth, making bonfires of them and the use of Khadi. The traditional private roles of women as weavers were also used for the public needs of the Nationalist Patriarchy.

From 1929 to 1942 the influence of the Mahila samities dwindled. Women of Assam started to directly participate in the nationalist struggle, many of them were arrested, many sacrificed their lives, and many others became victims of crime. Thus the first awakening of women and their collective action in a way withered away. In 1940 when the women's platform for the nationalist struggle was no longer necessary on the advice of the congress leaders within the congress constitution itself a new constitution of the Assam mahila samiti was made. The women were organized under a new banner called the Assam Pradeshik Mahila Samiti. The activities of this organization became more social than political. In the aftermath of the mass struggle for nationalism women in Assam again got confined to their homes i.e the private realm and it seemed as if they moved away from politics i.e. the public realm. It may be mentioned here that

both before and immediately after independence not a single woman leader or women's organization got a place on the negotiation table.

Women's Individual action in Assam: An Analysis:

Twentieth century Assam and women's individual action has to start with woman feminist pioneer like Chandraprova Saikiani (born 1901-died 1972). Her original name was Chandraprova Mazumdar who was born and conditioned in a small remote village called Doihingori of Bajali subdivision in Kamrup district. She was fortunate to have liberal parents who sent her and her sister Rajaniprova to a boy's school. Against countless odds she was able to claim for herself her right to education and to pursue a career as a school teacher and later as a Headmistress of M.V. School at Tezpur. She was a Gandhian and on Gandhi's call she joined the Swadeshi Andolan and emerged to provide leadership to Assamese women. As a social reformer, she actively participated in social works such as education of girls, prohibition of alcohol, widow remarriage, abolition of untouchability, promotion of Khadi etc. In other words, her entry into the public space took place through her engagements with social work.

It was under her leadership that the Nagaon Mahila Samiti was formed in 1917. She was invited by the Assam Chatra Sanmelen to deliver a speech at its tezpur annual session held in 1918. Chandraprova was the first woman leader of Assam to make a public speech from the platform of the Asom Chatra Sanmilan. Thus she was able to move from the private space to the public space and get recognition for her capacity and merit, even in the midst of the strong patriarchies that existed at that time, such as-Traditional, National and Colonial. Her speech from the platform of the Chatra Sanmilan inspired countless number of students to dedicate themselves to social reforms.

In 1925, at the Nagaon session of the Assam Sahitya Sabha, chaired by Rajanikanta Bordoloi, Chandraprova was the only lady invited to address the gathering, as a women's representative. She was honoured along with other dignitaries present.¹⁷ But she noticed that all the other women participating in the meeting had to sit together in an enclosure behind a curtain finely knit with bamboo- symbolising a private space for

women even while participating in the public space. The curtain was meant to be used as a purdah or veil to prevent men's gaze on women.¹⁸ This can also be interpreted as an attempt to protect the women as a group. Protection of the chastity of women has been assigned to men's gender role by Traditional Patriarchy. Chandraprova considered this as a great humiliation and insult, besides, being a great injustice to women.

In such situations, she refused to remain silent. She could not tolerate the humiliation and called upon the women delegates to un-cage themselves and assured them that nobody could stop them from doing so. Within seconds, the women broke the bamboo curtain and came out of the cage. This particular incident represents the collective movement of women from the private space to the public space under the daring leadership of a woman. The incident can also be interpreted as the movement of women together from the private space within the public space to the public space on equal terms with men. This was a huge achievement for sisterhood in Assam. This feat could not have been possible without the courage of Chandraprova to publicly challenge Patriarchy.

The experience of Nagaon made the women feel the need for a women's organization at the provincial level in Assam to fight against such injustice and discrimination. The next day on the request of Chandraprova Saikiani women in even larger numbers assembled at the same place. However, due to the resistance that they faced from a section of the agitated and offended men, the women left the Sahitya Sabha arrangement and held the Mahila Sabha in the open field near the arrangement built for the Assam Sahitya Sabha session. In the women's sabha, chaired by Chandraprova Saikiani it was decided to form an Assam Mahila Samiti and the responsibility to make the necessary preparations of mobilisation and organization was assigned to Saikiani. This is how women in Assam collectively reacted to the public practice of social injustice against women by conservative patriarchal men.

On the basis of the decision of the Nowgong Sabha, in the 1926 Dhubri annual session of the Assam Sahitya Sabha, a separate meeting of the women was also organized. It was here that with the initiative,

commitment, determination and drive of such individual leaders like Chandraprova that the Assam Mahila Samiti was formed in 1926.¹⁹ This is how individual action can also bolster collective action and help to mobilize and form organizations working for change. The women leaders were able to mobilize the support of the main leaders of the Assam Sahitya Sabha and therefore it was possible to form the women's organization within a year.²⁰ It may be noted that no women's organization can be successful by antagonizing the men, we need to seek the cooperation of some prominent gender sensitized men.

The Mahila Samities that existed in the local level in the urban areas gave up their local status and became a branch of the Assam Mahila Samiti. By the fag end of 1930, within a short span of time, Assam Mahila Samiti had its branches and sub-branches in almost every town and village of Assam. This was again possible because of the untiring activism of individual leaders like Chandraprova and the support that she was able to generate from leaders of the Chatra Sabha and the Krishak Sabha, in a colonial and a nationalist context.

Engagements with collective action and the transformation of the self (individual):

This socio-political activism also made Chandraprova give priority to herself respect, dignity and status in the society. Chandraprova had an intimate love relationship with the well known novelist Dandinath Kalita. She also had a child out of wedlock through this relationship.²¹ The rigid caste hierarchy of those times deprived her of the benefits of a well-settled life. As a young mother of a son, she courageously decided to live life on her own terms.

Ignoring all the hurdles in a predominantly patriarchal society, she even refused to retain the surname of either her father or her husband and identified herself with a new surname, Saikiani. In due course, she came to be known as Saikiani baidew. Thus she was able to claim for herself a self identity even in times when Patriarchy was very rigid and conservative. In her struggle to secure equal status for women in Assam's political, social,

cultural and economic life, Chandraprova had to face the wrath of powerful conservative forces.

Chandraprova did not come from a family with political background and hence did not enjoy the political patronage. As a result in independent India she failed to get any position in the congress leadership. She was an active member of the National Congress, a predominantly male organisation and also at the same time a leader of women. However, she was able to get the nomination of the congress but failed to be successful in the elections due to the non-cooperation of some of her male colleagues within the congress. Thus in spite of her contribution to nationalism, patriarchy managed to marginalise her in electoral politics. However, it was under her influence, inspiration and mentoring that another woman nationalist leader, Pushpalata Das was elected member of Rajya Sabha in 1951. Das also became member of All India Congress Working Committee in 1959 and was elected MLA in 1967 from Dhekiajuli constituency.²²

Conclusion:

Complete separation between the public and the private space does not exist and cannot exist in all situations and at all times. The separation is lifted from time to time to fulfil the needs of Patriarchy (Traditional, National, Colonial, Capitalist) – for reasons of Men, on invitation of Men, or to fill up the gap left vacant by Men. These opportunities or leeways need to be used creatively and with innovation for oneself as well as to change the lot of other women.

It may be noted that Chandraprova was an exceptional and exemplary woman leader. However, life stories and activism of such women feminist leaders together with the struggles and challenges faced by women's collective action need to be revived, told and analysed. For we need an active women's movement which can be possible only when we have leaders like Chandraprova who are committed, dedicated, courageous and fearless. Women's movements need to learn from the lessons of history and accordingly chalk out their strategy in their respective contexts.

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QUESTIONING THE DICHOTOMY BETWEEN STATE SECURITY AND HUMAN SECURITY

Perspective from the Third World

Rubul Patgiri

Contemporary period has witnessed fresh attempts on the part of academicians, leaders, international organizations to redefine security. So far the security discourse has focused on the security of the state i.e., security of its territory and interest. But today security is no longer defined exclusively in terms of state. Instead security is increasingly being defined in reference to the security of people. In other words security of the people instead of security of the state has become the prime focus of security concerns all over the world. This shift from state to people in security discourse is based on the assumption that there may be conflict between state security and security of people. Security of state may not necessarily mean security of people-while state may be secured people within the state may not be secured. Two factors have contributed to this development. First is the end of cold war- with the end of cold war, threats to the security of states have been fundamentally reduced. During the cold war hostility states were under constant threat and major concern was how to secure the states from external threats. The end of cold war rivalry has reduced this constant security threat. Another factor is the growth of concerns for human rights. Since the last decade of the twentieth century 'Human Rights' has become a popular term. While human rights have been a concern for a long time, there has been renewed interest on the issue since the end of cold war. It has been a subject of intense academic discussions and has seen concerted effort on the part of the scholars, human rights activists and governments. Against this backdrop the concept

of human security has emerged as the new and attractive vision of the notion of security.

Human Security is an attempt to define security as something more than the military defense of state's interests and territory and emphasize on the welfare of common people. The first major statement concerning human security appeared in Human Development Report, 1994. The report argues-"the concept of security has for too long been interpreted narrowly: as security of territory from external aggression or as protection of national interests in foreign policy or as global security from the threat of nuclear holocaust....forgotten were the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives." It criticizes the existing approach and proposes an alternative concept of security known as human security having mainly two aspects. First it means safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruption in the patterns of daily life-whether at homes, jobs or in communities. Then it identifies seven specific elements that comprise human security-

- Economic security-an assured basic income for individuals, usually from productive and remunerative work, or, in the last resort, from some publicly financed safety net.
- Food security-ensuring that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to basic food.
- Health security-guaranteeing a minimum protection from diseases and unhealthy lifestyles.
- Environmental security-protecting people from the short-and long term ravages of nature, man-made threats in nature, and deterioration of the natural environment.
- Personal security-protecting people from physical violence, whether from the state or external states, from violent individuals or sub-state factors, from domestic abuse, and from predatory adults.
- Community security-protecting people from the loss of traditional relationships and values and from sectarian and ethnic violence.

- Political security-ensuring that people live in a society that honours their basic human rights and ensuring the freedom of individuals and groups from government attempt to exercise control over ideas and information.

It is interesting to note that there are two distinct approaches with regard to the scope of this concept: 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want'. The former one, popularly known as Canadian approach, emphasizes primarily on reducing the human costs of violent conflicts through different means or protection of individual from conflicts. The other approach, commonly referred as Japanese approach focuses more on security of individuals from non military threats such as poverty, disease, and environmental degradation etc. Despite this difference of focus, both these approaches, however, concern with the individuals as the referring object of security and consider safety from violence as a key objective of human security and call for a rethinking of state sovereignty as a necessary part of promoting human security.

Human security and the third world:

Interestingly with regard to the concept of human security, a disjuncture can be observed between the proponents of this concept and context in which it is sought to be introduced or advanced. Rich and developed countries of the world like Canada, Norway, France, Germany Japan etc. are the main proponents of this concept. But interestingly in these countries most of the concerns of human security has already been addressed. People of these countries are already secured.

The issue of human security has strong relevance in the context of third world countries where most of the conditions necessary for ensuring security of the people are missing. Human security therefore must be contextualized and analyzed in the context of third world countries. Viewed in this way the issue of human security appears to be a donor driven agenda. Notwithstanding the politics behind the issue of human security the concerns of this new approach to security must be acknowledged. This brings us to

the most important challenge as per as human security is concerned and that is how to ensure human security in these countries?

In case of the third world countries two sources of insecurity of people can be noticed—one that emanates from the intra state conflicts and the other that emerges from lack of some social, political and economic conditions.

Intra state conflicts: one of the serious threats to the security of people is intra-state conflict or conflicts within the states. From 1945 to 1995 out of 164 armed conflicts worldwide all but five were located in third world countries. Out of these 77% were intra-state in character. This intra-state conflicts refers to two kinds of conflict—first, conflict among the people belonging to different ethnic, national and cultural groups, popularly termed as civil wars and second, conflict between state and different groups of people seeking for some sort of politically autonomous or independent status. These intra-state conflicts are largely functions of state making and nation building process. State making process implies territorial consolidation and establishment of legitimate political authority and nation building process refers to the process of formation of a single homogeneous national identity out of diverse cultural identities. It has been argued that there is a close link between state making and nation building process and internal conflicts. Internal conflicts are attributed to natural stresses and strains of state making and nation building process. As countries go through the process of unification under a common system of rules and institutions within a definite territory, they encounter resistance from within. Naturally states caught in the early stage of state making and nation building processes are prone to internal conflicts. Therefore the best way to address the problem of insecurity of people of third world countries arising out of intra-state conflicts is to facilitate the completion of ongoing process state making and nation building process in these countries.

Lack of basic facilities: the other type of threat to the people of third world countries emanates from the absence of some basic facilities,

conditions or opportunities which are essential for leading a decent standard of living. In order to provide security to these people these conditions must be made available. There can be two ways through these facilities can be arranged-either through active state intervention or through private initiative. Given the present conditions of these states in the third world, states remain the only hope for ensuring these conditions to the people of this part of the world. In European countries some of these conditions have been arranged through private initiative. But in most of the third world countries because of their colonial history such sector could not be effectively developed. In such scenario in this part of the world state must take direct responsibility to provide food, health, shelter etc. to the millions people in these countries. It is the state which must ensure these goods to the citizens. So the effort should be to develop an effective and capable state. These states should try to approximate the ideal of substantive states of Europe.

However under the present conditions of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization, states are being relegated to marginalized role. The developed west through the instruments of IMF, WTO, World Bank, Multinational Corporations have initiated the process of Liberalizations, Privatizations and Globalizations and the third world states are most vulnerable to this pressure. Structural adjustments programmes are being forced upon these countries and in order to impose such new economic system in these countries conditionalities are being attached for granting aid. The net result is the marginalization of economic role of the states and states are stripped off from their traditional functions. This has caused wide spread hunger, poverty and dislocation and disruption of life of large majority of people. So there is a gap between what the developed west are preaching and what they are practising.

Human security and North East India:

The status of human security in North East India presents a dismal picture. Almost all the indicators of human security are missing in North East India.

People of North East India are devoid of almost all the conditions necessary for leading a decent life and subject to widespread poverty, hunger, malnutrition, disease, poor health facility. However the poor living conditions of the people of North East India have received less attention compared to the security concerns of the state in the region as this region has thrown up some of the most serious security threat to the Indian state. In fact the concern for state security has overshadowed the concerns of common people of north east India. In view of this fact it is natural on the part of number of scholars and academicians to advocate security of people instead security of states. However such a shift from the security of states to the security of people is problematic in the context of north east. The traditional security concerns are rampant in north east. Ethnic conflicts, terrorism, insurgency, drug trafficking, small arms proliferation are some of them. The main cause of these problems is the fact that state itself has not consolidated here. This region of India has witnessed serious tension between nationalist claims and ethnic claims. While there has been attempt on the part of India to integrate the people of this region culturally, politically, economically, such attempt has been resisted by number different ethno-national groups of this region. Such ethno-national groups do not consider themselves as part of Indian nation and seek different form of political autonomy. They consider the Indian-nation building process as a hegemonic project designed to suppress different ethnic identities. Thus the state here itself is in flux and the idea of state as protector of life, liberty and property of people is missing. Thus like much of the third world countries, one of the major cause of insecurity of people is the insecurity of state. So the problems of state must be addressed first before the security people can be ensured.

Similarly state must assume responsibility to solve the problem of poverty, hunger, health care, food etc. Due to uneven nature of capitalist development in India, north east remained relatively backward. Further, given the geo strategic and geo political environment, private capitalistic forces exhibit a reluctant approach to participate in the development process of the north east. So the only solution to solve the social and economic

problems of the people of north east India is to strengthen the state and make it effective and substantive. So in the context of north east (as in the case of most of the third world countries) the route to human security is through state security.

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INTERSECTION OF ETHNICITY AND GENDER

Understanding Theoretical issues in the context of Northeast India

Dolly Phukon

Gender discrimination is one of the most endemic violations of human rights tolerated by the society due to the societal tendency towards its naturalization. In the words of Charlotte Bunch, violation of women's rights always centers upon the body of women itself that is coerced into obedience and veiled, that is raped as trophy of war, that is mutilated and burned in the name of honour and culture and ultimately the body disappears from the public sphere of life.¹ Women are trafficked, beaten, malnourished, uneducated. These discriminations cut across cultural, social and political lines which erode their sense of identity and dignity. Regardless of these commonalities of violence that goes beyond national, social and economic boundaries, due to the multiple cultural and ethnic differences, the magnitude of violence and invisibility of women's plights differs from women to women depending upon their ethnicity. There has been a long history of interconnection between ethnicity and gender based exclusion. Gender and ethnicity are two interlocking institutions which reflect the socially defined identity of women.

Ethnicity is a concept defined on a more social basis and rooted in self definition. It focuses on social or cultural differences between groups of human beings. Ethnicity becomes a characteristic of social groups based upon a shared identity rooted in common cultural, historical, religious or traditional factors.² Ethnic identities are cultural constructs and are not determined biologically or primordially. As a concept, its contested character has been accelerated with the influences of globalization, mass

migration, which led to the amalgamation and dissolution of ethnic groups. This observable fact lead to the proliferation of ethnic communities and creation of new forms of ethnic identifications within one ethnic group similarly as cell divisions takes place in a living body. There are different modes of identity formations among the ethnic groups owing to the intermixing and influence with friends, family, public environment creating within ethnic communities, the feeling of "Otherness".³ Thus a new tendency disintegration has been created or constructed with the push and pull syndrome within the ethnic communities based on two dichotomous characteristics i.e. *Strategic Essentialism* and *Hybridity* as explained by the post colonial thinker, Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak and Homi Bhaba respectively. It is often observed that minority groups very aggressively emphasize on their ethnicity with a motive for political bargain which could be called as (strategic) essentialism. Strategies of mutual support and coalition seemed to be developed or constructed among the ethnic community for some common gains. In order to uncover the universalist claims of Western Feminist prescribed in feminist methodologies, undermining the plurality of conceptions in order to serve the superiority complex of Western Feminist thought, Chandra Talpade Mohanty in her 'Under Western Eyes' describes how Veil used by Muslim women is not always the symbols of patriarchal domination. She exemplified the role of 'Iranian middleclass women who used the veil during the 1979 revolution in Iran to indicate solidarity with their working-class sisters'.⁴ On the other hand, Post-colonialism theorist like Homi Bhaba sees identities, based on race, ethnicity, nationality as dynamic in nature and are in constant motion. These identities are formed and reformed, shaped by historical circumstances like colonialism migration, assimilation, and dislocation, constant interaction with the global phenomena amalgamating and hybridizing different cultures into new forms. These heterogeneity, hybridity, and displacement are opposed to the unifying and homogenizing demands of imagined communities on the basis of ethnicity or any other identity.⁵

Within this backdrop, one cannot deny the importance of understanding the dynamics of ethnicity for exploring the ways how different

ethnic groups live their lives and relate to each other. Each ethnic group has its own social and cultural norms for the members of its communities and women being the custodians of traditions are the most closely knitted to its ethnic norms such as the assigned duties and responsibilities, preparation of food, dress, code of conduct etc. Moreover, the conditions of ethnic minority women can also be evaluated in terms of the status hierarchy that values some groups as more worthy than others. The glorification and cultural valuations of the whites in comparison to the blacks, brown and yellowish groups etc clearly depicts the inclusionary and exclusionary elements in determining ethnicity. There has been prolonged invisibility of the minority, black and mongoloid women even within the feminist movements and in the literatures of women's studies as well.⁶ But the Indian feminists had failed to analyze minutely the various problems of women on ethnic lines and had a tendency or inclination towards a goddess-inspired Hindu feminism. This type of feminism has not only marginalized and alienated women in minority communities, but has opened new sophisticated ways of exploitation of women of the different multi-ethnic communities by the Hindu Right on more repressive cultural lines. Of late the post modern feminist questioned the homogenizing model of feminist thinkers. They refuted all the feminist attempts and termed their perspective as determined by male or patriarchal perspective. The most current concern of feminist thought percolated into art, culture, religion and literature to resonate in multiple voices. Women of colour and from developing countries pointed to the ways in which race, class and gender intersected in complex ways to modify their lives. These ideas breached the private/public, mind/ body, nature/culture divide in western theorizing. It indicated that the habit of thinking in hierarchical binary opposites was responsible for the 'othering' of women, races and ethnic minorities.⁷

From the above discussion it becomes pertinent that two different strands of feminist understanding are being theorized to understand the intersection of gender and ethnicity. One strand is represented by the feminist thinkers like Leti Volpp, Susan Moller Okin who provoked the question: Is Multiculturalism bad for women? They assume that the cultures

of ethnic minorities are more patriarchal than the mainstream western culture: An Essentialist argument. The slogan for preserving ethnic culture may lead to more gendered relations. The other strand of feminist theorization is the post-modern understanding of women's subordination in the society represented by the theorist like Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak, Homi Bhaba, Frantz Fanon, etc, who provided fresh and provocative possibilities of rethinking gender and power relations in our society. According to them, social interactions in a gendered world reproduce gender differences and produces gender inequality. Gender emerges through social transactions which are influenced by the cultural, ethnic and individual sense of self in relation. Post modern feminism rejects the homogenizing regulatory functions that tend to naturalize the binary opposites.⁸ In this paper an endeavour is made to understand the dynamics of relation between gender and ethnicity and its theoretical perspectives in the light of the western feminist essentialist debate, presuming Ethnic Culture to be more patriarchal and strategic essentialist and identity hybridity debates of postmodern theorists.

II

The northeast India is characterized by multi-ethnic cultures. These ethnic communities are governed by their own customary laws and of late due to invasions by the British, coming of the Christians, Aryans and migrants from neighboring countries and from other states of India, there became a kind of fusion in the ethnic cultures. But gradually there have been a kind of imposed changes upon these cultures by majoritarian mainstream Indian culture and mainstream regional cultures leading to a sense of alienation and deprivation of the ethnic people. Moreover the elite sections of the ethnic people in order to save their culture and also in order to grab political gains, a new trend of politicization of ethnicity took place in the region leading to massive ethnic conflict, ethnic cleansing, separatist agendas and the slogan for preservation of the minority cultures considering any assimilation with other culture as oppressive.

Within the context it is questionable as already set by Okin in her "Is multiculturalism is bad?"⁹ Or whether preservation of the multi-ethnic cultures leads to gender equality or more patriarchal oppression? Okin presumes minority cultures to be more patriarchal than the Western Liberal Cultures. According to her, ethnic cultures are considered traditional, made up of unchanging and longstanding practices that warrant submission to cultural dictates. The ethnic people are more governed by these traditional cultural and customary dictates whereas the liberal western cultures are more inclined towards capacity to reason before blindly following traditions.¹⁰ To quote her minority cultures makes their women more vulnerable to "Death by Culture".¹¹ By this she meant that gender subordination is integral to the minority culture for example death due to Dowry and Sati is related to the Hindu Culture, whereas Western culture supports divorce as an alternative to incompatibility in marriage rather than death. Moreover the minority cultures tend to regulate women's sexuality with the national identity or culture. Fusing gender with culture, tradition and national identity, it is often reflected in ethnic women's dress, behavior. Women are always expected to uphold tradition without questioning both the negative and positive aspects of their native cultures, men have choice of remaining free and unregulated by even the positive values and belief systems of their indigenous cultures.¹²

Within this theoretical framework, some of the ethnic customary practices are analyzed that are more patriarchal in nature than liberating. The customary laws relating to inheritance, the Garo of Meghalaya have female inheritance but have do not possess the power of management of the property as it is done by the heiress's Uncle. Thus though the inheritance pattern is matrilineal, its nature is patriarchal. Thus the control of recourse is in the hands of man.¹³ The same process is followed by the Khasi family where the mother or the custodian of the family has to consult with her uncle or brothers. In case the girl changes her religion, this right is no longer applicable. The customary laws of other ethnic groups of northeast are patrilineal in nature. The Maitheis of Manipur valley follows the Hindu law if inheritance. In the hill areas the ethnic tribes of Manipur, the women

are not given the right to inherit immovable property. Regarding the customs of Mizo, women cannot inherit property. But in case there is no male heir the youngest daughter inherits the property. The same custom is prevalent among the Tripuris of Tripura and Ao of Nagaland. A widow of Ao cannot inherit the property of her deceased husband. The case is different among the Karbis of Assam, where a widow can inherit her husband's property but if marries then she cannot inherit the property.¹⁴ Now regarding the control of the Common Property Rights of the Aka of Arunachal Pradesh, it is again with the Village Council which is made up of Men. Thus from this stand point, the customary laws are highly gendered. Now regarding the customs of Ahoms of Assam, there is a trend of formulating *Bonghawoli* where the name of the first ancestor (male) who is the head of the family till the present generation male of the family are represented and are printed. But it is ridiculous that the names of the women of the family and also the female child are excluded from inclusion in the *bongkhawoli* as they are thought to be the outsiders. Moreover, generally the male elite that controls and interprets their customary law, for example the custom of the husband being better educated than the wife. It has forced many educated women to remain unmarried and has reinforced patriarchy. In their tradition, some customs favour women and others discriminate against them but all of them were based on the central pivot of women as homemakers and men as providers and protectors. Their myths and beliefs legitimised these practices and taboos ensured compliance (Vitso 2003: 58).¹⁵ Thus it is clear that while it is said that women of northeast has a higher status than in the rest of India, she is not equal to man.¹⁶ Thus when the issue of returning to customary law comes, it remains a question mark that it can be a return to an environment that ignores gender justice.

III

As discussed earlier, post modern feminism is characteristic for its respect for differences and plurality. It refutes the binary opposites where society values one and devalues the other. Post-modernists view the world

as endless stories or texts, many of which sustain the integration of power and oppression and views truth as a 'destructive illusion' or believe in multiple truths. It rejects the foundational grounding of knowledge, the universalizing claims for the scope of knowledge.¹⁷ Here regarding the politics of ethnicity it is seen that on the way of maintaining of one's identity, led to the conversion of some differences into otherness. Identity requires differences in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty. The dangers of identity politics, then, are that it casts as authentic to the self or group an identity that in fact is defined by its opposition to an Other. Reclaiming such an identity as one's own merely reinforces its dependence on this dominant Other, and further internalizes and reinforces an oppressive hierarchy.¹⁸

This politics of ethnicity has many gendered implications. Northeast is spectacle of ethnic conflicts and also there is a tendency of valuing one's ethnic cultural attributes and devaluing the other. For the last few decades the northeast region has witnessed human rights violations due to the ethnic conflicts and militant activities and its resultant response of the state. Because of armed conflicts and state sponsored violence the innocent people like the women, children, the elderly persons and the disabled are worst affected. Besides as told earlier, in the Northeastern societies, gender inequalities are deeply inherent, women's condition becomes more vulnerable during these conflicts. The ongoing armed-conflict prevalent in the Assam has intensified the violence faced by women, which takes the form of sexual, mental or physical abuse, killings and clashes. Although all the members of communities are affected, the impact on women and girls is far greater because of their status in society and their sex. But the cases of ethnic women are far more different than the non-ethnic women as they are under the triple arena of violence i.e., as a woman, Patriarchal society and Ethnicity. Apart from victims of ethnic conflicts, ethnic women have participated in the ethnic conflicts as well as perpetrators of wars, as supporter of the conflict and also as peace-makers. From that stand point as well the voices of the ethnic women, their sufferings, needs are different which needed to be taken note of. For the purpose, an account of the tea-

garden women and the mongoloid women of northeast are critically discussed in this light.

