

ST. XAVIER'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), MUMBAI
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE



SAMVAD **2018-19**

The Idea of Identity

Cover & Design
Charuta Ghadyalpatil

SAMVAD 2018-19

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our professors Dr. Pratiba Naitthani, Head of the Political Science Department and Prof. Aradhana Talwar for giving me this wonderful opportunity to lead Samvad 2018-2019. Their constant guidance, support and belief enabled us to bring out the best in the magazine.

I would like to sincerely thank the hardworking Samvad Team of 2018-19. Ishita Puri and Taanvi Shah from First year, Khushi Desai and Dylan D'Souza from Second year and Saumilee Sali and Prutha Pandharkame from Third year. It is because of their constant efforts and enthusiasm that the writers could express their thought to their full potential in this edition. I would also like to thank Charuta Ghadyalpatil, who worked with the magazine to ensure its layout and design.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to all the writers. It is because of their hard work and cooperation and the belief in the theme, that the magazine could be what it is.

Last but not the least, I would like to thank our principal Dr. Rajendra Shinde. It is his encouragement and support towards the department that allows us to take up such endeavours successfully.

FOREWORD

Rightly following the tradition, the Department of Political Science yet again has successfully published the annual magazine of the Department of Political Science 'Samvad' for the academic year 2018-19. The theme of the department activities this year was 'The Idea of Identity' and hence the theme for Samvad is also the same. Identity is crucial and integral to every individual, to every community. Presently, a lot is happening in the national and international space that brings us back to this idea of identity of the human kind.

Just like the department encourages students to go beyond their academic pursuits and syllabus in understanding politics and its reality, Samvad too, gave the opportunity to the students to sharpen their research and writing skills by submitting research papers and articles. The papers and articles cover the varied perspectives under this huge umbrella of identity and provide the readers with the most comprehensive understanding of the importance of the same.

The magazine also includes interviews of eminent personalities such as Irom Sharmila and Wilson Bezwada who have worked diligently for the rights of the communities and bring their ideas of Identity to this edition.

I would like to congratulate all the members of the editorial team of Samvad 2018-19 who worked diligently to shape up the magazine with best of the content. I thank all our young writers who came forward to contribute to the magazine. I express my heartfelt gratitude to everybody involved in the process of publishing this magazine, especially our Editor -in-Chief, Gokul Lavania, who has been a part of the editorial board for consecutive three years. The printing of the hard copies would not have been possible without the generous contributions of our sponsors, we are grateful to them. A special thank you to Prof. Aradhna Talwar, for extending all the support and help throughout. I hope that this edition of the Samvad is well-received by its readers.

Finally, I would like to thank the Principal of our college, Dr. Rajendra Shinde who has always been very cooperative and supportive in all the endeavours of the department.

Dr Pratiba Naitthani
Head - Department of Political Science

EDITORIAL

Identity is universally sacred. From oppression of an identity, to the unspoken narrative of another; from the need of empowerment of an identity to the desire of representation of another. All of politics and beyond condenses itself within the issues of identity politics. As it is the security of this identity that drives most primordial human nature and action.

Truly understanding the omnipotent nature of identity, the magazine went ahead with the theme 'the Idea of Identity' for its 2018-19 edition of *Samvad*. In making of this theme, the magazine envisaged a discussion that brought together varied disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology and others to understand this politics of identity. Hence, the magazine presents articles that range from discussing the institutional subjugation of caste identity in the UK as well as Jammu and Kashmir. While also understanding identity in relation to language and gender. The magazine also showcases various research papers that further dwell into the psychological drain of the Indian identity as a repercussion of the British rule, while also including diverse themes of gastro-politics, the Dravidian identity and even the growing Southeast Asian identity in the international forum.

The magazine further had the opportunity to present interviews of dignitaries such as Irom Sharmila, who has spent a lifetime fighting for the rights of the people of the northeast. It also features an interview of Mr. Wilson Bezwada, who has been a pioneer in the fight against institutional caste oppression and manual scavenging. Their perspectives, truly bring to light the importance of identity and its protection within the socio-political realm.

Samvad has consistently provided students with a platform to uncover and research areas that are imperative and relevant to the national and international scenarios. The hardwork and dedication of the team and the writers has proven for yet another enlightening edition of the magazine. It is an attempt at presenting unique and compelling perspectives not only from students but also from internationally renowned dignitaries. Hence, through the further pages, *Samvad* hopes to broaden the horizons of the reader with a conglomeration of varied ideas of identities.

Gokul Lavania
Editor-in-Chief
Samvad 2018-19

SAMVAD 2018-19



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RESEARCH PAPERS

01.

Brain Drain or Identity Drain?

Authored by: Tanvi Sheth

Abstract: *The last three generations have been but a product of a gradually globalising and eventually globalised world. The chances for exchange of ideas and skills have been magnanimous ever since the world became comfortably and suitably industrialised. But of course, the pace of this modernization has been lopsided, for not every country in the world has the same amount of technological resources. Human capital flight, more popularly known as brain drain, is the migration of skilled labour from a developing country to a developed country. In this paper, the concern of brain drain will be studied with reference to India as the developing country, whose citizens emigrate for better future prospects to the United States of America, the Western developed country which serves as a harbour, among other countries, for Indians who wish to provide their capacities.*

Introduction

For India, brain drain is something that had started prior to Independence, continued afterwards, gained momentum in the 60s and 70s, and hasn't stopped since. Millions of young Indians from different disciplines have left the country to pursue professions in the U.S. There has been a steady rise in the number of people who have left the country due to the brain drain phenomenon. Data shows a 225% increase in the migration of people to the U.S.A. for education, work or permanent residency. The majority of those who have moved abroad to these countries are skilled professionals in the fields of medicine, engineering and management. But this migration of skilled labour is not only limited to technology (synonymous with Silicon Valley) and the second most-coveted – medical practice, but also to authors, poets, hoteliers as well as persons in the entertainment industry.

Hypothesis

This paper tries to understand brain drain from India to the United States of America, keeping in mind the consequences it has on the polity and economy of both countries as well as their relations with each other, the most important aspect being to understand the effects of brain drain on the identity of those people who migrate due to this phenomenon.

Research Methodology

This research paper derives information mainly from secondary sources such as research papers, books, and online sources.

Review of Literature

The two main research papers referred to throughout the study were Laurie Cohen et al's 2012 paper entitled 'Examining the interplay of career, migration and national cultural identity: The case of Indian scientists' and Binod Khadria's 'Case Study of the Indian Scientific Diaspora' (2003). The first study examines individual career migration across international borders, in the context of Indian scientists. In order to do so, the researchers have interviewed Indian scientists in the U.S. and U.K., attempting to understand their reasons for migrating to such foreign countries, and the benefits and losses that it yields them. The second study by Khadria focuses on the entire migrated Indian diaspora that has now formed its own identity. The study talks about practical realities and changes of/for this Indian diaspora which is a result of brain drain. A range of topics such as the general scenario of the host country, the networks formed by the diaspora, the educational and employment perspective, view and expectations of the home country (India) as well as public opinion on and measures taken to curb brain

drain are discussed.

Analysis

Causes

There are specific – but not exclusive – reasons why Indians, particularly the younger generations, opt for providing their skills to another country instead of their own. These reasons can be understood with the help of the terms ‘push and pull factors’, which effectively convey their meaning. The push factors include those aspects within India itself that are characteristically negative, such as a lag in the quality of higher education. Although universities have increased by a manifold in the last century itself along with the resources spent by the State to provide primary education, later studies do require a few tweaks to suit the fast-paced world as well as the intellect of Indian students. Another reason is unemployment; the number of job openings in the country is barely sufficient to cover the number of people seeking employment. A significant push factor that takes away specialists and entrepreneurs is the taxation policy in India, due to which a large proportion of the profits earned have to be paid away as taxes. On the other hand, perhaps the most important factor that lures Indians to the US is the wage gap. It is one of the major reasons why the Indian skilled labour force leaves to earn greater rewards for their specialized work. The difference in wage gap is a pull factor, which is a positive aspect of the developed country (U.S.A. in this case) to which people migrate to (Dodani & LaPorte, 2005).

These drivers of the exodus of skilled labourers over international boundaries are not only economic, but also cultural and political. It is not simply the desire of moving to the U.S.A. or its consequent demand for skilled labour that results in brain drain, but also the pro-skills immigration policies set up by the country that play a crucial role. The cultural politics of identity, mobility and globalisation involved in brain drain lead to the formation of such policies along with the process of reinventing identities, socio-political affiliations and national obligations (Rizvi, 2005). The Non Resident Indians (NRIs) in the U.S. have formed their own diaspora. They have created their own cosmopolitan, globalisation-based identities appropriate to the political dynamics of the western

country they reside in, and yet, have also retained their sense of “Indian-ness”. This multiculturalism, in the form of a combination of Eastern ethnicity and values and Western roles and ideologies, is a part and parcel of the brain drain, which is both a product of and a progression towards the formulation of free migration policies. The career experience as well as the way of living of an individual of Indian origin will in more ways than one be shaped by the temperament and characteristics specific to India, and will also have an effect on relationship between the country of origin and the host country.

