

PROUT

A Journal of Proutistic Views and Neo-Humanistic Analysis



TOWARDS A GENUINE POLITICAL SYSTEM

PROUT advocates political centralization and economic decentralization. Political power is to be given to moralists elected by politically-conscious voters, whereas economic power is to be given to the local people.



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PROUT

Progressive Utilization Theory

Cry of the Suffering Humanity

A Vibrant Magazine which Informs & Inspires

What is PROUT :

PROUT is an acronym for the Progressive Utilization Theory. Conceptualized in 1959 by Indian Philosopher Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, PROUT is a viable alternative to the outmoded capitalist and communist socio-economic paradigms. Neither of these approaches has adequately met the physical, mental and spiritual needs of humanity. PROUT seeks a harmonious balance between economic growth, social development and cultural expression.

Combining the wisdom of spirituality, the struggle for self-reliance, and the spirit of economic democracy, Proutist intellectuals and activists are attempting to create a new civilizational discourse. PROUT news-magazine aims at conveying comprehensive and visionary goals of PROUT Philosophy.

PROUT magazine invites scientists, economists, politicians, artists, intellectuals and others to join us in the creation of a new, spiritually bonded society by propagating and popularising unambiguous elevating thoughts. Through Proutistic views and Neo Humanistic analysis, it strives to serve as beacon for the benighted civilization of our times.

Main principles of PROUT and Neo-Humanism :

Neo-humanism expands the humanistic love for all human beings to include love and respect for all creation - plants, animals and even inanimate objects. Neo-humanism provides a philosophical basis for creating a new era of ecological balance, planetary citizenship and cosmic kinship.

Basic necessities guaranteed to all : People can not strive toward their highest human aspirations if they are lacking the basic requirements of life. PROUT believes that access to food, shelter, clothing, education and medical care are fundamental human rights which must be guaranteed to all.

Balanced economy : Prout advocates regional self-reliance, cooperatively owned and managed businesses, local control of large scale key industries, and limits on the individual accumulation of excessive wealth.

Women's Right : PROUT encourages the struggle against all forms of violence and exploitation used to suppress women. PROUT's goal is coordinated cooperation, with equal rights between men and women.

Cultural Diversity : In the spirit of universal fellowship PROUT encourages the protection and cultivation of local culture, language, history and tradition.

World Government : PROUT supports the creation of world government with a global constitution and a common penal code.

For both civilization and science, intellectual knowledge is indispensable. Spiritual or intuitional development is possible through the happy blending between civilization and science. - Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

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Fundamental Principles :

1. No individual should be allowed to accumulate any physical wealth without the clear permission or approval of the collective body.
2. There should be maximum utilization and rational distribution of all mundane, supra mundane and spiritual potentialities of the universe.
3. There should be maximum utilization of the physical, metaphysical and spiritual potentialities of unit and collective body of the human society.
4. There should be a proper adjustment amongst these physical, metaphysical, mundane, supra mundane and spiritual utilizations.
5. The method of utilization should vary in accordance with the changes in time, space and person and the utilization should be of progressive nature.

“Socio-economic units

will give expression to

popular sentiments and fight

against all forms of exploitation

to meet the demands and

aspirations of the local people.

Movements will have to be

launched throughout the world

to establish self-sufficient

socio-economic units based on

the maxim, 'Know the area,

prepare the plan and serve the

people'.”

- Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

POWER SCAM, POWER SHAM

This is an ongoing series of corruption scams in the power sector that has for some reason not been reported much in the media. The report has been kept secret and the corruption is continuing. Despite Am Admi party's Ashish Ketan's revelation of a pirated copy of the report there has been little interest from the media. One reason might be that unlike the Coal, 2G and Commonwealth Games scams most of the alleged criminals are companies of Adani, Ambani, Jindal and Essar and not government bureaucrats and politicians. Needless to say, public sector companies like the National Thermal Power Corporation Limited are involved but to a much less degree than the private sector sharks.

These companies held to be guilty of hatching "a conspiracy to siphon off money abroad by way of indulging in over-valuation in imports for projects subject to low or nil rate of Customs duty, so that the incidence/burden of duty on the over-valued amount i.e cost of fund transfer is minimal." This involved imports bought directly from South Korea, China but on the invoice the imports were said to be from dummy companies in UAE, Hong Kong, Malaysia and the Virgin Islands. These dummy companies were created by our enterprising Indian corporations for tax fraud. These companies were so sure of being able to defraud customs due to their "contacts" that they did not even bother to properly hide their corruption. While some of the imports was equipment, allegedly over-invoicing coal imported from Indonesia took place up to Rs. 29,000 crore. So not only were the Indian people cheated of the customs dues, the national coal mining companies were also cheated. But that is not all, the increased amounts not paid to customs was used to justify increasing the electricity rate for the Aam Admi. The greater the tariff, the greater will be the illegal profits which are taken outside the country to foreign banks.

While this investigation has gone on for nearly five years, the corruption has also gone on with a little more discretion from these Corporates. On condition of anonymity, a customs officer in the Mundra port which has been set up by the Adani group, told a reporter from The Wire that "All customs clearances for home consumption [of imported coal] are provisional and the bills of entry will be finalized only when all investigations in this regard are complete." As another authority told the same reporter, "The more you delay the adjudication process, the more the cases fade away from public memory and our collective consciousness. There is no accountability in the system. No one is held responsible if adjudication is not done in a timely manner. And this is an important reason why the government, in this case the Department of Revenue in the Ministry of Finance, ends up losing most of such cases." All's well that ends well.

One of the persons being sought to be indicted in the scam is the brother of Gautam Adani, who is known to be cosy with the Prime Minister. Two years ago, in 2014, the DRI issued show cause notices alleging over-invoicing of power plant equipment to the tune of Rs. 6,000 crores by a number of companies in the Adani Group. But the CBI has been alleged to be going slow with the case. It is interesting to note that the brother of Adani's name has appeared in the recently leaked Panama Papers regarding illegal money stashed abroad in that nation. However, there is no need to blame one particular corporate group, there are skeletons in the closets of nearly every other major Indian power producer. Indeed Ambani used to be on similar terms with the previous Prime Minister as Adani has been with the present one. The more parties change, the more the culture of crony capitalism remains the same.

Recently Coal India has announced that it will be hiking the base prices of low-grade coal by 13% to 19%. One reason for this is that prices have not been increased since 2009 and due to upcoming wage increases this hike is required for basic survival. The power companies will hence be forced to pass on their burden onto the Aam Admi. Furthermore the power companies will be inclined to buy foreign coal to compensate for this hike. So it is a win-win scenario for our national power corporates. And how do these corporate finance all their corruption – by loans of thousands of crores from the people's banks - which of course they never bother to repay.

The real scam, the real sham is not what these corporates do, the real sham is not how the ministers allow this to go on – the real sham is how you and I can live in this system and imagine that it is a democracy where the people rule – how we can be cheated endlessly and simply allow it all to go on without any protest.

**Gurukula**

This is a remarkable discourse because it does not simply want to go back to the Vedas but rather it seeks to build on the more ancient Tantric tradition and go forward to unite all of humanity. One interesting idea is that of the Sanskrit and Bengali Vidyapiithas. This is akin to the current idea of a cultural university. It is stated that Ananda Marga Gurukula will do this for other languages as well. Has this work started yet after 26 years? Have the various colleges mentioned in this discourse been started? What is the status of all this work begun two and half decades ago? It would have been interesting if this information had been included along with the article. It would be good to know who today is working seriously on developing this auspicious institution.

Naveen Desai, Mumbai

Ananda Purnima

As a PROUT reader, reading so many sad stories, your special issue on Ananda Purnima was truly a blessing that stirred the depths of my heart. More and more we see that the main reason behind most of the suffering in the world is the lack of love. This lack of love is found not just with the criminals but also those who know the truth but fail to act. We get cynical because we cannot find that true love for humanity. Here in these articles we find that shining, pure love we all have been searching for - for so long.

Adithya Nagarajan, Thanjavur

Samaj Work

As a Proutist I cannot forget this story of how Baba told the wife of a martyred Prout Samaj worker that all should remain immersed in Samaj work. Let this vanii be taken to heart by all PROUT workers. We must just give up all obsession with our personal pains and take upon the pain of suffering people in our Samaj. When we feel their pain in the core of our hearts, then will not the day of PROUT being established in the Samaj as of Bihar - in Magahi Samaj where Baba Himself suffered so much for suffering humanity - be closer than we ever dreamed?

Ramesh Paswan, Nalanda

Drought Crisis

It was really an eye-opener to read about this. This is a global crisis that no one is taking seriously. The

heartlessness of the current central and state governments is truly beyond belief. To be corrupt when people are starving for water is no longer corruption - it is outright himsa against the people of Bundelkhand, Vidarbha, Kosal. When a man was arrested in Madhya Pradesh for stealing water no one is outraged. And when the corporates steal the people's money and do not pay back their debts no one is outraged. Yes Vidarbha, Bundelkhand, Baghelkhand, Bhojpur, Malwa, Braj all need separate statehood but more importantly they need Artha Swaraj. Unless they control their own resources they will remain beggars of handouts from the same heartless bureaucrats who have allowed the corporates to destroy the soil through over-farming and felling the forests. It was truly heart breaking to read about how young girls are being sold as temple prostitutes due to the drought. It seems there is a drought in the hearts of India's rulers that is the real crisis.

Faisal Tarekh, Bhopal

Labour Bondage

What is really shocking about this article is how we all know about it. We know about endless people working their hearts out as slaves, about young girls being victimised but we never bothered to care seriously about it. It always is when a foreign organisation launches a report that all of a sudden we start fussing a bit about the issue and the government issues some meaningless statements, activists and the opposition condemn the government and after a month the issue is forgotten. This shows it is not just the government that is criminal (for allowing bonded labour in the guise of allowing children to leave school and work for their parents) - we also are the criminals because we do not lift a finger to help these people and to stop the criminals. People talk of Hindu values but what about the countless Nepali girls sold to Indian metros daily - is this Hindu values to allow Hindu girls to be abused like this? Is this Hindu brotherhood between Hindu nations? It is not just the politicians whose Dharma is a jumla, our Dharma is also just a jumla we tell our guilty conscience also, is it not?

Sudhir Chettri, Delhi

PROUT for Parivartan

Just dropping a note to mention how

this article showed the different ways in which PROUT theory is still today a tremendous parivartan for those who follow capitalist and communist dogmas. There are many noble ideas here that are worthy of our dedication and sacrifice. The question is however - how do we bring this Parivartan into a reality? The idea of Samaj as of socio-economic groupifications seems the way forward. However it is not clear how this programme will work. We have seen very few articles on this topic. Hopefully the author will write in detail on this topic in another article.

Dhyanendra Pathak, Simla

Food Oil Crisis

Who can live without food oil in this country? This is such a basic item of every family. It is unbelievable that domestic oil production has been shut down due to a flood of cheap imports. The same thing has happened to the tire industry. However, food oil is most basic. We saw in January that shipping traffic almost came to a halt (first time since 2007) due to the economic crisis. If India is no longer able to import easily then is not the Indian economy in serious danger? Why is it that not a single party is taking these issues seriously and planning to make India self-reliant in at least such basic items such as food oil?

Hema Bhendre, Dharwar

Gujarat Villages Resist Urbanisation

Following their foreign masters, the government always follows the path of encouraging industrialisation by having refused for the last 60 years to develop industries and infrastructure in rural areas as Gandhi wanted and by deliberately underfunding the farming sector so that countless farmers are forced to migrate to the cities. The real crime comes in the fact that no preparation in the form of cheap housing for the poor is being made. The government is planning for people to live in slums. This is their vision for India - the vision of the US military - a planet of the slums. Pranam to Gujrati farmers for resisting this "development". They have been hearing the lies about sab ke vikas (all will prosper) longer than the rest of India and hence are no longer willing to suffer and be plundered in silence.

Kaykhushru Mehta, Navsari

We are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For

It is the worst of times. It is the best of times. Try as I might I cannot find a more appropriate opening: it helps tremendously that these words have been spoken before and, thanks to Charles Dickens, written at the beginning of *A Tale of Two Cities*. Perhaps they have been spoken, written, thought, an endless number of times throughout human history. It is the worst of times because it feels as though the very Earth is being stolen from us, *by us*: the land and air poisoned, the water polluted, the animals disappeared, humans degraded and misguided. War is everywhere. It is the best of times because we have entered a period, if we can bring ourselves to pay attention, of great clarity as to cause and effect. A blessing when we consider how much suffering human beings have endured, in previous millennia, without a clue to its cause. Gods and Goddesses were no doubt created and found place in human ingenuity to fill this gap. Because we can now see into every crevice of the globe and because we are free to explore previously unexplored crevices in our own hearts and minds, it is inevitable that everything we have needed to comprehend in order to survive, everything we have needed to understand in the most basic of ways, will be illuminated now. We have only to open our eyes, and awaken to our predicament. We see that we are, alas, a huge part of our problem. However: *We live in a time of global enlightenment.* This alone should make us shout for joy.

It is as if ancient graves, hidden deep in the shadows of the psyche and the earth, are breaking open of their own accord. Unwilling to be silent any longer. Incapable of silence. No leader or people of any country will be safe from these upheavals that lead to exposure, no matter how much the news is managed or how long people's grievances have been kept quiet. Human beings may well be unable to break free of the dictatorship of greed that spreads like a miasma over the world, but no longer will we be an inarticulate and ignorant humanity, confused by our enslavement to superior cruelty and weaponry. We will know at least a bit of the truth about what is going on, and that will set us free. Perhaps not free in the old way of thinking about freedom, as literal escape from enslavement in its various forms, but free in our understanding that our domination is not a comment on our worth. It is an awesome era in which to live.

It was the poet June Jordan who wrote "We are the ones we have been waiting for." Sweet Honey in the Rock turned those words into a song. Hearing this song, I have witnessed thousands of people rise to their feet in joyful recognition and affirmation. We are the ones we've been waiting for because we are able to see what is happening with a much greater awareness than our parents or grandparents, our ancestors, could see. This does not mean we believe, having seen the greater truth of how all oppression is connected, how pervasive and unrelenting, that we can "fix" things. But some of us are not content to have a gap in opportunity and income that drives a wedge between rich and poor, causing the rich to become ever more callous and complacent and the poor to become ever more wretched and humiliated. Not willing to ignore starving and brutalized children. Not willing to let women be stoned or mutilated without protest. Not willing to stand quietly by as farmers are destroyed by people who have never farmed, and plants are engineered to self-destruct. We have wanted all our lives to know that Earth, who has somehow obtained human beings as her custodians, was also capable of creating humans who could minister to her needs, and the needs of her creation. *We are the ones.*

Many people are already working on this model. They are the ones who go to places like Afghanistan and Iraq and place their bodies between the bombs of the United States and the infrastructure of the local water supply. They are the ones who collect food and medicine for those deprived. The ones who monitor the war(s) and report news that would not otherwise be heard. They are the ones who feel no joy at another's defeat. No satisfaction at another's pain.

In fact, the happiness that imbues this kind of friendship, whether for an individual or a country, or an act, is like an inner light, a compass we might steer by as we set out across the lengthening darkness. It comes from the simple belief and understanding that what one is feeling and doing is right. That it is right to protect rather than terrorize others; right to feed people rather than withhold food and medicine; right to want the freedom and joyful existence of all humankind. Right to want this freedom and joy for all creatures that exist already, or that might come into existence. *Existence, we are now learning, is not finished!* It is a happiness that comes from honoring the peace or the possibility of peace that lives within one's own heart. A deep knowing that we are the Earth our separation from Earth perhaps our greatest illusion and that we stand, with gratitude and love, by our planetary Self.

Alice Walker



Let Chattisgarh Have a Brilliant Future

SHRII PRABHAT RANJAN SARKAR

Goal of all sorts of mundane duties is that human beings should live in this world in such a way that no one exploits others

Human beings come onto this earth for a very short period, and within this short period they are required to complete everything. So there is a great deal of work to be done, but the time is very short. Thus intelligent people make the best use of every moment of their time wasting one's time is the height of foolishness. No human being on this earth will remain for long, and the very goal of human life is to attain the Supreme Stance. Human beings while moving forward towards that Goal which is fixed before their minds, will have to perform many interrelated works.

That is why it is said, Keep one hand on the feet of Parama Puruṣa, and with the other hand do your mundane duties. Let the mind be constantly attached to Parama Puruṣa. And while performing one's mundane duties one should always remember that these duties are also the task of Parama Puruṣa. This very earth in which we are living is also a creation of Parama Puruṣa, so to serve this world means to serve the children of the Cosmic Father. When someone takes care of the children of another family, which mother or father will not be satisfied to see that someone is caring for their children? So Parama Puruṣa will certainly be pleased with those who serve His children. While discharging their



mundane duties, they must remember that these duties are not intended for their personal interest; their only purpose is to serve Parama Puruṣa. Is there any end to the mundane duties in the world?

However, the goal of all sorts of mundane duties is that human beings should live in this world in such a way that no one exploits others, no one causes misery to others. If there is less exploitation in the external world there will be less misery also; and in that case people will get more time to pursue their spiritual practices.

Then human beings will attain the supreme state of spiritual fulfillment in life. If there is severe exploitation in the society, human attention is drawn towards that; and as a result their attention is diverted from their main goal. Then there arises some slackness in the path of their spiritual endeavour to realize Parama Puruṣa. That is why you should remember that if a spiritual human society is to be built, human beings must be spared from exploitation and injustice. There should be proper arrangements for

ensuring food, clothes, accommodation, education, and medical treatment for each and every human being. Those of you who want to establish righteousness and create virtuous people in this world, your bounden duty is to lay the foundation of a healthy society within a very short period. If all of you will work collectively in this effort, then it will not take a very long time; rather it will be accomplished very quickly.

I want that the present distressed condition of Chattisgarh should come to an end, and it should have a very bright future. Let the people from other parts of the world come here and learn how far the people here have achieved progress, and in which ways they are going to bring about progress in other spheres of life. Let the light of Chattisgarh be ever effulgent, like a luminous star in human society, so that all may learn and be benefitted by it.

Spatial Poverty in Chattisgarh

✱ Laveesh Bhandari / Minakshi Chakraborty

Chhattisgarh, then a backward region of Madhya Pradesh, was carved out to make a separate state in November 2000, fulfilling its people's long-cherished demand for statehood. The state is bestowed with rich natural resources such as forests, minerals and surface water, and the strategically favorable location of the state along with a conducive industrial environment attracted huge investments.

However, despite many advantageous factors, the state's growth story is a mixed bag. In the initial eight years, the state emerged as one of the fastest growing states with an impressive annual growth rate of 10% per annum, but in subsequent years, the growth rate slowed down to 7% per annum. In fact, the manufacturing sector that had been one of the dominant reasons for high growth initially has been on the decline since 2008-09. The share of the manufacturing

sector to the state's income decreased from 22% in 2008-09 to 13% in 2013-14. The per capita income in the state, measured in real terms is Rs. 28,373, far below the national average of Rs. 39,904 in 2014-15.

Given the lackluster economic conditions and progress of the state, it is not surprising that Chhattisgarh tops the list of states in terms of poverty rate. The Tendulkar committee estimates by the Planning Commission point towards 40% of the population living below the poverty line.

Spatial analysis illustrates a clear connection between forest areas and poverty. Chhattisgarh has the third largest area under forest cover after Madhya Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh. About 41% of the total geographical area of the state is covered under forests. A microscopic view of the poor districts: Bijapur, Surguja, Bastar and Narayanpur shows significant

More than a fifth of the population in every district in the state lives in extreme poverty. And this population is concentrated in the Bastar region which was made part of Chhattisgarh by the violent invasion of the kingdom and the murder of its raja.

proportion of the poor population in the forested areas. One aspect of high poverty in the forested areas is the lack of economic opportunities, with neither arable land nor scope for sufficient employment. Another aspect of these forest fringe areas is over-exploitation of resources for fuel and food, as well as illicit felling of trees for commercial purposes. The degradation of forest resources and restricted access for the poor to available natural resources keep the poor trapped in their circumstances.