IV

Post Colonial Analysis of the dependency complex of the Tea-Garden Community Women of Assam and the Women's Movement:

Demands for ST status by the Tea-Community of Assam have been constantly overlooked by the Government of India which clearly reveals that they are still thought to be temporary settlers in Assam. This Community came to Assam under a system of contract during British colonialism and circumstances encouraged them to settle permanently in Assam. But as these people started settling within the confines of Tea-gardens, they remained isolated geographically, socially, politically and economically from the mainstream Assamese society. Their settlement areas are still known as 'Labour lines' which happened to be very poor in terms of health-hygiene and sanitary provisions. Though these communities are the representatives of diverse tribal groups of different parts of India, a trend of assimilation started with the development of *Sadri* language which is the mixture of their tribal dialect and Assamese language. These tea community people are rarely being considered as a part of greater Assamese nationality and still thought to be outsiders due to which they were consequently deprived of having the benefit of Scheduled Tribe status. The poor economic conditions of the tea community had made the people vulnerable to various diseases, malnutrition, prone to local made alcohol, prone to superstitious beliefs like witch crafts, illiteracy etc, resulting to a stagnancy to the community. In addition to that, the dominant discourse of indoctrination based on status, colour, and ethnicity etc, this community faces violations of human rights in their work-place both in gardens and as workers in the houses of the natives of Assam. Unfortunately, the tea community, due to their internalization of atrocities meted out towards them rarely questions the violations of their rights but accepts them as their fate. Within this background, the tea-garden community women's

conditions are far bitterer due to multiple domains of discriminations based on gender, class, colour etc. Tea-industry is the only women-intensive industry in India, where tea-leaves plucking is done by women converting it to feminized domain of labour with its specific modes of exploitation to the women of the community. The sex-stereotype attached to the women folk of this community as sexual looseness, and deviancy throughout colonial and post-colonial era has added to their exploitation.¹⁹ The management of the tea-industry has inherited the feudal culture as a legacy of British rule and there has been no sincere efforts to liberate these people from the clutches of feudalism but are becoming more dependent on 'babus' or 'bor-babus' (head-clerks) and 'Saheb' (manager) rather than being independent. Their total dependence on the tea industry makes them vulnerable to exploitation and limits their participation in mainstream development. The same feudal elements of slave-master relationship are percolated to the other tea-community people who are working in the informal sectors as maids etc.

A study of the condition of the tea-garden community in general and women in particular reveals that nothing has changed for them and de-colonialism for them is the replacement of colonialism with another type of elite dominance, replicating old colonial dominance on the basis of the presumed racial superiority of the ruling elite. For their emancipation requires the dismantling of the colonial hierarchical legacies and also the homogenizing big brotherly complex of western feminists. Trinh T. Minh-Ha, the author of "Women Native, Other" tried to discuss the issue of western feminist's ideologies on the post-colonial world as ideological tourism where the western feminists while formulating their hypothesis and theories on the post-colonial women are conscious of their I (The Western Feminist) and You (The Post Colonial Women) perpetuating ideological hierarchy. Thus it led to the tendency of representing the post-colonial women as ignorant, poor, uneducated and tradition-bound, domesticated in contrast of the educated, modern independent western women. This phenomenon could be clearly visualized in Spivak's analysis of Julia Kristeva's notion about Chinese women as the politics of knowing the

'Other'.²⁰ Spivak argued that the gendered subaltern always becomes the problem for various theoretical formulations and debates but we could rarely hear a subaltern speaking herself. She always felt that, these women couldn't be represented by another. The reason for this is that, the theorist or researcher who wanted to emancipate the subalterns and seeks to represent them is in a privileged position and the hierarchy between 'I' and 'Other' persist. Within this framework of understanding, it becomes desirable to make the subaltern speak in their own modes of communications. But like the analysis of Fanon regarding the psychology of the colonized and colonizer, owing to the age old subjugation of the tea-garden community and specifically the women already tried to visualize themselves from the eyes of the dominant sections of the Assamese community and internalized the distorted sex stereotypes associated with them. Here the question comes, how the women of this community be emancipated and empowered? Owing to their ethnicity, the women of this community have been excluded from the preview of Women's Movement and organizations in Assam for empowerment and emancipation. Women movement, in Assam had a very narrow agenda fighting for their own divided sake devoid of a united social movement. When we compare the women's movement in Assam with the women's movement in the neighboring states, we can see that in Assam we lack a united strong women's movement. The reasons might be varied but the most pervasive reason is due to the failure of women groups to articulate their common interest or applying or articulating the Strategic Essentialism as theorized by Spivak, to raise the consciousness of the women of Assam uniting them under the common banner etc... Moreover, many a times women groups have failed even to build up trust within women fraternity and cases of violence against women and gendered incidents happens rarely women groups are seen to oppose or obstruct the happenings. Women organizations are seen to keep themselves aloof from other progressive social movements in Assam. Until and unless they join hands with the progressive alliance of the society and try to articulate space within the broad social movements of the society, women's issues will always be sidelined. Women

organizations' in Assam are seen to be following the neo-liberal i.e. "to improve the household's economic condition, participate in local community development (if you have time), help build and run local (apolitical) institutions like the self-help group; by then you should have no political or physical energy left to challenge this paradigm".²¹ But in this agenda too, the tea-garden women's concerns seemed to be missing.

V

Vulnerability of women of northeast owing to their ethnic features:

It may be referred that a Guwahati (Capital of Assam) based NGO named Global Organisation for Life Development (GOLD) has conducted a survey on Child Prostitution, which revealed that most of the child prostitutes are from the northeast region and are of Mongoloid Stock. The Seikhs of Middle Eastern Countries and the trafficking gangs of South Asian countries are interested in North Eastern Girls due to their Mongoloid Features.²² The Mongoloid features, tribal girls from the North-east are mostly trafficked as foreigners at a higher rate. Moreover growing atrocities to the girls of Northeast in Delhi is also due to the ethnic face and appearance. The social profiling or "the opinion formed upon one's appearance, culture" is a reflection of India's caste practices and social system as majority of North-East Indians come from Scheduled Castes and Tribes and ethnically Mongoloid race, which falls out of caste hierarchy,²³

The cultural and ethnic difference of northeast region from the Indian mainland has led to the belief that women of northeast are easily sexually accessible due to the free culture without the conservative nature of caste hindus. Thus the ethnic people who are identical due to their ethnic features are considered as outsiders polluting the mainland culture. Thus due to the differences racial apathy is shown which hampers women more. Ethnic women under the age of globalization and under the trend of assimilation are also facing different problems. With the assimilation of modern technology, and commercialization of agriculture, the ethnic women work force has been replaced from the fields (Public Sector) to the household

sphere (Private Sector) and their economic activities became invisible. The ethnic culture which was apart from the Hinduised culture of Dowry etc has entered the ethnic culture with the proliferation of consumerist culture.

VI

The above discussion shows two dichotomous theorization intersecting gender and ethnicity. One theory suggests and highlights the danger of multiculturalism and tended to liberate the multiple minority culture by replacing with the liberal western culture. The other theory glorified and respected multiculturalism and suggested to analyse and understand the multiple arenas of gender power structures operating in the society. Here again it is feared that if one tends to deal women problems separately in the name of ethnicity, race, culture, religion etc, the feminist movement tend to fragment and weaken. On the other if multiculturalism is devalued than again due to generalizations and homogenizations, the voices of victims of gender discrimination will tend to remain unheard. Thus under the banner of post-modern feminism the interaction of gender relation with the immediate environment and culture of the region needed to be addressed minutely in order to solve and understand the multiple domains of gender power relations in the society. The plurality of differences should be addressed and respected in order to find enduring solution to gender inequality. For the emancipation of the ethnic women in the northeast both Strategic Essentialism and respect for hybridity is necessary. Strategic essentialism would help women to articulate strategically the common problem the women and to bargain for it. Respect for hybridity will help women to acknowledge the differences, assimilative tendencies among them, which will give a new sense of unity amidst diversity. Both ways would be beneficial, if both essentialism and hybridity are kept in a balance. My analyses to the problem lies in the creation of a different gender equal symbolic order where the language used, the thought process and the whole psycho-social drama of the society needed to be re-written and

totally avert the present patriarchal cultural set-up where we are placed at present.

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HUNGRY PEOPLE AND APATHETIC STATE

The Neoliberal Anecdote

Dibyajyoti Dutta

Introduction:

The last two decades of the neo-liberal voyage in India have been a mixed bag. Despite the fact that stellar economic growth facilitates near double digit increase in the GDP, it has also catapulted a huge rich-poor division and a discrete rural-urban gap. In a way, market manoeuvred model of development under the neo-liberal framework has brought into being mixed fate for Indian democracy. Of late, the endemic poverty, as big as the size of the country and the politics involved in its estimation has occupied centre stage in the popular debates. The Government has been successful in creating a haze in the eyes of the commoners by introducing the National Food Security Act in one hand; which is truly a populist move and on the other, extends red carpet invitation to the corporate houses in agricultural sector as part of 'Public Private Partnership for Integrated Agricultural Development' (PPPIAD) indicating a clear capitalist bend. The non-convergence of such policies further surfaces questions of social justice and of democracy. Indian state has embraced series of anti poverty programmes to uproot hunger, poverty and malnutrition from the country in the last two decades but little could be achieved in actuality. In the backdrop of the above this article exemplifies the politics of food and poverty with a view to understand food security scenario in India in the post liberalisation phase. A brief attempt is also made to interrogate the Public Distribution System with special reference to Assam in light with the NFSA 2013.

The last two decades have been a success story of economic growth in India. The stellar growth (the highest 9.57% being recorded for the financial year 2006-07 and lowest 1.43% recorded for 1991-92)¹ of course, does not necessarily exemplify the fact that India really shines with the onward march of neo-liberal globalisation. In fact, poverty, hunger, malnutrition and other allied issues have compounded matters for the Indian State. It has been estimated that India presently is the home to a staggering 450 million impoverished persons (Kohli, 2012) and 48% children whose growth is stunted. Around 61 million Indian children (under five) constitute 38% of the total number of child malnutrition in the globe (UNICEF, 2012). FAO reports that in India, stunting and iron and iodine deficiencies result in productivity losses equivalent to 2.95 percent of GDP annually (SOFI; FAO, 2012). These statistics in some way reflects the failure of policy and of institutions and thus necessitates a thorough review of the political will to address poverty and hunger. Realizing that political will in terms of addressing food security is insensitive in the country and exclusively directed towards political gain, this article reverberates on the politics of food and poverty in India under the neo-liberal regime.

Two decades of Neo-liberalization and Poverty in India:

Addressing hunger and poverty in a country of 1.21 billion populations require a concerted strategy. The synergy is evidently lacking among the Government machineries in India. Whatever niggling attempts made to alleviating poverty, addressing malnutrition etc. all get twisted with the neo-liberal enchantments. The National Food Security Act (NFSA) is a glaring example. The Act has made provisions for covering 67% of the population, at a time, when the Planning Commission; the principal agency of the Government dealing with poverty, estimates landslide reduction of persons living Below Poverty Line (BPL). The estimation sparks massive uproar across party lines. The ruling UPA-II led by the Indian National Congress (INC) too distances itself from such estimations. The Planning Commission estimated the percentage of persons below the Poverty Line in 2011-12 as 25.7% in rural areas, 13.7% in urban areas and 21.9% for

the country as a whole based on Suresh Tendulkar's methodology. The press note released by the Commission stated that in 2011-12, India had 270 million persons below the Tendulkar Poverty Line as compared to 407 million in 2004-05, that means there is a reduction of 137 million persons over the seven year period. We certainly would deliberate on the tricky politics involved in estimation of poverty but, before doing that, let us discuss in brief the neo-liberal journey in India.

The nation-states in the modern world are responsible for the delivery of essential political goods to their inhabitants. These essential political goods can be summarized and gathered under five categories- Safety and Security; Rule of Law, Transparency, and Corruption; Participation and Human Rights; Sustainable Economic Opportunity; and Human Development. These five categories of political goods epitomize the performance of any government, at any level and can be used as a substantial benchmark to understand Indian politics as well. The last category has been given preference here to assess India's experience with neo-liberalism. To understand the boon or bane of neo-liberalism in India, one should at the very outset acknowledge the fact that some drastic policy measures were desperately required to reanimate the economy which was at its historical low. Indian state, according to T.J. Byres thus, attempted to create the conditions for a successful, transforming capitalist development. Byres posited "an 'instrumental' view of the state in a particular, narrowly 'functional', sense: that of laying the groundwork for capitalism and ensuring its dominance and development" (1999:41). In the last two decades Indian state has fostered that 'instrumental' approach thereby facilitating 'more inclusive growth' with extensive private participation. The pro-market approach with 'growth mantra', critics held, is deceptive and is a deliberate attempt to exhibit the humane face of the state. The Indian State since 2005 had embarked upon series of initiatives which are apparently the anti-thesis to the economic reforms of 1991. For instance, the rural and the excluded communities have assumed centre-

stage in the development vocabulary of the Indian state (viz. Food Security Act, MGNREGA etc.), Several social security initiatives have been undertaken and even new parameters of development propounded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) like Human Development Index (HDI), Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) and Gender Development Index (GDI) etc. have been used as important criteria to evaluate the policy implications of the government. These interventions, however, have occurred within the neo-liberal paradigm of development i.e. allowing the private and the market to take care of the key sectors of the economy such as- social security, education, healthcare, infrastructures etc. In most of the political discussions, these interventionist characters of Indian state have been construed as populist charm and sheer neo-liberal shibboleths.

Indian politics over the last decades have been trapped in search of a mid-way which seeks to assuage social tensions at one point and tweaking neo-liberal tango on the other. The co-existence of such unparallel ingredients has muddied Indian politics thereby resulting in a coalesced policy regime. Some policy makers and scholars view that a mid-way is the best deal. Amartya Sen reckons that the removal of major sources of unfreedom i.e. poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation require immediate state intervention. Sen writes, "what people can positively achieve is influenced by economic opportunities, political liberties, social powers, and the enabling conditions of good health, basic education, and the encouragement and cultivation of initiatives."² Sen along with Dreze (2013) reiterates that economic growth is meaningless without redistribution of its benefits to the underprivileged.³ There is a strong case for public expenditure on education, healthcare and employment leading to better capabilities and opportunities which will accelerate economic growth. They further argued that private intervention, as it is driven by profit, cannot prove effective in areas like education and health because a single-minded focus on profit can be at variance with the

interests of the public.⁴ A resonance of Sen can also be found in Ranabir Samaddar. Highlighting the co-existence of famine and hunger in the onward march of democracy, Samaddar noted that under conditions of political equality, there exist durable inequality, differential access to groups to food and food market.⁵ Democracy allows political, social and economic equality and, to him, it is a riddle why democracy fails to address hunger and famine. Indian democracy has been a success story with huge participation by the citizens in the electoral process but, real shadow of unfreedom such as hunger and poverty without doubt haunts the nation. The second school of thought led by Jagdish Bhagwati, Aravind Panagariya and others find appropriateness in the minimalist state intervention in terms of addressing poverty and deprivation. They discredit the redistribution of economic growth by dole and subsidy and contend that the unbridled market force with rewarding entrepreneurship has the potential to address impoverishment. On the other extreme, the proponents of the middle path assume that state must intervene in the key areas viz. healthcare, agriculture and education etc. but refrain from creating 'beneficiaries' out of the welfare schemes. Whatever the reasons, India fails miserably to address 'major sources of unfreedom' i.e. poverty, hunger and deprivation from the country which grossly paralyse human development. Highlighting the state of hungry people in the country the Global Hunger Index 2012 reported that India has lagged behind in improving its GHI score despite strong economic growth. After a small increase between 1996 and 2001, India's GHI score fell only slightly, and the latest GHI i.e. pegged at 22.9 returned to about the 1996 level (22.6). This stagnation in GHI scores occurred during a period when India's gross national income (GNI) per capita almost doubled, rising from about 1,460 to 2,850 constant 2005 international dollars between 1995–97 and 2008–10 (World Bank 2012).⁶ The latest Asian Development Bank's Social Protection Index (SPI) places India far below Sri Lanka, Nepal and Maldives with a score of 0.051 where the Asian benchmark is 0.2. Government spending on social welfare schemes as a

percentage of GDP in India was just 1.7% in contrast to 19.2% in Japan, 7.9% in Korea and 5.4% in China during 2009. India's spending increase due to heavy spending on the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) that accounted for 38% of social protection spending.⁷ These estimates reflect on the fact that India has done nothing compared to its neighbours in addressing hunger, poverty and deprivation. Atul Kohli observes that despite being a fastest-growing economy in the last three decades poverty in India has come down only slowly, leaving some 450 million Indians to subsist on less than \$1.25 per day.⁸ Despite laudable economic growth about 2.5 million children die in India every year, 46% children below three years are malnourished, 48% children below five are stunted, 43% are underweight and 79.2% are anaemic.⁹ Radhakrishnan and Ravi have analysed the relationship between malnutrition and poverty using state level estimates and explains that malnutrition would persist even when the poverty level is brought down to zero.¹⁰ These concerns further deepen the controversy relating to the poverty line. As has been mentioned earlier, the methods to measure poverty in the country are debated as grossly inappropriate. The Planning Commission reported in 2011 to the Supreme Court that if an urbanite earns more than Rs.32 a day and a villager Rs.26, s/he is not poor. It has been widely reported and as a matter of fact judges as well as common people understood for the first time in simple language how governments estimate poverty in India.¹¹ When asked to clarify its position on poverty estimation, Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission wrote a letter to the Attorney General of India (the latter agreed to appear in the Supreme Court on behalf of the Planning Commission) that, "Rs. 4,824 per month for a family (of five persons) to define poverty is not comfortable but it is not all that ridiculous from Indian conditions". Sen and Dreze have forwarded a significant point here. To them, even with such low benchmark so many people are below it- a full 30 percent of the population in 2009-10, or more than 350 million people

under the poverty line.¹² The following table exhibits estimation of poverty in the country by different bodies based on their own methodology.

Table- 1.1: Estimates of persons living in Poverty by different bodies (in %)

Year	Planning Commission	MoRD	World Bank	Tendulkar Committee
1973-74	54.9%			
1977-78	51.3%			
1981			60%	
1983	44.5%			
1987-88	38.9%			
1992		52.49%		
1993-94	36%			
1997		41.05%		
1999-2000	26.1%			
2004	27.5%			
2005	21.8%		42%	
2009				37.2%

**Source: author's compilation from the reports of respective bodies.*

In 2013, the policy makers in the country find appropriateness to pass Food Security Act. The UPA-II government led by the Congress party pressed hard to pass the bill to address food insecurity which the party failed since the launch of the *Garibi Hatao* in 1971. The promulgation of the NFSA first as an Ordinance to alleviate poverty without parliamentary debate sprouted massive uproar and the oppositions charged it as a move tilted exclusively towards electoral benefits. The NFSA aims at covering 67% of the population of the country with adequate food at a nominal price. Pregnant women and lactating mothers, besides being entitled to nutritious meals as per the prescribed nutritional norms, will also receive maternity benefit of not less than Rs. 6000.¹³ The NFSA is a very small step to alleviate hunger and ensure food security in India. India needed a

more comprehensive policy with appropriate measures of procurement, storage and distribution through a decentralized, strengthened and universal public distribution system along with a strong mechanism to redress grievances. There have been hypes that NFSA would incur heavy outlays as food subsidy and will harm the economy (according to Dipa Sinha it would be around 1.2 percent of the GDP rather than 3 percent that has been projected in the media).¹⁴ India can afford to spend a lot more to match with other developing countries in terms of providing social security protection. A mere 1.2% (estimated around \$20 billion per year) or at most 3% of the GDP would not harm much to the economy as has been feared. It needs special mention that supplying adequate food to the poor and eradication of Poverty are two prominent electoral issues in India. If suddenly these two issues are resolved politics in India will take a new turn. As such, the NFSA is genuinely a populist agenda to woo the voters. It is simply not the panacea to address food security but a political weapon and a feel good factor during electioneering.

What ails the PDS:

Public Distribution System is a major constituent of food security which covers the entire nation with a principal aim to ensure food security. The history of Public Distribution System in India dates back to 1939. It was the compulsions at the time of World War II that forced the then British Government to introduce the first structured public distribution of cereals in India through the rationing system, i.e., sale of a fixed quantity of ration (rice or wheat) to entitled families (ration card holders) in specified cities and towns. When the War ended, India, like many other countries, abolished the rationing system in 1943. India retained public distribution of food-grains as a deliberate food policy, when it embarked on the path of planned economic development in 1951. The creation of the Food Corporation of India and the Agricultural Prices Commission in 1965 consolidated the position of the PDS. Changes were made in 1991-92 through a crash programme designated "Revamped PDS" (RPDS), with components such as opening of several new Fair Price Shops (FPS) to

improve physical access of beneficiaries; mounting of special campaigns by the state governments to cancel the bogus entitlement cards and to issue new cards to households found to be without them; progressively bringing more and more FPS under the system doorstep delivery of PDS commodities; setting up vigilance committees of local people with substantial representation of women for each FPS at the village and higher levels; improving the supply chain by constructing or hiring small intermediary go-downs; and introducing additional commodities through FPS, in these areas.¹⁵ RPDS, nevertheless, was only a temporary reprieve. It could not reform a system that had grown so enormous and bureaucratic. For the Government, the solution was to reform the PDS by changing its universal character and targeting it to the really poor and deserving. Accordingly, a Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) to directly and effectively benefit the Below the Poverty Line (BPL) population was set in motion in June, 1997. The TPDS also came under severe criticism because of the faulty estimation and calculation of BPL categories and as a result after prolonged debates and deliberations 'outside the Parliament' Government has introduced the National Food Security Act, 2013. Earlier, the Panchayati Raj Institutions have nothing to say with the distribution of rations under the PDS but the new provisions have empowered the PRIs starting from selection of beneficiaries to monitoring and evaluation.

Let us dive a bit deeper into the institutional arrangements made to implement the provisions of the Act in Assam. An Action Plan was approved by the Group of Ministers, Assam which empowers the Gaon Panchayats as the unit of selection of beneficiaries in the rural areas and municipal bodies and town committees in the urban areas. The entire selection of beneficiaries are planned to be conducted on AAY (Antyodaya Anna Yojana) approach i.e. the poorest of the poor would get the first right to be selected. The Gaon Panchayat Samabai Samiti (GPSS) Secretaries have been held responsible for distribution and timely receipt of the forms. In a way, the new system has widened the ambit of the selection of beneficiaries and included new structures to implement the provisions. A ceiling of Rs.1 lakh has been fixed and persons below this income category

would be entitled to receive the benefit. An indicative category of persons to be included as beneficiaries' are- old/infirm, landless agricultural labourers, marginal farmers, rural artisans, craftsman, potters, tappers, weavers, blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, tea and ex-tea garden labourers, all casual workers, drivers, conductors, handymen porters, tailors, washer men, barbers, cobblers, sweepers, electricians, domestic servants, hawkers, vendors, delivery men, rickshaw pullers, handcart pullers, fruit, vegetable, fish and flower vendors selling on pavements, erosion affected families, patients suffering from cancer and HIV+ patients irrespective of his/her income provided that their total family income is less than Rs. 1 lakh per annum.

There is an interrogation point of the compatibility of the institutions which have run the PDS in the state prior to the NFSA, 2013. There are no indications as to what would happen to the GPSSs since most of these bodies are locally elected. Again if these bodies are retained then there are possibilities of overlapping with the new PRIs. Therefore, State government must clearly specify the role and responsibilities of all the structures and institutions involved in implementing the provisions of the NFSA, 2013. The initiative of the State Government to check bogus card holders by introducing biometric measures is a welcome step. It requires synergy and the role of civil society organizations are equally indispensable. In other words, the PDS mechanisms need to be revamped in consonance with the Act for its full execution.

Conclusion:

India homes the largest share of the world's hungry people. Except some policy measures such as- MGNREGA and the National Food Security Act, Indian state grossly remained apathetic to address the concerns which slackened economic growth and paralysed human development. On the opposite route, it has constantly facilitated space for global players to invest in key sectors such as social security to garner profit out of impoverishment and misery. Apparently, it looks as if serious attempts

have been made by the state to assuage hunger and poverty, but in reality, a mirage has been created which cannot be deciphered by the common people. These are neo-liberal shibboleths and Indian state is heavily hinging upon it.