Education and Recruitment Policies

This Indian diaspora has been a remarkably successful immigrant group in terms of educational and emotional achievement. According to the U.S. India Political Action Committee (USINPAC), about 58% of all Indians in America over the age of 25 have a college degree, compared to the national average of 26%. Indians are also the wealthiest minority ethnicity in the U.S.A. Therefore, the U.S. forms immigration and acculturation policies apropos to this performance of the Indian diaspora. However, the employment of emigrated skilled labour involves some uncertainties for the host country. In spite of India being one of the most sought after destinations for recruiting fully trained IT professionals, the U.S.A. has to account for their training and skills before hiring them. This has implications on the employment statistics of the U.S. citizens themselves. Therefore, skilled professionals have to be tested and interviewed meticulously before getting employed in large MNCs or tech companies outside of their won country. But, to avoid the filtering process altogether, the U.S.A. prefers to win over Indian college graduates who may complete their education from American universities themselves. This “fresh semi-finished” human capital is then moulded to fit the American working standards. Since Indian students are known for their meritorious and hard-working nature, a number of educational policies were put into place to woo Indian students. Various educational fairs are held annually in metropolitan cities in India such as the U.S. University Fair, the Edwise U.S.A. and Canada Education Fair, as well as other educational programs and events scheduled by the U.S. Embassy and Consulate in India. Apart from

this, there is also the economies-of-scale angle that the U.S. keeps in mind so as to increase skilled labour in the input so that the cost for the output is relatively smaller. This is helped by the enrolment of Indian students in U.S. universities at a particular age and point in time (Khadria, 2003).

Collectivism and Politics

A sociological feature of Indians as a community is that they are highly group-oriented; the belief of 'all before one' is generally heeded on different levels. Collectivism has also shown itself to be a deeply entrenched characteristic of the Indian diaspora in the U.S. This has promoted a subtle network of solidarity among Indians working in the same field in the U.S. Their connection of networks majorly includes (but is not limited to) people from their own ethnic minority, which in turn, has increased "trust in entrepreneurship" (Dossani, 2002). For example, Indian executives may employ more Indian workers than Americans. This economic benefit for the Indian diaspora is based on a relationship between identity and trust, which favours the ethnic group as against the mainstream community. (Ghate, 1992).

When it comes to politics, Indians living in America can only vote or contest elections after they have received their citizenship. There is a dichotomy that can be seen in this field concerning the Indian diaspora. A large number of Indians vote for the Democrat Party, as can be seen by statistical polls. However, it has been seen that some of the most prominent Indian-Americans in the political sphere are actually Republican. This is interesting as it is a contradiction of social and political motives; research shows that perhaps some Indian-Americans tend to vote Democrat not due to any sort of historical knowledge or affiliations towards the party, but probably due to some kind of social influence or obligation. On the contrary, due to their being a religious group having strong traditional values and belief in family ties, Indians have characteristics which are common to the Republican Party. This may lead to them being more drawn to join the Republicans while contesting (Kaufman, 2007). A few examples of Indians who are or have been part of the Republican Party are Governor Nikki Haley of South Carolina, who described herself as a Christian conservative,

and Dinesh D'Souza, conservative author and former policy advisor for Ronald Reagan. However, contradictory to what Kaufman says, this is not true of all Indian-Americans. A number of Indian-origin faces in the Democrat Party have also been prominent, such as Raja Krishnamoorthi, Congressman for the State of Illinois, Congresswoman Pramila Jaypal, as well as the recently elected CEO of the Democrat Party Seema Nanda.

Economy and International Relations

As one can guess, the emigration of skilled labour is not only related to the fields of science anymore, but has permeated to a number of different sectors. Brain drain can be a double-edged sword for India; it proves advantageous in terms of remittances, known as Private Transfer Payments, received particularly by the households when they provide labour to the USA, as it increases money flow within the Indian economy. However, this income in the form of remittances does not have permanent value. If there is migration of all the members of the household from India to the host country, there will be no payments coming in. Apart

If there were no brain drain, there would be a much larger number of specialists or professionals still carrying out operations within India.

from the income, there is also the showcase of the brightest talent that Indians possess in a number of different areas which has become possible due to the transnational movement / migration of labour in a globalised world. On the contrary, it's a direct loss for India in

terms of absence of a skilled workforce. If there were no brain drain, there would be a much larger number of specialists or professionals still carrying out operations within India. The more developed USA, with its knowledge-based economy, relies more heavily on workers with higher skill levels. This does play some part in the slower development of India's knowledge-based and specialised sectors. In spite of a huge amount of resources being shelled out by India for

the primary education of its citizens, and the creation of infrastructure and tools to create the desired skills, it stills finds itself unable to meet the agentic human resource requirement. This impact of brain drain and the culture surrounding it on the policies of both the origin and the host country are significant. For the host country, which in this case is the U.S., it mainly refers to visa and citizenship norms which may or may not be made more migrant-friendly. The best example of this is the H-1B Visa issue which has tightened the number of Indian emigrants allowed in the U.S.A. Along with this, certain acculturation policies also have to be put into place such as focus on the distribution of power, tolerance and a collectivistic attitude of the nation and the long-term orientation of the emigrants (Chand, 2012). For the origin country, which is India, there may be changes brought about to ensure that their development does not lack due to adverse effects of brain drain. A major reason why brain drain is of such a paramount nature in India is due to the unavailability of adequate facilities within the country for some specialised fields to prosper. Therefore, this needs to be addressed and requisite policies and programs should be carried out to promote circulation of skills instead of their drain. The Indian Government is also known to have made efforts to provide simplified measures for Indians living abroad to return back to the country.

Conclusion

Brain drain is a direct result of the American Dream. Indians move to modern western countries to live their version of the American Dream, have a far more substantial standard of living, and find themselves to be a mix of two very different cultures. At the same time, it is due to the free climate of globalisation, the liberal western stance and communication-technological advances that allow Indians living abroad the freedom and means to be emotionally ensconced in their homeland and to indulge in their bicultural status. Non Resident Indians have shown positive linkages with their homeland by not merely seeking to explore their roots, but also by exploring new avenues for mutual benefit of both their country of origin and their host country. This ranges from investment, to transfer of skills and technology, as also to charity and philanthropy (Khadria, 2003). In order to tap into the potential of this mutual development system,

a High Level Committee on Indian Diaspora was set up by the Indian Government to recommend policy options, organisational frameworks and strategies, and to involve NRIs and foreign Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) in the social, economic and technological acceleration of India. A report submitted by the Prime Minister in accordance with the Committee in 2002 confirmed that the majority of Indians moved to foreign nations in search of better employment prospects and not due to any political, social or ethnic crises, which is not necessarily applicable to emigrants of other nationalities. Therefore, steps are continuously being taken in order to take essential initiatives to retain the country's skilled labour as well as to maintain strong links with the Indian diaspora abroad. What a mutual development scheme ensures is also stronger Indo-US ties. The formation of the give-and-take relationship that is a result of brain drain can evolve to lead to holistic growth of both the countries. Although U.S. policies already have an influence on India due to the bilateral relations that they share, mutual development can help to strike a balance between the power structure of both as giving and receiving countries. Thus, policy formulation in India should also focus on a bargain deal of sending skilled Indian resources abroad which will entertain interests of both countries. This will be rooted in changing the 'nationalist model' of brain drain to an 'internationalist model' of brain circulation which is the movement of skilled labour across nations (Sahay, 2009). Sahay also talks about "soft power" which is related to the aforementioned balance between the two powers that has to be found. The migration of specialist and skilled Indians to the U.S. in itself is an investment made by India in America. This migration can be "effectively utilised as soft power for their country of origin, redefining notions of asymmetrical interdependence between them" writes Sahay. Speaking of a circular transnational movement of labour, it forms an imperative part of modern day trade in the globalised climate, and further strengthens economic and political relations between India and the United States of America as a rising and established power respectively. In conclusion, the identity of the Indian diaspora in the U.S. is connected to the negative or positive connotation of brain drain, which depends on policies which are adopted by both countries. The shift to brain circulation will call for the evocation of a

global identity among all people, eliminating the one-sided and sloping nature of brain drain, and replacing it with efficacious utilisation of skilled labour for integrated international development.

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02.

Evolution of the Tamil Identity in Politics and Cinema

Authored by: Hindol Hazra, Shivani Lalan

Abstract: *The cause for a Dravidian Tamil-identity although had its origins in linguistic unity and caste, the resultant political discourse used this identity as a vehicle to disburse social justice and welfare, with individuals transforming into almost-deity like political power centres which shaped the way democracy would function in the state. The construction of identity for these figures and the people in the state found a unique medium that would become a heavily contested site of political dialogue - cinema. This reflected in not only the propaganda-like films that these leaders were associated with, but in the very nature of Tamil cinema through the years. This paper attempts to trace the historicity of an entire state identity moulding itself after the identity of a premier, and the reaffirming of the same through media representations.*

Introduction

India in the early twentieth century saw the gradual evolution of an Indian national identity through the independence struggle. In the following years, these varying concepts of national identities were being equated with their origins in religion and regional identity. The Tamil political identity gained currency in these years, unified by two key factors: firstly, the foundation of a common linguistic base for a state identity, and secondly, the masses rallying around a power figure from whom they not only derived their identity but also found a medium to project it.

The struggle for a linguistic identity has defined a great part of Tamil politics, with its roots in the Dravidian Movement which was spearheaded by leaders like E.V Ramaswamy (Periyar) and C.N. Annadurai. The movement used linguistic unity to promote the need for political representation, especially for the non-Brahmin Tamil speakers as tensions soared between upper caste leaders and the untouchables. The Self-Respect movement led by Periyar which brought the lower caste populations gradually associated itself with an anti-Hindi sentiment that reflected strongly

during the post-Independence linguistic division of states. Resentment towards the Tamil domination in politics and the economy of the erstwhile Madras Presidency particularly from the Andhra movement led to the creation of the new provincial states of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Karnataka, while the demand to now recognize Madras as a separate state of Tamil speakers became even stronger. This was not a new cause for the state's political atmosphere, or for the Indian National Congress either, as the demand for such a state, referred to as the 'Dravida Nadu', was as old as the demand for a Muslim Pakistan in North India. The Dravidian movement did face a few setbacks owing to the split between Periyar and Annadurai, who formed the Dravidar Kazhagam as the movement's voice in electoral politics.