The economically better-off districts in the state are not much better in terms of poverty. More than a fifth of the population in every district lives in extreme poverty, as per Indicus estimates. Durg, Raipur, Korba and Bilaspur are the leading industrial districts in the state. Yet, in Korba, more than 40% of the population lives below the poverty line. A large section of the poor population in these districts is settled near the mining areas. Demand for low-skilled labourers in the mining



POVERTY GRID: CHHATTISGARH

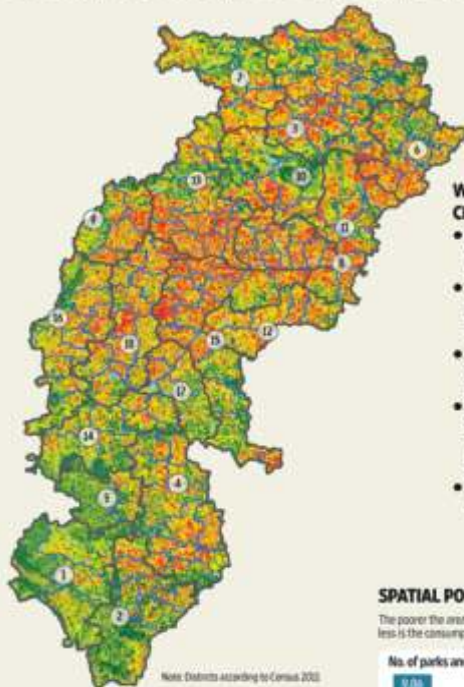
Chhattisgarh tops the list of states in terms of poverty rate, with 40% of the population living below the poverty line. Spatial analysis illustrates a clear connection between forest areas and poverty, but even the economically better-off districts in the state are not much better. Over a fifth of the population in every district lives in extreme poverty.

Map shaded on the basis of poverty index in every 1 sq. km grid.
Blue: Water, forest or wasteland areas with low habitation.
Red: Areas with high poverty.
Yellow: Moderate poverty.
Green: Low poverty.
Blue boundaries: Districts.
Black boundaries: Districts.

Grid The grid is divided into a series of cells, which together represent the state. Each cell is 1 sq. km in size. The grid is divided into 100 cells. The grid is divided into 100 cells. The grid is divided into 100 cells.

KEY RESULTS

- Geographical isolation contributes to spatial concentration of poverty. There is a higher concentration of poor population near forest areas.
- Low usage of energy in poverty-stricken areas indicates less economic activities in these zones.
- Parks and recreation facilities are not found near high poverty zones.
- Neglect of tribals continues to be a blot on the state record. A strikingly high percentage of ST (Scheduled Tribes) population resides in the high poverty zones compared to low poverty zones.

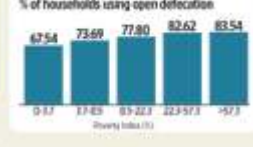
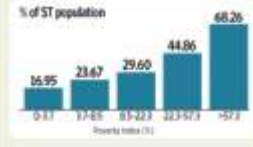
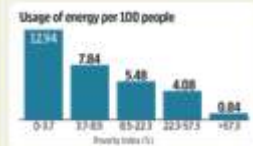
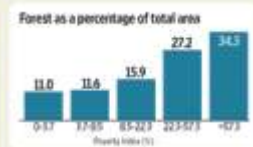
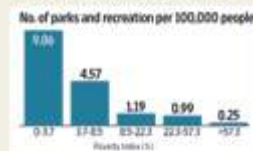


WHY CHHATTISGARH?

- Chhattisgarh was carved out of Madhya Pradesh to form a new state in 2000.
- The rich mineral and natural resources of the region helped the state attain a high economic growth rate in the initial period.
- Both manufacturing and mining sectors experienced a boom in this region.
- However, despite the high economic growth, people of Chhattisgarh are still in distress. The poverty rate at 40% is one of the highest in the country.
- Can micro-measurement of poverty make a difference?

SPATIAL POVERTY INDEX

The poorer the area (say, with index value 32+), the less is the consumption of energy, roads and space.



POVERTY DISTRIBUTION - district level



Graphic by Suresh Sharma/Mint

Note: Rajan Tandon committee's poverty definition for 2011-12.

Source: Indian Micro Market Analytics

areas attracts cheap labor from the state and around. The mineral-rich areas are also reported to have a large number of forced or bonded laborers. It is generally argued that Indian mining workers are victims of unfair labour practices and the meager wage rates, instability of working conditions and long working hours add to the vulnerability of the poor. This spatial analysis supports this view.

Micro level analysis suggests the forests and the mining areas are largely inhabited by tribals. The long deprivation of the tribal community, traditional practices and illiteracy further deter the progress of the poor in these areas.

Moreover, high poverty areas exhibit a high degree of physical and social infrastructure sparseness. This is demonstrated by poor infrastructure in terms of inadequate road connectivity and fewer infrastructural facilities, such as educational institutions, hospitals, etc. Another important determinant of poverty is the absence of proper sanitation facilities, suggesting that the latest policy direction to prioritize areas with low sanitation coverage can also result in greater pro-poor benefits. Basic facilities such as safe drinking water and improved sanitation practices are almost absent in the high poverty zones. While only 40% of the population in the state of Chhattisgarh uses improved sanitation facilities, in the high poverty zone, it reduces to 12%.

The government's policy initiatives require a more focused and targeted approach to tackle poverty. This is possible through microscopic characterization of the poor and identifying where the poor live. Our concept of spatial poverty can identify these pockets of poverty and measure its extent via remote sensing. This can lead us to a far greater set of policy insights, the most important being its ability to link poverty with the environment that gives rise to and perpetuates it.

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The Privileges of Being Elite in India

The systemic structural oppression fuelled by the hegemony of patriarchy, casteism, religion and economic forces work together to oppress marginalized people

✱ **Dr. Shalu Nigam (Adv)**

When Peggy McIntosh referred to the term 'White Male Privilege' she describes conditions that systematically 'overempower certain groups' and 'confers dominance, gives permission to control, because of one's race or sex', in a Western society. These privileges according to her are unjust and unearned. She stated that, "I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group". Similarly, in a conservative, patriarchal, stratified, casteist, hierarchical, unequal modern Indian society, the undeserved 'Male Privileges' besides the unwarranted advantage of being from the religious majority and hailing from an 'Upper Caste' and 'Elite Class' plays a significant role in defining the social status of a person which accordingly confers him the voice, the dominant position, the decision making authority and the power to exercise control over others. These socially sanctioned prerogatives conferred to a person operate together to legitimize his superior and authoritative position, on the basis of which he may tend to subjugate others including poor, women, minorities and those from lower caste or deprived classes. Also, a particular episode of violence that occurs because of such unbalanced



power equation is often seen in its micro context without realizing the undesirable systemic macro-structure in which it happens. McIntosh in her paper argued that in 'the same way men are not taught to acknowledge the ways in which they enjoy the benefits of being a male, similarly whites are conferred with privileges that they are taught not to recognize'. Likewise, in the present Indian society, these systematic structured unearned privileges of being a from the majority religion, a male, hailing from an upper caste and an elite class operate unjustifiably, invisibly and visibly, knowingly or unknowingly, where those privileged are neither taught to recognize the plight of 'others' nor the prerogatives conferred to them. These matrixes of privileges are inter-related, interconnected,

intersecting, interlocked and operates together in a manner to reiterates, and strengthens the structures of oppression. Thus, patriarchy, religious hegemony, casteism and wealth inequalities, all operate together to reinforce the culture of domination in an unconscious and invisible manner though the Constitution of India as well as the legal system is premised on the principles of equality, substantive equality and social justice. This essay looks at these systemic oppressions or the set of privileges which are structural, inbuilt, institutional and often remain hidden or unnoticed and unrecognized in social, political or legal debates relating to marginalization of subaltern groups. It is accordingly suggested to recognize, acknowledge and work

around these privileges in order to comprehend the unarticulated darkness surrounding it and to gain a holistic perception of the prevalent structural and systemic exploitation with the aim to reconstruct the egalitarian society where social structure is free from conditions that favours a few at the cost of majority of 'Others'.

Hierarchies, Inequalities and Hidden Privileges

The systemic structural oppression fuelled by the hegemony of patriarchy, casteism, religion and economic forces are interlocking and intersecting and work together to oppress marginalized people, is not new in a stratified Indian society. Historically, the nation has a record of being ruled by the kings, the nobles and the aristocrats, mostly feudal males, who were accorded with authority and power to govern, thus creating two distinct categories of people – the ruler and the ruled, the kings and their subjects or the privileged and the masses. This divide was further augmented by the British rulers who segregated the society not only on the basis of religion as 'Hindus' and 'Muslims' but also on the basis of the social status, as elite and the poor, dominant and the underprivileged, landlords or land owners and the landless peasants, the so called civilized, elegant, educated and superior and those who could not fit in the category of the cultured or could not adopt as per Western, imperial, colonial notions. The foreign rulers replaced feudal lords and aristocratic nobles with elite, English speaking, bureaucratic and technocratic establishment and thus played a significant role in making of a dominant, elite, majority religion, upper caste, educated, male dominated, urban society that is different and apart from the rest of rural, illiterate, poor, women, minorities, backward and others thus separating India along many lines and divisions.

Though with expanding education, social mobility could have increased and societal barriers

could have been evaded, however, this has not happened because Macaulay's system of education was not designed to create independent thinking adults rather it was intended to create a breed of slaves who could serve their colonial masters. After, India gained independence, this elite dominant group retained its supremacy, while emulating the set of prejudices and chauvinistic attitude as depicted by their foreign masters and followed the ominous colonial agenda by considering itself as a representative of millions of Indians across the country. The liberal western ideology practically could not influence the working of successive governments which came to power in independent India and alienated the masses further deepening the already entrenched inequalities while excluding millions who were further caught in a vicious circle of dealing with hunger, poverty or survival on a day to day basis and failed to participate in process of governance or fulfill aspirations for social mobility. In the modern, cosmopolitan India, inequalities, discrimination and hierarchies continue to operate together in a fragmented, stratified, multi-layered society to the benefit of particular groups who acquire unseen and unyielding power over the vulnerable 'others'. Often, these systemic structural exploitations like patriarchy, caste apartheid, religious hegemony, capitalism and class based inequities operate in synchronization with each other through intersecting and interlocking mechanism to create an oppressive, exploitative social institutions and structures which marginalize and subjugate those who do not fit within this tyrannical system. Thus, casteism thrives on the pillars of patriarchy and religious hegemony and it is fuelled by the capitalism which propagates economic inequities in order to push its exploitative agenda. Similarly, patriarchy or capitalistic patriarchy in the modern world operates because of exploitative

culture propagated by hegemonic casteist, religious and economic forces.

In order to maintain the status quo and superiority of this exploitative system, violence is often used as a tool to oppress those dare to raise their voice besides instilling fear among those at receiving end. The culture, the media, the propaganda, the folklores, the rituals, the practices, the daily life style, the history, the language, the ideologies, all are manipulated to reinforce and reiterate the anarchy of these oppressive, exploitative paradigms in timeless and borderless manner making it an ubiquitous phenomenon. The majority religious elites, upper caste and male dominant oppressive cultural codes and norms like dowry, son preference, lavish weddings, all are silently universalized and normalized and spread like evil monster adversely affecting even those communities who were earlier not practicing these. Thus, misogyny shows its virulent forms in many oppressive practices like female foeticide, honour killing, child marriage, rape, sexual harassments, assaults, coercion, beatings, bodily harm, murders before or after birth and strictures issued to control sexuality and reproduction among women to maintain social order. Often these forms of oppression are inflicted by the families, the communities and the state. Material deprivation and denial over use of economic and the political resources are the techniques that are being deployed to assert control and exclude women. Even in situations of conflict, war or ideological battle, women's bodies are used as systemic tool to intimidate the weak, establish superiority and assert power and domination. State sanctioned violence to crush the spirit of insurgence. Often lower caste women are being raped by upper caste men, women of one religion are raped by men from the opposing religion, tribal women are

raped by non tribals to assert domination over the particular community. Torture and abuse of women in naxalite areas, sexual abuse and humiliation of women while using apparatus of coercion or use of third degree torture techniques in prisons over vulnerable inmates, all happened on daily basis to assert dominance of one community over the other. And these violations are not only restricted along with these lines of social division but also reveal their dark nature when the state and business ally together to inflict injury to 'others' in order to grab control over natural resources. The business and the corporate are allowed to flourish in the manner while neglecting rights of masses as evident in the Bhopal Gas tragedy, struggles to protect Narmada and Niyamgiri or at various other places. Hence, all these situations taken together reflect the manner in which state sanctioned brutalities, religious sanctioned hostilities, culturally sanctioned viciousness, economically sanctioned vulnerabilities, politically sanctioned denials, intellectual exclusion, social alienation, emotional invalidation and physically sanctioned cruelties or humiliations operate collectively to

establish superiority of those in power over those who are the vulnerable, the 'others' and the weak.

However, besides using the divisive tools of violence, inducing fear, instilling discrimination, perpetuating inequalities and hierarchies, this exploitative system also uses certain hidden weapons like granting privileges or unearned advantages to those who are the powerful in this oppressive paradigm. These privileges are like a matrix of general hypothetical postulations that confer invisible authority to some while denying these to others. In a patriarchal Indian society, male members enjoy privileged status within private as well as in public spaces on the basis of their sex. Similarly, in a casteist society, Brahmins are given undue advantages over others by the virtue of their birth in an upper caste family like rich avail special benefits in a capitalistic society on the basis of their ability to pay. Privileges often act to alienate and exclude people who are already on margins. The social system is built upon and works around the imaginary assumptions which govern the dominant cultural forms. McIntosh argued that, "Whiteness protected me from many kinds of hostility,

distress, and violence, which I was being subtly trained to visit, in turn, upon people of color". Similarly, in a casteist Indian society, being from the majority religion, upper caste, elite class, male entails that one is granted with protection from hostility, violence or alienation. Also it arm them systemic dominance and immunity because of their background which 'other' members of community are deprived of as these 'others' feel 'unconfident, uncomfortable, isolated and alienated' within the oppressive system.

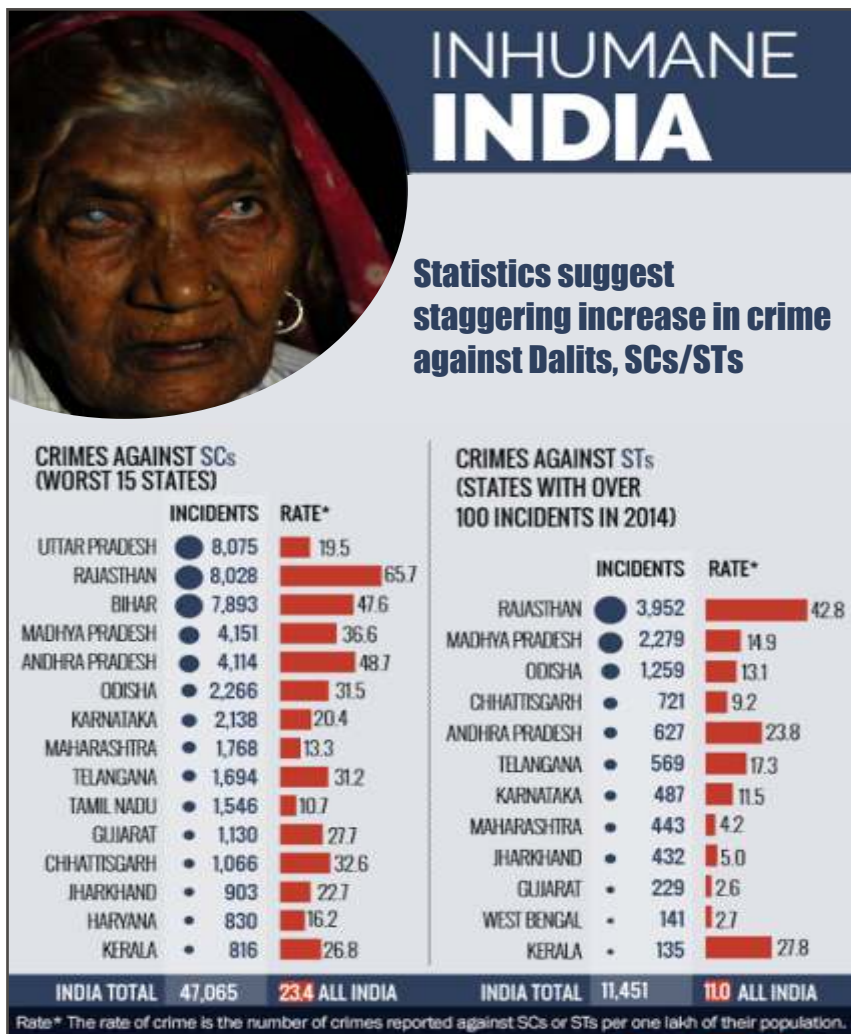
These hidden privileges or unearned advantages are the inherent benefits that a person gains from the systemic and structural biases that empower him and put others in an intrinsic unfavorable position. Often, these privileges operate in a subtle and hidden manner as compared to violent oppression, exploitation and discrimination. These prerogatives or rewards of being born in a particular community grant certain people social, economic and political advantages or entitlements and often operate institutionally in embedded and invisible forms. W.E. B. Du Bois in his seminal work 'The Soul of Black Folk' examined the consequences of racism and discrimination and argued that these lead to separate spheres of life, physical abuse, paternalism and economic disenfranchisement besides certain less visible consequences yet equally detrimental like angst, conflicted identity, self hate, self doubt, a lack of industriousness and self reliance. He wrote that the 'psychological wages' of being white enable poor whites to feel superior as compared to poor black. Likewise, in Indian society, the 'psychological wages' of being born as a poor, Hindu, upper caste, male entitles one to feel superior and thus at an advantageous position.

Legal scholar Ansley while elucidating on the concept of white supremacy explained that, "By 'white supremacy' I do not mean to

Brahmin-Bania (6% of India population) Hold on Industry

ACC, BHEL, Hindustan Unilever, Jaiprakash Associates, Larsen & Turbo, ONGC, Infosys, TCS, Kingfisher, Tatas TTML are run by Brahmins. Grasim, Hindalco, HDFC, Reliance firms, Wipro, Jet Airways, Vodafone, Idea, Spice, Essar, Ispat, Arcelor Mittal, Jindal firms, Bhushan Steel, SAIL, Lloyd Steel, Ambuja, Dalmia Cement, Ultratech, Vikram Cement, JK Cement, Hindustan Motors, Bajaj are all run by Banias.

Aakar Patel (2009)



allude only to the self-conscious racism of white supremacist hate groups. I refer instead to a political, economic and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings". She further illustrated that "The class domination model has a "political face" in addition to its economic one. Its political aspect points out that white supremacy not only allows super-exploitation of blacks, but also blocks potential class-based action by splitting the working class. It is axiomatic that exploited classes divided against each other have less

power compared to the relatively united exploiting classes. The constant reminder to whites that others are willing to work for less (because they are forced) makes minority workers into a helpful instrument of discipline to be used against their relatively privileged white counterparts". Similarly, in Indian situation, there exists a social, economic, political and cultural system that allows control of this privileged group over power and material resources as well as authority to determine ideologies that split exploited classes and thus operate to invisibly benefit those in command.