Notes and References:

- ¹ Year on year Growth rate of Gross Domestic Product in percentage accessed from <http://data.gov.in/dataset/gdp-india-and-major-sectors-economy-share-each-sector-gdp-and-growth-rate-gdp-and-other-sect> on 20/07/2013
- ² Sen, Amartya, *Development as Freedom*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2010, p.5
- ³ Dreze, Jean and Sen Amartya., *An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradictions*, Allen Lane, 2013, p. ix
- ⁴ Chandrasekaran, Gayatri, Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen on economic growth and redistribution, accessed from <http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/rbpCYAO7OXjuLydprKMG6L/Book-Review-An-Uncertain-Glory-India-and-its-Contradiction.html> on 26/07/2013
- ⁵ Ranabir Samaddar while writing the foreword of the book "Politics in Huger Regime: Essays on the right to food in West Bengal" edited by S. P. Basu and G. Dasgupta commented on the inherent contradictions persists in realizing equality, justice and democratic values throughout history and across boundaries, Frontpage, London, 2011, p. xi
- ⁶ 2012 Global Hunger Index: The Challenges of Hunger: Ensuring Sustainable Food Security under Land, water and energy stresses, p.12
- ⁷ <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/fast-on-growth-slow-on-social-security/1139196/0>
- ⁸ Atul Kohli analyses the nature of development and existence of poverty amid plenty in India in his book *Poverty amid Plenty in the New India*, Cambridge University Press, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139015080.001> accessed on 16/07/2013, p. xi
- ⁹ *India: Social Development Report, The Land Question and the Marginalized*, Council for Social Development, Oxford University Press, 2011
- ¹⁰ Radhakrishna, Ravi Samba Reddy, *State of Poverty and Malnutrition in India*, India: Social Development Report, 2010, Council for Social Development, OUP, 2011
- ¹¹ Mander, Harsh., *The troubling figures of poverty in India* accessed from <http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/zLVp0Nt6MmnO5hqii5piZK/The-troubling-figures-of-poverty-in-India.html> on 27/06/2013

- ¹² Dreze, Jean and Sen Amartya., *An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradictions*, Allen Lane, 2013, p.190
- ¹³ For details see <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=97045>
- ¹⁴ Sinha Dipa., National Food Security Ordinance: Anything But Expensive, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XLVIII, No. 30. July 27, 2013
- ¹⁵ Swaminathan, Madhura. Structural Adjustment, Food Security and System of Public Distribution of Food, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 31, No. 26 (Jun. 29, 1996), pp. 1665-1672, accessed from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4404331>

WHOSE BODY IS IT ANYWAYS?
Some Reflections on Womanhood and its
Self Alienations

Amrita Pritam Gogoi

"One is not born, but rather becomes, woman." - Simone De Beauvoir

Around early August, in Jorhat town, the principal of a college denied girls wearing leggings entry into the college premises considering it an indecent dress to be worn to an educational institute. The girls and some women activists in retaliation pointed out the various benefits of wearing one; its comfort, affordability, etc. But as my readers must have anticipated, the struggle soon emerged to be nothing at all and the decision of the authority was implemented strictly. Few days later, I happened to pass by that college and found some young lads (of course, students of that college) in their uniforms wearing trousers no less body hugging than the leggings. I wondered how comfortable they were, to be worn in a sunny August afternoon, in comparison with the leggings generally made of stretchable and lighter material. Although I felt bad for the girls, I couldn't be but happy for the young men. They were able to wear a trouser of their choice because they have managed to escape the many patriarchal eyes around. But deeper questions lie. Why the girls? Why the authority had to operate more firmly against the girls on a simple matter like wearing a dress. What is the politics behind it or should we say that a different and somewhat hypocritical understanding of the category 'decency' pompously normalised itself in the same campus? Another question may be asked whether the choice of the young lads wearing those fashionable dresses were actually a choice of their own. Given the pervasive presence of patriarchal

structures, is it possible to choose something of our own? This paper is an attempt to reflect upon these questions in order to unsettle the normalising tendency of patriarchal structures.

Constructing the Woman Body:

The case above exhibits in a way how construction, performance and practice of gender and gendered differences take place on the body of the female. Her body is an arena of immense interest to politics, economics, and other social institutions like the family, religion and educational institutions. The propagation of her virginity by religions; its politicization across nations, celebration and preservation around the globe is one such example. However, this propagation, politicization and celebration carried out at a subtle (mostly with the consent of the oppressed) level have serious implications in shaping her as an individual. A closer look into the way a woman use her body in the accomplishment of everyday tasks viz. eating, sleeping, walking, talking reveals how her body becomes the site for the expression of core social values, delimiting her from using her own body. In short, decisions regarding the use of her body even in the accomplishment of simplest of actions are taken beforehand by various social norms, customs and taboos. Her body, adorned with many gendered symbols is also an agent which is expected and bound to carry out various social roles and reproduce social situations.

An example can be drawn from the nationalist movement of India as it was the original point of departure from where questions like decency and so on emerged in our somewhat nationalist social life in order to create a category of Indian women, uniformly Indian in look and manner. Any rejection of these standard versions would naturally put oneself in the dark, non-familial location of indecency. One of the significant essays on this discourse, Partha Chatterjee's "*The Nationalist Resolution of Women's Question*" argues, the setback in the reform movements in India, by the end of the 19th century that took up the question of women's liberty, equality etc, was not because it was censored out of the reform movement

or that more pressing issues overtook them. Rather, he points, it was because the nationalist project placed issues of women in the inner domain (“constituted in the light of discovery of “tradition””) of Indian nationalism; issues under which were to be left unchanged. It was in dealing with this inner domain, that nationalism in India launched its most creative and historically significant project. Under this nationalist project a modern national culture was fashioned out, something that remained and is to remain outside the influence of the west. This inner domain was supposed to remain sovereign even when the state was in the hands of colonial power. He writes,

“in the entire phase of the national struggle, the crucial need was to protect, preserve and strengthen the inner core of the national culture, its spiritual essence. No encroachments by the colonizer must be allowed in the inner spectrum. In the world, imitation of and adaptation to western norms was a necessity; at home, they were tantamount to annihilation of one’s very identity”.¹

Application of inner/outer into everyday life led to the separation of *ghar*-the home; to be represented by woman, and *bahir* -the world, the supposedly domain of the male². The home, he writes,

“...was the principal site for expressing the spiritual quality of the national culture, and women must take the main responsibility of protecting and nurturing this quality. No matter what the changes in the external conditions of life for women, they must not lose their essential spiritual (i.e. feminine) virtues; they must not, in other words, become *essentially* westernised”³.

Referring to various writings of the time on the dress of Bengali woman, he notes, new clothes were considered vulgar even when they covered the body better. Literature of the time engaged in establishing the relationship between modesty, woman and spirituality; and concentrated on the threatened ‘westernization of Bengali woman’. It was expected of good woman to reflect characteristics of refined and civilized society through their appearance and behaviour.⁴ The new woman, a product of

the nationalist project was subjected to new patriarchy, and was 'quite reverse from the common woman who were coarse, vulgar, loud, quarrelsome, devoid of superior moral sense, sexually promiscuous, and were subjected to brutal physical oppression by male'⁵. This inner domain which reflects the tension between the shifting needs and nationalist stereotypes on woman has been a constant issue to be controlled by various national and sub-national strategies in India. Today dress like Selwar-Kameez has become so acceptable to many of the middle class Assamese households that one would hardly imagine the anxiety and controversy it brought about to them when the trend initially came to fashion in Assam. One can recount those moments of criticism and controversy that emerged in Assamese middle class households when dress like Sari, 'nightie' became fashionable cloths to be worn by Assamese married and working woman. But these examples would help one to conclude that the question of decency and indecency is always subjected to the temporal politics of a particular period. Moreover, the process of standardising norms like decency and indecency alienates woman from her right to choose. But it also takes us to the question, if at all, 'choice' can ever be an independent will of ones own.

The Patriarchal Body:

The gendered roles and temperament she is assigned with are nothing but the result of exaggeration of the different biological roles a female body plays from a male body. The exaggeration leads to the assumption that woman are physically weaker than man. The uniqueness of patriarchy from all forms of oppression is that unlike castism, racism, class etc it has existed beyond times and in all societies. The production and uninhibited sustenance of gendered roles assigned to man and woman is rooted in overlooking this vary fact and in the faith that reforms, similar socialization for boys and girls etc would bring an end to it. It is perhaps because of illusions like this even a thinker of J. S. Mill's stature who trespassed his liberal ideas and went on to understand the exploitation of women in their private domain of marriage and condemned marital slavery, accepted or prescribed for

the traditional gender-biased division of labour. He accepts traditional assumptions regarding woman's and man's different responsibilities in a household and that when woman marry they should be responsible for taking care of the home and children while man provide the family income⁶. When the irony of thinkers and reformers of woman's oppression stands such it becomes even more difficult to comprehend, analyse and settle our minds on questions regarding her body. It is even more difficult to calculate the difference in the physical strength of a boy and a girl when from their very childhood they grow up inculcating gendered roles, status and temperament. Their eating habits are gendered too. In trying to understand such assumptions on the body of the female and its relation to the temperament in performing various tasks Iris Young in her essay, *Throwing like a Girl: a Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment Motility and Spatiality*, referring to Erwin Straus (1966) study on the difference between the way a girl and a boy of five year uses their body in throwing a ball, argues that the differences are not biologically based (which Straus claims) but the difference gets manifested because of the difference in the way the bodies are situated. She says,

“...a space surrounds them in imaginations which are not free to move beyond; the space available to them is a constricted space. (...) Women often approach a physical engagement with things with timidity, uncertainty, and hesitancy. Typically we lack an entire trust in our bodies to carry out aims. There is, I suggest, a double hesitation here. On the one hand, we often lack confidence that we have the capacity to do what must be done... the other side of this tentativeness is, I suggest, a fear of getting hurt, which is greater in women than in men.”⁷

This, she argues, divides her attention between the aim to be realized and at the same time saving herself from harm. Young maintains that these leads to a feeling of incapacity, frustration and self-consciousness. As a result of the imaginations that surrounds her, the lack of thrust in her own body and the division of attention the space within which she performs the task becomes constricted⁸. It is a constricted space, which hinders her

from using her capacity in its entirety taking her away from such tasks and aligning her with task that require lesser physical strength without chances of getting hurt. She chooses spaces where there are lesser imaginations, thus assigning to herself roles confined to the private sphere like socialization of the child etc. Thus the cycle continues on and on. Once alignment of the psychological and physical self takes place with roles in the private a step into the public will be accompanied by imaginations, discomfort, feeling of alienation, lack of trust in oneself; the space would be a constricted one wherein she will not be able to perform with full ease and naturalness. Each time she fails to perform successfully in the public the more and more she would align herself with the private.

That apart, most importantly, she is alienated from her own self. Socialist thinker, Alison Jaggar, assigns such alienation to three aspects of a woman's life, i.e. her sexuality, motherhood and intellectuality. The politics between the two sexes leaves them unequal even when it comes to their sexual lives. Although women might claim that they diet, dress and go for beautification processes for their own happiness, but in reality they do it for the pleasure of men. She writes, "Women come to accept the male identification of their selves with their bodies, sometimes just with the feminised parts of their body. Simultaneously, however, women separate themselves from their bodies; their bodies are treated as recalcitrant nature which has to be overcome by a multitude of aids to "beauty""⁹. Further, she is judged in terms of her sexual life alone and society maintains double standards for men and women when it comes to sexual experiences¹⁰. Juliet Mitchell, argues that even though the market today makes available a lot of safe, effective and inexpensive reproduction and birth controlling technologies yet deciding on their use or consumption does not rest on the women. Similarly, although women today give birth to lesser number of children, the pressures of being a perfect mother has not lessened. In reality, women today spend more time in the socialization of the child. Mitchell, instead, argues that in an increasingly capitalist world women are expected to be more attentive towards the physical and psychological needs of the child. As a result of all these they become unsure of their intellectual

capacities and upon entering the public sphere they hesitate to express their ideas¹¹. Mill, on the other hand through his *The Subjection of Women* reflects on the plight of intelligent women who is deprived of her individuality owing to patriarchal institutions and customs. Mill writes, "any of the mental differences supposed to exist between women and men are but the natural effect of the differences in their education and circumstances, and indicate no radical difference, far less radical inferiority, of nature¹² .

Referring Hegel's dialectics where he describes the relationship of master to slave, Simone in her book '*Second Sex*' suggests that this can be applied to understand the relationship of man to woman. As it happens, the master privileges only because he risked his life but ironically the same risk has also been experienced by the vanquished slave in mutual recognition through mediation. But unlike Hegel's relationship of oppression where the slave at last recognises the oppression and free himself and even his master through struggle against the master, here in Male- female relationship 'woman herself aspires to and recognises the values concretely attained by males.' Thus Simone suggests,

"...in reality, woman have never pitted female values against male ones: it is men wanting to maintain masculine prerogatives who invented this division; the very submission of women proves this. Today what women claim to be recognised as existents just like men, and not to subordinate existence to life or man to his animality."

Simone explains how reproduction constraints women from forming a bond amongst themselves to come out of the oppression. The essential procreative relationship between men and women does not allow her to break relationship with her oppressor. Thus Simone sees women as a sex category¹³. This peculiar mediation between the two sexes thoroughly resist women to come out from this 'unholy' relationship, at least as Simone suggests. This inability of women, not to be a part of the "fundamental unity" with the other sex, subjects her to various inequalities and oppressions in relation to her day to day life. It actually transcends procreative roles and makes way to other subjections.

The Patriarchal Nature of Beauty:

The home, Simone notes, is not an interior but 'also the expression of its living standard, its wealth, its tastes; it must be exhibited for others to see'. The duty of organising the social life lies with the woman. While the man is connected to the community as producer and citizen, yet his professional relations often do not reflect his social level, while the wife does not have the obligations brought about by work. Her social duty which is to represent will become part of the pleasure she has in showing herself to others. She delights in showing off her home and even herself, which her husband and children do not see because they have a vested interest in them¹⁴.

One significant means through which she shows of the social standing of the family is through her dress. Dress, argues Simone *de* Beauvoir has twofold significance in the social life of a woman. In the first place, it reflects her social standing, her social situation; and, second it concretises her feminine narcissism. It helps a woman appropriate herself as a person. Simone notes that the relation a woman maintain with her dress maker and the seriousness and insecurity she retains reflects her predicament in the social life she maintains¹⁵. This relationship between women's body, beauty, dress and her social standing places her amidst lot of insecurities relating to her physical appearance, body, the cloth she wears, fear of aging etc.

The duty to 'represent' besides delimiting the range of her choices, wishes and preferences in terms of her dress also enforces decisions on the shape and size of the various parts of her body. Their bodies are deliberately deformed to meet standards of beauty. Note; beautiful enough to reflect family standards, beautiful enough to be eligible for marriage etc. With castism, racism, capitalism working hand in hand beauty buys much currency- to be desired and strived for; whatever its standard measurements and costs (in terms of health, money and stress) be. Apart from setting standards of beauty, society also prescribes ways of achieving them however painful and harmful they might be. Women of the Kayan tribe in Myanmar and Northern Thailand lengthen their necks with gold or

brass coils symbolising beauty, wealth and sexual fertility. On the other hand, in imperial China foot binding (where, feet are unwrapped and re-wrapped tighter and until it would get to approximately 4 inches long) because men found it highly attractive. Such a practice assures that women would never have to work outside the household, remain fully dependent on their male counterpart and would not leave their house on their own to participate in normal social events¹⁶. Similarly, amongst certain communities like the Mursi, Chai and Tirma women wear large pottery or wooden discs or plates in their lower lips.

But beauty standards being set outside the individual varies according to their spatial temporal contexts. Therefore lean neck, small feet, forcefully delimiting the growth of certain parts of the body may not be the practice everywhere. While worldwide women are seen to undergo cosmetic surgery to have lean and thin bodies in Mauritania women are force fed because, here, obesity is considered a sign of beauty and wealth. Big here is considered beautiful, stretch marks are considered sexy and obesity a mark of wealth and social status. To be made eligible for marriage and to exhibit the family status (which, Simone calls the duty of the female in the social sphere) young girls are sent to rural fattening camps where they are fed camel milk, bread crumbs soaked in olive oil, and goat meat that would come up to 16, 0000 calories a day in a land repeatedly wracked by drought. According to the World Health Organization 1.5 million women in Mauritania are obese.¹⁷ Moreover they are fed pills meant for animals. Because of these gavages women have been facing serious health problems like inability to have children, repeated heart attacks etc¹⁸.

Female genital mutilation is one such harmful practice, leading to adverse obstetric and perinatal outcomes. This practice involves 'partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons, The WHO and Inter- African Committee on Traditional Practices estimates that around 28 African countries are affected by it in varying degrees while the total number of victims rises to over 100 million. The high sense of

family honour and pride attached to women's virginity, rituals and norms relating to initiation of woman to womanhood etc are some of the primary reasons behind such practices¹⁹. Such traditional practices performed on the body of the female to uphold family and societal pride and honour has deep psychological implications as well apart from physical. According to another report, more than 125 million girls and women alive today has undergone this procedure²⁰. Although, it might seem that female genital mutilation is not a beauty practice but it intrinsically related to the power politics through which women are denied to have right over her own body.

While traditional customs and practices have forced women towards such harmful practices, it is often believed that liberalization, brought about through globalization would free women from the clutches of such practices. But patriarchy being a constant surpassing spatial temporal context; not much change on the meanings, role, status and temperament of women's body has yet been lived. Many believe and believed that with greater economic independence these standards would die off. However, women today are equally burdened to meet social standards of beauty. Matrimonial adverts still openly mentions how the girl should preferably look like. And therefore tanning skin, whitening skin, breaking jaw to get manga faces, slimming, bleaching, waxing, face lift, body piercing, surgery of different body parts, spilling of blood are some of the many practices that have come up to replace traditional ones. Body modification through cosmetic surgery earlier limited only to the elitist section of the society is widely practiced today owing to its acceptance and availability. Women are still made to feel guilty for not meeting set standards of beauty. The various practices carried out, traditional or modern, are intrinsically related to the social values that are gendered and patriarchal in nature. Beauty standards are most often designed to exercise social power and control over women's bodies and to foster and make easy the working and accomplishment of other patriarchal norms and values. The operation and normalization of beauty practices are thus ensured to recreate and reproduce control over her body.

In trying to understand the working of the beauty regime Andrea Dworkin in her book *Women Hating* analyses the idea of beauty as one aspect of the way women are hated in male supremacist culture. She argues that beauty practices are not only time wasting, expensive and painful to self esteem but it decides her mobility, spontaneity, posture, gait, etc. In other words they define in precise terms the dimension of her physical freedom (Dworkin, 1974, as in Shiel Jeffrey, 2005). Beauty practices throughout ages and across societies have been necessitated by the various institutions of the society so that the sexes can be told apart, so that patriarchy survives temporalities and so that the dominant sex class can be differentiated from the subordinate one. Beauty practices recreate and re-establish over and again difference between the sexes. It has to be realised that confidence over the self or one's body does not or should not come from achieving a particular standard set of a "perfect body". Rather, actual confidence would or must come from embracing the body as it is. But matrimonial adverts, magazines, cosmetic industry works otherwise. They, on the other hand, tell us how ashamed or ineligible a person we are for not looking like how we should. In the year 2010, India's whitening cream market was worth 432 million dollars with an annual growth rate of 18 per cent a year.

In the 1970s feminist did criticize the pervasive beauty regimes and pointed out in vehement terms its misogynist project²¹. Yet, body modification begun to be widely practised with more harmful ways requiring breaking of skin, spilling of blood, rearrangement or amputation of body parts. Foreign bodies in the form of breast implants are placed under the skin (many a times next to the heart), women's labia are cut to shape, fat is liposuctioned out of the thighs and buttocks and many a times are injected into other sites such as cheeks and chins. These developments, very interestingly, are much more harmful than the ones practiced in the 60s and 70s when the women's movements came up. This made some feminist argue that beauty regimes are no longer oppressive even if it would require breaking of skin, spilling of blood, amputation of body parts etc. In trying to interpret this development, some felt, this came out of the very feminist

movement that sought for women's right to choose. Thus women chose whatever they wanted to do with their body. Bolder propositions on beauty practices are also made that beauty practices could be socially transformative; help women come out of the traditional ways of understanding, maintaining and shaping their bodies. But the range of choices made available in a liberal capitalist world, however, does not give one the liberty or freedom to choose rather it only expands the horizon of the choices. The choices are therefore not individual. Sheila Jeffrey argues that the attitudes that underlie harmful cultural practices have coercive power and that they can and should be changed. She looks into the impact of male fashion designers, fashion photographers and makeup artists with interest in transformity. The impact of pornography and prostitution too is profound in the west. The advancement of new technologies, internet, laissez-faire government policies, cultural requirements for the construction of beauty have changes as well. We can cite here the example of the Barbie doll, a toy which also had to undergo body modification to meet changing notions of beauty or may be to establish newer sense of beauty. In the year 1997 it came out of the factory in a new shape with wider waist slimmer hips and with a reduction of her legendary bust line to replace the original Barbie of the 50s known for her 40-18-32 measurements.

In trying to analyse the secret behind beauty practices, Naomi Wolf in her book *The Beauty Myth* asserts that beauty is not a natural, universal category but a form of cultural currency. Beauty norms are used by male institutions to limit and control women's access to power. Economically, therefore, beauty should not be understood as merely a desirable asset but a legitimate and necessary qualification for women's rise to power. Wolf argues beauty is a cultural currency that is used by the male institutions to limit and control women's access to power and like any other economy; the beauty currency is also controlled by the state. She claims that in the West is the last best belief that keeps male dominance intact. Beauty thereby becomes not only desirable but also a necessary qualification for women's rise to power. Reasons behind body modification are two: register participation in social group and second, claim an identity in opposition to

a social group. Body modification, to a significant degree signals change in social status.²² It might therefore signify or lead to upward social mobility, as well.

The fashion industry, many a times, is portrayed as working in favour of the feminist agenda, of liberating women, freeing them from the clutches of the veils and household responsibilities. The Plup fashion week that celebrates plus-size models might even solidify our illusions regarding women, fashion and liberation. At this juncture it is important to remind ourselves of the working of capital, its interest and its coalition with patriarchy. Capitalism exploits Here capitalism does not work to break the stereotypical understanding of women body; rather it redefines another category of female body and sexualizes even this body as well. Simone, in this context notes, "The goal of fashion to which she is in thrall is not to reveal her as an autonomous individual but, on the contrary, to cut her from her transcendence so as to offer her as a prey to male desires; fashion does not serve to fulfil her projects but to thwart them"²³

Conclusion:

It seems not just economic empowerment of women would enable women to free themselves from the clutches of patriarchal power politics. Nor, even men, for that matter would come out from their sordid existences under the patriarchal norms. The irony is that both the genders are trapped in the patriarchal norms, as it happens to all oppressed, that both have accepted those norms and reproduce them in their lives with full self consent. A solution may be laid in our everyday existence how we destabilize those norms with constant vigilance; that means we need to question the very existence of our men and women hood. In this sordid oppressive regime of patriarchy to relinquish ourselves from the gendered categories is not just an easy task, but it seems there is no alternative to it.

Endnotes:

- ¹ Chatterjee, P.(1989), *The Nationalist Resolution of Women's Question* in Sangari, K and Vaid, S. eds *Recasting women: Essays in Colonial History*. Kali for Women and Zubaan, New Delhi, p. 239.
- ² Chatterjee, P.(1989), *The Nationalist Resolution of Women's Question* in Sangari, K and Vaid, S. eds *Recasting women: Essays in Colonial History*. Kali for Women and Zubaan, New Delhi, p. 239.
- ³ Ibid,1989, p.243
- ⁴ Ibid, 1999, p.122
- ⁵ Ibid, 1989, p. 244
- ⁶ Szapuova, Mariana (2006), *Mill's Liberal Feminism: Its Legacy and Current Criticism*, in *Prolegomena* 5 (2), 179-191. The writer here quotes Mill from his *The Subjection of Women*, "Like a man when he chooses a profession, so, when a women marries, it may in general be understood that she makes choice of the management of the household, and the bringing up of a family [...]; and that she renounces, not all other objects and occupations, but all which are not consistent with requirements of this (Mill, 1984: 237)". Mill contradicts himself here, because in later pages he writes, "The equality of married persons before the law, is not only the sole mode in which the particular relation can be made consistent with justice to both sides, and conducive to the happiness of both, but it is the only means of rendering the daily life of mankind, in any high sense, a school of moral cultivation. (Mill, 1984: 294)"
- ⁷ Young, Iris (1980), *Throwing like a Girl: a Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment Motility and Spatiality*, *Human Studies*, Vol 3 (2), 143.
- ⁸ Ibid
- ⁹ Jaggar, A M (1983), *Feminist politics and Human Nature*, Rowman & Allánheld Publishers, The Harvester Press, Sussex, p. 309-310.
- ¹⁰ Different feminist thinkers have dealt with this idea. While Kollontai in dealing with the women question argues that it is important to undo with the tradition/habit/ system of judging the personality of a woman exclusively in terms of her sexual life. Other scholars like Millet (1969), Firestone (1970) has prescribed for the elimination of double standards that persists regarding the sexual life of a man and a women.

- ¹¹ Mitchell, J (1966), *Women the Longest Revolution*, as in <http://www.marxists.org/subject/women/authors/mitchell-juliet/longest-revolution.htm>, accessed on 7th July, 2013.
- ¹² Szapuova, Mariana (2006), *Mill's Liberal Feminism: Its Legacy and Current Criticism*, in *Prolegomena* 5 (2), 179-191.
- ¹³ Beauvoir, S De (2011), *The Second Sex*, translated by Constance Borde and Shiela Malovany- Chevallier, Vintage Books, London, p 73-77. Although, here, in this chapter while seeking to unfold the historical trajectory behind dialectic relationship between men and women she sees women as a sexed category, in her later chapters she vividly explains the role of various norms and institutions in the making of a 'woman'. And therefore she wrote famously, "One is not born, but rather becomes, woman".
- ¹⁴ Ibid, pp 585
- ¹⁵ Ibid, pp 585-612
- ¹⁶ The Beauty and Art Of Body Modification, July 30, 2013, as in <http://www.ladybud.com/2013/07/30/body-modification/> accessed on 31st August.
- ¹⁷ Mauritania Struggles with Love for Fat, as in http://www.nbcnews.com/id/18141550/ns/health-health_care/t/mauritania-struggles-love-fat-women/#.UnIjhnCJSn2, accessed on 12th July, 2013.
- ¹⁸ Mauritania Girls Force Fed to Meet Men's Love For XL Beauty, as in <http://says.com/my/lifestyle/mauritania-women-force-fed-to-find-husbands-obesity-videos-pictures-infographics>, accessed on 12th July, 2013.
- ¹⁹ Ras-Work, Berhane (2006), *The Impact of Harmful traditional Practices on the Girl Child*, United Nations, Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) in Collaboration with UNICEF, Florence, Italy, September 25-28.
- ²⁰ Female genital mutilation: 30 million girls 'at risk' July, 22, 2013 as in http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-23410858?utm_content=buffer86ff0&utm_source=buffer&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign= accessed on 22nd July, 2013.
- ²¹ Jeffrey, S (2005), *Beauty and Misogyny: Harmful Cultural Practices in the West*, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York, p 1. In the consciousness raising groups organised by American radical feminist Catherine MacKinnon discussions were made on how women felt about themselves and their bodies and sought to identify male pressures that forced women to diet, depilate and makeup.

Feminist in the period also wrote extensively on masculine aesthetics that caused women to feel that their bodies were inadequate and forced them to engage in expensive, time-consuming practices and made them feel inauthentic and unacceptable. Beauty therefore was identified as oppressive to women.

- ²² Wolf, Naomi (1991), *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women*, Harper Collins e-books, New York, Morrow.
- ²³ Beauvoir, S De (2011), *The Second Sex*, translated by Constance Borde and Shiela Malovany- Chevallier, Vintage Books, London, p 586.