This newly formed party fought for secession from the Indian union on the basis of electoral politics. As a response to this, the Centre introduced an anti-secessionist clause in the Constitution, and encouraged Hindi as the lingua franca. This move garnered tremendous dissent in the Southern states, with many incidents turning violent. Eventually, the

pushback led to the removal of this clause from the Constitution. However, the fracture in identity and the politics surrounding it between the states and the Centre was already wide. The expression of this fracture then resounded through all avenues of Southern, and in particular Tamil politics for decades together, and continues even today.

The issues surrounding a Tamilian linguistic identity found the loudest expression in the politics of the state. All issues gravitated towards, or had an underlying base of this very issue. This issue became a grievance that required redressal from the Centre. Redressal would only be achieved with voices loud enough to encapsulate people's dissent, and yet not be dismissed by the Centre. Such a voice would ensure that collective opinion is sustained through political discourse, and eventually magnifying it as a united front. In Tamil Nadu, such figureheads have changed the way political identities operate and sustain themselves over the years. Their identities have come to be entrenched in not just the spirit of the state, but also in the way they manifest themselves in electoral politics.

Hypothesis

There is a presence of an underlying co-relation between the Tamil identity portrayed in the respective realm of cinema and the Political leadership. This co-relation creates a dynamic cause and effect relationship between the two variables.

Research Methodology

For the purpose of this paper, we have employed secondary research as our main tool for study. The content of this paper requires one to look at the interaction of the Tamil identity with its prominent figures and cinema. To cover these two areas, we looked at multiple films from Tamil cinema that covered the lives of famous icons. Content analysis of not just these films, but also several scholarly and news articles on the personalities and their affiliated filmography was required.

Review of Literature

This paper draws upon the work of scholars who have previously worked in this field but also seeks to capture the flows of identity through articles and reports on

occurrences in the given region. These two positions of works allow this paper to look at not just established knowledge and historical precedents but also to keep in mind contemporary politics.

The work of H. Schiffman in his commentary on linguistic politics guides this paper to analyze the impact of a carrier of language and culture, i.e cinema on the identity of an entire state (Schiffman, 1996). This work lays the groundwork to understand the layers that run between the presence of a uniting factor for one group, and how this dynamic works against the pressures of an external, and usually larger group. Schiffman's essay is, however, a dated oeuvre. This is then contrasted with multiple reports and coverage across news outlets including the Deccan Chronicle, The Wire, and The Caravan that provide not just new opinions, but also well-researched insights into what has changed in the state from then to now.

As for the main body of work that we draw our conclusions from, the paper refers to multiple films across decades and topics that have had a considerable impact on the way cinema interacted with the Tamilian identity.

Analysis

'Aalaporan Tamizhan' - Searching For The Tamil Linguistic Identity

Tamil secessionism was not just set against the backdrop of a conflict between the Aryans and Dravidians, but also a renaissance in the use of the language inspired by the conflict. The Tamil being spoken at the time had been influenced by the likes of the Vijayanagar Empire and had heavy Sanskritized influences of Indo-Aryan loan words which might have belonged to Prakrits or any other intermediary Dravidian language, which was pointed out by the study of the language by European missionaries (Schiffman, 1996). The Brahmin dominance and their monopolistic educational sphere ensured their Sanskritized control over the language, with Sanskrit enjoying perhaps even a higher status. It was in this period where old Tamil manuscripts were being brought to the public's attention which were written in an indecipherable form of the language. The existing knowledge of literature from the Sangam era was one of the main factors that led to the further

fostering of consciousness among the masses and the Tamil pride within them.

To trace the political aspect of this identity, a reading of the early nationalist literature from this period such as the works of poets like Subramania Bharati and Bharatidasan is required. These show a conflicting conception of the cultural idiom of nationalism, which was inspired by Gandhian values and the nationalist sentiment of the Congress Party but was also committed to its allegiance towards the pure Tamil ideal. This ideal sought freedom from the influence of Sanskrit, and moving away from the use of archaic forms of the language as well as English. This became the most prominent form of anti-Brahmin resistance against the priestly castes born from hereditary tradition and represented Sanskrit and Aryan culture (Schiffman, 1996).

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), which was born from the erstwhile Dravidar Kazhagam continued with the secessionist demands through the early sixties with the exception of the Sino-Indian War years of 1962-63. After negotiations with the Centre in the following years, the DMK's demand for a separate Dravida Nadu came to be replaced with the aim of creating a Tamil political unit within the Indian polity, which emphasized on more autonomy for the state and reduced intervention of the centre. The DMK came to power in the state in 1967, with Annadurai becoming the chief minister for two years until his death in 1969, when M. Karunanidhi took the reins of the party leadership ahead.

Linguistic politics helped the DMK coordinate an anti-Congress front in the state which brought together factionalist parties. The party's policies were rooted in populism and social welfare, which came to be a major force in the state's politics for years to come. While it did not actively curb policies put in place by the previous Congress state governments such as the green revolution for agrarian expansion and the growth of private industries which promoted the interests of the castes in dominance, it heavily subsidised rice for the public, sanctioned housing schemes for the poor in urban areas, carried out nationalisation in the transport sector, and continued reservations for the Backward

Classes. (Geetha, V. "Unhappy Anniversary: Taking stock after half a century of Dravidian rule in Tamil Nadu", 2017) In the initial few years of the DMK's rule, it projected itself as the custodian for the Tamil working class and its pride through its repeated confrontations with the Centre, most prominently through its resistance against Hindi being imposed as the national language. This challenge to linguistic authority and commitment to Tamil identity strengthened the party's popularity within the Tamil intellectual circles which sought to eradicate traditional Brahmin dominance and monopoly. The party had also come to accept atheism as one of its values, due to the strong influence of Periyar's ideology.

Karunanidhi, MGR, and Jayalalithaa – Tamil Cinema and Politics

Karunanidhi's policies were soon to be found promoting interests of certain corporates and inclusive of previous social prejudices, especially with regards to gender as well as caste. In 1972, the Tamil superstar M.G. Ramachandran, split from the DMK and formed the All India Anna Dravidian Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), which came to power in 1977.

The DMK had been known for its leaders being active players in cinema - Annadurai and Karunanidhi had been known renowned screenwriters, and the party's long-standing ally MGR had amassed his huge following through author-backed roles which promoted him as a righteous champion of the underprivileged. A new political imaginary was soon going to be constructed through the cinema space. The five-minute court scene from *Parasakthi* (1952) which established MGR's rival, Sivaji Ganesan as an acting force to reckon with is the most well-known example of Karunanidhi's finesse of political expression with an unparalleled command over the language through strong imagery. *Poompuhar* (1964), an adaptation of the Sangam-era epic *Silappadhikaram*, begins with an introduction by Karunanidhi himself on screen, positioning himself as a true devotee of the Tamil language and its heritage. These films served as effective propaganda pieces not just for the party concerned or the government, whether in the case of policies or their commitment to Tamil culture, but also for the power-wielding individuals who would soon transform into deity-like

mass leaders.

MGR's screen persona was built on 'the cultural presuppositions' of the state's subaltern classes and their folk heroes - underdog characters who upon gaining power strive for social justice, education, and the empowerment of women. The mass accessibility of cinema as a medium set the stage for this political messaging which was rooted in values of the subaltern folk ballads. His political sensibilities were refined over the years through his affiliation with the DMK which not only helped him carefully construct his almost symbiotic, politically driven cinema career but also create mass support that would propel his politics ahead. His intertwined relationship with the DMK ensured that the party's values would get conveyed as his values through his films. His personal and much-publicised generosity further amplified the populism in the state - free meals in schools, free uniforms, tooth powder and footwear for school children, free education upto plus two, employment for women, and so on.

The mass accessibility of cinema as a medium set the stage for political messaging which was rooted in values of the subaltern folk ballads

MGR's AIADMK relied heavily on banking upon its leader's persona and popularity which soon came to be the defining factors of the Dravidian movement and ideology. His support to the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka soon became an extension of Tamil nationalism in India, where the linguistic identity extended beyond borders and ethnic culture. The manufacturing of consent among the masses, especially in rural centres, was done through forcing cinemas to play his speeches, long tours with life-size cutouts, making carefully constructed biographies available for cheap, and so on. This ensured that the masses could not differentiate between the on-screen persona of MGR and the real-life leader, and gained support for the government

especially in its suppression of dissent. State machinery was used to put down working class protests and most of the advances that had been made, in the cultural and economic sphere with regards to inequality of caste, seemed to be undone. Despite rising encounters and civil rights protests, MGR's popularity among the poor, especially among women, remained unfazed. A regime of authoritarianism of the state had been established through the blurring line of distinction between the individual's deity-like status and the powers at the

state's disposal.

The cultural artefact of cinema became more than just a propagandist medium for reinforcement of identity, or just a tool for individuals to realize political ambitions. The political culture in the state had now become the battleground of symbolism and hero-worship, and cinema was the contested site of creating heroes who would lead the narrative ahead. MGR's long-time associate, J. Jayalalithaa took the reins of the party in her hands after his death in 1987 and served as the Chief Minister for five terms, with the DMK also coming to power in alternate terms under Karunanidhi. Having been a leading lady of Tamil cinema herself, her brand-like image too was constructed in a fashion similar to that of MGR, where she created her identity outside MGR's shadow as 'Amma' or a mother figure for the state who was a strong female politician and a champion of the Tamil cause. The liberalized economic growth in the following decades saw an increase in corruption charges and accusations of abuse of power for personal gains against both parties where the party's messaging machinery had moved beyond cinema. Inroads had been made in media control in television, print media, and so on, where entire narratives could be controlled according to the parties' wishes. The nature of politics shifted from a larger identity narrative to particular issues, such as the sand-mining mafia, the Kaveri water dispute, corruption, etc. Competitive populism had become the norm for winning elections and sustaining mandate, while growth stagnated, while the 'Tamil' interests were defined conveniently by the state according to its own will.