These systematic oblivious advantages often are unspoken of and operate in a vicious cycle where group members deny existence of the same and may work consciously or unconsciously to protect these

special hidden 'unearned privileges' and unjustified advantages. Undue advantages to a particular segment of the society though are unjustified and unreasonable yet these become the part of collective psyche and are inherently internalized by both the parties – those who enjoy the benefits of the privileged position and those who do not. Thus, for an example, when women's movement in India demanded reservation for seats in the parliament, most of the male legislators deployed clever tactics to oppose this claim. Also, the Supreme Court of India, dominated by all male judges, while adjudicating about the issue of appointment of judges failed to see that only a few women are being given the opportunity to be appointed as judges. These are the clear example of the manner in which privileges operate in public spaces to protect the group from sharing its benefits with others. Thus, many of those who are powerful and privileged occupy the major positions as the policy makers and the implementers and therefore are concerned about protecting their own prerogatives rather than being anxious about the issues relating to 'others' or the masses. Similarly, in private sphere too, strict endogamy system is maintained while arranging marriages in order to avoid sharing prerogatives with others.

Unearned and Undue Advantages of Being a Male in a Patriarchal Society

In a patriarchal society like India, men are positioned as superior beings. The celebrations on the birth of a son is a lively example of the manner in which male privilege operates whereas girl child is being killed before or after birth, rejected or abandoned thus resulting in a skewed sex ratio. Men enjoy undue advantages within the domain of household as being served best food, health, education and other such resources of which women are deprived of and also men enjoy more freedom and liberty as compared to women in the terms of

formulating networks and relationships or even mobility. Restrictions are being placed on women, the sexuality and reproductive rights are controlled by the families, the communities and the socio-political institutions including the courts and the legislature. Paternalistic approach is used to confine women. The songs, the advertisements, the messages conveyed through media, business group, religious leaders, political personalities, all deploy the ideology of commodifying, objectifying and controlling women. Virginity and chastity of a woman is associated with her moral character. At the workplace, men enjoy privileges of accessing the opportunity to earn and are entitled to higher wages in comparison to women workers for similar work. Property share or family resources are often allowed to be carried forward through male lineage in spite of the fact that laws have been amended to ensure rights of daughters over family property as through Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act 2005.

Often, these privileges exist not only within private domains of families but also in larger social arena and also the state is implicated in such behavior when it upholds male prerogative by passing lesser sentences in cases of crime against women or favouring the dominant notions while deciding civil cases. From work place to place of worship the privileges work in the hegemonic mischievous style in a structure that is against women as happens in TERI's sexual harassment case or in the matter where the law intern was harassed by the judge also reflect on biases and privileges that operate to undermine women. Within the free trade market economy, women are hardly treated as an agent with capabilities to make choices or negotiate their rightful entitlements either as a worker, a service provider or as a consumer. The cultural system that predominates in the society is marked by the emphasis

on competition, objectivity and merit all of which are masculine traits. The manly behavior and attitude which emphasize on aggression, violence and ambition is prized over feminine values of intuition, feeling and subjectivity in general thus granting clear undue advantage to men. As Anne Jardim while commenting on glass ceiling in business because of which women are denied top positions commented, "The ceiling isn't glass. It's a very dense layer of men". Similarly, in Indian situation it may be said that it is a dense layer of men and masculinity which prevent women to be taken seriously in the public domain or at workplace. Often, women's role as an intellectual contributor, as an artist or as a professional is negated. Frequently exploitative practices and thought processes are deployed deliberately, and at times, unintentionally to silence women's voices, negate women's subjectivities and sufferings and suppress women's struggles. The laws, the constitutional provisions, policies, guidelines all are made and implemented in manner to deprive women of their rightful dues. Thus, while amending the law on the recommendations of Justice Verma committee constituted after Nirbhaya rape case, attempts are made to deprive women of their

legitimate claims by not recognizing marital rape as crime. Also the manner in which laws are implemented in the court rooms or outside clearly shows the manner in which legal rights are violated. Gender dynamics operate to see women as a lesser citizen, be a court room or a police station, university or a workplace, private or a public domain women's existence is devalued.

Thus, when a woman is raped, these influential privileged people blame her for provoking and the solution they could point out therefore lies only in encaging women. In the name of safety, what is curtailed is women's liberty by those who occupy privileged positions in the prevalent oppressive system. The religious and the political institutions attempt to push the ideology of control to dominate women's bodies, their reproductive capacities, their daily life style, their sexuality, decision to marry, age at which they should marry, whom to marry, number of children they produce, the way they carry themselves, the manner to dress, so on and so forth using violence, deprivation, abuse, fear and other tools. The women who comply with such norms are glorified and awarded and those who rebel or fail to fit in the system are out casted. Moral policing to protect and

Merit did not die. It kills. It lies in wait and takes the life of dalit students after they have entered the prestigious educational hellhole by refusing to let them pass, by standing between them and the future. Merit is a murderer.

The deaths of young people, the hopes of their parents and their communities, have forced the festering casteism and anti-democracy of the 'prestigious' educational institution into the public realm.

Their deaths remind us again that Merit has blood on its hands, that bloody Merit is the offspring of generations of privilege and exploitation, that Merit was fed on blood.

This is why we must read these suicides as protest, why we must reclaim these lives within the struggle against caste.

promote ideology that is anti-people and anti-women is being promoted rather than social auditing to create gender just, poverty less, disease free and hunger free healthy society or swaraj or self governance based on the principles of equality, transparency and people's participation. Male domination or patriarchy is preserved not only in the domestic sphere but also in public domain using inevitable rationalizations ranging from biological and psychological to social and evolutionary reasons. Justifications like lack of experience to religious rituals, traditional and conservative notion all are deployed to deny women their rightful dues. McIntosh elaborates, "Virtually all men deny that male overreward alone can explain men's centrality in all the inner sanctums of our most powerful institutions. Moreover, those few who will acknowledge that male privilege has over-empowered them usually end up doubting that we could dismantle this privilege systems. They may say that will work to improve the women's status, in society or in the university, but they can't or won't support the idea of lessening men's". Hence, in a country like India, refuting women's claims to share power in panchayats to Parliament all are justified to protect male prerogative.

The capitalist patriarchy further exploits women. Women employed on contractual basis in factories and industries are being exploited as they are being paid less wages and are compelled to work beyond prescribed hours in unhealthy hazardous work conditions and are prone to sexual harassment and abuse. Women employed in garment industries, in SEZs as unorganized labourers are often compelled to work overtime with limited wages and are deprived of protections available in terms of law or being a member of a trade union. Porn industry, cosmetic industry, marriage market, surrogacy trade and all similar business ventures manufacture

oppression by profiting from women's bodies. Trafficking, sexual or economic enslavement, selling of women and girls, all are techniques used to affirm male power and legitimacy. Women farmers and agricultural labourers suffer more disadvantages as compared to men in terms of availability of resources or absence of social security measures and so do tribal women are being harassed by the virtue of their birth and are deprived of advantages as their male counterpart. The privileges of being a male therefore operate in a tyrannical manner to subjugate and oppress women, their voices, their opinions, their subjectivities and their sufferings even if claims are made of attaining women's equality and empowerment.

Other Forms of Privileges

This concept of privilege also applies to other categories like being a heterosexual, married, able-bodied male in the productive age group which make such person powerful as he is seen as one capable of supporting others within the social system. The person born with disability therefore may be denied employment or other privileges as compared to a person who is not. Similarly, family dynasties operate to ascertain privileges and undue advantages to those who hail from a particular family. This is a common factor evident in most of the fields from politics to business families, from industry like film or media to others where the privileges becomes automatically available by the birth. Similarly, in each state of India, some or the other community consider itself more privileged as compared to others like Marathi Manos in Maharashtra, Bhadrakalok in West Bengal, Business communities in Gujarat, and Jats, Gujjars or Yadavs in other North Indian states, Tam Bram or Tamilian Brahmin elsewhere, so on and so forth assert their domination on the basis of being member of that particular community. This entangling web of unearned advantage of a group results in

oppression of others is complex because each form of privilege based on class, caste, sex, religion, family or social background has its own repercussions which may adversely damage the social fabric, yet, when these factors run in parallel, in the institutionalized, systemic and embedded form these are seen as danger to integrity of the society.

Thus in a segregated, fragmented, divided Indian society, privileges exist though theoretically, the number of such people who are privileged are minuscule as compared to millions of those who are on the 'other' side and constitute the marginalized groups. However, there are situations when those who are 'the others' once gain power in a given situation may become part of the privileged group and may therefore act accordingly. Thus, there are a group of women who may choose to exploit and oppress other women because they may enjoy the benefits of patriarchal system. A dalit police constable may act oppressive against women, tribals or poor and a woman given the position of a bureaucrat may eventually end up making a policy unjust and against poor and tribals. Similarly, there may be a poor person who after acquiring wealth may choose to overlook the problems majority in the community face and likewise the reverberations echo in other marginalized communities too. The privileges therefore are internalized and inbuilt into the system and those who join the system acquire the same by the virtue of being a part of it.

Resistance to Privileges

To end this systemic dominance, McIntosh suggested that "individual acts can palliate, but cannot end these problems. To redesign social systems we need to first acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions. The silences and denials surrounding privilege are the key political tool here. They keep the thinking about inequality and inequity incomplete, protecting

unearned advantages and conferred dominance by making these taboo subjects". Similarly, considering the Indian situation it may be said that often silence and denials surround the privilege confer dominance to different groups which they seek to protect knowingly or unknowingly. Thus many privileged men argue that system is equally oppressive to them or that affirmative policies or laws in place are misused or abused by women, dalits, tribals and other marginalized sections. Thus debates on equality therefore, at times, ignore the concept of substantive equality or social justice.

Further, the unchecked power or privileges granted to a few, are not helping those who possess these. As there are rich people who are not

happy or contended, or men in order to be masculine and patriarchal need to behave aggressively and violently to prove and defend their masculinity. Similarly, the power granted to religion has not helped to achieve the goal of peace, or the concept of purity or pollution as propagated by the casteist society has not helped humanity in any manner. The need therefore is to recognize these systemic structural privileges organized ideologically and materially around religion caste, class, sex and social status. The struggles for resistance need to be accompanied by the recognition of privileges by those who are benefitted by it. However, there are people within both the groups – the privileged and the unprivileged,

who are breaking these taboos rather than trying to fit in the given structure. Therefore, the so-called feminists, though seen as men hating individuals are actually pointing out to misogynist society while holding patriarchy responsible for abuse, violence against women. Similarly, those fighting against the privileges of caste, class or religion are making attempts to visualize the systemic structures of oppression are vilified and disparaged by those who feel threatened and do not wish to share the power. Yet, the rules of unquestioning conformity to norms are being broken by those who are audacious, insolent and courageous who make responsible choice to cultivate the spirit of order and peace rather than confusion or chaos.

'Still I Rise'

- Maya Angelou

**You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may tread me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.
Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.
Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.
Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.
Weakened by my soulful cries.
Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.
You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise...**



**Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise I rise I rise.**

A Life of Dignity for 'Annadatas'

★ Pushparaj Deshpande

Farming is widely recognised as a high risk venture and our farmers have had to grapple with adverse and unpredictable climatic conditions (drought, hailstorms, unseasonal rains, cyclones), unforeseen loss of crop due to wild animals, technological failures, lack of irrigation) and a near complete absence of a supportive eco-system (lack of government support, non-remunerative prices, increasing input costs). All these here severely affected the farmers, who struggle to eke out a living.

Consider the findings of National Sample Survey Organisation's (NSSO) 70th round survey the average agricultural income (including livestock) per household is merely Rs. 3,800 per month. Even if this is complemented

by income from other sources (as farmers are forced to do), our farmers still get Rs. 6,400 per month. Compare this to the mandated minimum salary of a government employee, which at Rs. 18,000 per month is nearly three times higher than what a farmer earns on average. Culturally we have hailed farmers in India as *annadatas*, and blessed them with *annadata sukhbhava* ("May you prosper, provider of food"). Why then are we so indifferent towards their plight? Despite the fact that we depend on them for one of our most primal needs, why do we relegate farmers to the periphery of our consciousness?

Income and Agriculture

As a society, we should be ashamed that year after year, farmers beg for a decent livelihood and are forced to

As a society, we should be ashamed that year after year, farmers beg for a decent livelihood and are forced to take their lives.

take their lives. The farmers naturally turn to the government for succor because we so callously ignore them (even though they have such an organic relationship with us). The government in turn not only caricatures their concerns but also slashes support for farmers by "rationalising subsidies".

The government has also suggested farmer to shift to the manufacturing or service industries, for that will aid in the "structural transformation" of society (from agriculture to manufacturing and then to services, as Simon Kuznets an American economist famously propounded). In our crazy rush to emulate the development path of other countries, what the government forgets is that India has skipped the classical pattern of structural transformation and it is our services sector (sectors like IT, telecom and finance) that accounts for over two-thirds of our GDP.



The average agricultural income (including livestock) per household is merely Rs. 3,800 per month. Credit: Reuters

Does our government honestly expect that these low employment intensive sectors will be able to absorb nearly 50% of our workforce? And does it really think that farmers will be able to work in highly technical sectors without any prior training or education? In actuality, what ends up happening is that farmers are forced to migrate to urban centres (partly by a hostile and non-supportive ecosystem that treats agriculture with disdain, and because of the lure of a better life), where they end up living in miserable conditions as daily wage labourers.

Government's Indifference

A government really concerned about the enormity of the problem would have tackled the problem in a two-fold manner. Firstly, it would have sought to arrest distress migration with a scheme like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Guarantee Programme (MGNREGA), which not only creates a healthy wage market (between 1999 and 2004, nominal wages in the rural economy grew at a glacial rate of 2.7%. In stark contrast, because of MGNREGA, average wage rates almost quadrupled to 9.7% between 2006 and 2011. Consequently, the average wage rate increased from a mere Rs. 65 in 2004-'05 to Rs. 162.5 in 2013-'14), but also provides sustainable employment in times of need. It is extremely telling that in 2013-14, five crore households complemented their incomes with employment from MGNREGA.

Secondly, through a comprehensive support system, the government should have sought to institutionalise a minimum income level for all farm households, not by 2022 (as the NDA so vaguely announced) but immediately. This can be achieved if the government undertook the following steps on mission mode:

1. Link Minimum Support Price (MSPs) to input costs of farmers and with inflation. To do this effectively, state governments should account for real costs of cultivation, and

declare a bonus if the MSP declared by the Centre is less.

2. Establish a "Risk Stabilisation Fund" to deal with price fluctuations in commercial crops.

3. Urgently undertake measures to enhance soil health, water conservation/harvesting and irrigation. Without this, farmers cannot ever be secure about water availability.

4. Introduce a "Comprehensive Private Debt Rescheduling Act", under which all loans extended to farmers by private money-lenders at high interest rates, would be reconciled and rescheduled as institutional loans. This will free farmers from the scourge of exorbitant interest payments.

5. Ensure that institutional and co-operative credit is available to all cultivators (especially small, tenant and SC/ST farmers) with longer payment cycles. Currently, a major chunk of bank loans are monopolised by individuals or companies unrelated to cultivation.

6. Reorient subsidies towards meeting input costs, of which the biggest component is labour. If a similar delivery mechanism like MGNREGA is used to pay external labour, the government would be solving rural unemployment as well as reducing cost of production (which will eventually be passed on to the consumers).

7. Completely re-conceptualise the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), which currently recognises a village as a unit for crop insurance instead of the individual farm plot. This is counter-productive since damage to crops is farm specific and not area specific. Furthermore, the PMFBY should be made universal (currently, it does not offer universal coverage to all farmers, for all crops, against all forms of damage and at all stages of crop cycle).

8. Finally, institutionalise a Farmers' Income Commission through an "Income Security Act" to ensure income security. Including farmer representatives from all states, this body would be tasked

with averaging income of farmers across the country, cropping patterns and categories and determine a minimum income level (that the government must meet through the above mentioned measures). Ideally, there should be some parity with incomes of government employees.

Farmer's Right to Dignified Life

In stark contrast, the NDA government has done everything in its power to destroy agriculture and rural India. It tried to first restrict the MGNREGA to less than 1/3rd of all districts in the country, then tried scrapping it entirely. Furthermore, it delayed sanctioning monies to states (for wages and asset creation) and proposed to increase the share of material expenditure from 40% to 49% (this would have resulted in more work being done by heavy machinery, thus reducing employment). Equally important, despite all its efforts to regain some credibility as a pro-farmer government, the Modi government has done nothing to revitalise the agriculture sector. It tried to implement an extremely anti-farmer land acquisition act (and then ordinance) and has gone ahead to prod states to do that anyway. It announced meager increases in MSPs (despite exaggerated claims during elections) and disallowed BJP ruled states from giving bonuses over and above the central MSP rate. It deliberately compromised the interests of Indian farmers at the World Trade Organization (WTO) and has given inadequate support for drought relief (the Supreme Court had to pull up the government to perform its duty). Finally, it slashed budgetary support for agriculture and then audaciously tried to claim otherwise by statistically fiddling with statistics.

Every Indian has a right on the fruits of growing prosperity, farmers especially so. We need to ensure that our farmers have equal opportunities to a life of dignity and security and have access to a better life. Unless we support and empower them, we cannot progress as a nation.

Odisha's Land Degrading

More Than 1,95,000 Hectare Per Year!

The state is 'developing' from a drought prone to desert prone region

★ **Ranjan Panda**

In 2006, Odisha's leading water and environment watchdog Water Initiatives Odisha (WIO) had warned that many parts of Odisha are already showing symptoms of decertification. The state is 'developing' from a drought prone to desert prone region. Decertification is a process of productivity loss of lands. When severe, it leads to permanent damages to land.

By analyzing government statistics, WIO had said in 2006 that "In just 13 years, severely degraded land in the state had increased by 136 percent, barren land had increased by 69 percent and land converted to non-agricultural uses had increased by 34 percent. In 1991-92, about 10 percent of total geographical area of the state was unfit for agriculture, forest and tree cover excluded. In 2004-05, such spread increased to nearly 17.5 percent of total area of the state, based on the rate of degradation it is predicted that Odisha would go totally barren in about 150 years.

As the state is facing worst ever heat and water crisis, we wanted to add up to our 2006 analysis and do some more calculations based on government statistics. We are shocked to find that the state will turn barren even much faster, if urgent measures are not taken to arrest decertification.

Between 2005 and 2015, in ten years time, the barren and fallow



land of the state has increased further by almost 50000 hectares to reach at 1753000 hectares.

Adding the 'cultivable wastelands,' that is at 375000 hectares, the degraded land of the state reaches to about 22 per cent of total geographical area. Then, the state has lost about 5 per cent forests in forest lands and 1 per cent tree cover in plantation areas during the last decade. This adds up the land degradation rate to 28 per cent of total geographical area.

During this decade, agricultural land given away for other purposes has increased by a whopping 299000 hectares. We have every reason to believe that all this agricultural land has gone to

developmental activities that does not contribute to ecological restoration, and hence have added to heat woes either by degrading water resources or increasing concrete cover.

If we add the agricultural land taken away for other purposes, that also cause degradation of fertile lands, another about 1.92 per cent of land stand degraded, the total degraded land of the state adds up to almost 30 per cent of its geographical area. That means, during the last ten years, the state degraded at least 195000 hectares of its land per year on an average.

In this decade, the net sown area of the state has shrunk by as high as 243000 hectares indicating

[illegible]

This Earth Day, the state of Odisha must decide to mend its ways and drastically redesign development programmes that put emphasis on conservation of forests; rejuvenation of rivers and water bodies; reduction of coal fired power plants; increase in alternative energy sources; and promotion of land.



Science is built with facts, as a house is with stones, but a collection of facts is no more a science, than a heap of stones is a house.

Jules Henri Poincaré, mathematician, physicist, and philosopher
(29 Apr 1854-17 July 1912)

The Emergence of Biocultural Rights

★ **Kabir Sanjay Bavkiatte and Prof. Thomas Bennett**

1 Building Community Rights

Environmental law is at a political crossroads. Although, on the face of it, governments have a clear-eyed response to the ecological crisis confronting the planet, beneath the surface a battle is being fought over the most appropriate solutions. The terrain of this battle is the law itself.