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EVOLUTION OF THE NUCLEAR NON PROLIFERATION REGIME A Manifestation of Superpower Cooperation

Obja Borah Hazarika

Introduction:

Since the advent of the atom bomb, the world has been grappling with a changed security complex and efforts have been directed at confronting the challenge of both vertical (increase in nuclear arsenals of a state) and horizontal (increase in the number of nuclear states/non state actors) proliferation of nuclear weapons. The conviction that the horizontal spread of the nuclear weapon needs to be prevented is far from universal. The Kenneth Waltz-Scott Sagan debate on this issue illustrates both sides of the proliferation debate. Waltz, a nuclear proliferation optimist, contends that the spread of nuclear weapons will produce stable deterrence and nuclear states will avoid using nuclear weapons for fear of retaliation. Sagan disagrees with Waltz and holds the view that military organizations are characterized by common predispositions, rigid customs and insular interests, which would lead to deterrence failures and accidental use of nuclear weapons.

The inception and growth of the nuclear nonproliferation regime during the Cold War was largely possible due to cooperation between the United States (US) and the Soviet Union which together created the principles, treaties and other mechanisms related to nuclear nonproliferation. In spite of Cold War demands, Moscow and Washington cooperated to a considerable extent, sometimes even at the cost of defying allies, to prop up a nuclear nonproliferation regime. There were both advances and regressions with regard to nonproliferation in each decade

of the Cold War. Following initial confusion about trading nuclear weapons for allies, the superpowers concluded that prevention of horizontal proliferation and cooperating to this end served their national interest better and this provides the rationale behind the cooperative behaviour of the US and the Soviet Union in co-creating the nonproliferation regime.

Initial Attempts at Preventing Proliferation:

The Manhattan Project was an Anglo-American collaboration which led to the creation of the first nuclear bomb. It was defined by the Quebec Agreement of September 1943, according to which the US, Britain and Canada decided against disclosing information regarding this endeavour to third parties.¹ In addition, the US, Britain and Canada agreed to restrict dissemination of information on the practical industrial applications of atomic energy before effective "safeguards against its misuse could be devised".² Furthermore, the US planned to corner the entire stock of uranium available in the world. Washington had to eventually abandon this quest as it became evident that it was "politically unrealistic and that uranium could be found in many more places than were originally known."³

US President Harry S. Truman explicated on 3rd October, 1945, that the international community ought to renounce nuclear weapons and utilize nuclear energy solely for "peaceful and humanitarian ends".⁴ The US Secretary of War (1940-45) Stimson attempted to place all nuclear weapons under collective international control but the success of this endeavour depended on cooperation between the US and Russia, which was "undone by Cold War politics."⁵ On 15th November, 1945 the US, Britain and Canada proposed the setting up of an Atomic Energy Commission at the United Nations (UN) to prepare recommendations on eliminating the use of atomic energy for destructive purposes while promoting its peaceful uses. The Soviet Union enthusiastically agreed to this proposal but insisted that the planned commission be accountable to the UN Security Council.

Bernard Baruch of the US presented the Acheson-Lilienthal report (also called the Baruch plan) at the UN. The Baruch plan envisaged the

elimination of state possession of nuclear weapons. It proposed to disallow the use of the veto by nations which violated safeguards regarding nuclear proliferation. It mentioned that the US would continue to possess atomic weapons until firm guarantees were in place preventing other nations from arming themselves with nuclear weapons.⁶ These clauses were not accepted by the Soviet Union. Moscow responded with the Gromyko plan which required atomic weapons to be declared illegal and destroyed. The Baruch plan was approved by the UN but was killed by a Soviet veto in the Security Council.⁷

During this period, the US followed a strategy of 'strict secrecy' with regard to nuclear proliferation. This policy prevented the transfer of nuclear technology and know-how from the US to other nations. The Soviet Union conducted its first nuclear test in September 1949, which set the stage for the nuclear arms race between the superpowers.

Atoms for Peace:

In the 1950s, there arose two views regarding nuclear weapons in Washington. The 'monopolists' emphasized that the US ought to maintain its nuclear exclusivity by embarking on a policy which promoted nuclear nonproliferation as an international norm.⁸ The 'managers' believed that nuclear weapons would eventually spread to other countries and thus, the US ought to distribute them to its allies to secure an edge in the nuclear arms race.

The American and British leaders were confronted by the possibility that the Soviet Union would be able to offer the benefit of peaceful applications of nuclear energy to nations and thereby gain allies in the Cold War. In order to trump any attempted Soviet efforts to spread nuclear energy among its allies, the US altered its nonproliferation policy from one of "strict secrecy" to "selective secrecy".⁹ Washington decided to provide non-NATO nations access to nuclear technology as long as those nations pledged to refrain from diverting such technology to their military programme.¹⁰

In 1953, the 'Atoms for Peace' proposal was introduced by US President Dwight Eisenhower. This policy aimed to aid countries in developing civilian nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in return for the guarantee that they would not divert this assistance to weapons programmes. The Soviet Union and the US also began to assist several nations in the nuclear field in the 1950s, even though an 'acceptable safeguards regime' did not exist against proliferation.¹¹ Some scholars perceived that the 'Atoms for Peace' plan was driven by the US nuclear industry concerned about losing its market share to others. Others believed that sharing nuclear technology would disprove communist propaganda that the US was solely concerned with destructive uses of the atom.¹²

The 'Atoms for Peace' plan included a proposal to create an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Eisenhower advocated that the agency could devise ways to allow fissionable material to be used for "peaceful pursuits of mankind".¹³ The agency was to be responsible for the "impounding, storage and protection of these materials".¹⁴ The Soviet Union agreed to enter into discussions with the US regarding the creation of the IAEA. The superpowers combined their efforts to create the IAEA.¹⁵ The IAEA was established in 1957. IAEA member nations agreed to file with the agency regular detailed reports on nuclear civilian activities and consented to permit international inspections into their military complexes. The IAEA signalled the dawn of an era of inspections and safeguards with regard to nuclear commerce.

In the 1950s neither superpower transferred nuclear weapons outright to another state though, but for reasons of alliance politics, they came close to doing so under the 'Atoms for Peace' plan. Internationally recognized norms against nuclear proliferation were beginning to crystallize at this stage.

Regime Creation:

In the 1960s, Moscow and Washington cooperated in advancing the nuclear nonproliferation regime. The detente period in the Cold War provided an

atmosphere that was conducive for the superpowers to collaborate their efforts. US President John F. Kennedy proclaimed that as many as twenty five nations could emerge as nuclear nations in the world as early as the 1970s, which would prove to be the greatest possible danger and hazard for the international community.¹⁶

On the other hand, in the 1960s, the superpowers were constrained in their efforts to cooperate on promoting nuclear nonproliferation by a high priority of alliance maintenance demands. In the late 1960s, the relaxation of these constraints allowed them to agree on “formal norms for achieving their nonproliferation interests”.¹⁷ Thus, nonproliferation norms began to percolate into international consciousness.

The Cuban Missile Crisis provided an impetus to President Kennedy to renew negotiations for a Nuclear Test Ban agreement with the Soviet Union. President Kennedy signed the Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT) with the Soviet Union in 1963, which banned nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in space and underwater. The LTBT alluded to the pressure of popular tide on the superpowers and to their assumption of an almost paternal responsibility for drawing up universal rules to prevent proliferation.¹⁸ The Cuban Missile Crisis produced a negotiated settlement in which Moscow made assurances that Cuba would not acquire nuclear weapons.¹⁹

By 1964, there were five nations which had tested the nuclear bomb - the US, the Soviet Union, Britain, France and China. In addition, there were a number of countries considering the possibility of developing nuclear weapons and had launched nuclear programmes. The frequency of the spread of the bomb led to an increased sense of danger, which contributed to greater “cooperation between the superpowers”.²⁰

The Soviet Union aided China on the latter's nuclear power programme but this assistance was halted after the Sino-Soviet split. Post-1958, the Soviet Union slowed down transfers of nuclear technology to nations. Many nuclear commitments made by the Soviet Union were ‘drawn

out, re-negotiated, or left unfulfilled".²¹ Moscow insisted that recipients of its nuclear reactors obtain the nuclear fuel for their operation from the Soviet Union and return the spent fuel rods.²² In this manner, the Soviet Union restricted nations from developing their own uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing facilities.

Meanwhile, the US was debating the Multi-Lateral Force (MLF) plan which aimed to provide NATO countries "access to their own nuclear weapons but in a NATO context".²³ The MLF was distasteful to the Soviet Union as it was seen as a "German route to the bomb"²⁴. The Soviet Union began interacting with the US to formulate an improved safeguards system with regard to nuclear proliferation.²⁵ A breakthrough was achieved when Germany abandoned its quest for obtaining nuclear weapons, which eased the American dilemma of balancing alliance interest and pursuing global nonproliferation norms.²⁶ The US shelved the MLF plan and consequently, "Soviet and American interests were sufficiently in step to allow for the negotiation of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty".²⁷

The superpowers agreed to the creation of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). The NPT was signed in 1968. This treaty prevented nuclear weapon nations from aiding non-nuclear weapon nations in building or procuring nuclear weapons. It ensured that non-nuclear weapon states place their peaceful nuclear facilities under international safeguards. The NPT granted non-nuclear weapon signatories access to nuclear technology and allowed peaceful nuclear explosions. The NPT helped establish a normative presumption against proliferation and helped build a degree of predictability in states' behaviour with regard to nuclear proliferation.²⁸ The US and the Soviet Union cooperated to persuade the non-aligned nations to agree to the NPT. In this way, Moscow and Washington combined their efforts to ensure that the emergence of additional nuclear states would be prevented.²⁹ This definitive concurrence in the official policies of Washington and Moscow in accepting the NPT established them as 'proliferation pessimists'.

Proliferation Concerns on the Rise:

Despite the creation of the NPT, new circumstances prompted the need for further measures to prevent nuclear proliferation. Three events that occurred in the 1970s exposed the incompetence of the existing nonproliferation regime.

The first event was the Indian peaceful nuclear explosion (PNE) in 1974 which demonstrated the shortcomings of the NPT. It was feared that the Indian test would provided 'new incentives for other states to acquire nuclear weapons'.³⁰ The Soviet response to the Indian 1974 test was at most "politely noncommittal, (and) was not what one might have expected from a sponsor of the Nonproliferation Treaty".³¹ The passive Soviet response could have been influenced by Moscow's continuing domestic support for PNEs as a significant "economic resource".³² Moscow's response to the Indian explosion was in sync with its official nonproliferation policy, which stressed that Washington and Moscow were to each ensure that their client states did not assemble nuclear weapons. Moscow was nonchalant about pressing nations other than its allies on nonproliferation.³³ In addition, strong Indo-Soviet ties could have influenced the Soviet response to the Indian PNE.

The Indian PNE led to the passage of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Act in the US that made it mandatory for any nation availing nuclear aid from the US to undergo full-scope safeguards. The US vowed to terminate nuclear co-operation with any state that engaged in activities related to the 'manufacture or acquisition of nuclear explosives'.³⁴

The second event was the defeat of the US in Vietnam led to trepidation among client states of the US regarding its ability to provide them with security in case of a military outbreak. By the 1970s, France, Germany, Britain, the Netherlands, Japan, and South Africa had begun to build their own enrichment capacity. There was a proposition to sell facilities capable of producing fissile materials to non-nuclear weapon nations without regard to their proliferation implications.³⁵

The third event was the oil crisis of the 1970s which led to a sudden surge of exaggerated expectations around the world about the importance of nuclear energy.³⁶ The sudden increase in oil prices led several nations to consider substituting dependence on thermal power for nuclear energy.

These events generated renewed interest among the superpowers to cooperate in further strengthening the nonproliferation regime. The superpowers created the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in 1974, whereby transfer of dual-use nuclear technology was barred to nations which did not agree to the safeguards created by the nonproliferation regime. It was Henry Kissinger, the US National Security Adviser during US President Richard Nixon's administration, who has been credited with conceiving the idea of a multilateral control arrangement in response to the Indian test.³⁷

In 1974 the Zangger Committee released a 'trigger list' of equipment and materials related to the fuel cycle that were to be exported to non-nuclear weapon nations on the condition that they accepted IAEA 'comprehensive safeguards'.³⁸ The US and the Soviet Union participated in the Zangger Committee and were instrumental in the formation of the 'trigger list'.

The US also proposed the establishment of a Nuclear Supplier's Group (NSG), to exclude supply of dual-use nuclear technology to those who remained outside the NPT. The allies of the US were sceptical about the proposed NSG as they feared that restrictions suggested by the NSG could adversely affect their nuclear industries. The US compromised with the French and Germans by not requiring them to undergo full-scope safeguards in order to achieve consensus on the NSG.³⁹ The Soviet Union ensured that its allies accepted the proposed NSG plan.

The superpowers cooperated to form the NSG and thereby annulled to a large extent their previous policy of 'nuclear sharing' without requiring mandatory safeguards and inspections. The NSG was formed in 1975 and called for supplier nations to exercise restraint with regard to transfers

of enrichment and reprocessing technology to non-nuclear weapons nations. It required the provision of physical security for transferred nuclear facilities and materials. The NSG necessitated acceptance of safeguards on replicated facilities and prohibited retransfer of nuclear exports to third parties.⁴⁰

There was another significant development in the 1970s about possible relaxation of Soviet nonproliferation norms as the latter embarked on nuclear trade with Libya, India, Cuba and Argentina specifically and other developing nations in general. This development worried the US as it was perceived as a Soviet move to mould better ties with Third World nations instead of promoting nonproliferation norms.

Soviet nuclear trade with non-nuclear weapons nations was not completely devoid of safeguards as feared by the US. Soviet policy in the mid-1970s shifted towards "pragmatism and cooperation in the area of nonproliferation".⁴¹ In 1973-1974, the Soviet Union rejected Iraq's request to sell a plutonium fabrication plant.⁴² With regard to India, 'Moscow convinced New Delhi to sign a safeguards agreement with the IAEA'.⁴³ Libya's accession to the NPT before concluding an agreement involving the export of nuclear reactors is regarded as the result of Soviet pressure.⁴⁴ In case of Cuba, the Soviet Union insisted on the conclusion of a safeguards agreement between Cuba and the IAEA before transferring of reactors.⁴⁵

The recipients of nuclear-related aid from the Soviet Union were disallowed to develop "reprocessing and enrichment plants which would enable them to prepare uranium or plutonium for explosive purposes".⁴⁶ The Soviet Union required recipients of nuclear technology within the Bloc to sign the NPT and submit to the safeguards of the IAEA.⁴⁷ These examples prove that the Soviet Union was conscious not to disseminate nuclear weapons technology. Furthermore, the Soviet Union cooperated with the US to halt a South African PNE in the 1970s.

Thus, in the 1970s, the creation of the NSG was the most positive development with regard to preventing nuclear proliferation. On the other

hand, Cold War calculations did not entirely recede. The Soviet-Cuba trade cannot be brushed off as a purely economic venture given the geographical proximity of the receiver nation to the US. Furthermore, the Soviet-India nuclear trade can be viewed as Moscow's attempts at securing closer Indian cooperation.

There were several arms control measures that the US and the Soviet Union signed in the 1970s. These measures were a partial fulfilment of the commitment of nuclear weapons states under Article VI of the NPT. The US and the Soviet Union signed the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks I (SALT I) in 1972, which produced an Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. It limited strategic missile defences to 200 (later 100) interceptors each. Moreover, the SALT talks produced an Interim Agreement that capped US and Soviet ICBM and SLBM forces (Kimball 2010). The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks II (SALT II) in 1979 between the superpowers resulted in an agreement that limited US and Soviet ICBM, SLBM, and strategic bomber-based nuclear forces to 2,250 delivery vehicles.⁴⁸ Realizing the futility of the arms race, the superpowers coordinated their efforts to decrease nuclear arms in a verifiable manner.

Blind-eye to Iraq and Pakistan:

The Ronald Reagan administration in the US with its emphasis on Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) threatened to disrupt relations with the Soviet Union. The SDI aimed to build a nuclear missile defence shield in space which would amount to a violation of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. The Soviet Union was wary that the SDI would render their nuclear deterrence invalid.

Furthermore, SALT II was blocked by the American Senate in response to the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan. Conflicts between the superpowers from Kampuchea and Iran, to Afghanistan and Poland, strained the American-Soviet relationship to the point of "inhibiting, although not destroying, their co-sponsorship of the NPT's purposes".⁴⁹

Despite deteriorating relations between Washington and Moscow, cooperation on nonproliferation had not altogether ceased. Consultations and negotiations persisted between the superpowers on promoting nonproliferation and strengthening export controls on dual-use technology.

President Ronald Reagan championed US-Soviet cooperation in preventing the use of nuclear weapons.⁵⁰ *Reagan stressed the need for superpower cooperation to eliminate nuclear weapons in order to prevent the spread of nuclear explosives.*⁵¹ *In 1985 Reagan voiced his search for a world free from nuclear weapons.*⁵² *These commitments made by Reagan provided an enabling environment for Moscow and Washington to collaborate in preventing proliferation.*

At the Reykjavik Summit in 1986, Gorbachev and Reagan expressed their desire to pursue complete elimination of nuclear weapons.⁵³ Reagan and Gorbachev initiated steps leading to significant reductions in deployed long and intermediate-range nuclear forces, including the “elimination of an entire class of threatening missiles”.⁵⁴ The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty was signed on December 8, 1987. This treaty required the US and the Soviet Union to verifiably eliminate all ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometres.⁵⁵ The Missile Technology and Control Regime (MTCR) was conceived which aimed to control delivery systems that could be used to launch nuclear and other attacks. The MTCR came into effect on 16th April 1987. Russia joined the MTCR in August 1995.

There were some regressive developments in the nonproliferation realm in the 1980s. The US cast a blind-eye to the Pakistani nuclear programme as the latter became a frontline state in the US strategy to counter the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This eroded the “credibility of publicly stated U.S. nonproliferation commitments”.⁵⁶ During the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, the superpowers sided with Iraq which prevented them from obstructing Iraq’s quest for nuclear weapons. The US had severed diplomatic relations with Iran following the 1979 Iranian revolution. The

Soviet Union sought to preserve the valued Soviet-Iraqi bilateral relationship.

The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) was signed in July 1991 by the superpowers. It required the US and the Soviet Union to reduce their deployed strategic arsenals to 1,600 delivery vehicles, carrying no more than 6,000 warheads as counted using the agreement's rules.⁵⁷ US-Soviet cooperation in promoting nuclear nonproliferation in the 1980s produced mixed results. The blind-eye to proliferation activities of Pakistan and Iraq by the superpowers due to cold war constrictions weighed heavily on the nonproliferation records of Moscow and Washington. The SDI plan of the US threatened to ruin cooperation between the superpowers on nonproliferation matters. On the positive side, the superpowers managed to sign the INF and the START I treaties.

Nonproliferation and Regime Theory:

International regimes can be defined as a set of "mutual expectations, rules and regulations, plans, organizational energies and financial commitments which have been accepted by a group of states".⁵⁸ Security regimes are principles, rules and norms that permit nations to be restrained in their behaviour in the belief that others will reciprocate.⁵⁹ Principles allude to beliefs of fact, causation, and rectitude. Norms implicate standards of behaviour defined in terms of rights and obligations. Rules involve specific prescriptions or proscriptions for action.⁶⁰

There is a threefold division of scholastic take on the issue of the existence of regimes in international relations. Young, Hopkins and Puchala opine that regimes are a "pervasive characteristic of the international system".⁶¹ According to this view, a nonproliferation regime exists in the world which patterns state behaviour in relation to nuclear proliferation. Secondly, Susan Strange contends that the concept of a regime is pernicious because it "obfuscates and obscures the interests and power relationships that are the proximate, not just the ultimate, cause of behaviour in the international system".⁶² According to this view, powerful states steer the

behaviour of states with regard to their views on nuclear proliferation. The third position explicates that in a world of sovereign states, the basic function of regimes is to coordinate "state behaviour to achieve desired outcomes in particular issue-areas".⁶³ This view helps perceive the nonproliferation regime as a combined endeavour by many states to prevent proliferation.

Another explanation for the existence of international regimes suggests that there are times when rational self-interested calculation lead actors to abandon independent decision making in favour of "joint decision making".⁶⁴ For example, Russia or the US may have independently wanted to prevent nuclear proliferation but they realized that they could maximize their efforts by combining their resources to achieve this goal. Thus, they collaborated to formulate the nonproliferation regime.

Regimes may emerge spontaneously when expectations of many individual actors converge.⁶⁵ For example, the interests of the US and Russia converged in the area of preventing proliferation which led them to collaborate their efforts in creating the nonproliferation regime. Regimes can also be formed by "explicit agreements".⁶⁶ For instance, the creation of the NPT clearly enunciated a widely accepted nonproliferation norm in international relations.

Oran Young developed the notion of 'imposed regimes' where dominant nations explicitly use a combination of sanctions and incentives to compel other actors to act in conformity with a particular set of pre-decided principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures.⁶⁷ The current nonproliferation regime conforms to this explanation of 'imposed regimes', as it was created principally by the US and the Soviet Union, which were the dominant powers during the formative years of this regime.

The series of treaties banning the deployment of weapons of mass destruction from geographical boundaries like the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, the Treaty of Tlatelolco of 1967 and the Seabed Arms Control Treaty of 1972 attest to the nonproliferation norms that have materialized as part of the nonproliferation regime. Due to the existence of such treaties

curtailing and directing the behaviour of states, noncompliance comes at the risk of sanctions and loss of prestige at the international level.

A.A. Stein provides two dilemmas which lead states to collaborate and cooperate in regime building. In the first kind of dilemma, the actors have a common interest in “insuring a particular outcome”.⁶⁸ The superpowers had a common interest in preventing the spread of the bomb which could have led them to create the nonproliferation regime. In the second type of dilemma, the actors have a common interest in “avoiding a particular outcome”.⁶⁹ The superpowers had a common interest in avoiding nuclear war, theft and losing control over nuclear weapons which could have induced them to formulate the nonproliferation mechanisms.

Thus, a non-proliferation regime exists according to the theoretical postulations of international regimes. The US and the Soviet Union cooperated to form the nonproliferation regime. However, self-interest did at times override nonproliferation goals. The US's blind-eye to Pakistani nuclear proliferation and the reticent Russian comments on the Indian explosion in 1974 served as examples of Cold War interests superseding nonproliferation goals. Hence regime theory helps one situate the nonproliferation regime in a theoretical context but it cannot be the sole explanation to comprehend US-Soviet Union cooperation in co-creating the nonproliferation regime.

Conclusions:

Every decade of the Cold War was marked with some advances and some reverses with regard to the nonproliferation agenda. For example, in the 1940s, the Baruch and Gromyko plans were attempts at advancing the nonproliferation agenda but the creation of the Soviet bomb was a reversal. In the 1950s, the Atoms for Peace program initiated by Eisenhower helped distribute nuclear technology which made conspicuous the reversals in this decade; while the establishment of the IAEA was a definite advance for the nonproliferation agenda. In the 1960s, the LTBT was a visible advance, while the Chinese nuclear test was the reversal. In

the 1970s the Indian PNE was the setback, whereas the advance was noticeable by the formation of the NPT. The reversals in the 1980s was manifest by the Pakistani and Iraqi proliferation activities, while the arms control measures made discernible the advances.

Cooperation between the superpowers seemed unlikely during the Cold War due to the antagonistic positions assumed by the rivals. However, the lethality of nuclear weapons and power considerations of retaining exclusive control over them prompted the superpowers to combine their efforts to produce a nonproliferation regime. The superpowers overcame impediments at two levels to co-create the nonproliferation regime: first, nuclear technology was not bartered for allies and second, mutual hostility between Moscow and Washington did not hamper cooperation in fashioning a nuclear nonproliferation regime. In the contemporary times, nations should endeavour to emulate the cooperation of the Soviet Union and the US so that current nuclear issues like those of Iran, North Korea and Pakistan are effectively solved.

Endnotes:

- ¹ Goldschmidt, "Historical Survey of Nonproliferation", 70
- ² Goldschmidt, "Historical Survey of Nonproliferation", 70.
- ³ Krass, et al., Nuclear Weapon Proliferation", 194.
- ⁴ Weiss, "Atoms for Peace".
- ⁵ Chace, "Sharing the Atom Bomb", 130.
- ⁶ Goldschmidt, "Historical Survey of Nonproliferation", 71.
- ⁷ Weiss, "Atoms for Peace".
- ⁸ Walsh, "Russian and American Nonproliferation", 2.
- ⁹ Krass, et al., Nuclear Weapon Proliferation", 194.
- ¹⁰ Walsh, "Russian and American Nonproliferation", 3.
- ¹¹ Tucker, "United States-Soviet Co-operation", 1.
- ¹² Cirincione, *Bomb Scare*, 25.
- ¹³ UNGA. US President D.W. Eisenhower speaking at the Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly. UN. New York. (8 March 1953).

- 14 Goldschmidt, "Historical Survey of Nonproliferation", 71-2.
- 15 Nye, "The U.S. and Soviet Stakes", 32.
- 16 US State Department. US President JF Kennedy speaking at the State Department Auditorium: USA. (21 March 1963).
- 17 Nye, *U.S.-Soviet Cooperation*, 343.
- 18 Smart, "Pinioning the Genie", 13.
- 19 Walsh, "Russian and American Nonproliferation", 17.
- 20 Walsh, "Russian and American Nonproliferation", 6.
- 21 Duffy, "Soviet Nuclear Export", 86.
- 22 Potter, "The Soviet Union and Nuclear Proliferation", 470.
- 23 Walsh, "Russian and American Nonproliferation", 8.
- 24 Walsh, "Russian and American Nonproliferation", 8.
- 25 Orlov et al., "Nuclear Nonproliferation", 12-13.
- 26 Nye, *U.S.-Soviet Cooperation*, 343.
- 27 Sharp, "Are the Soviets Still Interested in Arms Control?", 816.
- 28 Nye, "Maintaining a Nonproliferation Regime", 18.
- 29 Bourantonis, "The Negotiation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty", 354.
- 30 Bull, "Rethinking Non-Proliferation", 175.
- 31 Potter, "The Soviet Union and Nuclear Proliferation", 474.
- 32 Potter, "The Soviet Union and Nuclear Proliferation", 474.
- 33 Duffy, "Soviet Nuclear Export", 90.
- 34 Tate, "Regime-Building", 409.
- 35 Nye, "Maintaining a Nonproliferation Regime", 19.
- 36 Nye, "Maintaining a Nonproliferation Regime", 19.
- 37 Cirincione, *Bomb Scare*, 37.
- 38 Tate, "Regime-Building", 406.
- 39 Nye, *U.S.-Soviet Cooperation*, 354.
- 40 Congressional Research Service, *Proliferation Control Regimes: Background and Status*, 18.
- 41 Potter, "The Soviet Union and Nuclear Proliferation", 471.
- 42 Orlov et al., "Nuclear Nonproliferation", 13.
- 43 Orlov et al., "Nuclear Nonproliferation", 12-13.
- 44 Duffy, "Soviet Nuclear Export", 96.