The 'Makkal' and the Movies – The Future of Tamil Identity Politics

The vacuum created by the deaths of Karunanidhi and Jayalalithaa in Tamil Nadu has prompted many new entrants, with some being smaller leaders in the two large parties of the state and some being other smaller players like actor Vijaykanth who attempted to chart a similar star-to-CM path like MGR. But it is the political entry of two of the biggest stars in Tamil cinema, Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan, which has already made its impact felt in the state. Rajinikanth, who is yet to launch a formal political party, has started an organization called the Rajini Makkal Mandram (Rajini's People Forum) to recruit cadre and reach out to the masses in each district, which is being carried out by the actor's fans and their associations. Speculations about the star's political ambitions have been rife since his films *Padayappa* (1999) and *Baba* (2002) released, and akin to MGR, the simple people's man persona of the superstar continues to attract him more followers. Haasan, who has launched his political party Makkal Needhi Maiam (People's Justice Party) which would soon be contesting elections, has been at the centre of several controversies in the past few decades that have involved the political messaging and tones of his films, such as in *Virumaandi* (2004) and *Vishwaroopam* (2012). The actor has also taken to television as the host of the Tamil version of the reality show Bigg Boss as a direct means of communication with the state's audience. Tamil cinema has also acquired a distinct political nature which has been critical of the state's politics as well as of national issues like demonetization, such as actor Vijay's recent films, *Mersal* (2017) and *Sarkar* (2018) while also serving as an indication of the actor's political ambitions.

Conclusion

It is not just the resurgence of cinema's direct political overtones in the state, but also of issues pertaining to linguistic pride for the people, with the recent Jallikattu protests being a clear indication of this. The series of protests at the Marina Beach in Chennai which attracted nationwide attention became a symbol of Tamil solidarity regardless of religion and caste, with the narrative of an alienated state coming back to the forefront. The state's politics have been quite disconnected from the Centre, and with the growing influence of the right wing in the nation and the Bharatiya Janata Party seeking to make inroads,

Tamil pride might prove to be one of the deciding factors in the next elections. Issues like the farmers' protests and the Sterlite firings have found the state's political players either on the back foot or taking a similar diplomatically calculated stand. This includes both Haasan and Rajinikanth, who although have chosen their own core issues such as corruption to deal with, and ways to invoke the linguistic identity, with all communication in chaste Tamil and using their cinema mileage in the form of active social work through their fans. Their methods, including the use of social media, might impact non-traditional voters and Tamil speakers such as the state's youth and diaspora.

Tamil linguistic pride has been often a symbol of the state's discontent with the Centre and its cultural differences with Northern India. The Dravidian movement at this juncture had come to be driven by the individuals who came to be at the centre of the power, and the present condition of the state's affairs present an equal chance for new cinema icons to fill in these positions, or that a new political order emerges in the state with the right wing making its presence felt. The movement has had its share of failures especially with regards to the parties' stand on women's rights and gender equality, and sustenance of caste-based hierarchies that still continue in the state, and the Sabarimala issue in the neighbouring state of Kerala finds both of these factors being utilized by the right wing to gain footing. Tamil Nadu now waits for a new sun to rise in its political horizon.

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03.

The Dynamics of ASEAN Identity: Sources, Challenges, and the Future

Authored by: Sejal Singh

Abstract: *The identity discourse that has emerged parallel to the power shift in the geopolitical arena has given rise to strong regional politics, and identity. The development of Southeast Asia as a region paired with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has created a robust Southeast Asian identity and an 'ASEAN way' of diplomacy'. These two identities - the regional and ASEAN organisational identity which emerged from sources like external colonialism, common geographical history and the intraregional imperialism of large pre-colonial states have global implications. Issues like regional conflicts, religious extremism, the South China Sea conflict, and uneven democratization will be resolved by how ASEAN perceives itself. In the process, it will redefine "the ASEAN way".*

Background

The two terms which are being discussed often in the realms of social sciences have come to be - identity and regions. With modern times these have evolved, redefining and reclaiming the space of what defines "identity" and "region". Though, these are not mutually exclusive. Their trajectory is a part and parcel of each other.

The first variable - identity in recent years, has gathered intense scholarly attention in a remarkable array of social sciences and the humanities. Within political science, every subfield has found the identity to be the onus of some evolving debates. In international relations, the idea of "state identity" is at the heart of constructivist critiques of realism and analyses of state sovereignty. In political theory, questions of "identity" mark numerous arguments on gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, and culture in relation to liberalism and its alternatives (Fearon, 1999). Though the discussion in this study will be within the ambit of

regional identity which as defined by Amitav Acharya is not a cultural given, but something constructed out of a self-conscious social interaction (Acharya, 2017). He credits the process of socialization with the development of a collective identity of a region. Socialization as a process can exist without a shared culture, history, similar political systems or common language. According to Acharya (2013), collective identities are 'imagined' during, and as a result of, an actor's or group of actors' interaction within an institutional context. This seems the case with the second variable of the study the- Southeast Asian region and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). First conceived in 1957 to avoid the marred conflict of Cold War (Li, 2016) and now an association of 10 nation states, ASEAN has been a playground for the process of socialization in the region through the engagement of member countries in creating imagined, collective identities.

Hypothesis

The development of Southeast Asia as a region paired with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has created a robust Southeast Asian identity and an 'ASEAN way' of diplomacy.

Research Methodology

Secondary research was used as the main tool for study with a number of analytic texts and articles being examined to draw inferences for the study.

Review of Literature

The identity discourse that has emerged parallel to the power shift in the geopolitical arena has given rise to regional politics and has brought the question of regional identities in the study. Describing the same, Anssi Paasi (2003) writes - traditional territorialized battles over democracy, political status/citizenship and wealth have been complicated by the struggle over 'race', ethnicity, multiculturalism, gender, sexuality, recognition and a new symbolic economy characterized by the production/marketing of images. Paasi (2003) argues that people's awareness of being part of the global space of flows seems to have generated a search for new points of orientation, efforts to strengthen old boundaries and to create new ones.

Amitav Acharya's works have also been dedicated to understand this course of regional identity and especially the juncture of ASEAN and the Southeast Asia's identity. In his book -*The Quest for Identity: International Relations of Southeast Asia* - Acharya seeks to trace the evolution and the construction of the ASEAN identity and order. He credits the five major variables: nationalism, religion, cultural norms and modes of interaction, a modernist developmental state orientation and approach, and regionalism as the sources of ASEAN identity (Acharya, 2001). Further, in works like "*Collective Identity Formation in Asian Regionalism: ASEAN Identity and the Construction of the Asia-Pacific Regional Order*" and "*Culture, Regionalism and Southeast Asian Identity*" he argues that ASEAN identity, however nascent and evolving, does matter in shaping security politics, regionalism and international relations in the Asia-Pacific (Acharya & Layug, 2013). His works also explore the link between culture and regionalism in Southeast Asia also considering the

diffusion of popular culture and its relationship with the 'soft power' of larger Asian actors, such as Japan, China and India, in Southeast Asia (Acharya, 2008).

The idea of ASEAN diplomacy and the "ASEAN way" as core component of the ASEAN identity is developed by Pham Quang Minh in "*In Search of an ASEAN Identity*". He lists six norms of ASEAN diplomacy including sovereign equality; the non-recourse to the use of force and the peaceful settlement of conflicts; non-interference and nonintervention; the non-involvement of ASEAN to address unresolved bilateral conflicts between members; quiet diplomacy; mutual respect and tolerance (Minh, 2011).

Further, elaborating on the challenges to the ASEAN identity, idea of which is developed by the above studies, Michael E. Jones, in his work "Forging an ASEAN Identity: The Challenge to Construct a Shared Destiny" emphasis on the collaborative efforts of national and regional organizations to forge the "regional citizenry" (Jones, 2004). A relationship between the South China Sea dispute, ASEAN identity and diplomacy is studied by Alan H. Yang in "The South China Sea Arbitration and Its Implications for ASEAN Centrality" highlighting the role of China as a key geopolitical player and the significance of the dispute involving both inter and intra state players. The author says - The South China Sea dispute is not only a struggle among countries in the area for sovereignty over various land features, territorial waters, and underwater natural resources, but also the focal point of great power politics. (Yang, 2015)

Though these works individually focus on different dynamics of ASEAN identity all converge to agree that the concept of identity building is ongoing and ASEAN is an organization in making.

Sources of ASEAN Identity

As historians of Southeast Asia well mention, it was the common history of the movement, settlement and cross-cultural sharing across Southeast Asia which preceded the now defined polities and boundaries of the modern region (Noor, 2017). Hence, the very first source of Southeast Asian identity emerged from this geographical history. Its relevance is justified by the

fluidity that the member states of ASEAN- Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam, Myanmar (Burma), Cambodia, Brunei, and Laos-inherit which emerges from the region previously a mass of common land.