In contention are solutions which are either technocratic in nature or ones derived from the experiences of local communities that have long-term attachments to the soil. This article argues that affirmation of the latter is a preferable response to the current ecological crisis. The article goes on to elaborate and make a case for 'biocultural rights' as a means to secure these community-led solutions.

The term 'biocultural' has a long pedigree. As will be seen below, it has been used widely by communities, academics and civil society to indicate a way of life that has developed out of a holistic relationship between Nature and culture. Hence, biocultural rights affirm the bond between indigenous, tribal and other communities with their land, together with the floral, faunal and other resources in and on the land. In the literature, this relationship is generally described as one of stewardship.

As yet, international environmental lawyers have undertaken little or no research into the development of biocultural rights, nor have they done much even to acknowledge these rights.

As a result, although rights practised by different types of community have very similar content, no connection between them has been made. For instance, because of ostensible differences between the activities of livestock keepers, farmers and gatherers, their cases were advocated by scholars and practitioners independently of one another and the rights in question were thought to be different. Fundamentally, however, they are the same: a form of community stewardship over land and all that is associated with that land.

A major reason for the failure in international environmental law scholarship to produce a comprehensive biocultural jurisprudence lies in a political, economic and social paradigm that is unable to grasp the ethic of stewardship. This paradigm stems from the very foundations of the market economy, which views land as a universally commensurable, commodifiable and alienable resource a view which has had a determining effect on discourses about private property as well as the nature and role of the associated human beings.

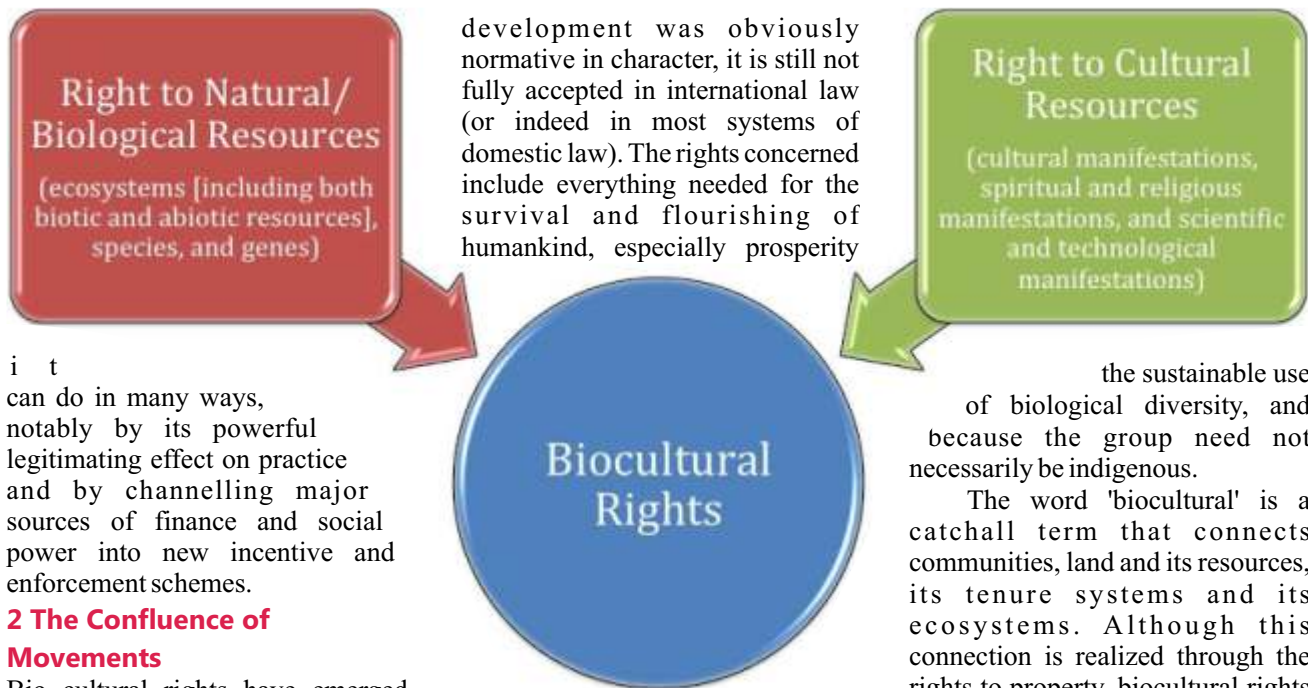
The aim of this article, therefore, is to show that communities that are empowered to maintain their traditional modes of land tenure can and do preserve the environment. In order to establish this proposition, the article will examine examples of effect being given to biocultural rights, at both international and national levels. These examples provide evidence of a distinct trend that, however dimly realized at present, shows that law-

International environmental lawyers have undertaken little or no research into the development of biocultural rights, nor have they done much even to acknowledge these rights

and policy-makers are at last taking cognizance of solutions that communities have developed often over long periods of time to preserve the environment.

This assertion is supported by four interrelated movements: a post development discourse; a third generation of human rights; a gathering body of indigenous (or aboriginal) rights; and the refutation of the 'tragedy of the commons'. By referring to tendencies in international law and various systems of domestic law supporting these four movements, the article seeks to show that their confluence indicates an emerging general acceptance of biocultural rights.

Definite *empirical* proof that recognition and enforcement of biocultural rights promotes better environmental protection remains elusive. Indeed, the interplay between norm and fact in the four movements mentioned above is complex, but, by drawing attention to global tendencies in the normative sphere, the article contends that a norm may endorse, if not influence, social practices. This



it can do in many ways, notably by its powerful legitimating effect on practice and by channelling major sources of finance and social power into new incentive and enforcement schemes.

2 The Confluence of Movements

Bio cultural rights have emerged largely because of the disappointing social and ecological results of the dominant development paradigm. Hence, the first movement to be discussed is the post-development response. This has both a normative and a factual basis. It is factual in the sense that it is grounded in clear empirical evidence that top-down development paradigms have failed to protect the environment. It is normative in its call to heed the voice of communities actually working and living in the environments concerned.

The second movement is that of 'the commons'. Theorists working in this area have claimed that state control or privatization of common resources has caused degradation, rather than an improved ecology. Initially, the movement was concerned with the production of actual evidence that would disprove a generalized supposition about the beneficial effect of state and private action on the commons. Later, its agenda became normative, actively campaigning for the rights of local communities to govern and manage local ecosystems as a more effective way of ensuring conservation.

The third movement is the development, over the last two decades, of a third-generation of human rights. Although this

and a healthy environment. Unlike first-generation civil and political rights, which generally benefit individuals, third-generation rights benefit groups, and, as a result, the rights are usually called 'group' or 'collective' rights.

Finally, a specific category of minority rights has developed over the last four decades, those of indigenous (or aboriginal) peoples. These are groups usually disadvantaged minorities who have demanded various rights, notably, free expression of culture, restoration of land and, more radically, full political self-determination. Any assertion of indigenous rights requires proof of the claimant's status of indigeneity, the core meaning of which denotes habitation of land before the arrival of colonists, together with social and cultural subordination, and, what is important for the purposes of this article, a long historical association with particular tracts of land.

Biocultural rights emerged contemporaneously with the appearance of environmental and indigenous rights, but almost unnoticed. These rights differ from the general category of indigenous rights because they presuppose an explicit link to the conservation and

the sustainable use of biological diversity, and because the group need not necessarily be indigenous.

The word 'biocultural' is a catchall term that connects communities, land and its resources, its tenure systems and its ecosystems. Although this connection is realized through the rights to property, biocultural rights are not a simple property claim, which would imply a hitherto excluded group demanding property in the typical market sense of property, i.e., a universally commensurable, commodifiable and alienable thing. On the contrary, biocultural rights are derived from a traditional tenure of land implicit in which is an obligation of stewardship.

3 Self-Determination as Political Ecology

As noted above, environmental legal solutions can either be technocratic in nature or draw upon approaches devised by local communities themselves. Technocratic interventions obviously recognize the need to prevent the abuse of natural resources, and they put forward expert solutions for rational management of air, water and land. Such solutions are generally based on scientific reports about the carrying capacity and pollution thresholds of the ecosystem in question, and are usually supported by studies on the possibility of industrialization keeping step with the regenerative capacity of the ecosystem.

Although technocratic solutions are implemented through a variety of sticks and carrots

methods, such as tax benefits, subsidies and penalties, their enforceability depends ultimately on a class of experts and bureaucrats who are given the task of managing the environment in the interests of humanity. The demarcation and administration of protected areas is operationalized by the exercise of techno-bureaucratic power. However, this power is often at odds with the decision-making authority of local communities.

The case of the Raika pastoralists of Rajasthan and the denial of their historical monsoon grazing rights in the Kumbalgarh sanctuary by a 2003 decision of the Indian Central Empowered Committee is an example of this kind of dynamic. The Raika's centuries-old grazing tradition in the Kumbalgarh sanctuary was abruptly halted when the Indian Central Empowered Committee prohibited grazing in the forest. This prohibition was issued without an understanding of the co-evolution of the Kumbalgarh ecosystem along with the grazing practices of the Raika pastoralists. Moreover, the prohibition rendered the forest vulnerable to fires, illegal logging and poachers, which the Raika had

always guarded against.

Indigenous peoples and other communities seeking recognition of their traditional land rights are clearly the most directly affected by any adverse environmental impact. It is often claimed that such communities have historically conserved ecosystems, and are best suited to make decisions about those ecosystems. In fact, it can be argued that the current ecological crisis is the consequence of an expertocracy imposing non-consultative, top-down solutions resulting in the delegitimation of local knowledge and decision-making. Several of these arguments rely on growing evidence of community conservation practices that have sustained ecosystems for generations. And much of this evidence, as we shall see later, has come to the fore over the last two decades. In some cases, it contradicts established wisdom that communities and their interests are in open conflict with conservation. An example of this would be 'slash and burn' farming or the *swidden* system of farming practised by communities the world over, which under certain conditions is considered ecologically sustainable

and mimics the growth of the natural forest pattern.

The top-down solutions imposed by experts are what Andre Gorz terms 'locking' as opposed to 'open' technologies. The latter facilitate sharing, communication and local autonomy. They rely on the personal and creative energies of the proposed beneficiaries of a technology, thereby making them both users and creators. Locking technologies, on the other hand, are those that come pre-set: they work on a principle of command and control. Their development and deployment is therefore centralized, and they allow their beneficiaries little or no freedom to adapt the imposed methods to local needs and context. Community activism around environmental issues can be seen, in this light, to represent a break from a techno-bureaucratic approach to political ecology.

Proponents of a bottom-up approach trace the origins of the environmental movement back to a time before the current crisis, when communities began to protest against colonial states usurping the rights to their lands and waters. The Nature that these communities sought to protect was not the Nature

<i>Biocultural Stewardship</i>	<i>Bio-Cultural Community Protocols</i> (based on Bavikatte & Jonas, eds.)
Self-determination	A self-definition of the group, its leadership structure, and decision making processes
Blended Knowledge	How they promote conservation and sustainable use of their natural resources
	Links between customary laws and bio-cultural ways of life
	Their spiritual understanding of nature
	How they share their knowledge
	What constitutes free, prior and informed consent to access their lands and traditional knowledge
Political Engagement	Their local challenges
	Their rights according to national and international law
	A call to various stakeholders for respect of their customary laws, their community protocol, and a statement of the various types of assistance needed by the community.

of the technocrats and bureaucrats, nor was it the 'unspoiled wilderness' of the naturalists. **Rather, it was a Nature that was so entwined with community life that it represented an entire way of being and knowing. In fact, the defence of Nature for these communities was the defence of a 'cosmovision'. For them, Nature was not something 'out there', which had to be protected by scientists and administrators through 'command and cope' mechanisms. Instead, Nature was the basis upon which they constructed their very notions of self and community through an intimate and historical interaction with the ecosystem.**

It is this understanding of political ecology that forms the backdrop to the discussion of the four social movements contributing to the emergence of biocultural rights.

3.1 Post-Development: A People-Centred Ecology

The post-development movement was born of the work of thinkers and activists such as EF Schumacher, Ivan Illich, Arturo Escobar and Gustavo Esteva. In his pivotal work, *Encountering Development: The Making and the Unmaking of the Third World*, Escobar sums up the post-development turn:

“Development was and continues to be for the most part a top down, ethnocentric and technocratic approach, which treated people and cultures as abstract concepts, statistical figures to be moved up and down in the charts of 'progress'. Development was conceived not as a cultural process (culture was a residual variable, to disappear with the advance of modernization) but instead as a system of more or less universally applicable technical interventions intended to deliver some 'badly needed' goods to a 'target' population. It comes as no surprise that development became a force so destructive to the Third World cultures, ironically in the name of people's interests.”

Post-development scholars presented a radical critique of the large development projects of the 1970s and 1980s, arguing that they had contributed to the destabilizing of communities, the creation of poverty and the destruction of the environment. In the 1980s and 90s, with a looming ecological crisis in view, post-development activists began to highlight local community conservation systems and the need to affirm them. The work of organizations such as PRATEC (Andean Project for Peasant Technologies) and COMPAS-ED (Comparing and Supporting Endogenous Development), epitomized the best of post-development thinking in action.

PRATEC is based in the central Andes (covering parts of Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador). It has worked extensively on cultural affirmation through the valorization of traditional agricultural practices. As Jorge Ishizawa from PRATEC points out:

“In our understanding, cultural affirmation is the process by which people who live in a place remember and regenerate their traditional practices, nurturing their *pacha* (local world) and letting themselves be nurtured by it. Since in the case of the central Andes, this local world is agrocentric, nurturance is the mode of being in the Andean *pacha*. Andean cultural affirmation is the continuous affirmation of this mode of being ... Cultural affirmation, then, is not an intellectual matter. For the people of the central Andes, it is the sustained regeneration of biocultural diversity through the activities of mutual nurturance undertaken by the *campesinos* and the entities that make up their *pacha*.”

A statement by Julia Pacoricona Aliaga from Conima in Peru exemplifies the kind of culture that PRATEC seeks to affirm:

“The potato is our mother because when it produces fruits it is feeding us, clothing us and giving us happiness, but we also nurture her. When the plants are small, we call

them *wawas* (children) because we have to look after them, delouse (weed) them, clothe (hill) them, dance and feast them. This has always been done. My parents taught me to nurture them with affection and good will as we do with our children.”

Over the last 16 years, COMPAS-ED has maintained a sustained project on endogenous development in partnership with organizations in Asia, Latin America and Africa. Endogenous development encapsulates the essence of post-development thinking, because it bases itself on local peoples' own criteria of development, taking into account their material, social and spiritual well-being. In an effort to avoid techno-bureaucratic, top-down solutions, COMPAS-ED seeks to make local peoples' worldviews and livelihood strategies the starting point for development. The work of its partners in Guatemala, India and Ghana provides evidence that these worldviews and strategies promote a particular conception of sustainable development as a balance between material, social and spiritual well-being.

Post-development, as a discipline that valorizes community ecological practices, arose as a result of the critique launched by the political ecology of techno-bureaucratic solutions to development and conservation. In this sense, it broke from sections of established environmental thinking by insisting on a clear link between environmental conservation and community rights in the management of that community's lands and waters.

3.2 (Un) Common Wisdom of the Commons

The post-development movement found a natural ally in the movement for the commons. The latter had, through empirical data, begun to turn the 'tragedy of the commons' theory on its head. This theory was based on an assumption that, when the community as a whole has to bear the consequences of dealing

with commonly held resources, individuals seek to maximize their own interests, a process that works to the detriment of both the community and the sustainability of a common resource. Hence, the tragedy of the commons is an argument that long-term sustainability of common pool resources is best ensured when such resources are privatized or state controlled.

Extensive research on governance of the commons by

effectiveness of protected areas under different kinds of management regimes in three different environments: the Chitwan District of Nepal, the Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary in West Bengal in India, and the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra, India. Research projects here found that a protectionist approach that excluded local communities was likely to fail unless governments were prepared to invest heavily in the initiative. The same projects also showed, on

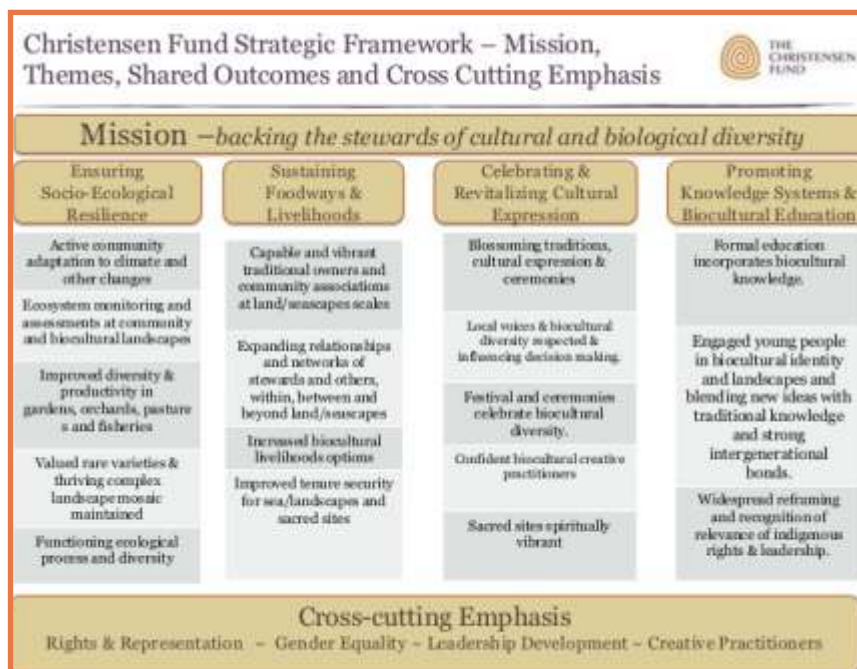
obtained a hearing at the League of Nations regarding a dispute with Canada over tribal self-government. It was only in the early 1980s, however, that the movement for indigenous peoples' rights, in both national and supra-national forums, really got underway.

The movement now speaks for an estimated 300 million indigenous peoples, claiming a primordial identity, from 4000 distinct societies. Unlike the movements of the 1960s for recognition of ethnic minorities, the indigenous people's movement asserts itself not as a legal category or as an analytical concept but as a paradoxical expression of a global identity. Thus, the term 'indigenous' reaches for a unity amidst diversity, and the movement has, with remarkable success, used the United Nations as the key site for its struggle for recognition of indigenous peoples' rights.

While there is no universally agreed definition of who is indigenous, a broad consensus has grown around the definition proposed by Jose Martinez Cobo, the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. In his *Study on the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations*, Martinez Cobo proposed the following:

"Indigenous communities, peoples and nations [are] those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system."

At the heart of the struggle for



political scientists and economists, such as Elinor Ostrom and Arun Agarwal, has established, unequivocally, that state control or privatization of common pool resources is not necessarily the best way of ensuring conservation. In many cases, these solutions are counter-productive. Contrary to the tragedy of the commons theory, which contends, *inter alia*, that mismanagement by a community leads to the destruction of common resources, researchers have established that, under certain conditions, conservation of ecosystems is best ensured by communities.

These findings are congruent with those of more recent research which has evaluated the

the one hand, that conservation was likely to fail if outsiders (or dominant insiders) imposed rules on a community's use of resources, and, on the other hand, that forest resources were more effectively managed if community members were genuinely involved in decision-making and developing rules for use of the resources.