- ⁴⁵ Potter, "The Soviet Union and Nuclear Proliferation", 483.
- ⁴⁶ Duffy, "Soviet Nuclear Export", 87-8.
- ⁴⁷ Duffy, "Soviet Nuclear Export", 87-8.
- ⁴⁸ Kimball, "U.S.-Russian Nuclear Arms Control".
- ⁴⁹ Smart, "Pinioning the Genie", 14.
- ⁵⁰ US Congress. US President Ronald Reagan's State of the Union Address. (25 January 1984).
- ⁵¹ US Congress. US President Ronald Reagan's Message to Congress. (25 March 1988).
- ⁵² US Congress. US President Ronald Reagan's Inaugural Address. (21 January 1985).
- ⁵³ Craft, J. "Fulfilling Reagan's Dream".
- ⁵⁴ Nunn et al., "A World Free of Nuclear Weapons". *Wall Street Journal*, 4 January 2011.
- ⁵⁵ Kimball, "U.S.-Russian Nuclear Arms Control".
- ⁵⁶ Cobham, H and G.C. Smith, "A Blind Eye to Nuclear Proliferation", 54.
- ⁵⁷ Kimball, "U.S.-Russian Nuclear Arms Control".
- ⁵⁸ Smith, "Explaining the Non-Proliferation Regime", 256.
- ⁵⁹ Jervis, "Security Regimes", 357.
- ⁶⁰ Smith, "Explaining the Non-Proliferation Regime", 256.
- ⁶¹ Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences", 185.
- ⁶² Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences", 190.
- ⁶³ Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences", 191.
- ⁶⁴ Stein, "Coordination and Collaboration", 316.
- ⁶⁵ Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences", 197.
- ⁶⁶ Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences", 196.
- ⁶⁷ Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences", 199-200.
- ⁶⁸ Stein, "Coordination and Collaboration", 309.
- ⁶⁹ Stein, "Coordination and Collaboration", 309.

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ETHNICITY, LANGUAGE AND PROCESS OF NATION BUILDING IN ASSAM

Pranjit Saikia

Introduction:

Language has been the most important marker of identity of an ethnic community or group. Ashutosh Varshney claimed 'ethnic' groups mean 'racial' or 'linguistic' groups.¹ Moreover, the language issue cannot be discussed in aloof from the issues of nationality formation. It was argued that in the early 19th century nationalism in India has been developing at two levels – one all India, on the basis of pan-India cultural homogeneities and an anti-imperialism shared in common; and another regional, on the basis of regional-cultural homogeneities. During that period both the nationalisms were found intertwined and dovetailed. But in the post-colonial India, it seems that the later form of nationalism has somehow overshadowed the pan-Indian form nationalism where language has played a more critical role. Moreover, language has also been one of the most controversial issues in shaping the political structure of India because violent expression of the issues had not only influenced the political spectrum in a big way but also forced the central government to pursue the policy of reorganization of states on the basis language. So, language is one the central questions of wider socio-political discourse in India. This paper will solely revolve around the language issue in Assam. The language question in Assam will be examined in the context ethnic consciousness which led to the struggle for power among various groups in the post-colonial India, and future of India as a viable nation-state in such competitive atmosphere of interests among various ethnic groups.

The Beginning of Language Syndrome:

Assam was annexed to the British India nearly after hundred years that it had come into contact with Bengal. Though they proclaimed not to come here for quench their thirst by conquering this kingdom, but by 1850s the colonial ruler had firmly established their foot on this province. Till now numerous changes had been made by the colonial authority to consolidate their control. As a part of it the Imperialist rulers had kept changing the Boundaries frequently for their administrative convenience and thereby caused serious setback to Assamese socio-cultural and geographic environment.

As a part of this policy, in 1874 when Assam was made a Chief Commissioners province by including a portion of Bengali speaking areas of Cachar and Sylhet into it, this change of boundaries had not only changed the geographical structure of Assam, but also completely altered Assam's socio-cultural destiny. The mood of public intellectuals had reflected sharply against it. Such exasperating views of Assamese towards Bengalis did not develop overnight, but could be dated back to 1836 when the British had introduced Bengali language in the schools and law courts in Assam which reduced "the Assamese speaking people into a minority in their own home land."² The official authorities had an unrealistic view on such sensitive issue who believe that "Assamese was only patois of the Bengalee language and had no literature of its own."³ The decision on the language question had been a severe blow to the Assamese nationalism which testifies the first Gellener's categorizations on nationalism – "feeling of anger aroused by the violence of principle give rise nationalism."⁴ The feeling of agony among Assamese across all stratum people was so intense that a section of Assamese intellectuals had demanded secession from India to "save the Assamese race"⁵; though this demand unable to attract much people but reflected the Assamese nationalism taking a fury shape.

Unnerved by the language policy the British authority, a section of newly educated Assamese youth had taken the herculean task of bringing back the pride of their language. These youth had taken some serious

steps to restore the Assamese language in the schools and law courts. One young Assamese youth Anandaram Dhakial Phukan who claimed to be the harbinger of the Modern Age, in his polemical work 'A Few Remarks on Assamese Language' had fervently opposed the imposition of the Bengali language in place of Assamese. He petitioned to Moffat Mills in 1852 against the instruction in the "Vernacular schools" being "imparted in a foreign language" that is Bengali⁶ and reaffirm the separate identity of the Assamese language by exposing the expansionist attitude of Bengali people. Looking at the sluggish development in education, during his visit in 1853 Moffat Mills had commented "an English youth is not taught Latin until he well grounded in English, and in the same manner an Assamese should not taught a foreign language until he knows his own."⁷ "We made a great mistake" candid Mills confessed "in directing that all business should be transacted in Bengalee, and that Assamese must acquire."⁸ Apart from him there were some other British rulers like A.H. Danforth who had raised their voices in opposition of imposing Bengali which in their view had an injurious effect on Assamese society and education system. Furthermore, whatever might be their intentions, but the American Baptists had also vehemently opposed the imposition of Bengali in place of Assamese but also strongly urged the Lieutenant General of revoke the decision to place Assamese in rightful place in the schools in Assam.⁹ Apart from these contrary views on the issue within the colonial authority and American Baptist "the Native" Dhakiyal Phukan in his another piece of remarkable work *Aamiya Lorar Mitra* in two parts in 1859, Dhakiyal Pukan dispelled "the belief the belief that Assamese people were incapable of writing reading materials for schools."¹⁰ In the meantime, the process standardization of the Assamese language had started with the writing of Assamese grammar and dictionary. Due to their relentless efforts the Assamese language was reinstalled in the schools and judicial proceedings in 1873. The formation of the Axomiya Bhaxa Unnati Xadhini Xobha (Association of the Development of Assamese language) in 1888 had further carried forwarded the linguistic nationalism in Assam.

Language Question in Post-Independence Era: The Impasse Continued:

Differentiating on the two types of nationalism – the Western and the Eastern, Plamenatz argued “the Western type of nationalism were acting on behalf of well-developed high cultures, normally centralized and endowed with a fairly well-defined folk clientele” whereas “the Eastern nationalism did not operate on behalf of an already existing, well-defined and codified high culture”¹¹ as these population still “locked into complex multiple loyalties of kinship, territory and religion.”¹² Due to such ardent loyalties towards their culture, the language question has been destined to be most controversial issue for Assamese society. The uproar over the issue has not been in a decreasing mood even in the post-Independence era. In this new horizon of history, the issues of the controversy may be different but the nature and the context has been same.

After independence, the Assamese middle class had become increasingly assertive of their socio-cultural and linguistic rights. Refuting the sheer heterogeneity of Assamese society, they had aspired to redefine the norms and traditions of this society by transforming it into a homogenous society; and imposition of Assamese language through various means has been a part of their broader objective. The Assamese middle class had pursued this objective so eloquently because they thought, if they were not assertive of their socio-cultural and linguistic rights, sometimes in future once again the Assamese identity may fall into the trap of some expansionist forces. But some credible leftist voices from Assam viewed such oversensitivity of Assamese people on the question of socio-cultural and linguistic rights had aroused out of their inability to compete with the outsiders. Hiren Gohain in one of his remarkable piece of writing argued “to defend its interest in competition with outsiders who possessed greater financial resources and more advanced skill”¹³ the Assamese middle class developed chauvinistic tendencies. Another celebrated writer A.K. Baruah pointed out that the fear of the outsiders noticed in Assam was the result of the bitter conflict over jobs, land and cultural hegemony.¹⁴ But refuting such

leftist disposition of analysis Sanjib Baruah argued that “immigration into Assam on a scale that has few parallels anywhere in the world, within a relatively short period of time, has hopelessly tangled Assam’s nationality question.” For Baruah such continued influx to Assam did not develop “a composite society of peoples who mingle with one another, but a plural society of separate communities.” That is why the chauvinistic tendencies that develop within the Assamese community are because of the “structuring effect of sudden demographic change rather than “the cultural weakness of the Assamese ruling elites.”

The language policy in Assam in the post-colonial period had also been the corollary of India’s partition in 1947. Immediately after Independence heavy flow of immigrants from the East Pakistan had made the situation alarming. Looking at the intensity of immigration, the alarmist Assamese community had sought government’s intervention on the issue, but the government of India was unconcerned about the fate of Assam. Various civil society organizations had also expressed their concern on the issue. These sections of Assamese had vociferously argued in favour of making Assamese as the Official language of Assam. Going ahead a step, the Axom Xahitya Xobha, the literary organization of the state who had ardently supported the cause set the deadline for the government that within 1960 the Assamese language should be declared as the state language of the state.¹⁵ With the change in the power structure in the state after Independence, the Assamese middle class could hold the key positions in administration which gave leverage to their demands. Initially though the ruling political class in the state had tried adopted a mid-way, but intense pressure from of Assamese civil society, they had to change their stance and adopted a resolution supporting the cause of making Assamese as the Official Language. This political victory on the issue had undoubtedly increased the strength of the supporters who started campaigning for the issue much enthusiastically. But the change of political stance over the issue had an adverse opinion among Bengali settlers and other hill tribes. They viewed it as the increasing hegemony of Assamese culture over their

cultural identity and economic opportunity. Such views were echoed among various hill tribes' organizations who assumed it as a process of depriving them from getting jobs.

But bowing down to the pressure from Assamese civil society, the government had made its mind to introduce the Assam Official Language Bill in 1960. The government's decision to introduce the bill in the Legislative Assembly had erupted violent protests in various parts of the state. There were allegations and counter allegations among communities which made the environment tense. The sporadic violent activities that took place in different parts of the state had inevitably taken toll on the law and order situation. After immense pull and pressure the Bill was introduced and got the nod of the Assembly. The Act provides "Assamese shall be used for all or any official purposes of the state of Assam. Further the Act provided that the English language, so long as the use thereof is permissible and thereafter Hindi in place of English, shall be used for such official purposes of the Secretariat and the offices of the head of the departments of the state government."¹⁶ In a bid to safeguard their linguistic identity, the Bengali people in Barak Valley had left no stone unturned. In 1972 when the Gauhati University had decided to introduce the Assamese as the medium of instruction in the colleges under its jurisdiction, the question of language once again surfaced in the public domain which had erupted heavy uproar among the people of both the valleys – the Brahmaputra and the Barak.

Language and the Ethnic Uprisings: Process of Detachment from Assamesization:

In the post-Independence era, Assam had witnessed the systematic assertion of identity by various hitherto suppressed communities. These communities had often whined for not getting proper access to the resources that required for socio-political and economic upliftment. The rejection of Assamese language, they viewed as an end of long drawn socio-cultural subjugation of these smaller ethnic groups who believed the "so called

Assamese" had "illegally occupied" the state of Assam. As the Assamese had viewed Bengalis as the alien in their country, likewise the Bodos has also alleged Assamese as immigrants from the Northern part of India who dominated local Assamese and aboriginals with the progress of time. So they have attempted to changeover from Assamese identity and rediscover their past in every possible way. An Official document has stated that "Although the perception of the Assamese was that they had attained an Assamese personality with coming together of different ethnic, religious and language groups this was not quite the picture. An identity crisis prevailed demanding the individual expression. This process instigated sub-groups to rediscover their own past identities".¹⁷ M.S. Prabhakar is also concerned about the unequal terms of assimilation of the Bodos into Assamese formation. He argued their assimilation into Assamese society has been very much related to their acceptance of Hinduism. In this process, they lost their native language and moreover, "the acceptance of Assamese language as the mother tongue was the *sine quo non* of entry into Assamese society".¹⁸ Initially an illusion was created that the new entrants were equal to the cast Hindu people, but in reality they were admitted in sufferance. The material benefits which meant for the Bodos were "in fact being almost exclusively cornered by the non-Bodo people."¹⁹ So such chronic exploitation of Assamese middle class had forced them to search for their past distinctive traditions and customs.

One of such suppressed communities is Bodo community which has developed its consciousness in the pre-Independence period, but after Independence the expressions became more concrete and systematic. The earliest expression of consciousness in a concretized form of this community was the demand for Roman script for Bodo language. This very demand implies the rejection of the Assamese identity by yet another group which concerned the Assamese community most.

By forming its own Xahitya Xobha as early as in 1952, the Bodo community had raised voices for Roman script for Bodo language. There were serious thinking prevailing in the political circle to accommodate the

aspirations of different ethnic groups. In February 1969, the Script Subcommittee of the Bodo Xahitya Xobha submitted its final report on the script issue. Almost immediately, the Bodo Xahitya Xobha adopted the report that recommended the abolition of the Assamese script and its replacement with the Roman script.²⁰ In 1974, when the Roman script was introduced for the Bodo language, the state government had stopped government's fund to the Bodo primary schools to pressurize them to back to Assamese language. The Bodo community viewed it as nothing but the hegemonic attitude on the part of the Assam government and forcefully opposed such parochial initiatives. In a bid to carrying forward the demands, the Bodo leadership had approached to the Central government and sought its interference on the issue. The shrewd Indira Gandhi government instead of conceding their demands had put forwarded their own agenda and suggested the Devnagari script – the script has a pan-Indian character, for the Bodo language. This move was nothing but the expansionism and exploitative character of the Indian nation-state to weaken the popular ethnic movements and to forcefully integrate them into Indian mainstream. The Bodo leadership found itself “between a lion and a crocodile”²¹ as described by a Bodo parliamentarian Dharanidhar Basumatary. But as their struggle was against the Assamese language, they rather decided to adopt Devnagari script for the Bodo language. But the decision to go with Devnagari had serious implications within the Bodo society.

As each fraction of Bodo community viewed the issue from religious perspective, the script movement for Bodo language had interestingly poised. Christian Bodos vociferously supported the use of Roman script because “they see in the Roman script a way of identifying closely with the West, with Christianity, with modern education. They believe that use of traditional scripts like Assamese and Bengali will keep them tied to dominant ethnic groups and hinder the creation of an independent identity, with its attendant political and economic consequences.”²² In a rejoinder to such approach, groups like All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) and the Bodo

Peoples Action Committee (BPAC) stridently opposed the Roman script and wanted to continue with the Hinduism. The contradiction over the language issue had threatened the cohesion of the Bodo society and generated intra-community conflicts. At the same time, the other ethnic communities have also raised their voice of dissent against the Assamese supremacy and demanded their rightful share in the society. Various socio-cultural organizations have crept up representing the interests of their respective communities.

As the smaller communities are facing growing insecurities, they have intensified their resistance and some of them even took militant path to protect community aspirations. Though the path of militancy has hardly been successful to fulfill the political aims, but these deviated fractions of the community assumed it to be a viable catalyst for solution of their predicament. Whatever may be the method for achieving goals, but one thing is clear that each community has risen up to achieve their community interests. Such juxtapositions of different interests have messed the society and hollowed the democratic design of India.

Nation-state and Ethnic Aspirations: the Indian Experiences:

A prolific Indian scholar Ramachandra Guha has stated that “linguistic reorganization . . . rather than leading to the Balkanization of India that many feared . . . seems rather to have consolidated the unity of India . . . and acted largely as a constructive channel for provincial pride.”²³ Undoubtedly an observation will definitely romanticized the hearts of many Indians. But if any one drags himself into reality, he will notice a quite contradictory picture. Even scholar like Guha unnoticed such a stark picture of Indian democracy which is also pretty interesting.

At the beginning of paper, it is claimed that the language has been the most controversial and influencing issue in shaping the political structure of post-colonial India. But before embarking upon the project of reorganization of states on the basis of language, the Linguistic Provinces Commission rejected the idea of “linguistic unity of area” should govern

redistribution of provinces – the idea put forwarded by the Motilal Nehru Report in 1928 and warned that “the assertion of linguistic identity could jeopardize the unity of the Indian nation”²⁴. Such a sentiment had also echoed by Krishna Menon who warned, “We will Balkanize India if we further dismember the State instead of creating larger units.”²⁵ Yet succumbing to the prevailing popular sentiments, the Indian Parliament had passed the State Reorganization Act, 1956 to create states along the line of language. Since then there have been “new identity-based states created under pressure from mass movements.”²⁶

Such identity based states had to create due to the flawed nation-building process of India. Describing the process of Indian nation building, Nivedita Menon most realistically revealed “One of the significant achievements of the nation-building elite of what subsequently become India, was the incorporation these people and regions (independent in the pre-British period), at varying degrees of willingness. The hegemonic drive of anti-imperialist struggle as well as the coercive power of the Indian state after independence was deployed to enforce the idea of as a homogenous nation with shared culture.”²⁷ The position of Indian nationalist leadership qualifies the normative vision of a modern democratic state which believes that every state should a nation i.e. the nation-state. The concept of nation-state believes in one social-cultural identity. As it stands for a political-institutional approach that attempts to match the political boundaries of the state with the presumed cultural boundaries of the nation, or vice versa, so it has become difficult for various ethnic communities to cultivate their own identities. Though India is not a French type nation-state where regional cultural differences were not recognized; but over the last sixty years of Indian independence, to create India a nation-state the nationalist leadership adopted a number of nation-state policies from relatively soft to downright brutal.

But vigorous persuasion of policies towards creating Indian nation-state had left communities in question to rethink about its future within such bigger national identity. They increasingly felt threatened about their

cultural and linguistic identity. Such insecurity as some ethnic communities felt within the nation-state system, they had initiated some measures to preserve their identity which sometimes took the violent form. Though they shared common Indian identity, equally also they carry their regional or community based identity. Such regional or community based identities were not given due importance rather nationalist leadership viewed it as threatening to India's unity and integrity and used a number of coercive measures to subside these identities. The inability of successive Indian national governments to understand these diversities itself created crisis of Indian nation-state.

In Assam it came out from the above discussion that in the post independence era consciousnesses among various communities have erupted which challenged the Indian nation-state project. The issues and movements embroiled around the question of language in Assam testify the claim. By questioning the Indian identity, such community consciousnesses have ostensibly proclaimed to nurture their own identity. In Assam itself, the communities like the Bodo, the Mising, the Karbi, the Moran etc. are struggling for long to foster their own identity rather than strengthening Indian identity. Moreover different separatist movements of the Northeastern region have also challenged the Indian identity. Such endless festering conflicts, which have spread to new areas of the region, leading to sustained deployment of the Indian army and federal paramilitary forces on 'internal security duties', that, in turn, has militarized rather than democratized the social and political space in the North East. Moreover, draconian laws like Arms Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) which is meant for counter-terrorism operations are still a major cause of indiscriminate human rights abuses in the region. The developmentalist discourses of the region are also guided by the internal and security perspectives. As these states of the Northeast were mainly created to contain the ethnic and separatist uprisings without giving due importance in the economic sustenance of them, so these states have to largely depend on the Central government's financial assistance. This is why the policy

frameworks are being made at Delhi without taking the people of this region into confidence. For example, the recently signed land pact between India and Bangladesh where land resources of Assam had surrendered to the neighbouring country without giving due respect to the sentiments of the people of Assam had done at the behest of the Central government. Moreover, the struggle against big dams which are constructing in Arunachal Pradesh is also one of the major irritants of the people of Assam. The popular democratic sentiments growing against the issue conveniently ignored by the Central government which would undoubtedly be a negative precedent of a democratic country like India for its future. Such imposition of New Delhi's authority over almost every walk of life in the region to maintain the sovereignty of India has proved to be a fraught idea which otherwise created a kind of crisis for greater Indian identity.

Possibilities of being a State-nation:

Acknowledging such unequal cultural differences and the idea of nation-state has had to pass through contested terrain in this robustly multinational state, a section of scholars looked into the other possibilities of nation building projects in India. In their work Stephen, Linz and Yadav²⁸ have claimed India to be a state-nation and argued that the idea "stand(s) for a political-institutional approach that respects and protects *multiple but complementary* sociocultural identities. State-nation policies recognize the legitimate public and even political expression of active sociocultural cleavages, and they include mechanisms to accommodate competing or conflicting claims made on behalf of those divisions without imposing or privileging, in a discriminatory way, any one claim." They further argued that "State-nation policies involve crafting a sense of belonging (or "we-feeling") with respect to the statewide political community, while simultaneously creating institutional safeguards for respecting and protecting politically salient sociocultural diversities." In other words, this system of governance facilitates diverse socio-cultural and ethnic communities to articulate their voices and tries to accommodate their demands. They further

argued that to accommodate such diverse interests, certain institutional safeguards have been curved out in the form of federalism. "These polities, in order to "hold together" their great diversity in one democratic system," they argued "had to embed in the constitution special cultural and historical prerogatives for some of the member units, prerogatives that respond to their somewhat different linguistic or cultural aspirations, demands, and historical identities."²⁹

Explaining the idea in Indian case Linz and Stephen vociferously rejected the idea of India being a nation-state³⁰ and stated that in the Nehruvian era India could manage such socio-cultural diversity to a certain extent through consociational maneuverings for what they believe India to be a state-nation in 1950s and 1960s. Experiencing India's northeast, such claim cannot be accepted thoroughly. If any one goes back to that period, one can see the Naga movement has started as early as in the 50's which has still been an unresolved problem in India. The irony of Nehruvian consensual policy was that in 1952 when five districts councils were created under Sixth schedule, this provision was not extended to the Naga Hills and reason were also not properly explained for which the Naga separatist movement intensified their struggle and at last to pursued the Naga rebellions the government had to break away some parts of Assam to create Nagaland, yet unable to contain the Naga separatist movement. The language impasse in Assam had got its momentum in the 50s and early 60s, but unable to find out a long-term and consensual solution for which the issue is yet another bone of contentions for many. The Bodo community had also made initial inroads for their demands in the early 50s, yet the Centre unnoticed the issue which has lasting influence on the state politics of Assam. Moreover the State Reorganization Commission (SRC) was created in 1953 to consider the question of reorganizing the states of the Union by giving 'greatest importance to language and culture'. This initiative can be consensual in the sense that every downtrodden community would get opportunity to raise voice in favour of their demands. From northeast also various communities had put forward their proposals for creation of

new states³¹ through which their interests can be best protected. But instead of conceding their demands the SRC favoured the merger of Tripura with Assam and viewed need of "large and relatively resourceful state on the border rather than small and less resilient units"³² which they otherwise they mean to create northeast a single administrative unite from the security perspective. Such an obsession still prevails in the minds of mainstream Indian administrators for which entire northeastern states have been made nothing but a scapegoat to protect India's unity and integrity.

Going by their argument, it seems that asymmetrical federalism has been the focal component for being a state-nation. They stated India a historically asymmetrical state due to which it has been a longstanding and relatively peaceful contemporary democracy. But this argument can be contested looking at the policy of federalism pursued in northeast by New Delhi. In northeast India most of the state was created to contain the growing separatist movements without giving due consideration its economic viability. So due to too much of dependence of this region for its sustenance led to the compromise its autonomy. The formation of North Eastern Council at the central level to bring all seven northern states under single administrative unit in respect of policy-making mostly economic reflects New Delhi neither accepted the individual state autonomy nor the socio-cultural and linguistic diversity of the region. What they are trying is, by such 'superficial federalism', to create a sense in the minds of people of northeast that they are being cheerfully incorporated into the mainstream India.

Concluding Remarks:

The politics of language in Assam has been solely revolved around the Assamese language. Sometime due to its disadvantageous position and sometime due to its hegemonic tendency over relatively deprived languages. Looking at the trajectories of Assamese language, it is apparent that in the pre-independence period, the Assamese language was struggling to establish its supremacy within own land. In one sense, it was the period of the resurgence of modern Assamese language. Immediately after

independence with some amount of political patronage, the Assamese elites were trying to impose the hegemony of Assamese language over nascent languages by which they expected to create a homogenizing/composite Assamese society, what basically nation-policies aimed for. But strongly disapproving such a homogenized structure of Assamese society, these nascent groups were successfully established their identity. So, such utter rejection of homogeneity and troubled nation-building process implies clear challenge to the nation-state policies pursued by India. But objectively speaking, the nation-state policies had served the national security purpose instead of giving some room to various ethnic communities to flourish peacefully. The federal structure in Indian polity was created with an intention to fulfill the interests of various socio-cultural and linguistic communities. But Indian political elites apply this form of governance structure mostly to fulfill the national security interests rather than settling down prevailing social dilemmas. Moreover, the consociational followed in the Nehruvian era had also unable to resolve the longstanding demands of various *imagined communities*. In this sense the pursuance of state-nation policies have also been half-hearted. But looking at the social structure of Assam in particular and India in general, such policies have the greater possibilities to coup with the socio-economic and cultural anxieties persisted in the Indian society. So it can be a viable and progressive alternative to employ in the nation-building process of India.