Another source of ASEAN identity sprouts from the colonial experience of the member states in Southeast Asia and the nationalism that developed in the post-colonial era directed against a shared external threat. All Southeast Asian countries were once Western colonies, except Thailand, which later ceded the territory and was subjected to significant restraints on its freedom of external action (Acharya, 2017). Moreover, anti-colonial sentiment became a powerful basis for not only the Southeast Asian nationalism but also regionalism. Southeast Asians saw the end of colonialism as both an imperative and opportunity for reconstituting lost regional linkages and identities. The international politics of Southeast Asia, before and after 1967, presents plenty of evidence which highlights deliberate efforts made by countries of the region to construct a regional identity. This includes the early days of the Asian Relations meetings in New Delhi, when there was deliberate rejection by the delegates to associate the region closely with an Indian or Chinese framework (Acharya, 2017). The quest for a unique and strong identity can be highlighted in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord, an important document of Southeast Asian regionalism signed by ASEAN's five original members in 1976. It clearly states that 'Member states shall vigorously develop an awareness of regional identity and exert all efforts to create a strong ASEAN community' (Prasetya, Nishimura, Zen, & Anbumozhi, 2015). In this sense, nationalism and regionalism in Southeast Asia were more complimentary than competitive (Acharya, 2013).

Another striking feature of the region's identity is that despite being subject to both external colonialism and the intraregional imperialism of large pre-colonial states such as Vietnam (Dai Viet), Angkor (Cambodia), Ayutthaya (Thailand), Majapahit (Indonesia), Ava (Myanmar), and Malacca (Malaysia) the sense of conflict in the identity, as well as the histories, seems to be insignificant as compared to states like Japan, China,

and the Republic of Korea (Acharya, 2017). Further, the Development State orientation that is prevalent across the Southeast Asia region constitutes a crucial basis for ASEAN. This orientation stresses a focus on economic growth over ideology and identity politics; calls for a strong role of the state in anchoring development which also bridges the cultural, geopolitical and security concerns in the area whilst constructing a melting pot originating from the economic objectives. Hence, even with the internal divisions and constraints imposed by the presence of major powers, ASEAN remains amongst the most cohesive and dynamic regional groups in Asia and the world today. The 'ASEAN Way', referring to a distinctive mode of interaction, marked by informality, consensus, non-adversarial bargaining, and a preference for non-legalistic and non-binding approaches to problem-solving, has been an important source of regional collective identity with a growing relevance for the rest of the world in a post-Western world (Acharya, 2001).



Source: <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/time-to-have-deeper-asean-identity>

The Dynamics of ASEAN identity

The self-conscious regional identity-building since the establishment of ASEAN explains many significant aspects of international relations in Southeast Asia. The regional identity operates in a dynamic environment and responds to domestic and international forces; like

globalization, the emergence of wider conceptions of regionalism driven by market integration and more. By defining these notions about South Asian identity, Amitav Acharya holds that:

“...it may be too optimistic to argue that the regional concept of Southeast Asia will become a permanent reality or endure indefinitely into the future. A lot will depend on external political (democratization of political culture), economic (globalization) and strategic (great power relations) events which are beyond the control of Southeast Asian countries. These events will offer alternative sources of identity, which could increase the diversity of Southeast Asia.” (Acharya, 2001)

The first challenge that the Southeast Asian identity faces is the threat to the domestic unity of member states due to religious extremism and strife. The arising damage has enough potential to challenge regional stability and the ASEAN motto of ‘one region, one identity’. The threat of violent radicalism in the name of Islam is omnipresent in Muslim majority states like Thailand and Southern Philippines and in Indonesia and Malaysia. These countries also have one of the highest conflict years with the Philippines having 86 conflict-years, Indonesia with 40 conflict-years, and Thailand with 35 conflict years (Acharya, 2013). Violent radicalism in the name of Islam has clear spillover potential due to its linkages with Al-Qaeda, and ISIS (Acharya, 2013). Further, Myanmar, another member state of ASEAN, has been witnessing a surprising degree of violent radicalism in the name of Buddhism. According to an estimate by Acharya, Myanmar was the world’s most conflict-prone country during the period of 1946–2003 (Acharya, 2013). These domestic conflicts have the potential to cause regional imbalance as they cross national boundaries; this happened in the past when members of the Communist Party of Malaya moved across the border into Thailand and the mass influx of Rohingyas in neighboring countries became a source of friction between ASEAN member states (Acharya, 2013).

Number of Conflict years in Southeast Asia- 1946-2003

Country	Number of Conflict Years
Myanmar	232
Philippines	86
Indonesia	40
Thailand	35
Vietnam	36
Cambodia	36

Source: (Acharya, ASEAN 2030: Challenges of building a mature political and security community, 2013)

Uneven democratization in ASEAN which is a mixture of authoritarian, semi-authoritarian and democratic regimes and the struggle for regime survival alongside demands for political change can create regional stress. For example, in the case of the new (democratic) state of Indonesia, the country may be unable resist domestic demands for sympathizing with opposition parties or parties in support of democracy in neighboring authoritarian states. This position of Indonesia which is against the national interests of the authoritarian states may be considered as too much of interference of the state in internal politics of regional partner (Acharya, 2013). Such an approach stands against the ‘ASEAN way’ where regional affairs are guided by non-interference, and the sanctity of state sovereignty (Singh, 2008). According to Shaun Narine, it is no longer clear what norms and values ASEAN is actually trying to promote (Narine, 2009).

Freedom and Democracy in ASEAN - 2017-18

Country	Freedom Status	Electoral Democracy
Brunei	Not Free	No
Cambodia	Not Free	No
Indonesia	Partly Free	Yes
Laos	Not Free	No
Malaysia	Partly Free	No
Myanmar	Partly Free	No
Philippines	Partly Free	Yes
Singapore	Partly Free	No
Thailand	Not Free	No

Vietnam	Not Free	No
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Source: Freedom House Organization

The question of South China Sea conflict with respect to China's expansive territorial claims and its increasing assertiveness can pose a challenge to the ongoing process of ASEAN identity building. As expressed by Acharya:

“For the next 20 years, the South China Sea conflict will probably remain the “worst-case” threat to peace, security and centrality in the ASEAN region, and possibly the most serious challenge to ASEAN's regional conflict management role.” (Acharya, 2013)

Four ASEAN claimant countries -Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam and Philippines - have wrangled with China over the resource-rich South China Sea in a territorial spat that has been disrupting Southeast Asia for decades. Claimants have insisted that this is a regional issue as it threatens not only peace and stability of the region but also ASEAN's unity. However, ASEAN has chosen to deal with the issue through dialogue and consultation process with China given the nature of the organization that prioritizes pacific settlement of dispute. China's emphasis on a bilateral track and discussion system rather than deal with ASEAN as a group (Tong, 2016) has jeopardized the status quo between ASEAN and China. The Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, signed by ASEAN countries and China had no significant impact.

Such a position where there are interstate claims and the contrasting stands of the ASEAN community on the South China Sea dispute, will challenge ASEAN unity and centrality. The ASEAN struggle demonstrates that to model a common ASEAN strategy towards the South China Sea the views and interests of all 10 ASEAN countries must work as a group. This unity will ensure representation of the common interests, position, and identity of ASEAN member countries. As ASEAN strengthens regional integration, the core value of the ASEAN community will be recognized and fully supported by its members. Realizing ASEAN unity will facilitate closer integration of the collective

interests of the ASEAN, putting it at the core of regional and national development (Yang, 2015).

Conclusion

With a power shift in global political, social, and economic scenarios, Asia is gathering much attention by overcoming its colonial past through achieving numerous developmental and social indices. Southeast Asia has emerged as one of the regional superpowers due to the regional unity and identity that is strongly exhibited by ASEAN.

It is to be noted at the outset that ASEAN can be a representative of the regional identity of Southeast Asia but it is not a source of it. Therefore, a distinction must be made between Southeast Asia's regional identity and ASEAN's identity as a regional organization. While these identities can be mutually reinforcing as well overlap occasionally, they have their own trajectories. Southeast Asian identity predates the creation of ASEAN and has been sourced from the common history of the movement, settlement and cross-cultural sharing across Southeast Asia which preceded the now defined politics and boundaries of the modern region. The colonial experience of the member states and the Southeast Asian region and the resulting nationalism in the post-colonial era, strengthened regional unity and became a source of the ASEAN identity. Further, the lack of conflict between the national identity of member states and the ASEAN identity as whole and presence of development state orientation has strengthened this association.

But Southeast Asia is a region-in-making that is challenged by internal and external challenges; intra- ASEAN conflicts like religious extremism and terrorism, uneven democratization of the region, and transnational threats like the South China Sea conflict, US-China rivalry. Unless lead by great purpose and unity, ASEAN's identity and representation could crumble in the balance of power dynamics dominated by powers like the U.S.A., and China. Hence, the challenge for the region is now to ensure that the regional identity and the ASEAN identity converge. This will not only ensure ASEAN unity-driven policies that will sustain the relevance of ASEAN in the world and region but will also expand its support base through active participation of the regional stakeholders.

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04.

Gastro-politics: Construction of an Identity Around Food

Authored by: Preksha Jain, Bhuvan Majmudar

Abstract: *'You are what you eat' is a saying we have all heard at least once in our lives, but what does what you don't eat say about you? What about what the law doesn't let you eat say about you, or by extension the law and your country itself? This research paper would like to look at identity formation with food by considering how external forces of caste, class and gender politically navigate individual and communal identity.*

Introduction

The idea of identity implies that identities are constructed across time and space, at an individual level and a global level. These identities refer to the various facets of individually lived experiences. Built along the lines of economic class, caste, political belonging, access to cultural and social capital, an identity speaks volumes about an individual's participation in their economic, social, and political environment. The identity helps define a set of individuals as a collective, which then enables them to assert recognition - social and political, leading to the process of representation at a broader level in society.