3.3 Indigenous Peoples and the Right to Ecological Stewardship

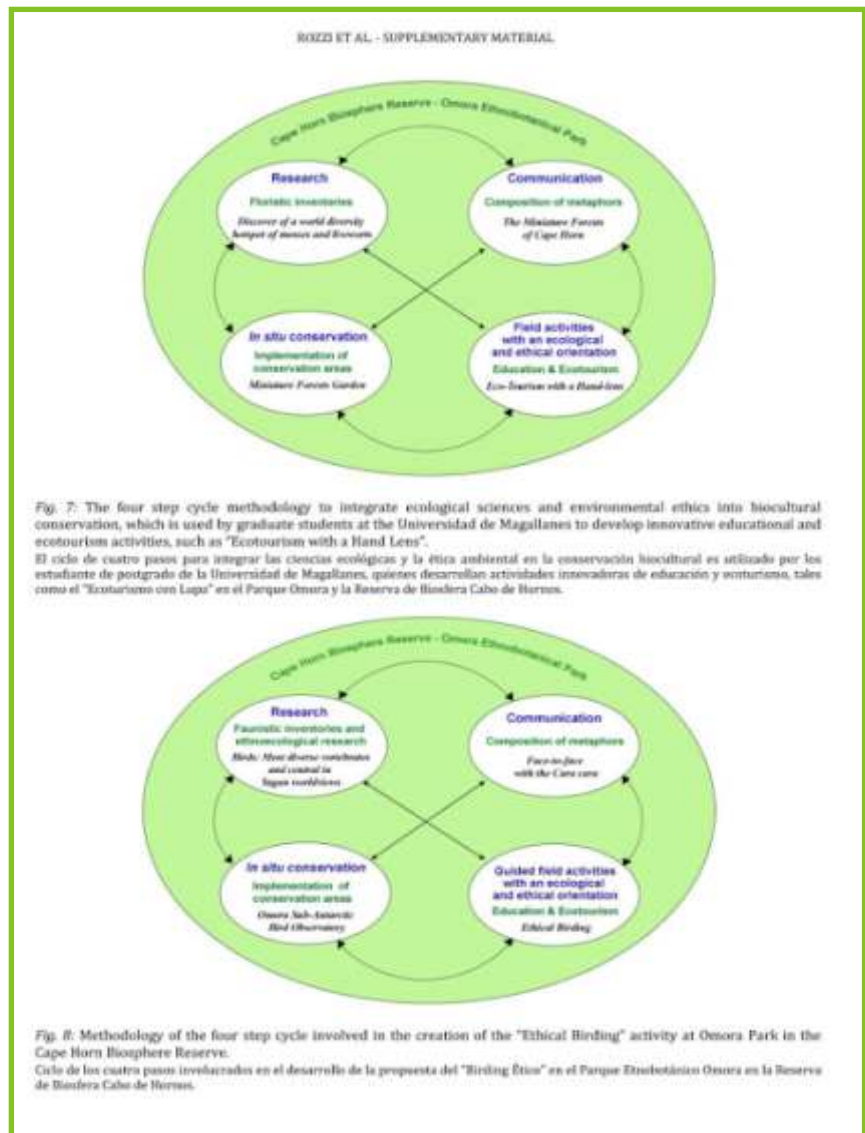
International advocacy for indigenous peoples' rights goes back to 1923, when Levi General Deskaheh, chief of the Younger Bear Clan of the Cayuga Nation, a spokesperson of the Six Nations of the Grand River Land, Ontario,

the rights of indigenous peoples lies a right to self-determination. As noted by James Anaya, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples, self-determination in this context is not a claim for separate statehood but is rather a claim grounded on international human rights, namely, certain core principles of non-discrimination, protection of cultural integrity, self-government, title to lands and natural resources, together with social welfare for economic well-being.

Since the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) came into force in 1993, the nature of the indigenous 'self' that seeks the right to determine or actualize itself has extended beyond Martinez Cobo's 1987 definition. The idea of indigeneity that has now captured public attention conceives of such peoples as the original trustees of the earth. Strategically and steadfastly, indigenous peoples have begun to claim legal recognition for this role and to demand rights to ecological stewardship in negotiations towards multilateral environmental agreements, programmes of work, decisions and guidelines under the CBD (as will become apparent below). Riding on the momentum of the commons and post-development movements, indigenous peoples present recognition of their right to self-determination as both a practical and a moral solution to the ecological crisis.

Discourses around the strong cultural and spiritual links between indigenous peoples and their lands are not new. They stretch back to the beliefs of some of the oldest aboriginal peoples of the world, notably Aborigines in Australia and the San of Southern Africa. The common theme among the different San groups was:

"the existence of a primal time, a mythic age in which beings and states were ontologically fluid and a certain state of inchoate amorphousness prevailed. ... The majority of the beings of primal time



were beings, in which animal and human traits co-mingled. ... These therianthropic variants of the 'Early Race' bore animal names Anteater, Lion, Hyena, Jackal, Springbok, Blue Crane, Tortoise. ... Yet they were also human, and were married, in a riotous mix of cross-species alliances, including with humans of the 'Early Race'. ... They behaved in all ways like humans; however now and again their actions took an animal twist, in line with the protagonist's specific faunal trait."

In a political climate where grand top-down development theories have been discredited and local systems of resource management affirmed, the indigenous peoples movement has begun to make a critical link

between the right to self-determination and environmental conservation. And, as already noted, to do so, they have begun to highlight their role as guardians of ecosystems and the significance of their cultural and spiritual bonds with Nature. What is more, indigenous peoples point out that their territories are some of the richest in biodiversity, and that the collapse of such ecosystems began with their dispossession. The natural corollary of this view is that biodiversity conservation is integrally linked to securing the rights of indigenous peoples to their territories, their way of life, their culture and customary ways of decision-making, in short, to the securing of biocultural rights.



A Citizen's Dividend from Mining

★ Rahul Basu

The Goa Foundation, an environmental NGO based in Goa, India is proposing a set of reforms to mining, based largely on the work of the World Bank, IMF and a number of the people conducting the course. Our lens to view mining is the perspective of the owner of the minerals. One of our key recommendations is a Citizen's Dividend, the most successful variant of Universal Basic Income.

We Argue:

- When we inherit something, we are simply its custodians. We are obliged to preserve the value of our inheritance and pass it on to our children. This is also the Inter-generational Equity principle.
- Minerals are non-renewable inherited assets. Under the Indian

Constitution, the state government owns minerals, not the federal government. Therefore, in India, this obligation to preserve the value devolves on the government of the state of Goa.

- Imagine we own a piece of gold. We must prevent its theft. We can contemplate selling it to buy agricultural land that will provide income while the preserving value of the gold. By analogy, the mineral remains intact for our children only when we prevent illegal mining. If we decide to sell our minerals, through mining, we must create new non-wasting assets of at least equal value.

We Found:

At the root is our analysis on iron ore mining in Goa. We found that as far as iron ore mining was concerned,

we were losing 95% of the value (economic rent) of our minerals, Rs. 51,446 crores (~US\$ 8.5 billion). This was over an eight year period. The loss amounted to 28% of the Goa GDP for those years, twice the state revenues for those years, and Rs.3.5 lakhs each (~\$5,800). Our analysis was based on the annual reports of Sesa Goa (now Vedanta India), the largest iron ore mining company in Goa.

Note that since minerals are a part of the commons, i.e., owned by all of us, this loss is effectively per-head tax - everyone loses equally, and a few get richer. This is a highly regressive redistribution of wealth. It is contrary to equality, and contrary to Article 17 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

We have found similar issues in fossil fuels in India. As royalty rates are usually set by trying to attract investment into the sector, countries race to the bottom. Therefore, it is very likely that similar losses are present globally. It is possibly even a significant driver of the growing inequality that Piketty has found.

We Want:

1. Zero loss mining - the owners on behalf of our children and future generations (the State of Goa in particular), must ensure that the full value of the mineral be captured. Losses are unacceptable.
2. All receipts from minerals be treated as capital receipts (sale of assets) and be deposited into a Future Generations Fund, invested entirely overseas. This is like the Norway Government Pension Fund. Currently, mineral receipts such royalties are treated as windfall revenues, to be blown up. Instead, they are our inheritance, and must be

Plunder of India is like TV serials it never ends!

- **Now, it's illegal iron ore mining in Goa**
- **Goa mining scam worth Rs. 34,935 crore : Justice Shah Commission**
- **Shah : File theft cases against mining companies, grant mining leases through auction**

saved for our children. A Future Generations Fund is simply an endowment fund whose income is reinvested to fully compensate for inflation.

3. All the real income from the fund

be distributed equally to all as a Citizen's Dividend, as a right of ownership. This is like the the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend. The principal goal is to create a stake for the Citizen in their minerals. All

must be distributed to leave the state as a non-mineral state - no incomes from minerals.

4. We want this implemented across India and globally. It is fair, our right and our duty to our children.

GOLD AND SILVER

*Not many may know that
Silver is rarer than gold
Gold is hoarded as ornaments mostly
While silver is put to industrial use
In films and mirrors, cell phones computers
In many other appliances
And all the silver mined in human history
Would make a cube 65 metres high.*

*Gold is another story yet
Starting over 6000 years back
Around 165000 tonnes
Has been extracted by hands of men
Valued at 8488 billion dollars
This should technically make
Each of Earth's 7 billion men
Trillionaires and more
And if all this gold is melted
It would fill nearly three and half
Olympic sized swimming pools
And half of it has been removed
From the earth's crust
In the last fifty years and
Annually nearly 2500 tonnes is mined
And India is the biggest consumer
With 745.7 tonnes followed by
China 428 and the USA 128.61
There's 52000 tonnes still left
For every person on earth
It's roughly 24 grams or five gold rings.*

*There's lot more but out of reach
1800 miles below at the Earth's core
Believed to be a staggering
122 billion tonnes
Enough to cover
The surface of the Earth
Up to a depth of 12 to 13 feet.
And there's gold in the oceans too
Which covers 71% of the surface
No one knows how much for sure*

*Some expect it's around 35 billion tonnes
That's still to be explored.*

*Though there's more gold than silver
It should logically cost lesser
While platinum being rarer still
Costs more than gold
This artificially hiked price
Based on the capitalistic driven
Gold standard of economics
Benefits very few people
Still beside the glitter and shine
People think gold is precious
Because of its high cost
They attribute high value
Influenced by price tags
Set by only a chosen few
A consistent subconscious error
Being committed by humans
Since the dawn of history.*

*All this gold and more on Earth's crust
That man madly craves for
Came mostly from meteorites
So how much more
Could possibly be there
In other planets or maybe
Drifting around in space
Plentiful as dust on Earth.*

*So why to run after something
Not so precious or rare
Why not aspire for
The most precious one of all
Our universal Father
Who created it in the first place
This path is arduous
By no means easy
Once one gets there
It is everything and more.*

Arun Prakash

Human Safaris in the Andamans

★ Survival International

The tribes of the Andaman Islands the Jarawa, Great Andamanese, Onge and Sentinelese are believed to have lived in their Indian Ocean home for up to 55,000 years.

They are now vastly outnumbered by several hundred thousand Indians, who have settled on the islands in recent decades.

The Jarawa

Today, approximately 400 members of the nomadic Jarawa tribe live in groups of 40-50 people in *chaddhas* as they call their homes.

Like most tribal peoples who live self-sufficiently on their ancestral lands, the Jarawa continue to thrive, and their numbers are steadily growing.

They hunt pig and turtle and fish with bows and arrows in the coral-fringed reefs for crabs and fish, including striped catfish-eel and the toothed pony fish. They also gather fruits, wild roots, tubers and honey. The bows are made from the chooi wood, which does not grow throughout the Jarawa territory. The Jarawa often have to travel long

The Jarawa of the Andaman Islands enjoy a time of opulence. Their forests give them more than they need.

distances to Baratang Island to collect it.

Both Jarawa men and women collect wild honey from lofty trees. During the honey collection the members of the group will sing songs to express their delight. The honey-collector will chew the sap of leaves of a bee-repellant plant, such as Ooyekwalin, which they will then spray with their mouths at the bees to keep them away. Once the bees have gone the Jarawa can cut the bee's nest, which they will put in a wooden bucket on their back. The Jarawa always bathe after consuming honey.

A study of their nutrition and health found their 'nutritional status' was 'optimal'. They have detailed knowledge of more than 150 plant and 350 animal species.

"The Jarawa of the Andaman Islands enjoy a time of opulence. Their forests give them more than they need."

(Anvita Abbi, Professor of Linguistics, Jawaharlal Nehru University)

In 1998, a few Jarawa started to emerge from their forest for the first time without their bows and arrows to visit nearby towns and settlements.

In 1990 the local authorities revealed their long-term 'master plan' to settle the Jarawa in two villages with an economy based on fishery, suggesting that hunting and gathering could be their 'sports'. The plan was so prescriptive it even detailed what style of clothes the Jarawa should wear. Forced settlement had been fatal for other



A Jarawa woman and boy by the side of the Andaman Trunk Road



The Jarawa thatch their shelters with leaves from the forest



Vehicles queue to enter the Jarawa reserve along the Andaman Trunk Road

tribes in the Andaman Islands, just as it has been for most newly-contacted tribal peoples worldwide.

“I am Civilized and They are Not Civilized.”

(An Indian Lawyer Making her Case for the Forcible Settlement of the Jarawa, In 2001)

Following a vigorous campaign by Survival and Indian organisations, the resettlement plan was abandoned, and in 2004 the authorities announced a radical new policy: the Jarawa would be allowed to choose their own future, and that outside intervention in their lives would be kept to a minimum. This was an enormous success for the international and Indian campaign.

“No attempts to bring them to the mainstream of society should be made.”

(Indian Government Jarawa Policy, 2004)

What Problems do the Jarawa Face?

Of the four Andaman Island tribes, it is the Jarawa's situation that is the most precarious.

The Jarawa face many threats:

- The road that cuts through their territory brings thousands of outsiders, including tourists, into their land. The tourists treat the Jarawa like animals in a safari park.
- Outsiders, both local settlers and international poachers enter their rich forest reserve to steal the game the tribe needs to survive.
- They remain vulnerable to outside diseases to which they have little or no immunity. In 1999 and 2006, the Jarawa suffered outbreaks of measles a disease that has wiped out many tribes worldwide following contact with outsiders. An epidemic could devastate the tribe.
- Jarawa women have been sexually abused by poachers, settlers, bus drivers and others.

“The girls say, that the outside boys pressure them to do a lot. They pressure them with their hands and fingernails, when the girls get angry. They chase them under the influence of alcohol. They have sex with the girls... They drink alcohol in the girls'

house. They sleep in the Jarawa's house. They smoke marijuana and then chase the girls.”

(Jarawa Man Speaking Out Against the Abuse In 2014)

- There is pressure from some, including the island's MP, to force the Jarawa to integrate into the 'mainstream' of Indian society.
- The fate of the Great Andamanese and Onge peoples serves as a vivid warning of what may happen to the Jarawa unless their rights to control who comes onto their land and to make their own decisions about their ways of life are recognized.

Attempts to 'Mainstream' the Jarawa

In India, 'mainstreaming' refers to the policy of pushing a tribe to join the country's dominant society. It has a devastating effect on tribal peoples. It strips them of their self-sufficiency and sense of identity, and leaves them struggling at the very margins of society. Rates of disease, depression, addiction and suicide within the tribal community almost

Don't use

the Andaman Trunk Road

Tourists traveling to Baratang are treating the Jarawa tribe like animals in a safari park.

The road which cuts through the Jarawa's land is illegal – India's Supreme Court ordered it to be closed in 2002. **Please don't travel on it.**

Tourists risk passing on diseases to which the Jarawa have no immunity. The Jarawa tribe have lived in the Andamans for over 50,000 years, and an epidemic could wipe them out.



Leaflet given to tourists arriving on the Andaman Islands about the 'human safari park' boycott

inevitably soar.

In 2010 the Andaman Islands' member of parliament called for 'quick and drastic steps be taken to bring the Jarawa up to the basic mainstream characteristics' and for children to be sent to residential schools in order to 'wean' the children away from the tribe. He described the Jarawa as being 'in a primitive stage of development' and 'stuck in time somewhere between the stone and iron age'.

Influential figures in India, including government ministers, have often called for the Jarawa to be assimilated, believing that they are 'backward' or 'primitive'. This request, however, has not come from the Jarawa, who show no sign of wanting to leave their life in the forest.

"The outsiders are bad men. They abuse us. I prefer to stay in the jungle."

(Enmei, a Jarawa Man)

Such an attitude can stem from racist disdain or from a genuine concern for the tribe's welfare; either way it is always based on a misunderstanding of both the Jarawa's current excellent quality of life, and the miserable experiences of tribal people who have been forcibly

assimilated.

Since 2004, the Indian government's policy towards the Jarawa has been very positive: the general principle is that the tribe themselves should control their future, with minimal intervention from the state. However, there are still many who are clamoring for this to change.

What is Survival's Position on 'Mainstreaming'?

Survival International, a global organisation working for the welfare of indigenous peoples, advocates neither isolation nor integration, believing as with all tribal peoples that they themselves are best placed to determine what, if any, changes they wish to make to their lives. Crucial to having the time and space to make these decisions is that their land is properly protected from outside incursions.

Land Encroachment and Poaching

The principal threat to the Jarawa's existence comes from encroachment onto their land, which was sparked by the building of a highway through their forest in the 1970s. The Andaman Trunk Road (ATR) brings outsiders into the heart of their

territory.

The ATR has also encouraged 'human safaris', where tour operators drive tourists along the road in the hope of 'spotting' members of the tribe.

Illegal hunting, fishing and gathering, from both local and foreign poachers, remains a serious threat to the Jarawa's survival. The theft of the food they rely on risks robbing them of their self sufficiency and driving the tribe to extinction.

What is Survival's Position in Land Encroachment and Poaching?

Since 1993 Survival has been lobbying the Indian government to close the Andaman Trunk Road, believing that only the Jarawa should decide if, when and where outsiders traverse their land.

In 2002, the Indian Supreme Court ordered the closure of the road, yet it still remains open.

In 2013, following a campaign from Survival and local organization 'Search' to ban 'human safaris', the Supreme Court banned tourists from travelling along the ATR for seven weeks. After the Andaman Authorities changed their own rules in order to allow the human safaris to continue, the Supreme Court had no choice but to reverse the ban.

The Andaman Authorities have committed to opening an alternative sea route to Baratang by March 2015. This sea route would stop the human safaris as tourists would no longer have an excuse to drive through the Jarawa's forest. Despite promises to the Supreme Court and pressure from Survival and a local organisation 'Search', the project is already running woefully behind schedule.

Survival has been calling for the Andaman authorities to clamp down on poaching and to ensure that those arrested are prosecuted. Although in recent years many poachers have been arrested, none have been sentenced by the courts, despite the offence carrying a prison term of up to seven years.

Industrial Corridors

How Can Fate of People Be Decided Without Consulting Them?

Fact remains, the ploy is to loot the land and displace a huge population without any thought given to the real issues. Reality is the DMIC or any such projects being planned are one big real estate project.

★ Delhi Solidarity Group

“Overnight, the government declares that the home and fields of an adivasi or a farmer is now part of an industrial corridor. Even after days and months no one comes to visit her home or village and she is left to wonder who are these people deciding her fate, without ever seeking her consent.” This is the experience of so many people now living within the influence zone of the Delhi Mumbai or Amritsar Kolkata Industrial Corridors, said Medha Patkar of Narmada Bachao Andolan and National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM). She asked, how can the fate of people in this country be decided without ever consulting them in the name of larger public good? The planning of the growing web of industrial corridors in the country today is an undemocratic ploy to take away the sovereign rights of the people and its public institutions.

Ulka Mahajan, leader of Sarvhara Jan Andolan, Raigad, said, “Even though notifications for acquisition of 67000 Acres of land from 78 villages were issued for the development of the Dighi Industrial Port area, still no one had a project plan in hand to share with the communities. There was completely

opaqueness over the projects proposed, investments or industries expected, still the notifications were issued. The fact remains, the ploy is to loot the land and displace a huge population without any thought given to the real issues. The reality is the DMIC or any such projects being planned are one big real estate project. Even planners have no idea but they want the land, water, forests

and everything for themselves.”