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YOUTH MOVEMENTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

An Analysis of State of Human Security from the perspective of civil liberty during Assam Movement (1979-1985)

Rukchana Rahman

Introduction - Conceptualizing Youth Movement:

Youth movement was a term that came to be widely used after World War I for actions of organized youth groups who began to seek political influence through various planned campaigns.¹ However, in such usage a lot of confusions seem to persist. The politics of Assam, the most conflict-ridden area of North-East India is no exception to it which has been a hot bed of youth movements. Here, we find significant youth participation in mass movements and in some occasions, the young people have themselves taken the initiative of such struggles.² In Assam, it is found that the beginning of student movement can be traced back to the period when the Assamese students consciously made up their mind for the social, cultural and intellectual uplift of the Assamese.³ It has been viewed that every democratic movement in Assam seemed to be initiated by youth. In this context, we may refer to the establishment of *Asomiya Bhasa Unnati Sadhini Sabha*.⁴ The students in Assam also took initiative in the establishment of "*Assam Chatra Sanmilan*" in 1916⁵, one of the oldest student organizations of India. There was significant Assamese student and youth participation in the national struggle for freedom. Where the pre-independent period Assamese youth significantly participated in the national struggle for freedom, in the post independent period also, we see youth launching massive movements on issues of cultural identity and economic backwardness, sometimes with secessionist tendencies.⁶ A few

significant examples are the movement for an oil-refinery in Assam in the late-fifties, the movement demanding to make *Asomiya* the official language of Assam in 1960, the movement for a tribal hill state, the food movement of 1966, the movement for a second oil-refinery in Assam during 1969-70, the movement to make *Asomiya* a medium of instruction up to the graduate level in Assam's two universities in 1972, the All Assam Students' Union Movement for economic development of Assam in 1974 and the movement against the foreign nationals, the famous "Assam Movement".⁷ It may be noted here that these movements have direct impact on the democratic politics of the state as all these movements involving youth activism in contemporary Assam are taking place in a political reality which centers round democratic politics of the state of India. Democracy which itself is a contentious term of which practice varies from society to society including simple direct democracy to incursive, communicative and deliberative variations of democracy.⁸ However, in the recent past democracy is found to be synonymous with liberal representative governance.⁹ Politics of any form would often include governance which is conceived of as a system based on active popular participation in the exercise of legitimate authority of the state in a just, transparent and accountable way.¹⁰ Democratic politics would thus involve, handling of the affairs of a people to enable it to lead a peaceful, orderly and satisfying life through a process of decision making that involves popular participation.¹¹ Participation here would refer to participation in democratic politics through representation, mobilization and opinion formation to influence political decision making.¹² Participation of this kind would of course involve civil liberties and rule of law. Since youth activism has been a prominent feature of the politics of Assam therefore there is a possibility that the political attitude and the behaviour of the youth might have affected the democratic politics of the state. If we define democracy to include political participation, civil liberties and rule of law, it is necessary to examine how these features of democracy are affected by youth movements. However, little attention has been given by policy-makers and scholars to the vast and largely unknown area of youth activism and its consequences

for democratic politics of the state. For instance, in two major books on youth movements in Assam by Sheila Bora¹³ and Meeta Deka¹⁴ one does not find any discussion about impact of such movements on the essential features of democratic politics of the state. Baruah¹⁵ has shown some serious theoretical weaknesses of a genre of scholarly works that can be called youth movement in Assam. Some other existing materials on student movements in Assam also have not examined this aspect.¹⁶ It is in the light of the above paucity of works on the issue of youth movements and its impact on norms of democratic politics of the state that this paper makes an attempt to study how youth movement as a social phenomenon influences the democratic politics of Assam, particularly in the matter of civil liberties of the state. The researchable question we intend to examine is – does youth movement affect civil liberties of the democratic politics of the state? To facilitate the above, we plan to analyze the politics of the famous “Assam Movement” led by All Assam Students’ Union (AASU) considered to be the most significant and influential student organization of North-East India. There is an urgent need to examine this aspect of the politics of Assam so that we can arrive at a better understanding of the politics of the state. This paper is based on both primary and secondary data. The general methods adopted for the study are both analytical and empirical. Both Quantitative and Qualitative technique are used to study the impact of youth movement on norms of democratic politics of the state from published and unpublished records which includes the study of official records and diaries of the student union and government reports on those.

Conceptualizing Civil Liberty:

However, before analyzing the impact of youth activism on norms of democratic politics of the state, it is important to conceptualize the definition of civil liberties as consulted by the Indian constitution which as a system of power incorporates certain ideas. Civil liberty as commonly used denotes rights of free expression, freedom to form associations, freedom to dissent, freedom to generate and disseminate public opinion. These values have been privileged by democratic theory as vital for existence of democracy

which leads to the subsistence of civil society in democratic states and societies.¹⁷ Liberty is about freedom and as Mill¹⁸ views “freedom is necessary to man as bread and air”. As per Mill, the sole end for which mankind is warranted individually or collectively in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their member is self-protection. However, the most comprehensive description of civil liberty comes from the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany of 1949.¹⁹ It covers the right to free development of personality, freedom of equality, of faith and conscience, of expression and to disseminate opinion by speech, writing and pictures, freedom of press reporting by radio and motion pictures, inviolability of home and protection of marriage, right to assemble peacefully and unarmed and to hold open air meetings, right to form association including associations for improving working and economic conditions of all trades and professions, right to property and inheritance and secrecy of mail and post and tele-communication. In such context, Berlin²⁰ draws attention to the development of two concepts of liberty-positive and negative. According to him, negative liberty is something the extent of which is difficult to estimate in a given case. It may seem to depend simply on the power to choose between two alternatives at any rate. The positive sense of liberty refers not freedom from but freedom to lead one prescribed form of life and where the adherents of the negative notion represents as beings at times no better than a specious disguise than a brutal tyranny.²¹ In India, the transformation of nationalist demands in a mass movement ends the short phase of liberal politics in India. However, it is also seen that any plausible form of liberalism incorporates the peoples’ right to resist illegitimate state power.²² Accordingly, the concept of civil liberty implies the basic right of equality which flows from individual’s freedom with respect to his life and livelihood against both governmental and private interference. However, for the Indian political elite, the civil liberties had to be viewed individualistically essentially as features of individuals rather than of groups. The section of fundamental rights in the Indian Constitution has been regarded as the core of civil liberties of the people of India. It may be noted here that both collective and individual rights are not mutually

exclusive. The right to self-determination and the right to preserve a culture against potential threat from other cultural communities are irreducibly collective rights. At the same time, the right not to be subjected to bodily harm or detained arbitrarily and not to be prosecuted for expressing dissent against the state is considered as the individual rights. Though while granting both kinds of rights they may occasionally conflict however, it is found that they coexist as well. This summarizes our concept of civil liberty as conceived in the constitution.

The Assam Movement and the State of Civil Liberty:

The historic Assam Movement (1979-85) fought against the foreign nationals and led by the student youth of Assam is the longest movement involving various sections of people of the state. It was found that the youth in Assam became able to mobilize a greater number of people which helped in making the movement as the biggest mass movement of the state. However, in this context, it is necessary to examine whether rights and liberties of the masses were allowed to be exercised or violated during the period of the movement. For this we have made an effort to analyze the text available covering both pro and anti movement reporting those. It is to be noted here that while the movement leaders claimed that the movement was fought in a peaceful Gandhian method but at the same time others viewed it as a violent and fascist movement.²³ It must be noted here that killings in Assam started from the very beginning of the movement. According to the source of Union Home Ministry in Parliament, right from 1979 till December 1982-just prior to the calling of election-there were 272 murders, 1404 assaults, 425 cases of arson, 346 cases of intimidation, 228 cases of mischief, 147 cases of kidnapping, 330 cases of explosion and 146 case of recovery of explosives like bombs recorded attributable to the agitation.²⁴ It was viewed that right from the beginning the leadership of the movement was alleged that the target of attack was the minorities-religious and linguistic. The carnage of the minorities both Hindus and the Muslims in North *Kamrup* in January 1980 clearly indicated the extent of

chauvinist fanaticism in the movement. It was found that hundreds including women and children were killed, thousands were wounded and 20,000 people were rendered homeless. Posters were displayed with inscriptions "Indian dogs get out", "If you see a snake and a Bengali at the same time, kill the Bengali first" and so on. It has been also obtained that throughout the agitation, there had been harassment of the minorities, many murders, forcible occupation of shops and landed property, insults and humiliations.²⁵ It is found that this massive movement sowed the seeds of deep suspicion and mistrust among different communities living as peaceable neighbours for generations which resulted into mob violence in which hundreds lost their lives and thousands had been uprooted from their homes. As has been stated earlier in wide areas of North Kamrup, a populous district, for about a week (January 4 to 10, 1980) the agitators roamed from village to village which indulged arson, massacred pitilessly helpless people and terrified women and children. At the same time, the press of Assam was also alleged for blacking out sporadic acts of violence and camouflaging the panic and terror among the threatened minority communities. It was also alleged for preparing such a picture for local and outside consumption with one or two exceptions. It was also seen that the agitator youths in the movement were not given clear instructions for detection and expulsion of foreigners which resulted into the absence of strict discipline and control at the local level. Moreover, the extremists among the regional groups also resorted to coercive fascist practices which increased the incidents of violence and intimidation. Another such incident showed the same picture when in north Guwahati, students participated in a police attack on indigenous tribal peasants falsely given out as "Bangladeshis". It was also found that a river-boat carrying "Bangladeshis" to the paper mill at *Jogighopa* was seized and two helpless members of the Muslim crew were butchered near *Soalkuchi*. Gohain finds chauvinism as the main factor threatening the genuine democratic nature of the movement which helped the agitators to violate the rights and liberties of the minorities.²⁶ Some other widely reported facts which reflected the violent character of the movement were attack on Communist Party of India (CPI) (M) office at

Sarbhog on December 3, 1979 by the youth leaders where three party members were injured severely. At the same time, the party office at *Barpeta* was also attacked. The party members, sympathizers and also the members of Student Federation of India (SFI), the student wing of CPI (M) faced attack at many places by the leaders of AASU like *Nalbari*, *Bambhay*, *Sootea*, *Tihu*, *Pathsala*, *Bhabanipur*, *Sarthebari* and also at *Barpeta*. While the killing of one Assamese student had been widely reported during the movement but at the same time the number of Bengalis killed was not reported either.²⁷ The killing of *Bihuram Bodo* and *Habiram Bodo* at North *Fulung* of North *Guwahati* indicated the fascist character of the movement.²⁸ In another incident the killing of two indigenous Muslims of Assam namely *Abdul Latif* and *Chand Miyan* of *Telahi* of *Nagaon* district also showed that the life and liberty of the people were threatened during the period of the movement.²⁹ The exploitation over the minorities of North *Kamrup* by the agitators including killings of at least thirty three people and missing of forty one people of minority community had been regarded as the biggest instance of brutality of the agitators. Moreover, the agitators killed *Ramakanta Baishya*, *Kaliram Baishya*, *Boroda Baishya* and *Promod Baishya*, *Amulya Pandit* of *Nalbari*, *Dilip Huzuri* of *Barama*, wife and child of *Joynal Ali* of *Pakhamara* area, one pregnant woman of minority community of *Tihu*, *Kalimuddin* and his family of *Mukalmua* of *Nalbari*, *Haridas* of *Paka* village and *Akbar Ali* of *Nali* village which itself signifies the loss of life, liberty and rights of the minority people during the period of the movement. At the same time, the student leaders of the movement burnt down many houses of the minority people and also looted those. At many places they were threatened by their lives and liberties by the movement leaders.³⁰ It may be stated here that fifty copies of *Asomiya* progressive weekly *Saptahik Kolakhar*, a well-known publication critical of the movement were burnt down at New *Guwahati* by the agitators which was reflective of the loss of freedom of expression of the press. The press was also attacked and damaged.³¹ In another incident of communal riot total thirty seven minority people lost their lives in June, 1980 when they came out of their houses on the request of All

Assam Minority Students' Union (AAMSU) and faced attack by the agitators.³² The killing of *Madan Deka* and *Madhav Barman*, two CPI (M) workers and injury of many other workers at *Jagira* nearby *Nalbari* by the agitators also stated that lives and liberties of the common masses were threatened during the movement.³³ It is also found that the Peoples' Union of Civil Liberties, New Delhi, constituted a fact-finding community with *G.P. Deshpande*, *Dhirendra Sharma* and *Chamanlal* of Jawaharlal Nehru University on the Assam Unrest.³⁴ On the basis of their week long investigations in Assam during February 9-16, 1980, they submitted a report which revealed that between August 1979 and 16 February, 1980, altogether 23 persons were killed in *Dibrugarh* district alone. Out of them 6 including 4 were declared as martyrs died of police firing and 17 were killed by mob violence or unknown assailants. Out of 17 later, one was an *Asomiya* and others were non-*Asomiyas* mostly Bengalis as the names suggest. At the same time, the committee also submitted a long list of persons killed in other districts as well but could not make it exhaustive.³⁵ The loss of civil liberties of the minorities in Assam reached the highest point with the genocide, bloodshed and mass killing before, during and after the election of 1983. The minority people of *Nellie*, *Gohpur*, *Saulkhuwa Chapori*, *Mukalmua*, *Samaria*, *Silapathar*, *Tiyak*, *Hatisal* and many other places became the victims of such genocide and mass killing. Amongst these *Nellie* massacre recorded the highest killing of 1,819 minority people (According to the Government Data) of which many were children. At the same time, at *Saulkhuwa Chapori* also a number of 190 children were killed by unknown assailants.³⁶ The discussion reveals that the lives of the common people were threatened and rights and liberties of the minorities were violated during the period of the movement. The leaders of the movement who were basically young people were highly condemned for such acts by various sections of the society and some intellectuals termed the movement as fascist where rights and liberties of the common people were never allowed to be exercised. Scholars found this as the result of many ill elements guiding the movement involving aggressive

regionalism, communalism and separatist tendencies which influenced the leadership of the movement to the highest level.³⁷

Some more Analysis of the State of People' Civil Liberty during the Movement:

However, while analyzing the other side of the movement which reflects an opposite picture indicating the violation of rights and liberties of the agitators by the government and the government officials where many of them lost their lives also. In their week long mass Satyagraha from November 12 to 17, 1979, AASU became able to garner support from lakhs of people of all ages, castes and communities. But the many participants of this peaceful agitation courted imprisonment and suffered in several ways.³⁸ In *Nowgong*, in an agitational programme of peaceful picketing by the youth leaders to prevent the candidates from filing nomination papers came down severely on the picketers on December 10, 1979 when the leaders tried to prevent Congress (U) candidate *Dev Kanta Barua* from filing nomination papers. Though at *Nowgong*, agitators were successful in preventing *Barua* from filing nomination in spite of governmental harassment on them but the *Barpeta* incident brought tragedy to the agitators. Peaceful picketers standing sleepless in the cold December night were brutally lathicharged and pushed to roadside drains when they tried to stop *Mrs. Begum Abida Ahmed*, wife of late President *Fakharuddin Ali Ahmed* and a candidate of the Congress (I) from filing her nomination at *Barpeta*. Hundreds were injured and a 20 year old student leader named *Khargeswar Talukdar* was beaten with *lathis* and boots and thrown to a drain where he died. Earlier at *Lakhtokia, Guwahati* also in front of *Mrs. Ahmed's* residence, thousands of picketers faced merciless lathicharge by the CRP when they were waiting before her residence day and night requesting her not to file nomination. It was also found that the government took many repressive measures to suppress the movement and accordingly the agitators faced many atrocities from the government side. Like the *Barpeta* incident, at *Naharkatia* also a teen-aged school boy named *Purna Nirmalia* became the victim of such

atrocities. At the same time, *Dilip Huzuri*, a young student was killed by army personnel. The people of North *Kamrup* also suffered from several cruel acts imposed on them by the government. Even the minor girls, pregnant women, old men and women were found to be beaten up indiscriminately by the army men at North *Kamrup*. Amid all such atrocities, the *Duliajan* incident reached highest peak when CRP men at the command of the police officials and the District administration opened fire on the conglomeration of more than seven thousand peaceful picketers who were squatting in front of the Oil installations at *Duliajan* to stop their flow of crude from Assam on January 18, 1980 in support of their demand of deletion and deportation of foreigners. It must be stated here that thirty rounds of ammunitions were fired in a few minutes time on the mob without giving them any prior warning.³⁹ The *Duliajan* tragedy led to the death of four persons and injury of other hundreds. At *Narengi* Oil blockade on April, 1980 also thousands of picketers were arrested.⁴⁰ At the same time, on April 4, 1980, a huge protest march of 20,000 people was launched to *Narangi* for demonstrating against government's repression.⁴¹ It may also be noted here that during this period Assamese Hindu villages were attacked particularly in *Nagaon* district where 1200 people were rendered homeless after 300 houses were set on fire in that district. At the same time, 39 persons were killed and hundreds were injured as a result of the week long organized violence in that district. Accordingly, throughout the year 1980 various agitational programmes were continued and the police atrocities made the lives and properties of the people insecure.⁴² Reference can be made also to the incidents of *Dimou* area of *Nagaon* district where youth leaders like *Naren Nath*, *Bhudhar Deka* and *Rajiv Rajkumar* were brutally killed by the police and C.R.P. personnel when they tried to stop the canvas of police officials in a *Path Bandh* agitational programme called by AASU on 31st December, 1981. Same incident took place at *Biswanath-Chariali* of *Tezpur* district where the agitators like *Manjit Das*, *Anukul Kakoti* and *Ratna Rajkhowa* lost their lives in their peaceful protest against the Government.⁴³ The Assamese women were also not left out of such atrocities. The Indian army men and CRP personnel were

accused of much violence committed against women of Assam.⁴⁴ The full-scale agitation launched by AASU beginning from August 1981 undertook various protest programmes like All Assam *bandh*, boycott of Independence Day, poster campaign and road blockade etc. But the government took repressive measures against the movement resulted in killing of more than seven persons in the police firing in two different incidents and hundreds of people were arrested. At the same time, during the period of short-lived Ministry of *Keshave Gogoi* from January 1 to 19 March, 1982, several agitational programmes were carried out including closer of shops and business establishments, bazaar *bandh*, black-outs and picketings which led to the loss of 394 lives.⁴⁵ On 9th June 1982, reports of bomb explosions came from various parts of the state where about 18 persons were killed in Guwahati indicating the movement's sign of loosing its non-violent character. At the same time, as a result of the police firing at a huge crowd stormed a police outpost at *Ghahigaon* of *Darrang* district led to the killing of one *Jiban Lahon* on 24th January, 1983. The government's stern measures against a thousand strong mobs at *Bourdalgaon* in the *Mongoldoi* sub-division of *Darrang* district led to the killing of two persons and injury of many on 2nd February, 1983. Moreover, the *Tongla* incident of *Darrang* district led to the death of three persons when police opened fire on a mob trying to ablaze a weekly bazaar. In the anti-poll demonstrations throughout Assam organized by AASU and AAGSP eleven persons were killed and several were injured in police firing and bomb explosions. *Mantu Kalita* died in police firing at *Nonoi* of *Nagaon* district. At *Govindpur* of *Kamrup* district, five died out of police firing as a result of the anti-election agitation. At the same time on 14 February, 1983 the *Gohpur* massacre brought death of 100 persons where 6000 became homeless in 17 villages. At the same time, on 20th March, 1983, 25 persons were killed including two prominent leaders of AASU at *Tezpur*.⁴⁶ The *Rajabari* killing of *Golaghat* of *Sibsagar* district on April 3, 1983 where 9 persons were killed and 15 injured at a police firing was also indicative of the use of violent divisive forces by the state against the peaceful agitators.⁴⁷ However, 1983 election in Assam

was recorded as the most violent election in the North-East India which left an estimated 2,500 dead, 30,000 houses burned down and thousands of refugees who were forced to flee their homes by the threat of violence. At the same time, though the election allowed the country's democratic process to prevail but at the same time, it further aggravated ethnic tensions in the state during the period of the movement.⁴⁸ Altogether a number of 855 people were recorded as martyrs of the movement.⁴⁹

Conclusion:

The rate of violence was shocking which virtually paralyzed the law and order situation in Assam. The incidents of wide-spread violence, deaths, riots, clashes and tortures on innocents became a usual feature of the movement. These incidents broke the fragile peace in the state. People were either killed or made homeless and tension prevailed everywhere in the state. Though the movement started in a peaceful and democratic way but very soon it took the turn of a violent movement with communal clashes, carnages, kidnappings, bomb explosions and killings of people including women and children. The extent of chauvinist fanaticism and hatred reflected throughout the period of the movement against each other. Under such "disturbed" situation, however, it became almost impossible to practice the democratic norms and values during the movement although the leaders of the movement claimed that the movement was fought in a peaceful Gandhian method. While the agitators violated the rights and liberties of the minorities but at the same time, they themselves became the victims of merciless atrocities by the government and the government officials. The doctrine of civil liberties of the people under which the basic right of equality flowing from individual's freedom with respect to his life and livelihood against both governmental and private interference were completely lost during the period of the movement. At the same time, the individual's rights and liberties of thought, expression and discussion were totally violated and never allowed to be exercised. The basic norms of democracy including principles of equality of rights, popular sovereignty, liberty, freedom of

opinion and property rights were never practiced particularly during the period of the movement under the disruptive forces in Assam. The main elements like "Individualism" and "Liberalism" were lost under worst incidents of violence directed either against minorities or the agitators. Accordingly, it is found that the practices of the basic norms of civil liberties of the democratic politics of the state were highly affected throughout the movement. However, it is essential to remember that such violation of rights and liberties was against both sides of the movement i.e. minorities and agitators which left no place for exercise of norms and values of democratic politics in its true sense of the term.

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CONFLICT AND HUMAN SECURITY IN SOUTH ASIA

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We need to fashion a new concept of human security that is reflected in the lives of our people, not in the weapons of our country.

– Mahbub-ul-Haq.

Introduction:

Security as a concept has come into being from the very sense of insecurity human beings have. As such, it is not a static concept. Concepts on security which we have in contemporary times are different from what we have during the war periods or post cold war periods. With the change in international system the concept of security changed. It is thus linked to the way we perceive things as to who is secure or who is not. Therefore, we can say that the very concept of security is not narrow; its domain is very wide. The realist view security to be state-centric i.e. state should be secured first in order to render security to its citizens. The liberals view that there should be minimal interference of state for the security of citizens. Likewise, the constructivist believes that security is what states make it. On the contrary, the critical security scholars look at security from the prism of human emancipation. The concept of security has thus itself become a battleground. In large part this is because of the end of the Cold War and the rise of globalization.

Therefore, human security is one such formulation of security which is people-centric. Caroline Thomas, has pointed out, human security requires both that basic material needs are met (food shelter, education,

health care etc) and the achievements of human dignity which incorporates personal autonomy control over one's life and unhindered participation in the life of the community.¹ However, to render human security, as Kanti Bajpai has pointed out one needs to answer four basic questions—security for whom, security for what values, security from what threats and security by what means.² Therefore keeping these questions in view my analysis in this paper would be to understand human security in relation to conflicts. In this regard, it would be worthwhile to analyze firstly the mutuality between conflict and development and secondly, the basic sources and reasons that give rise to conflicts would be analyzed. Thirdly, the impact of these conflicts in the human life and their security and fourthly, the role of the state in generating human security and curbing conflicts. In conclusion, along with the summarization of the topic suggestions would follow for maintaining a society free of conflict and ensuring a secured everyday life.

Human Security:

Human Security is a concept that identifies the security of human lives as the central objective of national and international security policy. It basically said to emerge out of the increasing dissatisfaction with, the state-centred concept of security as an adequate conceptual framework for understanding human vulnerabilities in the contemporary world and military interventions as adequate responses to them.³ During the mid 1990s the concept has been widely used by scholars and policy makers, but in a contesting way. There are multiple formulations of its definition and divergent efforts to evolve associated agendas. In this sense, the Human Development Report of UNDP 1994 is credited as the first source of explicit use of the term. The term was developed by

by former Pakistani Finance Minister Mahbub-ul-Haq, with strong support from economist Amartya Sen. Thereafter, influenced from this report many countries have formulated their definition of human security. As such in the Report human security is defined as—*“Human security can be said to have two main aspects. It means, first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. And second, it means*

protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life-whether in homes, in jobs or in communities. Such threats can exist at all levels of national income and development."⁴ The report shifted the focus of security from the protection of the state and its borders by military means to the protection of individuals from a wider range of threats particularly (i) Economic (assured basic income), (ii) Food (physical and economic access to food), (iii) Health (relative freedom from disease and infection), (iv) Environment (access to sanitary water supply, clean air and a non-degraded land system), (v) Personal (security from physical violence and threats), (vi) Community (security of cultural identity), (vii) Political (protection of basic human rights and freedoms),⁵ to their well-being and security, and by a wider range of measures and policies, from the local and community levels to the national and international arenas.

Similarly, the Canadian formulation of human security promoted by former Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy focuses on the security of people by addressing the threats faced by people due to the growing incidence of violent conflicts. It basically focuses on the human costs of violent conflict. In this sense the main objective of the Canadian Formulation is (i) the protection of civilians in armed conflicts and (ii) the prevention and resolution of violent conflicts.⁶

From the above formulations on human security it can be seen that the Canadian approach focuses on the "freedom from fear" while the UNDP report stresses on "freedom from want". But to ensure the security of the individual and people at large both the two aspects of human security - freedom from want and freedom from fear - is necessary and are complementary to each other. Thus, protecting people as well as promoting human development becomes an important requirement to promote human security. Inequalities, which are often the root causes of violent conflict, should be addressed. That is why, "Freedom from want" is impossible to achieve or sustain without achieving "freedom from fear". Hence human security can be defined, primarily as an analytical tool that focuses on

ensuring security for the individual, not the state. Human security is therefore: people-centered, multidimensional, interconnected and universal.

Conflict:

The term conflict has many meanings in everyday life. In simple language it means a fight, a struggle or a disagreement between two or more individuals, groups, regions or states. As such to some it might be behaviour and to some action. For example, there is conflict when the labourers are denied their wages in an industry or when a trade union goes on strike. It is also conflict when two states are at war with one another, and where battlefield events determine their relations. Thus, the actions constitute the conflicts. If this were all, however, it would mean that a conflict ends once this behaviour ends. But, this is not true everytime. In this sense, a ceasefire is not the end of conflict; actions may resume at some later stage. There may still be dissatisfaction. For example, Pakistan and India relations over Kashmir area. As such, there are various kinds of conflicts based on various issues- scarce resources, loss of social capital, regional imbalance, identity issues, distribution of resources etc. Thus, conflict is an intrinsic and inevitable aspect of social change. It is an expression of the heterogeneity of interests, values and beliefs that arise as new formations generated by social change come up against inherited constraints.⁷

Therefore, conflict can be said to comprise of three factors- actions, incompatibility and actors. As such, combining them, Prof. Peter Wallensteen defined conflict as, "*A social situation in which a minimum of two actors (parties) strive to acquire at the same moment in time an available set of scarce resources.*"⁸ The word 'strive' used by the writer, although is a vague term, but here he is using it to point out that when the parties are acting, they are doing something (however minimal) to acquire the resources. 'Strive' may even include warfare or even a wide range of activities. Similarly, the phrase, 'available set of scarce resources' should not be taken to include only economic matters. The

term 'resources' covers all kinds of positions that are of interest to an actor.

Conflict and Human Security in South Asia: Causes and Consequences:

The South Asian region geo-strategically is one of the most resourceful regions in the world. It is also one of the regions which have been ruled earlier by various Arab Kingdoms and later by various strong powers like the Portuguese, Dutch and British. However, after they left these countries were left with the hard task of nation-building and state-building. All most, all the South Asian governments essentially adopted the same British administrative model for managing governance and on some countries the same structures are continuing even today. As such, the colonial legacy has left important imprints on the culture, institutions, rules and regulations and socio-economic fabric of these societies, including issues pertaining to human security.