One of the most critical facets of identity formation is the role played by cultural factors and hence, it becomes important to study culinary habits as a stimulus to identity construction, especially in contemporary times. Individuals and societies associate themselves not only with food dishes that are native to their culture but also with the distinct culinary process that they practice. Hence, an identity is derived from a set of food products, and this can be a two-way process wherein the product asserts itself over the collective's identity. As an illustration, one can notice how the Jain identity is formed by the conscious exclusion of certain food products, and in turn how products are capable

of asserting a Jain identity over an individual, too.

The reason behind culinary practices being essential to look at critically is that these identities are politicised, in subtle and sometimes, not so subtle ways. Although inherently personal, the idea of an identity transcends into the public sphere, hence making it a political issue in addition to an economic, as well as a social issue. Representation and marginalisation happen due to the political nature of group identities, which highlights the importance of studying identity construction, and more so through an intersectional lens.

The saying "You are what you eat" encourages people to eat healthy food as by doing so reflects in one's overall, physical bodily well being. The ideal quantity and quality of food that humans require for a better quality of life is something that nutritionists are still debating on to this day. However, eating has never been just a biological necessity, the forces that govern almost every attribute related to our eating habits, the time, the table manners in the urban spaces and the different practices in rural spaces, and also what we consume to a large extent are socially determined in nature. These 'social forces' manifest themselves through literature, traditions, and the way in which these are passed down in conscious or unconscious ways across generations.

One notices this while viewing food blogs and reviews where certain foods are deemed to be ‘trendy’, ‘elite’ and supposedly ‘healthy superfoods’ while the same food products may be looked at with a sense of indifference due to the cultural context. For example, consumption of chia seeds is a contemporary health trend that started in the western countries, while the same ‘sabja’ lacks significance in the Indian context.

Eating today goes beyond fulfilling one’s nutritional requirements and seeks to fulfil the goals of society too. Society interferes with something as personal and primary as eating because the nuances behind the eating practices of varied cultures help in defining their identity to a great extent. This paper wishes to understand the two-way influence of the private life of individuals and the political reality of collectives; how private culinary practices make their way into the public sphere and how the personal is made the political. Every political party adopts an ideology which makes up their political identity. This political ideology is a set of doctrines and principles that provide a blueprint on how to govern. These doctrines are strongly influenced by social mores, many of which deal with food.

As discussed before, the quality and quantity of foods that we consume are determined by external forces, and so this paper will go on to examine the implications of the political interference that occurs. When a nation or statewide bans are imposed on certain foods, it is essential to gauge the reason behind it. This embargo on certain foods affect the large-scale trade and by extension the livelihood of the people which ultimately alters individual and collective identities, which will be analysed in detail later in the paper.

Therefore, food has evolved from just being what you are to helping construct who you are.

Research Question

This paper aims to reflect upon how socio-political forces exert an influence on the creation of individual and collective identities, and in what manner they result in being beneficial or discriminatory. Hence, the research questions could be streamlined to an understanding of “To what extent do political agencies

influence the construction of the Indian gastro-identity?”.

Research Methodology

This paper uses secondary sources of information in order to achieve the research objectives through the textual analysis method. The idea of an identity formation process has been looked at from several perspectives by different authors and researchers. It is primarily an intersectional area delving into culture, economics, politics and several other domains. Thus, a holistic method of conducting research on identity politics is by borrowing from several other disciplines such as anthropology, cultural studies, economics, sociology and of course, politics.

Analysis

The Indian identity is derived from several forces external to the individuals, which are then utilised as tools to navigate through political gains. Economic class plays a crucial role in determining the accessibility to food products and culinary techniques. The sheer economic unaffordability restricts the access of individuals belonging to the lower economic strata in society. The caste system also leads to a severe conflict of access to food, relegating those considered inferior further down the hierarchy. These socially discriminatory processes serve and augment a dominant, mainstream ideology. Gastro-politics is a result of the exploitation of these hegemonic ideas, while continuously suppressing those at the margins. The ban on beef consumption could be considered a very hostile move against a significant part of the population that consumes it on a regular basis. Although contested by several activists, the ban was sustained due to the lobbying of those with religious and caste-based political power.

A predominant part of the Indian national identity is her apparent bend towards vegetarianism. The number of sign boards outside a restaurant advertising the fact that they serve only vegetarian food is paltry as compared to the significant number of local Indian eateries mentioning how they are a “pure veg” eating joint on their signboards. The word “pure” also plays a semantic role in the superiority and inferiority of foods which was discussed previously. On days of “fasting”

which vary across regions in the Hindu tradition, one is not supposed to consume certain foods like onion, garlic, certain grains, or rice. The specifications of the kinds of fasts depend on the faith one believes in, although the non-consumption of meat on such days is common. Hence, purity and vegetarianism are rendered synonymous in people's minds. The very act of fasting too has acted as a tool to attain liberation from the existing method of governance peacefully. Not consuming food as a form of protest has been very effective in the past to send a message that has more often than not, been political. Gandhi's many hunger strikes proved that non-violence too could be a challenging but effective method of conflict resolution. This method has been adopted by activists like Anna Hazare on the Jan Lokpal bill, Irom Sharmila on the repeal of the AFSPA act, and Delhi Commission for Women Chief Swati Maliwal on stringent rape laws in contemporary times.

Coupled with the notion of purity, is the misconception that the dominating group of the Hindu Brahmins, are all vegetarian which is also statistically incorrect. Even within the Brahmins, there is an enormous preference variation, with only two-thirds of Brahmins and one-third of 'forward castes' being vegetarian, which defies the 'vegetarian' identity of the masses. People are still more likely to agree with the idea that India is primarily a vegetarian country. This misguided view of our national identity is why a petition was filed by the founder trustee of Healthy, Wealthy, Ethical, World Guide India Trust, to make India officially vegetarian. Advocate R Chandrachud filed the petition. He was quoted saying, "State policies and the state's involvement in the pollutive slaughter-cum-meat trade is against public health, farmers' welfare and national interest. The business of meat trade is brutal, toxic, and destructive of animal and human life." For such a bold move, people must be secure in their belief that India is vegetarian. However, contrary to this notion, according to multiple large-scale surveys (National Sample Survey, National Family Health Survey and India Human Development) not even half of the country is 'pure' vegetarian. The same research also displayed the distribution of the degree of vegetarianism in each state which stated that Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab and Gujrat have the

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maximum amount of people practising vegetarianism. These are the regions that are politically very relevant from an election point of view. There is a subtle but often overlooked connection on how this misguided view of our nation's eating habits provides lawmakers and law enforcers with the confidence to implement bans on food products such as the recent controversial beef ban. By making decisions based on these states, the administration is unknowingly declaring that India's identity is that of those four northern states, discounting the seemingly less influential remaining twenty-five states.

A report that aided the implementation of the beef ban was the report of the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) by the Indian Council of Medical Research. It fuels the vegetarian identity formation in the first place, as it does not consider meat as a fundamental source of protein. In an interview Dr. Veena Shatrugna was quoted explaining this report, "During the 1950s and early 60s when scientists and nutritionists were coming up with the RDA for the nation, the primary focus was on cereals and pulses as a source of not just calories but also proteins. It should be noted that most of the experts were upper-caste Brahmins whose personal diet was vegetarian." It sheds light on how the government despite representing even the marginalised has not been thorough enough to accurately map their dietary requirements. Although the country has not adopted a national food, it has

recently started to declare a nation-wide meatless day on the 25th of November. Spearheaded by our current Prime Minister, the leader of our nation, this seems to indicate why the public gastro identity is vegetarian.

As the British influx resulted in a tremendous economic drain, it also changed several parts of Indian food culture. The “civilisation mission” of the White Man exercised through the imparting of Western education and occidental values and mannerisms not only changed the manner in which food was consumed (traditional v/s anglicised ways) but also changed what could be consumed and how. The introduction of “fine dining” as a method of consuming multiple elaborate course meals was introduced by the Englishmen, quite contrary to the general Indian dining tradition of a *thaali* or a *sadhya* meal, which would contain all food items together. Consumption of ethnic food by the Occident then became a marker of privilege and class, while the assimilation of Occidental methods of cooking by the Oriental communities became a political tool to civilise, groom and impart knowledge about the production, distribution, and consumption of food.

As ethnic food consumption increases in a post-colonial era, it can often be seen as a manner of economic and cultural survival of immigrants in the West. However, what begs to be looked at critically is the contextual understanding of the colonial food consumed by the coloniser, which forms one aspect of food colonialism. Food items carry immense historical baggage, such as the cultivation of sugar and its roots in the slavery of West Indies. It is crucial to be aware of the history behind the food one consumes, almost passively, the racial and classist discrimination faced by the Third World nations, the conflict emerging out of food cultivation and distribution, and the manner in which these forces affect the communities at large.

Identities are always in a state of flux, the space being negotiated and renegotiated to establish a relatively stable sense of identity at a certain point in time, influenced by the socio-political and economic atmosphere around the ‘individual’. How does a local identity, which is built around food get influenced by forces such as globalisation or migration? In a world with virtually

minimal boundaries concerning the rapid expansion of the market for franchises such as McDonald’s, Dominos, Burger King, Starbucks, etc. one must discuss ‘glocalisation’. Glocalisation is a portmanteau of the words globalisation and localisation, and it implies the simultaneous processes of universalising and particularising tendencies concerning contemporary social, political and economic changes. Glocalisation, thus, is a phenomenon wherein global products are adapted to suit a local palate. This not only is a driver for economic market penetration but also greatly significant to the argument of identity and culture. Global identities are fused with local identities, creating a space for an extremely diverse and dynamic set of individual identities, which in turn lead to constructed community identities. This can be observed in our vibrant street food which serves ‘paneer tandoori’ momos, Chinese ‘bhel’ and ‘gobi’ Manchurian. This localised identity then gives communities the space to exercise their agency over global cuisines, reclaiming them as their own.