It is the financialisation of economy in favor of big corporations that is being facilitated by the government with active help from the governments of Japan, Singapore, Hongkong, UK, Germany, US or other developed countries who are exploring the possibilities for expansion of their own corporations, said, Anil

**Feeling sad and depressed? Are you worried?
Anxious about the future? Feeling isolated and
alone? You might be suffering from...**

CAPITALISM

Symptoms may include:

**Homelessness, unemployment, poverty, hunger,
feelings of powerlessness, fear, apathy, boredom,
cultural decay, loss of identity, self-doubt, loss of free
speech, incarceration, hatred of minorities, suicidal
or revolutionary thoughts, death.**



Chaudhary of Jan Sangharsh Samanvay Samiti.

Sagar Rabari of Gujarat Khedut Mazdoor Samaj said, "We have forged alliances with all caste groups and cut across the traditional boundaries of the trade unions and farmers to oppose the corporate loot of the natural resources in name of development, and we have had successes in challenging the Dholera SIR or Mandala Bechara SIR or other projects. Since, they are completely undemocratic, anti people and a real estate project which will destroy the livelihoods of the people, without offering them anything in return. Contrary to the image that land acquisition in Gujarat is easy, we would say that it is one of the most difficult places to acquire land in the country. Likewise, as against the claims of creation of jobs, Gujarat, despite numerous SEZs in the past decade has created the fewest jobs, this exposing the fact that as against displacement of lakhs of people, the jobs created are very, very few".

Experiences of the state governments changing land laws, labour laws, environmental laws were shared by the activists and how they were in complete violations of the central laws and constitutionally untenable, most of which needs to be

challenged in the courts.

The development of the corridors, as of now five, including the Vizag Chennai, Chennai Bangalore and Mumbai Bangalore Corridor together have an influence area covering 50% of the land area. Together with the Sagarmala, Bharat Mala projects, the Industrial Corridors are a massive infrastructure plan. But does our country have the natural resources to support this massive development plan, and have we conducted an comprehensive social and environmental impact assessment? Have we even looked at the fact that what will happen to the millions of people dependent on the natural resources, farmers, adivasis, fishworkers, artisans, pastoralists? The answer we get is no!

These questions along with the accountability of our own elected governments were also discussed. The experience shared by activists from DMIC and AKIC was that even Mukhiyas, Sarpanchs, MLAs and to an extent MPs also don't know about these projects. These projects and plans are being prepared by the Consultants and to be implemented by Special Purpose Vehicles and Specially appointed authorities which are completely anti democratic bodies with over-riding

powers over the power of Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayat or Municipalities and Municipal Corporations. The complete governance structure is being privatized at the moment, in the name of development.

- We demand that let there be a parliamentary oversight over the loan agreements signed by the government with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), World Bank, Asian Development Bank and other financial institutions.

- Voluntarily all the agreements, projects, plans, feasibility studies and every document related to the Corridors must be put in front of the public voluntarily, as per Section 4 of the RTI Act.

- We demand that the Parliamentary Standing Committee studying the Industrial corridor Policy framework must meet and respond to the groups who have approached for a personal hearing. In addition, they must go out and meet the areas demarcated as being part of the Industrial Corridors.

- We also demand that the anti democratic and completely unconstitutional changes to the labour and land laws brought in by the Rajasthan and Gujarat government be withdrawn and President must not give assent to those.

The meeting ended with the formation of a nationwide committee which will undertake the work of reaching out to other groups, conduct researches, workshops, plan actions and inform a wider population about these projects and the impacts it might have. In the next five months, a wide campaigning will be done across the nation under the banner of "Corridor Virodhi Sangharsh Abhiyaan" and will decide about the national platform in the month of October this year. Towards the end of the year a nation-wide yatra would be undertaken and this would be preceded by a series of the regional meetings.



Towards A Genuine Political System

★ Ganesh Bhatt

ProuT proposes the centralization of political power and decentralization of economic power. **Centralization does not mean Totalitarianism.** PROUT believes in the centralization of political power but not in its concentration in one institution or one person. PROUT proposes the centralization of political power only as far as policy planning and general supervision are concerned. It devolves the legislative, executive, judicial and financial powers in such a manner that the power of actual execution is wielded by different institutions who co-exist in a dynamic balance.

The motivation and purpose behind the Proutistic political system is basically to administer in a manner so that economic institutions are able to materialize the principles and policies of a progressive economy, and that the society progresses ahead with the sublime motto: **for the good and happiness of all.** Political institutions are not an end in themselves but a means to achieve economic well-being and social progress.

Real Face of Present Democracy

In the prevailing political systems, both political and economic powers are concentrated in the hands of single institution, office or person, which is also a major cause of corruption. People's representatives frame policies and they also take many important economic decisions at different levels. It is they who decide about the mode, quantum and the beneficiary etc., of the utilization of natural resources of a state or a country. Instead of being the

"I want that every person should be guaranteed the minimum physical requirements of life, every person should get scope for full exploitation of psychic potentiality, every person should get equal opportunity to attain absolute truth, and endowed with all the glories and achievements of the world, every person should march towards the Absolute."

- Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

vanguard and referee of economic system the Government itself becomes the player. Developmental planning, in most of the cases is not based on the needs and potentiality of the area, but on the whims and fancies of the politicians or the party in power, which is again based on the likely benefit to be derived in terms of money or popularity. The mad rush to be a representative in the legislature and the respect they get from the mass is due to the economic power they have.

Even in those countries in the world where the writers of the constitution wished and drafted a system to avoid centralization of political power, circumstances ultimately led to its concentration. Of course, artificial circumstances had to be created in order to cover up such an event. The method may be different but the basic psychology, necessity or the story is the same.

India claims to have decentralization of political power through the panchayat raj system. In reality, these institutions from village to district levels have no right or authority to plan and decide the uses of the natural resources in their area. Their power is restricted to

implement the schemes planned and sanctioned by state or central governments, with ample opportunity to become corrupt. Even if the people in these areas die of starvation, these institutions cannot take any independent decision, but have to beg for help from the state. The states are demanding for more economic powers, which the central government is not willing to part with because of the fear of losing its power and importance. The reality is that both political and economic decisions are taken by the high command of the ruling party, which consists of a few persons who generally represent vested interests and are not directly answerable to the voters. This simply means, that there is centralization of political power, even in the modern democratic setup.

It was believed that, universal suffrage would change the character of society from a state of watchfulness, doubt and suspicion to that of brotherly love, reciprocal interest and universal confidence. The idea of 'one person, one vote' sounds sweet and appealing, but it never works that way in practice

The problem of democracy today is not any more the restriction of franchise but the manner in which the franchise is exercised. How can people express 'their' will if they do not have any will or conviction of their own, if they are alienated automatons, whose tastes, opinions and preferences are manipulated by the big conditioning machineries? The mode in which people express their will is not very different from that of their choice in buying commodities. If a highly advertised brand of soap is used by the majority of the people because of some fantastic claims it makes in the propaganda, nobody with any sense would say that the people have 'made a decision' in favor of it. All that could be claimed is that the propaganda was sufficiently effective to coax millions of people into believing the claim. In recent years, we have seen more and more how the guidance of public relations counsels determines the political propaganda. They use television and other media to build up political personalities as they use it to sell a soap product; what matters is the effect, in sales or votes, not the rationality or usefulness of what is presented.

Presently money, intra-party status, and media portrayal have more to do with the success or failure of a candidate at the polls than does his or her position on issues and standard of behavior. In many countries, votes are bought and sold openly and corruption is the rule rather than the exception. It is often impossible for moral people to even dent the realm of politics. In the so-called developed countries, the situation is only little better.

It has been often witnessed that regionalism, parochialism, casteism, groupism, religionism and other narrow sentimental or even psychic appeals play a vital role in the selection and election of candidates in most modern democracies. The huge role of Big Business and definitely the influence of money in elections even in the most thriving of democracies

undermine the spirit and content of democracy.

PROUT'S Concept of Democracy

Shri Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar was not against the principle of democracy in the sense of a collective decision-making process, but was critical of the present form of democracy, especially in developing and underdeveloped countries, where money, muscle power and cheap sentiments of caste, tribe and religion influence voter decisions. He called this type of democracy 'mobocracy' or 'foolocracy', which creates a situation of exploitation of the majority of people by a few.

Voting Rights

According to PROUT, the right of people to vote only upon acquiring a certain age is fundamentally defective. The qualities of a candidate cannot be judged by the majority unless the majority itself has acquired a fair level of consciousness. Common people remain engrossed in satisfying their common needs. They are reluctant and uninterested in finding a true leader. For the success of real democracy, Shri P.R. Sarkar suggested that the public must be socially conscious, educated, possess basic morality, and that the minimum requirements of life of all citizens be guaranteed.

Security

Security for all members of society must be ensured, without depending on the bureaucratic structure. Security includes not only a guarantee of food, clothes, housing, health care, education and other minimum requirements of life, but also security in the psychological sense. Human beings must restore the sense of unity with their fellow beings, other living beings, nature, society, etc.

Freedom

The basic human urge for freedom is the motivating force behind social evolution and progress. Freedom should be considered in the physico-psycho-spiritual sense. Physical freedom means the guarantee of the

minimum requirements of life, and it cannot be unlimited, because it is finite.

Intellectual freedom implies an arrangement for the development of intellect that can overcome environmental and pseudo-cultural influences, which can be ensured by an education system which develops intuitional and creative consciousness. Spiritual liberation is a state where the individual mind realizes the sense of unity and harmony with the entire universe. The awakening of this consciousness is the goal of freedom. It is the responsibility of society to create opportunities for every member to pursue their spiritual goal without hindrance. Unrestricted social freedom, Shri P.R. Sarkar said, is tantamount to social anarchism and is detrimental to real democracy. Hence he evolved a moral and social code for future society.

Economic Development

Prout advocates bifurcation of political and economic powers. There should be no political involvement in economic affairs by the Central government, as the economic system is to be decentralized. Local government would be responsible for the running of certain key or large-scale industries, but for this purpose, independent managers would be hired and politicians will not run them.

Prout rejects profit as the core motive of economic activity. While profit is an important practical consideration in operating enterprises, it must not supersede in importance such concerns as consumer needs, community well being, resource sustain ability, environmental health, social equity and worker fulfillment.

Prout's economic stand is:

- Guaranteeing of the minimum requirements of all.
- Economic power with the people, i.e. decentralization of economic power leading to Economic Democracy.
- Production designed for aiding

public consumption and not for profit motivation.

- Narrowing of the gap between rich and poor individuals, areas and nations.
- Establishment of harmonious relations of cooperation with nature.

Compartmentalized Democracy

PROUT favors the three branch system of Executive, Legislative, and Judicial with the addition of an independent Financial or Public Exchequer department. This is an important addition that would monitor federal spending and publicize the strengths and weaknesses of government programs. This department would keep the accounts of the other three departments. All of these departments should function independently, with some form of social control for coordination. Only then can these structures function freely, without interference from elected representatives.

The cabinet should confine itself to legislation, the passage and passing of the budget, the implementation of its plans and policies defense etc. The power of ministers should remain confined to the parliament and they should not poke their nose into the working of the secretariat.

Party-less Democracy

The Problem with the present system of political democracy is that as candidates are dependent upon

campaign contributions from the wealthy, in most instances, they end up catering to the demands of those influential sections of society. This means that the decisions taken by the leaders in a democratic country do not necessarily reflect the best interests of society as a whole. Political leaders are forced to serve powerful corporate interest groups, even immoral hypocrites, who have tremendous financial influence. They are unable to maintain their offices if they cross such people. And due to continual pressure to canvass for funding, the role of money in politics is paramount.

The system of political parties seems also to have significant defects. Candidate qualifications, personal integrity, and the spirit of social service play secondary roles to party status and seniority. Candidates are forced to abide by party policies and cannot effectively combat elections without party endorsement. In this way, political parties are also controlled by moneyed interests. For these reasons, **PROUT advocates a system of party-less democracy.** A partyless system is of paramount importance for lessening corruption. Of course, it is natural that like minded people will associate and work together out of common interest. Indeed, it would be impossible to enact any positive measures independently. Yet, it is clear that the current formality of party affiliation has significant

drawbacks. A more balanced approach without the formalities of party name and the necessity of party endorsement may alleviate such problems.

It is well known: the essence of democracy lies in consensus; it is the rule by consensus. But, the convention of Whip has thoroughly diluted this essence. As per the current Anti-defection law if any MP votes against the party's decision, then that MP can be charged under this law and removed from office. Privately MPs have told reporters that since this law was passed they never dare to challenge the whip of any party. No doubt, an elected member of legislature owns loyalty to the party, but first he represents lakhs of people and thus he must be made to owe his loyalty first to the electorate and his conscience to their welfare. As such, he must be free to agree or disagree on any issue on the basis of his free conscience, and NOT on borrowed one from the barons of the party.

Rule of Sadvipras

Under Prout, there is a concept of benevolent dominion of sadvipras. According to Shri P.R. Sarkar, sadvipras will be in the nucleus of social cycle, always watchful, and whenever injustice will be seen, they will take remedial steps. Their major function is to see that the class in power does not abuse its authority. Even if wheels of social cycle slow down, they will give tremendous push to change one era to the other. Thus, in clear terms, they will be capable of sacking any Minister, Chief Minister, PM or even dissolving a House at the state or central level. Their source of power is their social and spiritual merit earned by their self-less service. On the basis of their social and spiritual merit people will recognize the sadvipras as true benefactors of society and therefore offer them support. The rapport between sadvipras and the people will be sustained by this confidence only. More importantly the sign of a genuine sadvipra is that they will make members of society into





sadvipras themselves.

Who is a Sadvipra?

Sat (Sanskrit: Cosmic Truth) + *vipra* (intellect) = sadvipra. It means one whose intellect is ensconced in Cosmic Truth. Sadvipras however are de-classed people who strive for the good of all. They have no own agenda except liberation for self and service to the creation. They are morally and spiritually conscious and possess all the qualities of the four classes without being dominated by any of them.

Plainly speaking, sadvipras are those persons who cannot even think of acting in self-interest. They are honest, intelligent and compassionate persons whose nature it is to fight injustice and corruption in society. Since such people represent our best sides, since they are beyond selfishness, the political power should be centralized in the hands of Boards or Collective Body of Sadvipras.

Social Boards (Collective Body of Sadvipras)

PROUT advocates the existence of grassroots Social Boards composed of sadvipras. The role assigned to this Collective Body is one of planning and general supervision in

important aspects of life. It **does not assign the Body** any legislative, judicial and executive functions, which are to be performed by elected or appointed officials in accordance with the constitution.

The object of these boards would be to help create economic democracy, environmental sustainability, and ensure that all local people have their basic needs met. Boards would begin to address the social, cultural, scientific and welfare needs of the people and serve as a catalyst to organize the community. The members of these boards would not contest elections to legislative posts.

Electoral College should have the responsibility of selecting / electing members of Sadvipra Boards. In case of more number of eligible persons available and not being able to arrive at a consensus, then the members of Electoral College would decide by majority opinion.

Prout advocates selecto electional, party less democracy with establishment of social boards which are also called Sadvipra Boards, and centralization of political power with the Supreme Sadvipra Board, which would be

president's advisory committee.

Right to Recall People's Representatives

Candidates would be required to state their promises and policies in black-and-white. Failure to implement such programs could result in termination from office so as to prevent politicians from making empty promises for the sake of an election. This can be affected by more than 50% of the voters of the constituency expressing their desire to recall with valid reasons or approaching appropriate authority or court.

Presidential Form of Government

Presidential form of government is the preferred one, legislative heads i.e. presidents of all elected bodies, chief ministers, prime minister and president of the country should get elected directly from the voters.

World Government

A world federation must be established which prevents military conflicts, secures the rights of minorities, protects the environment, and insures equitable distribution of resources. There would be two houses, the lower house bring represented on the basis of population strength and each country would have one representative in the upper house, irrespective of population.

Salient Features of PROUT's Political System

Economic and political power in PROUT are bifurcated. PROUT advocates political centralization and economic decentralization. Political power is to be given to moralists elected by politically-conscious voters, whereas economic power is to be given to the local people.

Voting Right to Selected People

Since we are children of a common Progenitor, Creator, we all are part of the same patrimony. Being so, we all have the right of utilization of all material resources. But, as all do neither have the same psychic,

intellectual development nor are all bestowed with similar characteristics, everyone should not be allowed the right of governance until and unless they have attained a particular level to be judged intelligently and effectively. Since 'voting' is the lowest step in the ladder of governance, this right, therefore, will have to be given to selected people only.

Electoral College

It is, therefore, proposed: "Let there be an Electoral College: voting right NOT on the basis of age, but on the basis of morality, socio-politico-economic consciousness.

PROUT advocates the formation of an Electoral College whose members satisfy the following qualities:

- They should be educated to the extent that they understand the pros and cons of the proposals made by those contesting elections.
- They should have a sense of responsibility and a socio-economic consciousness and be aware of their own social rights and responsibilities.
- They should, above all, be moral.

With this 'selective voting' system, no doubt, the number of voters is bound to be greatly reduced. This will require compulsory voting by all eligible voters. PROUT mandates that every person should be provided the opportunities to imbibe such qualities and suggests that institutions should be established to provide moral and social education to people, thereby qualifying them as a voter. Such institutions should be free from any political influence; they should be administered by an independent body like the Election Commission or the Public Service Commission, and their curriculum should be carefully designed by experts educationalist, sociologists, philanthropists, spiritualists among others.

Those who pass the tests of such institutions should alone be the members of the Electoral College

which may be divided into regions or administrative units to elect candidates for various legislative and executive bodies, and also the constituents of the Collective Body vested with the supreme authority.

In the Proutist system the role of the Electoral College is not over even after it has elected members of various political bodies including the Collective Body. It will continue to remain in touch with the people and apprise them of the points and counter-points of various socio-economic issues. Constant vigil is required to make sure that all the arms of government function efficiently and honestly, and this vigil will have to be exercised not only by the Collective Body but the ever watchful Electoral College.

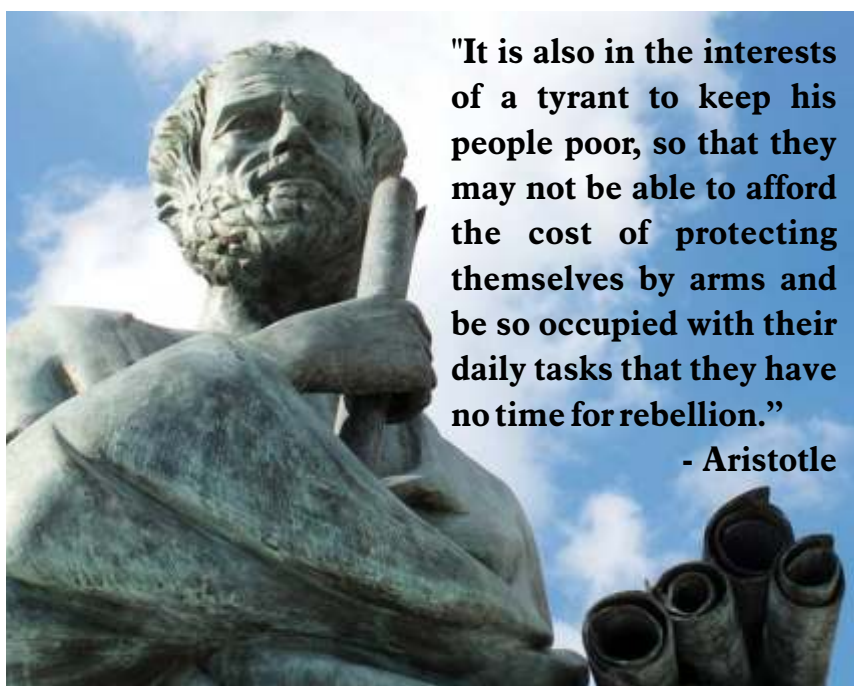
- Qualifications of a candidate to be much higher than a voter
- The qualification of a candidate to an election must be fixed much higher than that of a voter and also according to the requirements of the House to which election is sought. For instance, election to a municipal council may require lower educational qualification or lower general awareness while that to Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha (the Houses which have to deal with complex national and international issues,

security matters, defense requirements, budget implications, emergency situations or similar host of important issues) may require men of caliber, higher awareness of socio-politico-economic issues and much higher standard of integrity, morality and dedication.