However, although the British has left behind many of its institutions and structures but the policies they followed during their colonial rule and before they left, still haunt the South Asian region from various corners. Firstly, the 'divide and rule' policy of the British explicitly encouraged, has left a bitter legacy for the post-colonial states. Secondly, the boundaries created by British, particularly the division of British India during 1947 created a number of disputes on boundaries and over territories that continue to plague relations between and within states in South Asia. e.g, India and Pakistan over Jammu and Kashmir or India and China over Mac Mohan Line etc. As such, the human security situation in South Asia is one of the worst in the world characterized by high degree of both want and fear. On one hand, the persistence of threats to the safety and security of the people generated by violent intra-state and inter-state conflicts, non-democratic rule, violation of democratic and human rights, ill-governance, corruption, crime, terrorism, gender violence and fear is very high. On the other hand, human deprivation caused by the consequences of

underdevelopment, poverty, hunger, deprivation, inequality, illiteracy, disease and health hazards, overpopulation, environmental degradation, natural disaster, overuse and misuse of natural resources and so on in the region is more acute than other regions of the world.

From this it can be said that although the security discourse in the world is in the process of a shift of emphasis away from military security to human security, but in the South Asian region priority is more on national security than on human security. Therefore, the factors that lead to conflicts within the South Asian region are discussed below:

1. Militarization and Nuclearisation: protection or threat to human security?

Militarization and Nuclearisation is not only a threat to human security in terms of diverting resources for human development, but it also leads to regional instability. More importantly, as Mahbub ul Haq has repeatedly pointed out that there is a »delicate balance between the demands of human security and of national security throughout South Asia. The former requires investment in people, the latter investment in arms. How to balance these two is a major dilemma faced by policymakers. It will be difficult to accelerate human development levels in South Asia unless this dilemma is resolved.' The impact of increased military spending does not end with enlarged military arsenals; it has emerged as a much more direct threat to individual security and human rights. Militarisation leads to increased military spending and Nuclearization to achieve political ends by keeping the enemy in a state of dilemma. The costs associated with nuclear weapons are tremendous. As reported in the 1999 Report on *Human Development in South Asia*, the nuclear weaponry possessed by India and Pakistan creates a potential for mass annihilation of innocent civilians and has major environmental and security consequences for all South Asian countries. Thus, despite being aware of the awesome destructive power of these weapons, the countries continue to develop, modernize and enlarge their nuclear arsenals. States defend the acquisition and development of nuclear

arsenals in the name of national security. For Pakistan the strengthening of the military institution at the behest of its political and military leaders alike, with the acquiescence of its citizens, has taken its toll on the political, democratic and judicial institutions of the country.

In Nepal, increased militarization has meant a highly weaponised society where acquiring arms is increasingly easy. The South Asian armies have become a force of aggression against the very people they have been sworn to protect. Not only did the Pakistan army unleash havoc on its own population in the 1971 war, it has been used twice to brutally suppress the uprising in Baluchistan as well as its war three times war and border conflicts with India. The Indian army has been pitted in battles against its own people in Gujarat, the northeast and other states. The Golden Temple incident in Punjab with the Sikhs is cited as another example. The Sri Lankan army has been fighting the citizens of its country for over twenty years. These acts of aggression are justified in the name of national interest. But the fact remains that such aggressive uses of force against one's own people is tantamount to state violence and a clear violation of the rights of the people, along with their security.

2. Armed conflicts, arms transfers and human security:

Armed conflicts within states have been on the rise since the end of the Cold war and the trend is no different for South Asia where the deadliest of armed conflicts are being fought not on state borders, but within nations, inside cities with the citizens of the states. While major arms are the most significant tools in interstate wars, the presence of small arms like revolvers, pistols, hand grenades, shotguns etc is a very significant determinant of the outbreak, continuation and intensification of most recent violent internal conflicts. *Small arms* and *light weapons* have become the main tools of violence in the ethnic, political and other internal conflicts by both state and non-state actors. Referred to as weapons of mass destruction these are responsible for the majority—between 60 and 90 per cent, of direct conflict deaths. Secondary impact of small arms, when the fighting is over is long lasting and extends far beyond physical injuries. Threat of arms

results in forced migration and failure of entitlements. The most adverse impact of small arms is felt in countries where state apparatus is weak, and institutions, such as police and related services are failing. Arms often find their way into the hands of the non-state actors (militant rebel groups, guerrillas or just civilians) through the black market.

Despite the destructive role small arms play in violent conflicts their transfers have not been monitored. The abuse of arms in underdeveloped conflict ridden countries is a major source of human rights violations. Small arms and light weapons are attractive because they are easily available, low in cost, highly portable and easy to hide. More importantly, since they possess legitimate civilian, military and police uses, they are present in all societies. Because of their lightweight, they are the weapons of choice for child soldiers. The easy availability of these weapons has led to a militarization of society and privatization of violence. In some societies, these surplus weapons may create a »culture of violence that traps whole populations in an endless cycle of war.

3. Internal conflicts in South Asia:

A general pattern has emerged in the past few decades that highlights that the states have become more vulnerable to sliding into a situation of violent internal conflict—civil wars, insurgencies, separatist movements, religious and sectarian violence. This new brand of conflicts has deeper links with poverty, deprivation, inequality and identity than with international politics. In addition to being poor, these states share the malaise of weak institutions, intolerant societies and vested political interests that stand to benefit from a fragmented society. Thus, internal conflicts, which on the surface are linked to resources and representations of communities, groups and regions that have been excluded from the process of development, of economic and political participation, cultural and religious freedoms. This exclusion has manifested itself as horizontal inequalities (inequalities between groups/

identities/peoples), which have emerged as the main underlying source of tensions in societies. South Asia has a history of almost 15 ethnic conflicts in five decades. Geography, history, politics and resurgence of ethnicity and religion have all contributed to an increasingly complicated South Asia. Almost all internal conflicts are driven by tensions between groups. These tensions are apparent in the various separatist movements for greater autonomy, which is in itself an outcome of a fear of assimilation, marginalization and a sense of relative deprivation and powerlessness. The Bangladesh independence movement was the most disastrous civil war in the history of the region, with the death toll crossing three million. The civil war that has torn the island of Sri Lanka apart for over two decades has ethnic tensions at its roots driven by perceptions of political and economic marginalization. The civil war in Nepal also has a political dimension where years of political repression of certain groups in the guise of a parliamentary democracy finally exploded in violent political upheaval. Ethnically discriminatory policies in Bhutan led to anti-government riots and a huge refugee problem. Political repression and human rights abuses have resulted in the outbreak of violence in Maldives. Therefore, the link between such failure of entitlements, conflict and human security is twofold— asymmetric distribution of entitlements leads to insecurity and results in conflict, and conflicts destroy entitlements and result in insecurity.

4. Ethnicity, inequality and conflicts- links and evidence:

Diverse ethnicities, religions, languages and values of the people that make up modern states, especially in South Asia, are an inescapable feature of the politics of the twenty-first century. It is an unfortunate fact that politics in this region, has evolved in a way that puts state security first and chooses to ignore or suppress diverse identities (ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural) through religious persecution and through economic, social and political exclusion. Ethnicity finds expression in political domination, economic exploitation or psychological oppression.

All states in South Asia, except Maldives, have experienced negative ramifications of ethnicity. The large degree of ethnic polarization in Pakistan has resulted in sectarian violence in provinces and clashes between provinces and the central government. The Bhutanese government has been accused of systematic discrimination against the Nepalese minority in the country. In many districts of Assam in Northeast region of India ethnicity is one of the burning issues.

5. Regional disparities:

Asymmetric development in regions within a nation results in perceptions of deprivation by a certain group and is often a cause for political violence. Inter-regional comparisons within countries reveal regional disparities in development. Some regions have been able to develop faster and progress further than others, at times at the expense of others. In India, five states—Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Assam and Maharashtra—account for 56 per cent of rural poverty while containing only one-third of the total rural population. These states also share the dubious honour of having witnessed some of the worst forms of political or civil violence. In Bangladesh in 1991, the divisions of Rajshahi, Barisal and Dhaka had the highest incidence of rural poverty at around 60 per cent, whereas urban poverty in Chittagong and Dhaka was less than 15 per cent.⁹ Access to economic opportunity and resources determines economic security and well-being, while an environment of poverty and deprivation breed discontent. The regions excluded from the process of development become rebellious, especially when ethnic identities mix with geographical locations. For example—The Bangladesh war of Independence, Maoist insurgency in Nepal, Political violence in Baluchistan and North-east India etc.

6. Religious discrimination:

The religious animosity runs very deep between communities and is possibly the major cause of violence in South Asia. Communalization (a term used to refer to the inter-religious conflicts, especially Muslim-Hindu strife) of the Indian polity not only threatens the rights of whole communities and

millions of people but the very make-up of society. The communal riots in India, largely between the Hindus and Muslims, have become increasingly violent. Religion marks a clear line of demarcation, separating one group from another with perceptions of deprivation revolving around this identity. Likewise, in Pakistan, despite being a religiously homogenous country, has a history of sectarian violence. The divide between the Sunni and Shia communities in Pakistan has become highly politicized as each has sought to institutionalize its particular brand of Islam. Originally the Sunni and the Shia communities in Pakistan had joined forces against the Ahmadiya movement in the 1970s. This period saw institutionalized discrimination against a religious minority when a law was promulgated that accorded the Ahmedis a non-Muslim status. This violence has gone on for decades and still persisting, the increasing trend of religious extremism threatens the development of the society and the opportunities for people to live together in peace.

Consequences:

Conflicts have emerged as a major obstacle to development and a potential threat to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set by the United Nations. More specifically, internal conflicts—wars, insurgencies and separatist movements—pose a threat for individual well-being and stability of states. As such, the resultant collapse of state apparatus leads to loss of control and access to essential services and assets. The insecurity, migration and deaths that are direct outcomes of fighting have damaging effects on human well-being and their security.

Below are mentioned some of the consequences of conflicts:

(a) Human costs of conflict:

The impact of conflicts on civilian life and property is directly linked to the onset of political violence in insurgencies and civil wars—suicide bombings, militia raids, rocket attacks and shoot-outs etc. More than 1.2 million people have been killed in internal armed conflicts in South Asia and more

than 700,000 people have been internally displaced or live as refugees in neighboring countries.¹⁰ While violence accounts for a lot of the human suffering, it is hunger, forced migration, onset of disease in the wake of violence, health and educational standards, worsening infant mortality, collapse of public services arising from the wider effects of protracted conflicts on the economic and administrative structure of the country as a whole, which lead to greater misery and death. . All these adverse outcomes are a direct result of the disruption of access, claim and/or control on various services (public, private and market based), and social as well as communal structures that form the fabric of a well functioning society.

The onset of conflicts reduces food production, resulting into fall in consumption levels and worsening availability of calories per head. The most damaging consequence for human survival is the combination of food price inflation and falling incomes that occurs simultaneously during conflicts. In the worst cases this leads to famine, with a death toll that exceeds the numbers directly killed by fighting and compound by the effects of food shortages as malnourished children succumb to diseases, e.g. the rising violence in Pakistan, Burma and the war of independence in Bangladesh (1971).

Furthermore, the agricultural sector is usually the worst hit and this is the sector where most of the poorer sections of society are employed. In Sri Lanka, the war served to intensify and expand greatly the threshold of vulnerabilities routinely associated with agricultural, fishing and other livelihoods. Despite the Sri Lankan government's initiative to continue provision of basic services, there has been a significant public entitlement failure due to conflicts. The value of education services in the region declined substantially between 1990-91 in LTTE controlled regions of Sri Lanka. Rail and water transport services also fell sharply. Moreover, apart from the daily insecurity of falling victim to violence, the people in the north east provinces of India feel insecure because they do not have freedom of movement, secure land rights and are subjected to illegal taxation.

(b) Women in situations of conflict:

Conflict impacts the lives of women in a most fundamental way. Conflict takes away the bare minimum of rights available to them. It threatens their lives, survival and the survival of their children. It takes away their homes, families and livelihoods. The direct threat to women's lives and well-being comes from physical violence during the conflicts, they have become a weapon of war, strategic, systematic and gender specific. The objectives vary from ethnic cleansing, spreading political terror, breaking the resistance of a community, to rewarding soldiers. Ironically it is the exalted status of women as symbols of national honors and bearers of the national culture, values and traditions that makes them targets of the violence.

Moreover, the collapse of state control makes enforcement impossible in a conflict-ridden situation, as such women's legal status and rights are non-existent at times of war. War and forced displacement takes a heavy toll on the reproductive health of women. Women have very little or no access to pre-natal and post-natal care as hospitals and health care units are the first to be destroyed. Women doctors are killed, forced to leave or forbidden to attend to patients by the government's security forces and militia's alike.

The impact of conflict on women is not only gender specific it also varies with religion, caste, ethnicity, location and political affiliation. The mere suspicion of association with a particular group during conflict is a death sentence for women. Systematic rape during conflict has evolved to become a war tactic. Other forms of gender specific violence include sexual slavery, forced pregnancies and enforced sterilization.

In Bangladesh, estimates of the number of women raped during the country's nine-month war for independence in 1971 range from 250,000 to 400,000. Similarly, in Kashmir, both the security forces and the militants have systematically used rape as a weapon to punish, intimidate, coerce, humiliate or degrade. According to human rights investigations, mass rape began to be routinely used in search and cordon operations.¹¹ Women in

Sri Lanka have suffered rape, detainment, and harassment at checkpoints in the two decades of civil war.

(c) Economic costs of conflict:

The nature of conflict, its duration and geography as well as the pre-conflict conditions in the economy (income levels, structures, external dependency, flexibility) are important determinants of the severity of impact. The indirect effects of conflict filter through the economic channels and are, more often than not specially in the case of internal conflicts, more disruptive than the direct impact. The economic costs arise from a worsening macro-economic situation, as resources are diverted to military expenditure, rising transaction costs of business, and falling investment due to uncertainty. While military activity accelerates, the agricultural sector and trade are disrupted, thereby reducing production capacity. The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka has caused a significant decline in educational services provided in the Northern Province because a majority of schools and colleges have been destroyed along with government hospitals and health centres. In Nepal, the war has taken a significant toll on the economic, social and physical infrastructure of the country, and its consequences are felt in every sphere of the social and economic life in Nepal. Not only have the human rights violations reached crisis proportions, political, legal and social rights are being eroded every day. Schools are frequently closed due to rising threats and strikes. Similarly, there is a lot of looting and forced collection of taxes by insurgents, and supplies of essential goods are frequently interrupted in remote areas in Manipur and most of the Northeastern parts of India. In Afghanistan also the economy is worst hit because of internal conflicts.

Thus, the negative impact of such destruction is magnified as development expenditure to build or reconstruct damaged infrastructure declines during times of conflict. The impact of conflicts on macro-economic indicators has a direct link to concepts of economic security. Various studies have shown the impact of conflicts on GDP. Of the 25 countries that had experienced major internal conflict during the years 1960-1995, GDP per capita fell in all nations. It is important to note that deaths due to conflicts

are lower in countries with higher levels of income. The states with improved social indicators are able to sustain economic growth despite ongoing conflict as in Sri Lanka. During times of conflict, the economy moves from tradable to non-tradable products. The consequent fall in exports leads to reduced foreign exchange earnings. Although the overall level of output in the economy falls due to a decline in agricultural as well as industrial output, the former is affected far worse. In Nepal, the escalation of the Maoist insurgency in 2001 drastically affected the economic performance of the country, with the economic growth slowing down to an average of 1.9 per cent (FY2002-04) from a high of 4.9 per cent in the decade before. Private investments, as a percentage of GDP, have fallen from 15.4 per cent to 12.6 per cent between 1996 and 2004.¹² The same is the case in Pakistan where its GDP have fallen from.

(d) Refugees: a consequence of violent conflicts:

Threats to life and physical security, fear of active persecution, destruction of homes and means of livelihoods, and collapse of state provision and control, all become a reason for people to flee from their homes. These threats are a direct consequence of conflicts making refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) a tragic feature and consequence of conflicts within and between states. South Asia is home to 13.7 per cent of the total 9.236 million refugees in the world. Since the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947, South Asia has experienced mass population movements that arose as a result of grave human security concerns such as war, violent conflict, human rights violations or discrimination. Records show that more than 14 million people have left their homes during the partition. Another 10 million people were also displaced during 1971 when Bangladesh became independent. The third wave of refugees, and by far the largest in the history of the region, came during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late 1970s, when millions of people fled to Iran and Pakistan.¹³ While these events top the list with regards to the severity of the situation, other states in the region have also experienced mass displacement and exodus as a consequence of civil wars and insurgencies. In Nepal, nearly 400,000

rural families have been internally displaced from the mid-western regions due to the Maoist insurgency. In Sri Lanka, the civil war has displaced an estimated 650,000 people, comprising roughly one-third of the population living in affected areas. Moreover, most of the refugees do not want to return home but are forced to go back, sometimes by the host states and at other times in the hope of rebuilding their lives. For example, Recently, on 15th January 2013 Thailand arrested and pledged to deport more than 150 Burmese Rohingya refugees including 71 men and 85 woman and children, discovered in a hidden camp near the country's southern border with Malaysia.¹⁴

Education is another big challenge in refugee camps, lack of availability of textbooks and reluctance of trained teachers to teach in camps is a big problem. At times, cultural taboos keep girls out of schools. One-third of refugee children and adolescents in populations categorized as UNHCR assisted are in UNHCR-supported schooling and perhaps only 40 per cent are in school altogether.

State, Conflict and Human Security:

An understanding of security cannot be devoid of the understanding of the nature and character of the state and stages of development. As such, State security is not opposed to Human Security. A State can be both a source of security and insecurity. As such, as the critical security studies scholars like Ken Booth said, the security referent and security can be assured through human emancipation defined in terms of "freeing people, as individual and groups, from the social, physical, economic, political and other constraints that stop them from carrying out what would freely choose to do".¹⁵ But the question remains whether security can be understood in the same way for the South Asian countries as it is for the western developed countries. Not only is concept of "Emancipator Security" abstract, it also does not in any sense alter the fundamental sources of South Asian (Third World) security. As mentioned before the causes of insecurity in South Asia continue to lie in weak state-society cohesion,

problems of national integration, economic underdevelopment and the lack of legitimacy of regimes. It is the weak state that is a problem for the security of the individuals in the South Asian states and not states per se. A strong state with a high degree of socio-political cohesion is a necessary prerequisite for individual as well as national security. Just as a modern vibrant market economy requires the state to invest in people and provide the infrastructure-physical and institutional –for the market to function; similarly citizen's security can only be ensured by the state. Therefore one cannot deny the fact that the state is a means and not an end, states still constitute the primary nexus when it comes to the security of the individuals and groups. European economic supremacy was not forged by free markets but by strong states. The growth of terrorism has also put the state centre-stage in fighting terrorism. But at times it compels states to compromise on civil liberties to control violence and deal with terrorism.

The process of globalization has led to transforming the role of the state. But it would still remain a key referent in the security debate. The question that needs to be addressed is not whether security should be reconceptualized around individuals or societies as alternatives to the state, but how the practice of states can be reconfigured to take into account the new discourse on human security. Despite globalization states are not withering away but are being transformed as they struggle to deal with the new security agendas that confront them. Thus, people's security cannot be ensured in the absence of strong, democratic and responsible states. This has been made amply clear by the collapse states of international system. In this new discourse on security, the state still has a primary role to play, because the human security agenda cannot be further without state security. Given the fact that the state has to play an important role in its development functions and in providing security, state security and human security are to be seen as mutually supportive.

Conclusion:

The threat to human security in South Asia, as discussed in this paper, originating from conflicts within a country or between them, is now increasingly being realized by the people and the governments as the main stumbling block for the region to become an economic giant with over 1.4 billion peaceful and harmonious people. As Mahbub-ul-Haq passionately believed, there is nothing standing in the way of South Asia becoming like the European Union of one economy and eight polities. May be that is for the future South Asian people and their leaders to decide, but for now we need to think concretely about how to resolve some of the conflicts so that the region is ready for a peaceful future. At the most elemental level, the right to life constitutes the basic values underlying human security. As such any kind of violence or conflict directed against citizens is a threat to human security. Therefore, the government and the citizens should work hand in hand to find long-term solutions thereby building a faithful, responsive and responsible relation and taking up steps to establish peace and stability - like reducing arms proliferation and military expenditure, protection for displaced persons should be ensured, equal distribution of opportunities as well as recognition and fuller participation of various class, caste and gender in both economic and political projects undertaken by the respective states in South Asia.

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REVISITING POVERTY, EQUALITY AND HUMAN SECURITY The Case of MGNREGA

Priyanka Sharma

Introduction:

The world has witnessed unprecedented economic growth in terms of GDP across different sectors since 1990s primarily because of the neo-liberal policies adopted under the aegis of the IMF, the World Bank and other global financial giants. In a way, global capitalism through its new incarnation has integrated the global economy and opened up tremendous prospects for economic growth. However, such impressive growth rates have led to greater polarization in the societies and have failed to make a difference in the lives of the majority of the masses. Global poverty has been rising; there is increase in infant mortality rates, lack of access to safe drinking water etc. Such unbridled proliferation of poverty brought forth with the shift to the market liberalisation policies, necessarily have questioned the validity of issues like equity and human security. This paper shall address the inter-linkages of issues of poverty, equity and human security in the light of the performance of MGNREGA programme in India.

Poverty, Equity and Human Security: Inter-linkages:

Poverty has been generally understood as lack of access to the basic amenities of life, a situation in which people do not have the minimum income to buy adequate food or satisfy other basic needs; the character of which has undergone qualitative changes with the introduction of Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) by UNDP. Conventionally poverty

was determined through income. However, it is now realized that the increase in income alone cannot reduce poverty as it has its relations with deprivation at multiple levels. A person earning more income but spending very high in health, education, housing and food etc. may be poor compared to a person who earns relatively less but his/her education, health, housing etc. comes under social security network. In such a comprehensive sense, poverty is dependent upon the commitment of the state to social and collective security. Besides, a person whose livelihood is primarily dependent upon natural resources and environment like the tribal communities in India may not earn more income, but may not be necessarily poor. However, if through the policies of the government, peoples' access to natural resources is taken away and those resources are handed over to the private and corporate houses for profiteering, those policies may not help the people to reduce poverty. Destruction of nature by policies of the government if causes calamities like pollution, flood, drought etc. may also cause poverty despite ensuring more income. It is in this sense that UNDP has introduced the notion of Multiple Poverty Index (MPI) in order to evaluate the extent of poverty across various dimensions.

Equity, on the other hand, is related to the equitable distribution of resources in order to usher in an equal and just world. At the UN General Assembly in 2000, the heads of the states and governments recognized their collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level and had set 8 goals to be achieved by 2015 for human development and poverty eradication, popularised as the Millennium Development Goals –

- * Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- * Achieve universal primary education
- * Promote gender equality and empower women
- * Reduce child mortality
- * Improve maternal health
- * Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

- * Ensure environmental sustainability
- * Develop a global partnership for development.

Through these goals, the global community has sought to minimise the inequalities that have penetrated the societies through increasing poverty rates, particularly in the age of globalisation where a minority group becomes wealthier day by day while the majority of the population are engrossed in the vicious poverty cycle. Poverty, hunger and disease have been more pronounced among women, the enormity of which has been recognised in emphasising gender equality in the MDGs. In areas such as health, gender, environment, education and development, the MDGs have tried to address the issues of 'equity' in order to reduce the rising social inequalities. According to James Wolfensohn, Managing Director of the World Bank, 'The World Bank is committed to making gender equality central to its fight against poverty' (Bayles, Smith and Owens, 2008: 472). On issues of hunger, the FAO estimated that there are still over 800 million people who suffer from hunger and poverty. Furthermore, it is in the Third World countries that majority of the people are malnourished or undernourished. It is in this context that the MDGs have been formulated to look into the issue of equitable development and had set certain targets for achieving the goals by 2015. However, although substantial progress has been made, yet it is unlikely that the MDG targets will be met.

Furthermore, human security as a concept seeks to understand global vulnerabilities or critical pervasive threats to human life challenging the traditional notion of national security by arguing that the proper referent for security should be the individual rather than the state. Human security holds that a people-centred view of security is necessary for regional, national and global stability. It shifts the focus to persons, regardless of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, citizenship, or other distinguishing characteristics. The objective is to safeguard the vital core of human lives

from critical threats. Human security processes should be consistent with ongoing human development paradigm by supporting participation, freedom, institutional appropriateness, and diversity for long term human fulfillment. "Freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" for all persons should be the core of ensuring human security. According to the United Nations Development Report of 1994, seven components basic to human security are economic security, food security, health security, environment security, personal security, community security, and political security.

Despite such global commitments, it is seen that the level of inequality worldwide has been increasing with increased regional disparities, dismissing the 'trickle down' approach of globalisation and liberalisation policies. The Human Development Report, 2002 reveals that between 1975 and 2000, impressive growth in East Asia and the Pacific increased its per capita income measured in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) terms from about 1/4th of the average per capita income in OECD countries to 1/6th while at the same period Sub-Saharan Africa suffered the reverse with its per capita income dropping from 1/6th of that in OECD countries to 1/4th. Rapid growth in countries like China and India since the 1970s and 1980s respectively has enabled them to catch up with the rich countries of the world, yet considering human development indicators, such increase in GDP does not reflect the true state of affairs. It has been calculated that the world's richest 1% of population receive as much income as the poorest 5% while the richest 10% of the US population has an income equal to that of the poorest 43% of the world (HDR, 2002:19). In 1999, 2.8 billion people lived on less than \$2 a day with 1.2 billion of them barely surviving at the margins of subsistence on less than \$1 a day. The share of the world's population living in extreme poverty fell marginally from 29% in 1990 to 23% in 1999 but yet the level remains disturbingly high. The idea that increase in GDP will lead to benefits to the poor had not materialised.