However, several issues crop up while speaking of a liberalised world and international trade. The sudden surge in the consumption of quinoa as a ‘healthy dietary requirement’ legitimised through the contemporary health discourse on food has led to several changes in its cultivation and production. Native to Peru, quinoa’s increasing international demand has made it extremely expensive as a commodity. Not only is it now available only in high priced markets, but also, unfortunately, becomes unaffordable for those who cultivated it initially and produced the grain. In a sense, the farmers of Peru become the victims of international politics of food, the capitalist set-up and the newly emerging discourse around nutrition.

Another instance where food products become the carriers of political and economic agendas can be noticed in the Genetically Modified Seeds industry. GM Crops although can be useful as they are engineered to be resistant to certain types of insects, pests, etc. are also leading to growing concerns about farmer’s economic survival. All GM variety seeds are owned and patented by mainly four multinational corporations, and these MNCs hold the IPRs for these seeds. Consequently, farmers are legally unable

to utilise grains grown from GM seeds for the next harvest cycle due to IPR regulations, forcing them to purchase new seeds at the beginning of each cycle.

An apt illustration of how today economics, food, politics and identity culminate lies in the upcoming brand of Patanjali. Even though the Maggi ban was imposed, other ramen brands did not receive the entire consumer base of those noodle buyers due to the timely entry of the Patanjali 'safe' noodles. According to a Hindustan Times news report, Since Modi came to power, Ramdev's company has received more than an estimated \$46 million in discounts and concessions for land acquisitions in states controlled by the BJP. The speeches and WhatsApp forwards related to how Modi plans to make India more financially stable proposed a return to the 'Swadeshi' concept, something that Baba Ramdev conveniently provides a solution for. Baba Ramdev has also often taken an anti-Congress stance publically which may indicate potential propaganda. Thus, as much as we try to study politics, finance, sociology or even food independently, there is always a way they all tie up together. In this particular case with more credit to the strategic politics in India, which materialised closer to home in unexpected forms, impacting us in our bathroom cabinets, kitchens and dressing rooms.

Conclusion

Contemporary identities are mainly impacted due to the forces of imperialism and the resulting slavery, forced labour migration and exploitation. Due to these forces, large parts of the population were displaced across continents, resulting in the assimilation of several identities. These ethnic identities struggle to preserve, retain, protect their cultural traditions, a large part of which are rooted in food and culinary traditions.

Our gastro identity is not restricted to our national boundaries, to know how foreigners perceive us also is an integral part of our identity in the global sphere which impacts finances just as much as culture. Even though India has such diverse preferences when it comes to food, when food franchisees expand to India, their menus simplify our identity into a half vegetarian and half non-vegetarian menu. We know that that is not the ratio of vegetarian and non-vegetarians in the country and yet that is how we are perceived to

the foreign markets. If we consider McDonald's as an example, one can observe that no other country with a McDonalds has as many vegetarian options as the Indian one. The company (like any other) for marketing purposes, adapts their menu to suit the native palate, and the glocalised McDonalds produces products that are 'spicy' and broadly 'vegetarian'. This too is based on how political figures present their food preferences abroad as representatives of our nation.

If MNCs add the word 'curry' to any of the menu items, it would more overtly fit the stereotypes that exist outside India and which manifest themselves in mainstream media to this day. Any reference to Indian cuisine in the minds of Westerners is relegated to the 'strong smelling curries' and 'Naan bread'. There is always an exotic view towards developing countries that is easy to appropriate into the dominant culture, case in point being the (infuriating and incorrect) use of the word "chai tea". Even the Starbucks menu in India describes the drinks as 'Chai Tea Latte'.

If our identity is not the curry-naan one and not vegetarian, we must seek to understand what does define it. What we eat has explicitly a clear link with the policies, which are clearly observed in India and are slowly growing on the outsiders too. Be it through official documents and guidelines, bans, economic partnerships or religion and caste-related decisions, politics and food are entwined in a relationship that was a contributor not only to the way we ate post independence but also to our national identity to this day. This globalised reality of today is a direct outcome of multiple migrations, ethnic conflicts, and wars, and this lends ambiguity to the sense of nationhood, constantly being re-negotiated and re-established. In this process of identity conflict, culinary traditions and food become a powerful tool to not only demarcate one's culture but also further the fight for political and social representation.

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ARTICLES

05.

Article 35A: Oppressor of Identities

Authored by: Ajunee Singh

Beneath the terrorism and religion-based conflict very evidently present in Jammu and Kashmir (henceforth J & K), there also lies a conflict of identity that is so deep rooted that it threatens human rights and the basic dignity of life to several communities in J & K. Article 370 gave birth to autonomy and the existence of a separate Constitution to J & K. It was the 1954 Presidential Order which introduced the draconian Article 35A to the Indian Constitution (Rashid,2017). The 'permanent residentship' was extended to the residents of Jammu & Kashmir beyond the single citizenship present in the rest of the country. It defined a permanent resident as someone who was a State Subject on 14 May 1954, or has been a resident of the State for 10 years, and has lawfully acquired immovable property in the State (Ghoshal,2017). The treatment of the non-permanent residents of J&K is akin to the treatment of second-rate citizens. They are not eligible to buy immovable property, vote or contest in local body or Assembly elections, cannot avail scholarships and grants and are not to be employed by the State Government. Communities such as Valmikis, West Pakistan Refugees and Gorkhas have been victims of Article 35A because they do not hold permanent resident status in spite of living in J&K for years and are thus denied all basic rights and govt benefits. The Right to Equality is the foundation of the democracy promised in the Indian Constitution and this stands sacrificed under the provisions of Article 35A. J&K is the only state in India which controls the rights and liberties of the citizens and this is why there is denial

of judicial redressal for the non-permanent residents of J&K. Most people remain unaware of this aspect as it was inserted in the Appendix, (Katoch,2017).

The most discriminated against are the women of J&K who, under Section 6 of the J&K Constitution, in spite of holding a Permanent Resident Certificate (PRC) status cannot marry men from another state or men with out PRC. The children from unions like this are not entitled to the PRC and the benefits that will entitle them to even inherit their ancestral property. Men, however, are permitted to marry women from another state and even from another country. These women get the PRC and the children from such a union are entitled to the PRC and all the rights and benefits. The condition of women becomes worst if she is divorced or widowed, and is denied the inheritance rights. This provision had been challenged in court to be declared ultra vires and the response of this petition by Mr Mohammad Ashraf Mir was to merely confirm the discrimination (Katoch,2017). Earlier, women who married non-permanent residents used to completely lose their Permanent resident status. In 2002, after the Susheela Sawhney case, the women of the state won the right to retain their permanent resident status after marriage. However, the discrimination continues because their children are still not eligible for PRC, sending across a clear message that the men and women of J&K do not enjoy equal rights and liberties. Besides the added trauma of women who marry outside the state and are later divorced or widowed,

every woman in J&K is discriminated against on the basis of their gender and that is the biggest violation of our guaranteed Fundamental Rights.

The West Pakistan refugees were the people who migrated from West Punjab to East Punjab during partition and were thus termed as refugees in the dominion of India in 1947. There were a number of reasons why these West Pakistan refugees settled in Jammu & Kashmir, mainly being geographical proximity. However, after migration these West Pakistani Refugees hence referred as WPR faced problems when it came to rehabilitation because unlike the POJK refugees, they belonged to another state altogether. The unwillingness of the Government of J&K to accommodate the WPR led them to leave J&K and settle in Punjab, but they were stopped by the then PM of J&K Sheikh Abdullah in Lakhanpur and were promised that they would be rehabilitated and would be given permission to occupy the evacuee property. As per an account of a respondent, the WPRs were also promised by Sheikh Abdullah that they would be made "state subjects" eventually which has the same value of having a PRC. However, till date they haven't been given their permanent resident certificate and they haven't been rehabilitated from the border villages, their proximity from the border making them vulnerable to border violence. As per the report of the Wadhwa Committee of 2007, around 5,764 families consisting of 47,215 people migrated from West Pakistan and settled in J&K. The Ministry of Home Affairs further informed that the West Pakistani Refugees settled in J & K are very much the citizens of India. They have the right to vote in Parliamentary Elections but they do not enjoy voting rights to the State Assembly and Local Bodies. There is no provision of separate citizenship for the State. However, they are not permanent residents of the State in terms of the J&K Constitution, therefore, these families could not be provided the benefits which had been provided to POJK refugees (JPC,2007). One of the biggest grievances of the community is the loss of their identity as Indians and as citizens of J&K who have resided there for generations. The term 'refugee' feels derogatory to them as being used even now, it makes them feel like outsiders who have lost their identity in their own country.

The Valmiki of J&K is the community that was brought from Punjab in 1957 as sanitation workers to the state. They belonged to the farming community and were assured good salaries and equal rights. Initially, they were treated well by the state government but later on, the promise was not fulfilled and the community faced many hardships. Member of this community were granted Conditional Resident Certificates and not the Permanent Resident ones. This prohibited them from education, employment and property ownership. This community faces further discrimination as they are subjected to caste discrimination. Being debarred from PRC status, they have not been able to apply for Schedule Caste Certificates and its benefits (Sagar,2017). A young girl, Radhika Gill from the Valmiki community who is a trained athlete and cleared the tests rounds for the Border Security Force was not selected because she was not a holder of the PRC and her application was rejected. The biggest grievance of the Valmiki is that their future generations despite education does not have career prospects and are subjected to the same oppression and discrimination, because as per the rule they can become only sweepers, only on the Municipality of Jammu. It is ironical that entire India is working towards eradicating caste-based discrimination but in J & K the Scheduled Caste Valmiki are forced to live a life of deprivation and discrimination due to their caste. The government has always turned a blind eye towards the community and in the distraught and divided state, their well-being is not a matter of concern.