- No candidate should be declared elected without a contest, even if there is only one candidate, opinion for or against him / her should be polled. Only if the candidate secures more than 50% of votes he/she should be declared elected.

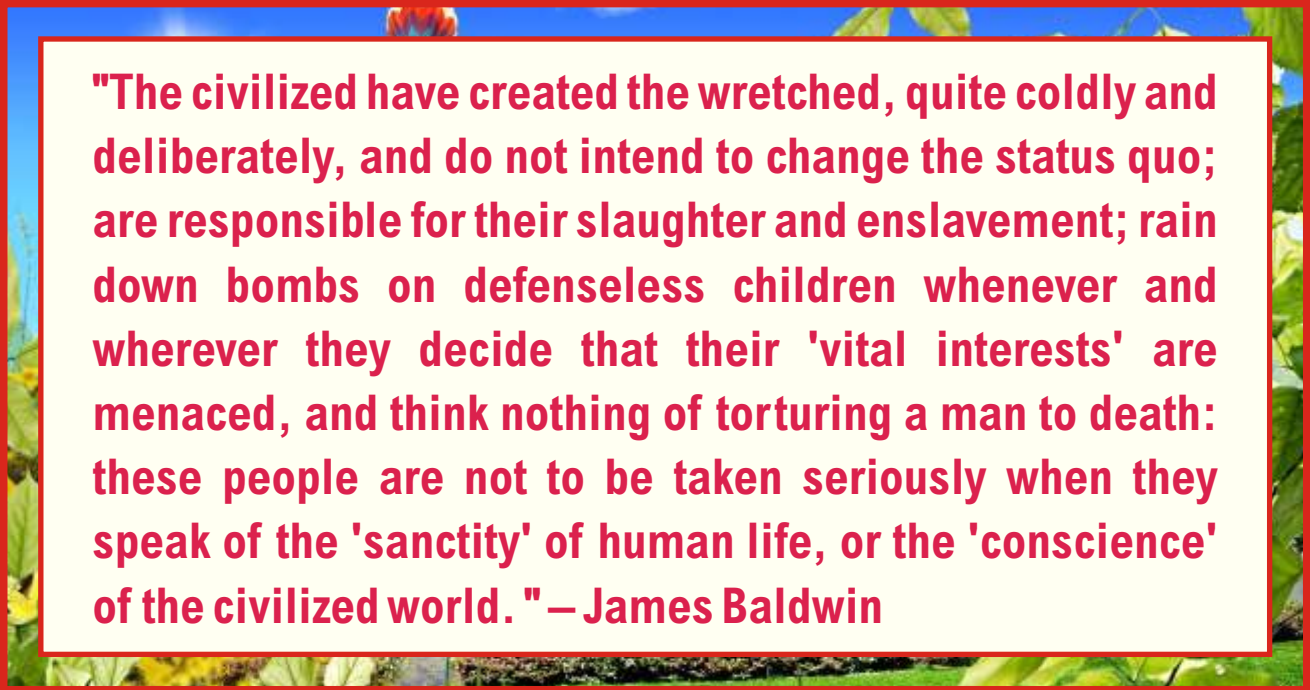
- During elections no candidate should be declared elected unless they secure more than 50% votes cast. In case of less percentage, second preference be added to the first and only then one who secures majority votes i.e. 50% plus should be declared elected. Second preference marking will have to be made compulsory for this purpose. Alternatively, the candidate securing the highest votes can be referred back to confirm confidence of more than 50% of voters, and declared elected; in case of a failure, fresh election should be conducted.

- Entire cost of election should be borne by the government.



"It is also in the interests of a tyrant to keep his people poor, so that they may not be able to afford the cost of protecting themselves by arms and be so occupied with their daily tasks that they have no time for rebellion."

- Aristotle



"The civilized have created the wretched, quite coldly and deliberately, and do not intend to change the status quo; are responsible for their slaughter and enslavement; rain down bombs on defenseless children whenever and wherever they decide that their 'vital interests' are menaced, and think nothing of torturing a man to death: these people are not to be taken seriously when they speak of the 'sanctity' of human life, or the 'conscience' of the civilized world. " – James Baldwin

What Will Prevent Prout System From Leading to Autocratic Dictatorship?

In a Proutistic system, it is centralization of only political power and not executive, judiciary, economic etc. Administrators or leaders elected through the selecto-electional system will be fundamentally responsible to the electorate. Empowered by PROUT's principles of maximum utilization and rational distribution the electorate will be conscious and vigilant to make sure that their elected representatives neither go astray, deviate, nor grow ambitious to usurp power beyond the limits imposed by the constitution or the guiding rules of administration. Autocratic dictatorship emerges only when the dictator or his/her group is able to fool the people or the electorate and the latter is not responsive quickly enough to the pressure exercised over them.

PROUT denounces the concept of concentrating any power in one person and advocates the concept of "collective leadership" at every stage. Even though the Collective Body is given ultimate authority in the land, with no other body restraining it, there is no

possibility of autocracy or totalitarianism for various reasons. First, the Collective Body provides collective leadership, and power is not vested with one person only. Secondly, it is answerable to the mass-conscious Electoral College and ultimately to the general public. In Proutistic political system, the selected electorate will elect representatives to the political administrative institutions of the State using their capacity, quality, popularity and inquisitiveness. They will remain ever vigilant and involved in the working of the administration, and keep a close watch over their behavior and activities, in their individual as well as collective life, which, although so much advocated and desired, is rarely observed by today's passive electorate. Thirdly, the members of the Collective Body themselves satisfy certain credentials of honesty and integrity. They can never go against the common good and welfare. Fourthly, the proutist system calls for a full guarantee of all the human rights including the right to free speech, criticism, assembly and employment. As long as the media are free and independent, no system is likely to lapse into autocracy.

How Proutistic System is Unique?

Under communism, fascism or dictatorship all the powers of administration tend to get concentrated in one person or a group. The administrative machinery becomes completely committed to a fear-psychosis generated by the rich person or a group.

In present-day democracies, there is also an acute dependence of legislative and executive functionaries upon a person or a group of persons, whether it is a parliamentary system or a presidential one. As a result, the entire administration gets politically involved and decisions get politically tainted. In the final analysis the majority suffer.

Under the Proutistic system, the administration and bureaucracy are to be guided by the "rules of law" without any fear or favour. The only commitment of the administration will be towards the ideal of PROUT. The scientific system of **"separation of Political and Economic powers"** will enable the administration to act, undauntedly and without fear or favour.



Are Some Suicides More Important Than Others?

According to NCRB data for 2014, the suicide rate for 'housewives' was more than double that of farmers, though the latter gets far more media attention. What does this really indicate?

★ Jahnvi Sen

2014, National Crime Records Bureau data showed that 20,148 housewives took their own lives across the country. This amounts to approximately 18% of all suicides that year.

A recent article in the *Economic and Political Weekly* by political scientist Peter Mayer takes this data as the basis for questioning why media coverage on suicide by housewives is strikingly low. He compares coverage on farmers' suicides to that of "housewives", saying that the Indian media has a sensationalist, stereotyped approach to covering farmers' suicides that does not follow any ethical guidelines.

When talking about farmers' suicides, Mayer argues that the media almost never treats the individual suicide in question as the principal subject. Rather, it is an example to highlight the plight of a larger section of workers. He compares the vignettes from surviving family members to pictures of malnourished children from Africa—portrayals that have been criticised for their stereotypical nature and lack of complexity, and even for reinforcing regional hierarchies.

Mayer also makes the point that the media would have you

believe that all farmers who take their lives are male, based mainly in central India, and are driven to suicide because of economic distress. None of these inferences are factual, he goes on to say.

The highest number of farmer suicides are in fact in the south. NCRB data show that the suicide rate of female farmers was only very slightly lower than their male counterparts in 1997, though the gap between the two has grown dramatically in recent times. However, in 2014, the suicide rates of both male and female agricultural

labourers were higher than for farm owners—something that is "invisibilised" in discussions.

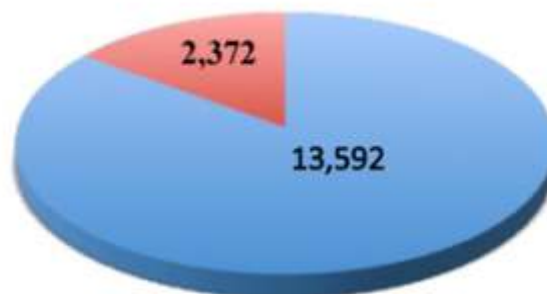
Comparing the 2014 number for housewife suicides (20,148) to the number of farmer suicides in that same year yields an answer very different from the one media reports articulate, Mayer argues. The number of housewife suicides is 250% higher than the number of farmer suicides (5,650 in 2014). In the same year, the suicide rate for housewives was 13.3 per lakh, and the equivalent for self-employed in agriculture was 6.3 (male) and 1.4 (female).

Yet media coverage on the suicides of married women remains close to zero, Mayer argues.

Ideologically Driven Reporting'

For Mayer, this is because of the way that agricultural suicides are "framed" in media reports, showing an ideological preference for the

Women farmers, too, commit suicide



■ Farmers suicide cases (male)
■ Farm suicide cases (female)

agricultural policies of pre-1990s liberalisation. This is why, he says, farmer suicides are immediately linked to economic distress resulting from various post-liberalisation policies: BT cotton, competition from cheap imports and higher input prices. Suicides resulting from depression or other mental illness, drug abuse, etc. are not equally highlighted, “because they do not fit into the anti-globalisation frame which dominates much of Indian media”.

Irrespective of how one feels about economic liberalisation and the policies that came with it, Mayer sees this kind of framing of Indian suicides as “destructive”. It does not bring in the psychiatric factors that may lead to suicides the lack of

women committing suicide is so high, Patel said: “We can only speculate on this, but the most plausible reason is related to gender disadvantage, i.e. the limited agency that young women, the group of married women who have the highest suicide rates, have to choose their own partners and to enjoy equal rights in a marital relationship, notably the right to freedom from harassment and violence. Add to that the lack of mental health literacy and access to services, and you have a perfect storm.”

P. Sainath is arguably the most prolific journalistic writer about agrarian distress and farmers' suicides in India, and the first name that comes to mind when thinking about Indian media coverage of

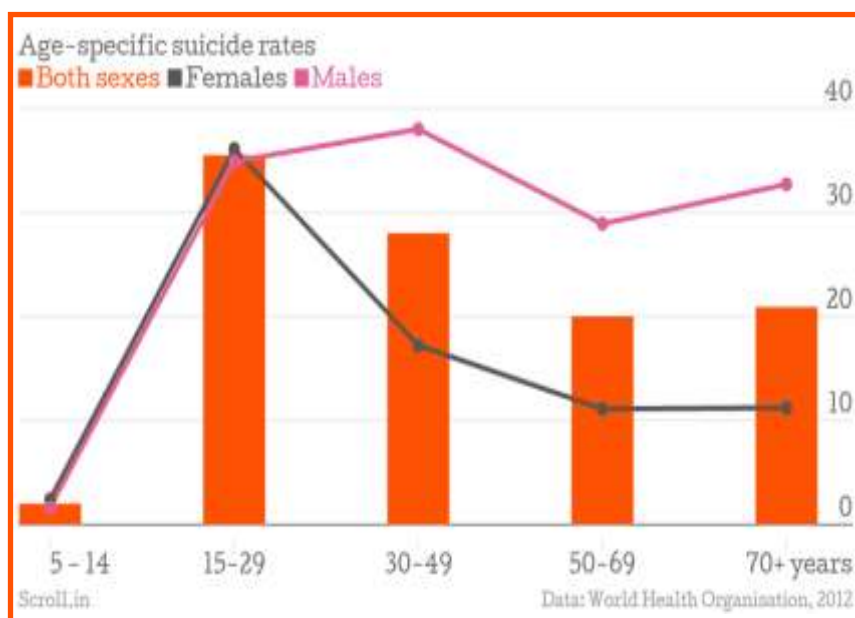
thing to do in this country is to classify a woman as a housewife. She may be a petty vendor, or doing some sort of piece-rate work at home, but she'll be called 'housewife'.”

Sainath's work has in fact mentioned this problem, well before the release of Mayer's article. In an August 2015 article in *Frontline*, he wrote:

“Women farmers' suicides are routinely undercounted because conventional societies mostly do not acknowledge women as farmers. And only a few have their names on title deeds or *pattas*. One result of this is that the 'housewives' category explodes in those years when states claim nil women farmers' suicides. In some states, 'housewives' (including many who are farmers but not so acknowledged) make up 70% of all women suicides in certain years.” He made a similar argument in an article published by the India International Centre in 2010, saying, “Why I say that the [NCRB] numbers are authentic but not accurate is because a lot of social and other prejudice goes into defining who is a farmer”.

Perhaps thousands of women farmers have not had their suicides recorded. Their suicides are recorded as suicides by farmers' wives or daughters. Now if you take the data too literally, then the best place in the world to be a farmer is Haryana, which has never had a woman farmer suicide because they don't concede that women can be farmers.”

Sainath also critiqued Mayer's point on the “invisible” suicides of tenant farmers. “It is worth noting that these arguments always use 2014 as an example,” he said. “That was the year where the government changed the way it classified suicide data. Before, there was one broad category called 'farmer suicides'. But the agriculture ministry under Sharad Pawar changed the classification in order to make the numbers appear smaller they created different categories for farmers, tenant farmers and



support services and mental illness awareness and care. Public policy needs to respond to these issues, and according to him for that it is essential that the media not portray them as non-existent.

Mayer is not alone in his views. Vikram Patel, professor of international mental health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, told that the “sensational reporting of farmer suicides represents a strong ideologically driven bias in how health issues are reported in India.”

On why the rate of married

these issues. For him, Mayer's article did not do justice to the reality of the situation. “This debate is not new,” he told *The Wire*, referring to Mayer's article. “But all these arguments [like Mayer's] take no note of how the data is collected.”

Misleading Numbers?

“The first thing I want to say is that we are not into comparing victimhoods. Women's suicides are terribly high. But here's the problem many of those groups overlap strongly. Thousands of those “housewives” are in fact women farmers who are not counted as such ... The easiest

agricultural labourers. Tenant farmers are regularly classified as agricultural labourers in India, since there is no document signed between the landowner and the tenant, it is a completely informal arrangement. Top policemen have said that they don't know how the NCRB could create this new classification, as the police are not equipped to make these distinctions. Thousands of tenant farmer suicides are then placed in the agricultural labourer category. This is not to say that there is no suicide among agricultural labourers, but that the suicide of tenant farmers is under reported by incorrect classification."

Both Matter

Others working on issues of agrarian distress as well as gender were also critical of Mayer's approach, saying that his arguments were as "politically motivated" as the ones he was critiquing. They also felt that the two important issues of suicides by farmers' and married women both need to be looked at, and not presented in a way that makes it seem as if one is taking away from the other.

Economist and activist Jean Dreze, who has worked on issues around rural distress in India for years, said that while the issue of farmers' suicides is real, it may arise in waves and in certain regional pockets such that they do have a big impact in terms of figures and aggregate suicide rates. "The observation that suicide rates among married women are much higher is important," he added. "But I see it more as a pointer to a further neglected problem than as evidence that the problem of farmer suicides is a figment of the imagination."

Feminist activist and researcher Kalyani Menon-Sen had more serious problems with Mayer's views after an initial reading of the article, saying that he was being not just apolitical but "anti-political". She questioned why the author felt the political "framing" of suicides is wrong, and how he could imply the agrarian crisis was a creation of the media's imagination.

TRAPPED INSIDE THE FOUR WALLS

Of the 15 people who commit suicide every hour in India, around 17% are housewives, shows NCRB data

➤ Of the 1.3 lakh people who committed suicide in 2013, **almost 23,000 were women**

➤ Among suicides by women, a whopping **51.4% are by housewives**

➤ "Non-worker and marginal worker" female population engaged in "household duties" makes up only **33 per cent of the entire female population**

 **The stresses and pressures faced by housewives are a leading cause behind their committing suicide**

— K.R. RENUKA,
Director, Centre for
Women's Development
and Research

Speaking on the issue of the under reporting on the suicides of married women, Menon-Sen told *The Wire* that being surprised by that meant that the author was "completely blind to gender politics", since feminists have been routinely talking about "the patriarchal filters that media reports are passed through".

In addition, she also questioned the gender bias in the NCRB's data. "Gender politics also plays out in the NCRB data on women's suicides. In many cases, the police refuse to treat deaths of married women inside the marital home as murder, and register them as suicide despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary," she said. "Husbands literally get away with murder in this country, especially if they are from privileged families that can bring their class and caste power to bear on the police and ensure that the unnatural death of a wife or daughter-in-law (or mother for that matter) is made into a suicide for which the woman herself can be blamed."

"On the point of mental health being one of the most neglected areas in India, and of the almost total absence of any kind of support for the risk of suicide I agree with the author," Menon-Sen added.

Economist Utsa Patnaik

seconded what Menon-Sen said on the politics of Mayer's view. Farmers suicides, she said, are qualitatively different from the suicides of married women. "The evidence suggests that the rate of farmers' suicide has gone up in the last two decades, owing to particular public policy measures which have increased greatly the risk to their incomes, and these policy measures have been undertaken by our successive governments not so much because they independently thought of it, but at the insistence of advanced countries and international financial institutions that everything should be left to the market. So, if specific policy measures have increased risk of suddenly reduced incomes for farmers, driven them into debt-trap, and driven a section to suicide then clearly the question will arise: why continue to follow these policies?"

Both sides of this debate put a spotlight on the prevalence of suicides in India, and the disproportionate rates of suicide within certain population cohorts (whether farmers or women who work at home). This points to certain social, economic and cultural inequalities that need to be studied and addressed ranging from material conditions to access to mental health support.

Revolution Begins in 2016

New Book by Ravi Batra Predicts

★ Dr. Archana Kaushik

Ravi Batra, author of *End Unemployment Now: How to Eliminate Joblessness, Debt and Poverty Despite Congress*, has made a career out of making accurate forecasts. He claims an over 90 percent success rate in his predictions that seem to be borne out by what he has written in the past. For instance, in two books penned in 1978 and 1980, he foresaw the fall of Soviet communism before the end of the century, a forecast that earned him the medal of the Italian Senate in 1990.

In another book published in 2006 and noted for its predictive

accuracy, *The New Golden Age: The Coming Revolution against Political Corruption and Economic Chaos*, he made forecasts for the next 10 years. He prophesied a very deep recession starting in 2007, along with a lingering malaise and stagnation at least till 2016. The title of this book says it all. He also foresaw the Bush and Obama bailouts along with a giant increase in federal debt. Regarding oil, he predicted a continuing bubble that would crash after 2012. It seems everything he said or wrote in 2006 has come true.

What is in store for us in 2016?

That is where his new book, *End Unemployment Now*, comes in. "2016 is going to be a year of the climax," says Batra, an economics professor at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. "It will be a year in which a revolution begins against the rule of money, leading to economic reforms by 2018. After that a golden age starts and is in place around the end the decade."