Despite impressive growth rates in the developing countries, polarization among societies and regions are well evident as reflected from the following table:

Table 1.1 GDP Growth in selected developing countries and regions, 1980-2004 (average annual percentage change)

Region/country	1980-85	1985-90	1990-95	1995-2000	2000-04
Africa	2.2	2.6	1.1	3.4	3.9
Sub Saharan Africa, (excl. South Africa)	1.7	3.2	1.5	3.7	4.2
Latin America	0.5	1.8	3.6	2.8	1.5
East Asia	7.1	8.2	8.8	4.9	6.2
China	11.0	7.8	12.9	8.5	9.4
First Tier NIEs	7.1	9.1	7.3	4.2	3.8
South Asia	5.3	5.9	5.0	5.3	5.7
India	5.3	6.6	5.3	5.8	6.1
Developing countries	2.9	5.4	5.4	4.1	4.4

Source: UNCTAD secretarial calculations based on World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, various issues United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) *National Accounts Main Aggregates Database* and Taiwan Province of China, *Macroeconomics Database*

*Note Calculations are based on GDP in constant 1995 dollars

*Source: UNCTAD (2006a: 46) as in-Baylis, Smith and Owens (2008). *The Globalization of World Politics*, New York: OUP, pp 476

The above table shows the striking regional disparities in case of growth of GDPs in various countries and regions. While the East Asian experience has been impressive, the African experience shows myth associated with the neo liberal economic shift. On the other hand, taking

US \$ 1.25/day as the standard poverty line for computing poverty rates in various countries, the following table gives a glimpse of the percentage of population living below poverty line in select countries –

Table 1.2 Percentage of population living below poverty line in select countries

Country	Year	% of population living below poverty line
China, rural	2005	26
China, urban	2005	2
India, rural	2004/05	44
India, urban	2004/05	36
Nigeria	2003	64
Indonesia, rural	2005	24
Indonesia, urban	2005	19
Phillipines	2006	23
Vietnam	1998	50
Vietnam	2006	22

*Source: PovCalNet (accessed November 11, 2008) as cited in Khandker, Shahidur R. and Jonathan Houghton (2010). *Handbook on Poverty and Inequality*, New Delhi: Rawat Publications, pp 46

The wide variations in the poverty rates in the select countries are reflected from the above table. Although poverty rates in Indonesia and Vietnam seems to be much closer to each other yet in case of Nigeria, it is seen that about 64% of the population were living under poverty line by 2003. These figures show the incidence of poverty prevailing in the countries despite their increasing GDP growth rates, sharply repudiating the claims of the liberalisation market policies aimed at creating larger benefits to the people.

Following the global financial recession of 2011-12, global economic growth has decelerated with rising fear of unemployment as about 197 million people were left without a job in 2012 and about 39 million people have dropped out of the labour market as job prospects proved unattainable. The unemployment rate is set to increase again and the number of unemployed worldwide is projected to rise by 5.1 million in 2013 and by another 3 million in 2014. Such alarming statistics have necessarily questioned the commitment of the states to ensure the goals of equity and human security. Particularly in the globalised world where market dominance has created larger inequalities in the societies, it is imperative that the states should resort to effective policies to bring about equitable development and secure human life.

Poverty Reduction in India - An Overview:

Of late India has embarked upon series of social intervention programmes within the neo liberal paradigm that apparently conform to a comprehensive notion of ensuring equity and human security. These programmes, although are fragmented, are supposed to address various social determinants of secure life of its population like food, livelihood, housing, poverty etc. However, scrutiny reveals that corporate obsession driven by neo-liberal framework of development has undermined the welfare content of such social programmes. Series of policy initiatives were undertaken like the model of Public-Private Partnership (PPP); converting Public Distribution System (PDS) into Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) or amendments to the National Drug Policy 1978 as well as relaxation in import of technology to facilitate the private participation in sectors like health. David Harvey argues that the creation of this neoliberal system has entailed much destruction, not only of prior institutional frameworks and powers (such as the supposed prior state sovereignty over political-economic affairs) but also of divisions of labor, social relations, welfare provisions, technological mixes, ways of life, attachments to the land, habits of the heart, ways of thought, and the like. (Harvey 2007: 23). Studies have revealed that the policy changes undertaken at the auspices of IMF

and World Bank have opened up the environment and its natural resources to the corporate greed and loot; employment generation has been stalled; providing basic amenities have been handed over to the profit making private and corporate agencies and the achievements in different domains like health, education, agriculture etc. after independence has also been turned upside down. The whole economy has become obsessed with growth without corresponding strategies for distribution. In such a situation India is bound to be relatively in top in the hierarchy of the MPI. This is evident from the following table.

Table: 1.3 Multidimensional Poverty Index and National poverty Line

Country	MPI (HDI Rank)	Population below Income Poverty Line	
		PPP \$1.25 a day 2000-08	National Poverty Line 2000-08
Poland	-(41)	Less than 2	14.8
Malaysia	-(57)	Less than 2	12.8
Brazil	0.039(73)	5.2	21.5
China	0.056(89)	15.9	2.8
Sri Lanka	0.021 (91)	14	22.7
Indonesia	0.095 (108)	29.4	16.7
India	0.296 (119)	41.6	28.6
Pakistan	0.275(125)	22.6	—

*Source: HDR, 2010, quoted from Economic Survey 2010-11, GoI: 296

The national poverty line is drawn by the Planning Commission of India the estimate of which is extremely low. For example, for 2004-05, Planning Commission took Rs. 356 (US\$9.01) per capita per month for rural areas and Rs. 538 (US\$13.62) per capita per month for urban areas. Asha Kapur Mehta has pointed out that 28.3 percent of Indians in rural areas (220.92 million persons) and 25.7 percent of Indians in urban areas

(80.79 million persons) are unable to earn even such a low levels of income. (Mehta 2010: 89). The Hunger and Malnutrition Survey Report, 2011 (also called HUNGaMA Survey Report 2011) reveals that in the backward districts (100 focus districts as per the survey) 42 percent of the children under five are underweight and 59 percent are stunted i.e. chronically malnourished. The number of underweight although has declined from 53 percent in 2004 to 42 percent in 2011, the figure is unacceptably high and even higher compared to the Sub-Saharan average of 22 percent in 2005-06.

The food security debate in India has assumed great deal of significance with the Government of India proposing a Food Security Act. The 2013 National Food Security Bill which was tabled in the Parliament on 22 March, 2013 seeks to “provide for food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach, by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto.” (Dreze, Tehelka, 2013). In matters related to the environment, the Report of the Global Footprint Network (GFN) and the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) released in 2008 said that India has the world’s third largest ecological footprint after USA and China and that Indians are using almost twice the country’s ‘bio capacity’ (Kothari, 2010:346). The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS) in its report in 2009 ‘calculates that the number of unemployed persons in India increased from over 3.62 crore persons in 1993 to nearly 5.74 crore persons in 2004-05. The report concludes that the organized sector has seen very little growth and there is growing informalization of labour employment which reflects the stagnation of the process of employment generation in the country.’ (Kabra, 2010:440).

Against such a background, the Government of India has formulated numerous programmes, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) being one of them, as a means for socio-economic development of the country. ‘Inclusive growth’ and ‘inclusive

development' have become the watchwords of the development discourse in recent times as the need of development planning is to "continuously strive for broad-based improvement in the standard of living and quality of life of the people through an inclusive development strategy that focuses on both income and non-income dimensions" (Economic Survey, 2010-11:291). In fact, the central vision of the 11th Five Year Plan is to trigger a development process that ensures broad-based improvement in the quality of life of our people, especially the poor, the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and Minorities in order to ensure more regionally balanced development for upholding principles of equity as well as human security.

Performance of MGNREGA: Programme for poverty alleviation, equity and human security:

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) is a flagship programme endorsed by the UPA government to enhance the livelihood security of the people of rural India. The Act which came into force on 2nd February, 2006 has been enacted as the largest public employment programme by the Government of India till date in order to redesign the rural economy of the country. Being implemented in 200 of India's most backward districts in 2006, the Act now covers almost all districts of rural India thereby making it the largest public works programme ever. In 2009, the NREGA was rechristened as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

The Act has recognized the right to work as a legal guarantee with the aim of providing up to 100 days of employment to households whose adult members are willing to do unskilled and semi skilled labour. However, in the wake of the neo liberalization agenda, schemes like the MGNREGA do not question the inequality that has been penetrated by the market driven conditions. Rather, they aim to reinforce that inequality by aiming at poverty alleviation among the rural households rather than improving their employment conditions on a sustained basis and dismantling the prevailing

dichotomy between the rural and the urban as well as the organized and the unorganized sectors.

According to the Economic Survey report, 2010-11, 'During 2009-10, 5.26 crore households were provided employment as against 4.51 crore during 2008-09. About 4.10 crore households were provided employment during 2010-11 till December 2010. During 2010-11, the budget estimate was Rs. 40,100 crore out of which Rs 29,822.59 crore have been released to the states/UTs till February 10, 2010. Out of 145 crore person days created during this period, 23% and 17% were accounted for by SC and ST population respectively and 50% by women. Under the scheme, maximum employment during 2009-10 was provided in the state of Rajasthan followed by Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Bihar.' (Ibid, 2010-11:300-301).

On the other hand, as per the Economic Survey report, 2012-13, 'out of a total outlay of Rs 33,000 crore approved for 2012-13, 25,894.03 crore has been released and the total fund available with the states including the opening balance of Rs 10,009.09 crore is Rs 41,788.74 crore. Of this, Rs 28,073.51 crore has been utilized (as on 31.01.2013) and about 4.39 crore households have been provided employment.' About 156.01 crore person days have been created out of which 82.58 crore (53%) were availed by women, 34.56 crore (22%) SCs and 24.90 crore (16%) by STs. 'At the national level, with the average wage paid under the MGNREGA increasing from Rs 65 in FY 2006-07 to Rs 115 in FY 2011-12, the bargaining power of agricultural labour has increased as even private sector wages have increased. Improved economic outcomes especially in watershed activities and reduction in distress migration are its other achievements.' (Economic Survey, 2012-13: 279-80). As a developing country, poverty alleviation is central to policy formulation in India so that the poor benefit from the 'trickle-down' effect of development and hence a plethora of policies have been formulated to eliminate the forces of hunger and unemployment. The MGNREGA, seen in this regard, is an attempt on

part of the government to reduce poverty through a rights –based programme of guaranteed employment.

Dreze and Oldgies focusing on the ‘extraordinary scale’ of the programme pointed out that, ‘In 2007-08, the programme generated 144 crore person –days of employment... over the year, 34 million households participated in the NREGA... The scale of the programme is even larger today, with the NREGA budget shooting up to Rs.25,000 crore or so in 2008-09(from around Rs.16,000 crore in 2007-08).’ (Dreze and Oldgies, *Frontline*. 2009:1). This shows the enormity of the project and its expected outcomes in removing rural poverty and achieving sustainable growth. Although the accuracy of statistical data can always be contested, yet these figures can at least give a picture of the huge difference that the programme can make in the lives of the people and in the areas where incidence of poverty, hunger, malnutrition and unemployment is very high.

Despite such rosy picture, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) Report in 2007, exposed a number of procedural irregularities in the programme bringing the curtains down on the much hyped achievements. Its scope was the 200 districts covered by the first phase of the programme since 2006. Overall, the CAG assessed the performance of the programme of ‘68 districts in 26 states, 128 blocks within the selected districts and 513 GPS in the selected blocks’. (Vanaik, Siddhartha, *EPW*, 2008: 39). According to the Report, non - appointment of a full time Programme Officer (PO), who is pivotal to the successful implementation of NREGA, and giving additional charge of PO to the Block Development Officers (BDOs) are some of the grave problems facing the NREGA implementation. The CAG Report further states that, the lack of adequate administrative and technical manpower at the block and GP levels have adversely affected the preparation of plans, scrutiny, approval, monitoring and measurement of works, and maintenance of the stipulated records and has also impacted adversely on the planning process which was inadequate and delayed, resulting in poor progress of works.

The CAG report on the performance of the NREGA covering the period from 2007 -2012 reveals that 'only 30 percent of 129 lakh works worth over Rs. 1.26 lakh crore approved in 14 states were completed. Bihar, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh used only 20 percent of funds while rural households' work is down to 43 percent from 54 percent. The highest number of *ghost workers* – workers who exist only on paper –was found in Karnataka while misappropriation of funds was highest in Assam.' (Jain, Pande and Nanda, CNN- IBN, 2013). The CAG performance audit (2007-12) checked the implementation of the scheme in 3,848 gram panchayats in 28 states and 4 Union Territories. The report concluded that there is a significant decline in per rural household employment generation in the last two years. It declined from 54 days in 2009-10 to 43 days in 2011-12. About 31% of the total checked GPs in 11 states and 1 Union Territory did not prepare annual plans or prepared them in an incomplete manner. The report also concluded that the governments of the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Kerala, Manipur and Tamil Nadu had not appointed dedicated Gram Rozgar Sahayaks. Even excess funds amounting to Rs. 2,374.86 crore were released by the Ministry to 6 states either due to wrong calculation or without taking note of the balances available with the states. It was found that job cards were not issued to 12, 455 households in 6 states and photographs on 4.33 lakh job cards were not found pasted in 7 states. Non- payment or under payment of wages amounting to Rs. 36.97 crore was noticed in 14 states. Regarding social audit which constitutes an important characteristic of the Act, it was found that 10 states and 4 Union Territories did not constitute Social Audit Units to facilitate the Social Audit Forums (Executive Summary, Performance Audit of MGNREGA, 2013:vii-viii).

Welfare measures such as the MGNREGA have been introduced to overcome the deficits of the political society in looking into the welfare agenda of the state in a neo-liberal economy in which the registered notion is that of the gradual withdrawal of the state from its commitment towards social security. But the institutionalization of the NREGA can be said to be

a diversion from such established notion as it is at the prerogative of the state itself that such a programme has been initiated. Yet it is seen that the NREG programme has not been able to create sustained livelihood assets for the rural poor despite incorporating procedures and the conditions of generating livelihood security by guarantying 100 days of manual work. But the question remains as to how far such policies have actually benefited the people or how far are the people involved in deciding such policies. Moreover, the crucial point is that such policies are actually designed to control people's livelihood through government schemes without taking into consideration the relevance of those schemes in a particular area or a particular group of population.

Conclusion:

The above discussion delineates the fact that equitable distribution of resources is imperative for poverty reduction which has an inalienable relation with ensuring human security. In the Indian context, although the government has taken up a host of measures like the MGNREGA, yet these schemes have not been able to root out poverty from the societies and in effect have created a 'dependency syndrome' rather than questioning the structural inequities in the society. These schemes have in fact given birth of a beneficiary regime and structural dependency which helps the elites in power to capture political mileage out these schemes but does not help the masses to come of the cycles of inequality and poverty.

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MODERNITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Sukanya Bharadwaj

Introduction:

The idea of modernity has been conceived differently by different scholars. The temporal or substantive connotation has always been attached to the concept of modernity. It is important to delineate what our understanding of modernity is and what are those characteristics that have come to acquire what the phenomena of modernity actually means? Wittrock (2000) states that there are varieties of cultural patterns, beliefs and institutional arrangements within this all-encompassing phenomena which he refers to as modern. But the terminology only attains its actual meaning by the convergence of these processes on a certain plain. The commonality in the variety of features that differ across societies would then be considered as modernity. "The society is modern only if some key defining institutions and types of behaviour can be said to be modern" (Wittrock 2000, 32).

The argument in this paper that I propose, is the emergence of this unilinear, monocausal understanding of modernity, and then how this conception was challenged and deconstructed to produce multiple forms of modernity. This gives us a more nuanced understanding of modernity producing multiple forms which can be explained historically and contextually. Each type of modernity is being specific and unique to its own cultural and historical context. This understanding of modernity running parallel and being correlated with the idea of development and progress in societies which also take this unilinear path but disintegrates to produce multiple forms of development, each specific to its own context like modernity. Thereby drawing on the relationship between modernity and development both contextually defined, specifies producing multiple forms, both being interrelated. Our views on both modernity and development may be limited, emanating a Eurocentric bias in its very lens, however there is reflexivity in the application of both these concepts that need

to be considered and further explored. The interaction of both processes modernity and development in their different contexts, producing multiple facets which can be multiple modernities that coexist with multiple developments in a society.

The aspiration to be modern denotes a view of the contemporary world which emerged with the classical theories of modernization in the 1950's and the Marx, Weber and Durkheim having converged on only one reading of modernity, all assuming that the same trajectory of modernity the way it developed in Europe would ultimately spread to the rest of the world as the expansion of modernity prevailing throughout the world. This view of modernity having hegemonic and homogenizing elements in its very construct, denies any dynamism to the concept itself.

Modernity as Development:

The emergence of concepts of development and modernity both are exclusively European projects. This begins with Enlightenment in the 15th and 18th century known as the age of reason and scientific knowledge by many philosophers and another development which influenced modernity was the prevalence of capitalism as a dominant ideology after the Second World War. This view of the modernity was through one trajectory of development known as industrialization and economic growth. Rostow (1956) explains the generalizations that set the stages of growth which delineates the traditional society from an advanced one through only a particular pattern of development with production, consumption, demand and supply being indicators of that economic growth sought after by traditional societies in its aspiration to become advanced.

“Developmentalism or the theory of linear progress has several forms- evolutionism, modernization theory, developmental thinking which correlate with different epochs of western hegemony”. (Pieterse 1991, 5) The historical unfolding of the monocausal and unilinear expression of modernity explored by Kaviraj (2000) in the non-western world shaped the route to development. The conventional understanding of modernity is conflated and misused with westernization, following a trajectory of development in the ‘in the will to be modern’ therefore also needs revision.

Shills (1960) elucidates that the proponents of modernity view being modern as economically advanced and progressive. Modernity would mean a centre of dynamism with modern technology, high standard of living and industrialization. This model of modernity following a unilinear path to development as illustrated by Rostow (1959) in his stages of economic growth which create the binary between advanced and primitive or traditional societies to create this channel or bridge of development from primitive to advanced societies through the stages of production- take off, drive to maturity, high consumption and beyond consumption. The disjuncture from primitive to advanced having only a technological definition of development to reach the maturity stage.

Wittrock (2000) states the point of convergence in Talcott Parsons works about the kinds of changes in the societal trends and values in defining the characteristics of 'modern' delve into the empirical questions. These empirical debates themselves blur the basic question about the unity and multiplicity of modern societies. However the only point of convergence that comes closest to resolving the multiplicity of modern processes is "the industrial revolution", "the democratic revolution" and "the education revolution" being substantially similar in its very evolution throughout the world termed as the global modern age.

There are other problems with the theory of convergence argued by Wittrock (2000) which is the development of one society such as the United States being the yardstick or the measuring rod which assesses the success or failure of other societies to achieve a sufficient degree of modernity. Another bone of contention is conflating the different processes of modernity into one and considering that to be an epitome of the concept itself. The substantial differences between Western countries particularly North America and Western Europe in the way their society, market economy and modern political forms have been organized. There also have been differences in the way political and economic institutions have been shaped in these countries.

Lushaba (2006) has argued that in spite of development efforts in Africa; the continent still remains underdeveloped even after five decades of planning and implementation of developmental objectives. The economic variables and social factors following theories of Capitalism and Marxism underlie an

intellectual apology for neo-colonialism. Although both these theories are contending theories of modernity, they are progenies of a larger Enlightenment project in Europe having overriding objectives to reproduce the same "development" in Africa. This shows us the complementary relationship between modernity and development- both being acquiesce to the same European enlightenment lineage. Thus, development becomes the channel for the pursuit of modernity.

The Evolution of Multiple Modernities:

Eisenstadt (2000) contests the understanding of modernity as a single, linear, uniform imagined cultural process as it developed in Europe. The idea of multiple modernities is the best way to understand the contemporary world which shows the "continual constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programmes". (Eisenstadt 2000, 2) The engagement of various actors social, political and intellectual with different sectors in society is the process through which unique expressions of modernity can be realized. The realization of autonomous human agency and the intensive reflexivity developed to go beyond the crystallization of structures, to question the pre-existing traditional political structures of authority led to the evolution of multiple modernities. These multiple visions existing were an awareness of the various kinds of processes that go beyond the narrow, local and familial ones. The emergence autonomy of human judgement, personal and institutional freedom which led to reflexivity and explorations also played an important role in constructing boundaries of collectives and collective identities through organization and mobilization.

Nilufer Gole also observes, as cited by Eisenstadt (2000) that characteristics of modernity entail a continuous need for self-correction. Kaviraj (2000) explains that the history of modernity is also reflexive through expanded forms of collective agency and will formation and this requiring constant monitoring regulating its own effectiveness and perceived failures, redefining itself with time to become better each time through the process of 'recursive rationality'.

As understood by Eisenstadt (2000) that the crystallization or convergence theory for modernities or modernity in Europe was by no means

a peaceful one as this phenomena was interwoven with internal conflict and confrontation, each time generating a new manifestation of modernity or modernities. Eisenstadt's (2000) central argument highlights that since there is no certain universal notion of modernity that evolved in Europe, each society has their unique experience in the attempt to appropriate and interpret modernity in their own terms. The realization of the impact of modernity on social, political and economic development unfolding in Europe at the time when each emphasize on different aspects employing different tools of analysis produce multiple forms of that modernity.

Eisenstadt (2000) elucidates his point further by arguing that multiple modernities will continue to emerge and go beyond nation-states percolating down to societies, with new challenges and reinterpretations. Different dimensions of modernity will continue to emerge and this trend of different cultural agendas of modern societies will be beyond the hegemonic and homogenizing construct of modernity that emanated in the 1950's. However, these dimensions of modernity keep reinterpreting under different historical forces giving rise to new movements, thereby the vision of modernity augmenting into new ones.

Kaviraj (2000) also asserts the modernity is a radical rupture in the way social affairs are conducted, modernity not only being an alteration of current practices but also plurality of processes. He highlights the mediation and interaction of the state with colonialism. The Indian society was brought under the intellectual control and disciplinary power of the British to be able to make the society amenable and apprehensible according to Western ruling practices. Indian society was heterogeneous and linguistically diverse and could not be regarded as culturally homogenous. Kaviraj (2000) argues against this conception of modernity replicating Western social forms in the Indian context as it could not have produced the uniform modernity due to the diversity inherent in Indian societies. The singular process of rationalization and intellectualist teleological view of modernity is rejected in the realization that it is a phenomenon itself is internally plural and reflexive. Modernity is not uniform and homogeneous because there are different social processes and reconstitution of institutions in different historical and cultural contexts. (Kaviraj 2000)

Kaviraj (2000) states modernity as a self-conscious process of reflexive construction of societies that should be able to rationally access principles and practices from all sources and improve institutions contextually. The varying degrees of European influence in the interaction with another culture cannot uproot the inherent characteristics of a particular culture but produces another form. It produces a new form of modernity each time in its social interactions. The logic of modern structures of new processes does not automatically erase traditional forms of conduct but may manage to subsume them in its application, changing its own character in the process and forming a new modernity each time. The logic of plurality is intrinsic to the understanding of modernity itself.

Though the Western model is applied, the result is not a replica of that model but produces different results as it comes into interaction with other forces in that society therefore modernity always is dependent on the context. It is only in the context that modernity gains its meaning and redefines itself as different from the Eurocentric Western model. The internal transformation generates other forms of processes or practices in its interaction, which are termed here as the multiple modernities.

Lushaba (2000) notes that Europe has been the site of development from 18th century in which modernity was considered as an end and development as the means to that end. Development being a route to that modernity denotes the processes occurring in Europe at the time which can be traced to the emergence of Capitalist industrial society and capitalist social relations. Said (1978) analyses the dialectical relationship between modernity and imperialism. He also notes the asymmetrical power relations that extend into binary categories showing the modernity discourse as inevitable. It is through this discourse of development as the only path to modernity that depicts the non-western societies as pre-modern, barbaric and uncivilized modernist discourse. Here development is also subject the same unlinear Eurocentric bias that modernity as a goal was infected with. Said (1978) also notes that this modernist discourse creates a moral justification for domination and subjugation of non-western societies through the creation of orientalism to comprehend their practices and processes.

Multiple developments producing Multiple Modernities– Both Interactive and Contextual Processes:

Escobar (1995) sees development as a historically produced discourse examining how the conception of developed and underdeveloped was formed in different countries. Post Second World War when most Asian and African countries began to subject themselves to the systematic and comprehensive domination and intervention in the hope of “development”.

In an illuminating study of Modernity by Timothy Mitchell (2000) characterizes the effects of representation stating that the replica can never be an original by nature as it can only be a replication making a double claim;

“.. it denies its own essence and defines itself by what it is not, lacking, immateriality and substance that separates it from the real thing. On the one hand, in asserting its own lack, a representation claims that the world it replicates,... enacts or endows with meaning and structure must be, by contrast original,... in a word real”. (Mitchell 2000, 18)

Following Mitchell’s argument it is understood that the copy of European model of development or modernity cannot replicate itself in the same manner or become “original” in another context but produce another form of modernity altogether.

To explore the idea of multiple modernities is also directly correlated with the multiple facets of development. Both processes have an inherent Eurocentric bias and it is this single linear hegemonic lens through which modernity and development is viewed which ignores other factors that play a phenomenal role in changing these processes. However, if in the interaction like Kaviraj (2000) and Eisenstadt (2000) notes that the processes of modernity produce multiple forms which can be differentiated along many isolated but interdependent aspects, then developments are also a multiple and not a unilinear process.

Escobar (1991) traces the rise and growth in the field of development anthropology where anthropologists attempt to bring cultural sensitivity and local knowledge to dilute the Eurocentric unilinear model of development. This attempt however is a failure according to Escobar as the discipline and the forms of knowledge itself are embedded in relations of power reflecting the

bias. What Escobar fails to observe is the fractures in development producing different results in its interaction with other aspects in society which needs to be understood contextually. It is here that we see multiple facets of development emerging as the unilinear conception of development will interact with the traditional aspects in the society to produce different form of development itself, its nature changing in every context and with every interaction. Therefore Escobar fails to recognize the distinctiveness of the implications of applying the same Eurocentric model of development to different context may produce varied results.

Conclusion:

The teleological view of modernity and development both need to be rejected and both are internally plural processes. Fergusson (2006) in his *Anti Politics Machine* has shown how the unilinear conception of development project implemented by the State had different outcomes than the ones anticipated. Though the ThabaTseka project had not been able to resolve the agricultural problems it was initially intended to resolve but ended up producing other "side-effects" in its implementation. These side effects or instrumental effects like linking a road to the capital, provision of health, security and other facilities were not intentional but products of interaction, producing different forms of development which is again contextual. "The opportunities that development may produce even in its larger unspoken logic needs to be considered" (Fergusson 2006, 272).

The meaning of development evolves and translates itself in the context to which it is applied. The replication of a model does not always emulate the model in the same manner therefore as Fergusson (2006) notes, it is not what the development project does but also what it fails to do, is of significance as it is contextual and producing multiple forms and differences between places where the same concept is applied. If the monocausal, homogenous understanding of modernity is rejected, development also cannot have a singular route, as both these processes are emulated to produce different forms which are multiple and proliferate in each societies differently. Therefore one cannot negate the reflexivity in the concepts, their application and impact. Both development and modernity are normative goals which should not be translated in its application into universal phenomena or processes. It is important to

note and explore further the ways in which modernity and development as a hegemonic device would respond and transform each time coming into interaction with variety of processes producing multiple forms.

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