End Unemployment Now (www.ravibatra.com) explains the reason behind what is now known as The Great Recession and offers a variety of reforms. "The main cause of our troubles is monopoly

"The coming revolution will catapult the United States and India into a warrior's democracy. This is because the opponents of the prevailing capitalist regime will have to display extreme courage and valour, qualities that belong only to warriors. Nobody surrenders power on a silver platter. The capitalists and their cronies will fight tooth and nail before surrendering to the revolution, but their defeat is ordained by the law of the social cycle. My calculations indicate that the laws of Nature now favour the warriors; these laws will disrupt the status quo, unite the people and goad them into a...revolt, until the capitalist regime is deposed...We will have to persevere in order to open a new chapter in the ever-flowing spring of civilization. Our success is assured, because history is about to repeat itself: after the downfall of the American business empire will come a global golden age."

— Ravi Batra

capitalism, which is a system dominated by giant companies that charge high prices, pay low wages and extract huge productivity from employees," says Batra. "As a result, supply rises faster than demand and generates layoffs. So the solution lies in breaking up the behemoths and returning to free markets, where small firms engage in price and quality competition."

However, politicians are beholden to wealthy corporations and will not permit such reforms, at least until the revolution. Batra says there are existing laws that any U.S. president can use to quickly eradicate poverty and joblessness, making Congress irrelevant to the restoration of prosperity. For instance, the president can ask the FDIC to create what is known as a "bridge bank" that would compete with large banks. This step could trim interest rates on credit cards by as much as 66 percent, he says. "Using The FDIC alone can cut poverty in half in just a week," an outlandish claim that, according to Batra, "depends on the president acting courageously like the FDR and not worry about the political fallout." Further steps include gradually raising the minimum wage in concert with inflation and national productivity levels, and preserving competition by not allowing large profitable firms to merge.

Batra offers far-reaching proposals to end joblessness quickly. Taking a broader overview of unemployment than the narrow definition employed to boost claims for the strength of economic recovery, the author offers a macroeconomic look at the causes of joblessness and income inequality. "The ultimate source of joblessness," he writes, "is monopoly capitalism, which enables industrial giants...to charge exorbitant prices while restraining wages and extracting huge productivity from employees. This creates overproduction, hence layoffs." Batra disagrees with those who believe that domination by virtual monopoly corporations is

"PROUT is the panacea for the integrated progress of human society. It aims to bring about equilibrium and equipoise in all aspects of socio-economic life through totally restructuring economics. Without PROUT, socio-economic emancipation will remain a utopian dream. Only PROUT can save the world from depression.

Furthermore, only PROUT is free from the inherent and exherent staticity. In capitalism there is exherent and inherent staticity. In communism there is extensive and intensive innate staticity. People suffer from the ailments of staticity. These ailments will destroy all forms of "isms" in the very near future. Wise people should utilize this moment.

We are near the last stage of the Capitalist Era. If an impact is created, it will help the suffering humanity. It is the most opportune moment for creating an all-round revolution."

- Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

part of the proper functioning of a free market. He advocates for the use of the executive branch to adopt and enforce regulations to launch a shift away from corporate domination and toward truly freer markets. Interestingly, he recommends as a model the approach adopted by American occupation authorities in Japan and Germany after World War II. Japanese industries were configured as vertical monopolies and called Zaibatsu, which "earned high profits by keeping wages low." The U.S. military dissolved them and the owners were removed from their positions. The conglomerates were then broken up into the smaller, more agile and creative pieces, which helped Japan recover from the war with free market methods. The U.S. military did the same to Germany's war economy, breaking up IG Farben, which provided the gas for many concentration camps. Batra believes "the president has to take charge and

deliver the poor and middle class from the damning status quo." The author argues that the president should break up the corporate monopolies of the finance and retail sectors, along with oil and pharmaceutical industries, by administrative fiat. A similar approach, he argues, could be adopted to reregulate foreign trade. An innovative approach that will appeal to those who question current claims of economic recovery. If recent financial turmoil is any indication, we may do well to pay heed to Batra's words.

About Ravi Batra

Dr. Ravi Batra, a professor of economics at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, is the author of five international bestsellers. In 1990, the Italian Prime Minister awarded him a Medal of the Italian Senate for writing a book that correctly predicted the downfall of Soviet communism, 15 years before it happened.

I Have Become a Hero

Shrii Shrii Ānandamūrti

Life is to fight.⁽¹⁾ Now when one starts fight, then he becomes a man in human structure. He is no longer a brute in human structure, he is a man in human structure. And in that phase he says: “O Lord, by Your mercy, by Your grace, I have become a hero, I have started fighting against debasing forces functioning within my mind, functioning within my family, functioning within the society. So by Your grace I have become a hero. I am a hero, I am a viira, thou art Vireshvara [Lord of Heroes].”

So in the second phase of sādhanā, Pashupati⁽²⁾ becomes Vireshvara. It is another name of Lord Shiva. Pashupati becomes Vireshvara. And as a result of further fight, when this fighting tendency, this belligerent tendency, becomes his wont, in that case He becomes a deva, he is called a deva.

Dyotate kriidate yasmādudyate dyotate divi;

Tasmāt deva iti proktah stūyate sarvadevataeh.

[The vibrational manifestations emanating from the Supreme Nucleus are known as devatās or devas; and these devatas address that Supreme Nucleus as “(Mahā)deva”. He with His powers vibrates the entire universe, makes the entire universe dance; and He by dint of His occult and supra-occult powers brings everything back onto His lap.]

So he becomes a deva. And he says: “O Lord, by Your mercy I have become a deva, a god.” (Deva means “god in human structure”). “And Thou art my Lord, Thou art Mahādeva.” So in the third stage that very Lord becomes Mahādeva. Pashupati becomes Vireshvara, Vireshvara becomes Mahādeva according to the status or phase of sādhanā of the spiritual aspirant.

Now, this fight, this fight against the eccentric force fighting, eccentric force functioning, in the world, is actually the sādhanā. You know, in each and every structure, there are two forces, the centripetal force and the centrifugal force. In the case of this Cosmological world, in the case of this Cosmological system, in the case of this Brahma Cakra, the centripetal force, the centre-seeking force, is called vidyā, and the centrifugal force is called avidyā. So this spiritual practice, or intuition practice, is a fight between vidyā and avidyā. A sādhanā is to strengthen his vidyā, his centripetal force, in his movement towards the nave of this Cosmological order, towards the nucleus of this Cosmological order because of the fact that this Cosmological Nucleus is the nucleus of all other nuclei of the universe. It is the abode of supreme beatitude. All other nuclei of the universe are sheltered in Him... There is no other way. If one wants peace of permanent nature, if one has developed the longing for supreme beatitude, one has no alternative but to move towards this Supreme Nucleus; and this movement is sādhanā. And while moving towards this Supreme Nucleus, one will have to fight against the centrifugal force, the avidyā shakti.

In this fight against avidyā shakti one must have sufficient weapons. You know, a soldier requires weapons, and sādhanā is a fight. In your internal sphere, that is, in your mind, you should have ten weapons. Those ten weapons are five Yama and five Niyama [moral principles]. And similarly, while fighting against evil forces in this crude physicality, you should have ultra-modern physical weapons also. Those who want disarmament and those who want to ban the atom bomb are not friends of human society. They do not want to accelerate the speed of human society. Rather they want to retard its progress. Weapons you must have, but you should have control over your body and mind. There must not be any abuse or misuse of your weapons.

Now, in this progress, that is, in the realm of intuitionism, you should have ten internal weapons Yama and Niyama and your progress in sādhanā depends on jināna, karma and bhakti.⁽³⁾ Your progress is effected by jināna and karma.⁽⁴⁾

Footnotes

(1) This discourse begins on the tape with the words “... never-ending [or unending] effort to restore an unstable equilibrium”. This is followed by “Life is to fight.” Elsewhere the author has said: “Life is a constant effort to restore an unstable equilibrium.” Eds.

(2) Lord of those in the animalistic first phase of sādhanā. Pashu means “animal”. Eds.

(3) Jināna, karma and bhakti are forms of spiritual practice which emphasize, respectively, discrimination, selfless action, and devotion. Eds.

(4) This discourse ends here on the tape with the words “But the final union with the Sup”. The complete sentence must have said that the final union with the Supreme is effected by bhakti. Eds.

Menschliche Welt at Ramstein Peace Action

We participated in the peace and protests on 10 and 11th June in Ramstein and Kaiserslautern.

At an event in the Church of Reconciliation in Kaiserslautern, Dada Madhuvidyananda (the leader of the party) presented the 150 participants about the mission and work of the Proutist party, Menschliche Welt. Dada's speech was received with loud applause. Then he was interviewed by the TV Open Channel of Kaiserslautern about his work and recommendations for obtaining internal peace.

Dada met with Elsa Rossbach (CODEPINK Spokesperson for Germany) and Ray McGovern (Leading US peace activist, former CIA analyst).

Dada also met with Ken Jebson of Ken FM whose enormous efforts for peace, independent media and political public education we appreciated. Many participants of Ramstein Peace Action have seen Dada before, because they saw his interview on KenFM with Bilbo Calvez.

Dada Madhuvidyananda and Harimaya participated in a human chain programme around the US military base at Ramstein.

Why Proutists were there

The United States keeps more than 10,000 military troops in Germany and uses bases in Germany for war against Africa and also for drone wars in the Middle East. Drones are mechanical devices used to assassinate enemies of NATO without a trial to determine their guilt. As per official records more than 90% of the people killed have been innocent bystanders. This drone war programme launched via Ramstein Base war is inhumane and against German and International law.

The military expansion policy of NATO countries and the nuclear arms race increases the danger of war in Europe and endangering the lives of billions of people worldwide. To eliminate this risk, Proutists have to make enormous efforts.

Menschliche Welt works through: dissemination of meditation and spirituality, extra-parliamentary opposition and cooperation with progressive people and groups campaigning for parliamentary opposition and accept political responsibility for the victims of these crimes. Above all the party works to spread the ideal of a holistic society (PROUT), via popular education and the development of holistic projects and communities. Led by Dada, Proutists in Germany are working with urgency to it to direct the social trend in a new direction.



Girls Proutist Movement in Uttar Dinajpur (WB)



On June 13th, the Girls Proutist unit of Uttar Dinajpur District of West Bengal submitted a memorandum to the DM (District Magistrate) regarding ten women issues. They included: free education for all women (since in many places the literacy of women is half that of men), economic security and empowerment for women at all levels, ending the all-round exploitation of women in the cultural, social, economic and religious spheres, police in the district should take action against all forms of dowry exploitation, banning the encouragement of vulgar dress by the corporate media, respectful rehabilitation of prostitutes and the closing of

their prisons and finally ensuring practical justice for rape victims in the district and higher courts.

In addition, a procession has been taken out to protest against the common abuses of women that are part of daily life. The protest lasted from 3.30 PM to 6.00 PM and in different corners of Raiganj market public meetings were organised. About 200 Girls Proutist attended the said programme.

On this occasion a District Committee was also formed. The programme was organised by Avadhutika Ananda Advaeta Acarya. This is the first of many such programmes to be carried out by Girls Proutists.

Prabhata Samgiita Research Awakening Readers in Assam

Recently, research on Prabhata Samgiit was performed by Professor Amalendu Chakravarty, a Professor of the Bengali Department, Guwahati University. It is called *Bharatiya Samskriti Alope - Prabhata Samgiita* [The Radiance of Indian Culture - Prabhata Samgiita]. His thesis was published in book form by Ananda Marga Pracharak Samgha Publications. This book was reviewed by a leading Bengali newspaper, Dainik Yugasan, from Guwahati.

The review begins by saying "The great philosopher, Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, founder of Ananda Marga, has come on this Earth with infinite divine power. He has established the Ananda Marga organisation and that is why he is called Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji. He has multifarious capacities and poetry and song composition was one of them. These songs are known as Prabhata Samgiita.

"The history of the composition of the creation of these songs is divine. He understood the urgent need of music and thus within a short span of time (1982-1990) he composed more than 5000 songs. Not only in Indian literature but even in global literature this number is amazing. Of great interest in these songs is that He never wrote any of these songs but gave them by dictation. He has composed the songs in eight different languages which includes Bengali, Sanskrit, Urdu, Angika, Hindi, Maithili, Magahi and English. The complete songs were published in ten volumes and the tunes are given by him as well. In global literature Prabhata Samgiita is an unparalleled contribution.

"Shrii Prabhata Ranjan Sarkar in the age of Marxism gave the Progressive Utilisation Theory, a socio-economic philosophy. In the 20th century, to establish universal love, cosmic brotherhood and service to all beings, He gave Neo-Humanism. In addition, Shrii Prabhata Ranjan Sarkar has given discourses on social philosophy, geology, archaeology, art, aesthetics, linguistics, yoga psychology, yogic medicines, liberation of women, ecology and much more. Literally hundreds of books of His exist as a legacy for humanity.

"Furthermore the author of this book discussed many issues related to Prabhata Samgiita. These included comparisons of Prabhata Samgiita with Vedic, Bhakti, bhakti philosophy, Neo-Humanism, Shiva literature. A great universal, infinite feelings of Consciousness is found in these songs.

Prabhata Samgiita Number 2526 was found to be full of Neo-Humanistic ideas arising from modern and ancient civilizations. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti began from the Upanishadic worldview and took the reader onto universal knowledge and humanism. This is the beauty of Shrii Shrii Anandamurti's philosophy."



PBI Delhi State Committee Gears Up for Action

On June 19th, a meeting of the state committee of PBI took place in Prout Bhavan, Delhi. The purpose of the meeting was how to make PROUT a force in Delhi. The Secretary of Universal Proutist Liberation Front (UPLF), Y. B. Singh emphasized that the Proutists take part in movements against the problems faced by the people. This alone will help build PROUT. Among the main sectors where the public faces pressure from various mafias is the Education Sector.

- 1) Government schools are becoming smaller in number and quality is always a problem. The poor parents cannot fight for proper facilities and proper education
- 2) Private schools, even at the cheaper rate routinely exploit parents and find new reasons for hiking the fees as well as demand bribes for admitting new students due to fierce competition for seats
- 3) Small colleges routinely exploit poor students who come from other states and who are not educated enough to protest and fight for their rights. This is a problem also in small government colleges for weaker sections.
- 4) Private universities and colleges demand capitation fees for admission and thus many talented students are denied seats.

No party will fight the mafias in the education sector. PBI has taken up the challenge to research the problems and then start active people's movements to fight for the people's rights and to end the various forms of corruption and mafias that control the sector.

Another issues discussed were the upcoming municipal elections in Delhi next year. The members attending the meeting made a commitment to find and recruit honest candidates for these elections in their areas. Everyone realised that this work needs to begin from the present, as time is short. Through these two programmes PBI will awaken the people of Delhi to realise that only PROUT can break apart the web of exploitation and corruption.

Ashok Sachdeva, the vice-chairman of the State Committee chaired the meeting. He said that raising sufficient fund for the party is of paramount importance. Various suggestions were made for fund raising including regular monthly contributions of Rs 100 by the functionaries of the State Committee.

Others who expressed their views included Baidyanath Shah, the General Secretary of the State Committee, Trilok Singh, Vice- Chairman of the National Committee, Vikash Sharma, Vinod Tiwari, Sudesh Kumar besides the National Convener of the Party, Acarya Santosananda Avadhuta.

UPLF National Convention In Delhi

On 5 June, 2016, 51st annual national convention of Universal Proutist Labour Federation (UPLF) was held at Gautam Public School, sector 58, Noida, which was attended by more than 200 people besides UPLF's chairman Y.B. Singh, General Secretary Ranjeet Singh, Omprakash, Ajay Kumar, Ashok Sachdeva, R.K. Shrivastav, Ashok Singh and Vinod Kumar, Delhi State General Secretary S.V. Dube and Sanjay Singh, Gautam Budh District General Secretary S.N. Pandey, Gautam Budh district Secretary Raju Khan, Rudrmani Pandey and Arvind Tiwari, PBI's National Convener Acharya Santosanand Avadhuta, General Secretary Rajesh Singh and PBI's Parliamentary Board's Chairman Gopalji Singh.

Speaking on this occasion Y. B. Singh said that farmers and workers are the foundation of any country, but it is sad to see that today they are suffering the most. On the one hand farmers are dying by the hundreds, and on the other hand, the workers are being exploited mercilessly. They have to fight fierce battles even to secure the minimum wages; they don't get yearly increment, bonus or overtime. While their counterparts in the government sector get 74 to 89 leaves in a year, they don't get even 15 yearly leaves, 7 casual leaves and 9 festival leaves; they are thrown out of jobs without any rhyme or reason. In case of a dispute, they can't hope to get justice from a labour court in less than 10-20 years. MPs and MLAs get Rs. 50,000 as a pension, which is half of their salary. Government employees get at least Rs. 15,000 as pension. But the workers in private sector get only Rs. 600 as their pension. He said that UPLF wants to change this situation. He said that UPLF demands that the minimum salary should be high enough to provide for their basic necessities to enable them to live a respectable life, while the maximum salary must not be more than ten times of the minimum wages.

Rajesh Singh said that today a handful of people own most of the world's wealth. Merely 1% of world's population possesses more than the total wealth owned by 99% of the world's population. This economic disparity has resulted in poverty, unemployment, economic depression and corruption. He asked, "If government cannot print unlimited number of currency notes, how can a few people be allowed to own unlimited wealth. If we wish to solve these problems, we will have to implement Amiiriii Rekha."

Acharya Santosanand Avadhuta said that no matter how good a theory is, it cannot be materialized if the people trying to implement it are not moralists. He said that even present laws can solve many of our problems if they are implemented honestly. He asked the audience to try and be moralists in their personal life and then work for society.

Gopalji Singh said, "According to Article 39C of the Indian constitution, the government should ensure that the resources of the country don't get concentrated in the hands of a few people. But the kind of economic disparity we see these days gives the impression that the government has dumped the constitution into the dustbin. He said that without giving the workers their due, we can't hope to create a just society. He expressed the hope that UPLF will succeed in securing justice for the toiling masses.



Ashok Sachdeva, General Secretary of UPLF, said that our organisation should give a memorandum of the demands of the workers to the PM, CM, Chief Justice and the concerned departments of the government, and if the demands are not addressed satisfactorily, we should be prepared for sit-ins, voluntary arrests etc. as the last resort. S.N. Pandey said that he will try his best to strengthen UPLF in UP and make it powerful enough to solve the problems of the workers.

On this occasion some office-bearers of UPLF were appointed and some resolutions were passed.



DANCING & DESTROYING BONDAGES

JHARNÁ ÁMI UCCHAL JAL DHÁRÁ, JHARANÁ
ADRIR KATHÁ DRAVITA VÁRTÁ SINDHUTE
PAONCHÁI MADHU MUKHARÁ
UCCHAL JAL DHÁRÁ, JHARANÁ
JHARNÁ ÁMI UCCHAL JAL DHÁRÁ, JHARANÁ

I am the turbulent waters
Of a cascading waterfall.
Tales from the mountains
News from molten ice
I carry to the sea
With sweet clamour.

KONO BÁ-DHÁI MORE BÁNDHITE NÁHI PÁRE
DEATYÁKÁR KÁRÁ RODHITE NÁRE MORE PRÁNA
CANCAL ÁMI HOYE JÁI PÁGAL PÁRÁ
UCCHAL JAL DHÁRÁ, JHARANÁ JHARNÁ ÁMI
UCCHAL JAL DHÁRÁ, JHARANÁ

No obstacle is capable of binding me.
Demons cannot imprison or obstruct me.
With restless vitality
I am like the ones who are mad with love.

KONO BÁDHÁ KEI ÁMI KAKHANO NÁHI DÁRI
VISHUŚKA KANTHA SUDHÁ NIIRE DII BHARI KAL
KALOCCHAL ÁMI NECE JÁI BÁNDHAN HÁRÁ
UCCHAL JAL DHÁRÁ, JHARANÁ JHARNÁ ÁMI
UCCHAL JAL DHÁRÁ, JHARANÁ

No obstacle can make me afraid any time
Parched throats I fill with sweet water.
Murmuring with excitement
I go on dancing
Destroying bondages.

With best compliments from



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