Upon being challenged in the Supreme Court and the prospect of Article 35A being struck down, all political groups have come together in support of the most regressive clause in the state's history. In a memorandum to the Union Home Minister and to the National Human Rights Commission, the Jammu & Kashmir People's Forum presented cases of the communities whose fundamental rights have been "legally" snatched by the state government. The mainstream media coverage and academia surrounding issues of J & K have never addressed the grievances of the communities that are victims of Article 35A which has led to them not being able to voice their injustices. The status of women in the state seems as old as the stone age to a Twenty first century

educated person but the fact that such atrocities exist is a gross violation of everything our Constitution stands for. The identities of these communities are truly lost and the unawareness of people increases their pain. If Article 35A is not struck down, Jammu and Kashmir will continue to witness one of the greatest violation of rights ever known to man.

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06.

Caste Discrimination Legislation in UK: An Evaluation

Authored by: Suyash Nandgaonkar

Since the days of the Raj, UK has seen a steady influx of Indian migrants. These migrants, while still the minority have continued to grow in number and their influence on the British culture but everything is not a rosy picture as the popularity of chicken tikka and naans would lead you to believe. With the introduction of their Indian-ness, they have also brought along certain problems peculiar to them, a la Bend it like Beckham. There has been a prevalence of discussion regarding caste discrimination in the UK, an issue that was previously commonly considered exclusive to the Hindus in India. This issue has been hotly debated, denied and attempts made to outlaw it. While common sense would suggest there is nothing wrong with outlawing caste, this issue is more complicated and deeper than it appears to be.

The Evidence

Organisations in the UK have been campaigning against caste discrimination for a long time now which has led to multiple studies documenting the impact of such discrimination in the UK. An overwhelming majority, 80% and more, answered that Indians in the UK followed the caste system which divided people. A similar majority answered positive to belonging to a caste, however about half the respondents agreed that caste was an identity. Around 65% said that caste was a major hindrance to the development of the individual and society.

The caste system seemed to be deeply ingrained

in religion as well which could be a barrier to allow a person to perform pooja in a temple. Caste discrimination in sectors like education, employment, religion and access to services isn't always clear and is highly dependent on the victim's perception of the discrimination. (Mahimaidass and Sadana, 2006). There are cases where caste has directly affected a person's career, social functioning, and education. People have been favoured by virtue of belonging to higher caste. Despite all of these issues, only about a third of the respondents were aware of anti-caste organisations or conventions protecting against caste discriminations. (Metcalf and Rolfe, 2010).

However, an overwhelming and absolute majority, 85.61% of the people agreed that the UK authorities should work towards elimination of such discrimination.

The History and Context

The pro-legislature campaigners, like CasteWatchUK, Dalit Solidarity Network, various scholars and even Jeremy Corbyn have been going on the basis of the evidence mentioned above and have ignited an intense debate. For them, the issue is a very real one and deserves a distinct mention in the equality act.

On the other hand, there has been an equally intense anti-legislature campaign, that is led mostly by Hindu groups, such as Hindu Council (UK), National council of Hindu temples UK), Hindu forum of Britain and

many others. (Alliance of Hindu Organisations, 2013). For the anti-legislature group, the issue has been primarily based on religious and 'anti-factual' ideas. They claim that the caste divide never was a part of Hinduism and is not propagated by it. However, they also maintain that such a legislation is a part of a bigger conspiracy to vilify the Hindu minority in the UK. They maintain that the caste divide was introduced in India itself by the colonialists and such a legislation in the UK would be an extension of similar colonial policies. They specifically attacked the Church of England, and implied a Christian conspiracy to spread Hinduphobia.

2013, acknowledged the fact that the race section of the Equality Act covers caste as an aspect of ethnicity and made it mandatory for a Minister of the Crown to review the race section of the EA 2010, publish a report on such review and to make amends if deemed necessary. This led to the government conducting a public consultation and publishing its response as well. However, the consultation report very clearly stated that it was not supposed to follow quantitative results only, but also to take into account qualitative merit of such results. The UK Government ended up prescribing case law as a method to deal with further such cases (Government Equalities Office, 2018).

The lower caste population find themselves to be a minority within a minority and thus experiencing two layers of discrimination.

There was mention of the low crime rates, hardworking philosophy and high output and income levels among the Hindu diaspora as an implication that such a community could not practice regressive philosophies. The current anti-discriminatory regulation in the UK is the Equality Act, passed in 2009 and adopted in 2010 which brought the issue of caste discrimination to broader political and public attention. The UK has signed and ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). It is legally binding on the UK to prevent all form of descent-based discrimination. The current scope of the Equality act does not mention caste, however there is a possibility of it being included under the ethnic and racial discrimination sections. There has always been the implication and discussion of whether case-law could be used in such a scenario. (UK Legislature, 2010).

Referring to a case of caste discrimination in employment settled in the Employment Appeal Tribunal, the government acknowledged that "The Tirkey vs Chandhok Judgment" wasn't a definitive assessment of whether caste is or isn't within the scope of the Equality Act and in some cases caste discrimination might be outside the scope of the Equality Act. The passage of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act

The Minority Issue

This issue has resonated with the Indian minority and their identity. The lower caste population find themselves to be a minority within a minority and thus experiencing two layers of discrimination.

In a foreign land, a minority naturally depends on its own solidarity and ascribes increasing importance to such notions. This is very apparent in the South Asian diaspora in the UK, in terms of biraderi (clan/caste-based groups), a concept of mutual identity, loyalty and solidarity. With the growth, in numbers and intensity, of such groups, there is pressure among minorities to conform according to their tenets. These organisations are almost always based on religious or caste lines with community centres based at temples, gurudwaras, mosques etc.; leading to communities that are supposedly inferior like, Ravidassias, Ambedkarites, Dalits, Christian Dalits (Mahimaidass and Sadana, 2006).

A workshop conducted with delegates of both sides led to a better understanding of the views. The 'lower-caste' delegates supported the idea that caste discrimination was prevalent in the UK and needed to be tackled, whereas the delegates of the Hindu

organisations composed of mostly upper castes denied any such claims because they believed that it would re-institutionalise caste by bringing it up again and would tag the issue as a 'Hindu' problem and would further increase the burden on courts unnecessarily (Dhanda and Mosse, 2014).

How It Comes Together

Hindu organisations now, and the government previously have denied the existence of such evidence, however the reports still stand. There are claims of it being too little to bother about, however the number of people potentially affected by this range is from 50,000 to 200,000. The difference in claims of evidence is not solely on factual grounds. There are doubts of bias and not being objective in all the studies proving that caste discrimination exists. It also could be a catch22 situation. The organisations point towards low number of reported cases, but there is a very distinct possibility and high probability that the number of cases is low precisely because people are not aware of their rights and measures to protect them (Mahimaidass and Sadana, 2006).

As to the claims of the Hindus saying they have never experienced it, this should be taken with a grain of salt. Most of the members of the Hindu organisations seem to belong to upper castes and they would be of different social circles than the ones facing discrimination. As is apparent the cases related to sexism or racism, the class of people perpetrating it has very different perceptions of the issue than the victim class, therefore personal experiences and anecdotes as cited by many denying the evidence should be given very little weight (Eisenberg and Spinner-Halev, 2004).

Equality ought not to be about numbers but about principles. The legislation is about sending signals and demarcating unacceptable behaviour, its biggest impact will be acknowledging the problem and forcing the country to rectify it. Analysing this point in a vacuum suggests that the reason for opposition of the system comes from the Hindu community's desire to not be interfered with in their personal and private practices. The communities claim of this legislation attacking Hindus while at the same time arguing that caste is

not Hindu, defies logic. This argument also does not stand up as a strong opposition to the legislation. It may very well be a case of minorities getting insecure and polarised against what they perceive as majority interference in their activities. The claims that such a legislation will negatively affect the Hindus simply boils down to identity politics.

The government has also acknowledged this and has a commitment to keep the Hindu religion away from such a legislation. Reinforcing caste does not seem likely, however the legislation will bring the issue of caste again, especially in an educational context. The argument made by anti-legislature groups is based on the caste identity and politics in India, however they seem to overlook the fact that, such conditions are caused due to the affirmative action policies and not anti-discriminatory.

The same scenario in the UK looks unlikely as positive discrimination laws are not going to be enacted at all and aren't being discussed. It will spread caste awareness among students, however they cannot deny that there already is such an awareness due to bigoted sources. Legislations like these will make the education more comprehensive and have a positive effect on caste bullying. (Metcalf and Rolfe, 2010)

Even if the majority of respondents of the government consultation were in favour of case law, there is no guarantee that such a law would evolve correctly to rectify caste discrimination. It may take multiple failed attempts, to reach a satisfactory precedent, if it is reached at all. This is even more risky, considering Britain as a nation, never had to deal with casteism until recently by most of its population. The nuances and the complexities of casteism in a foreign land, by foreign people are too much to be trusted with such volatile and flexible machinery like case-law (Waghray, 2019).

Conclusion

This issue cannot simply be dismissed as a case of vote bank politics. The Hindus, with their history of being discriminated against by the English, do raise a valid fear of being demonised and ostracised. However, the potential gains outweigh the potential losses, which do not hold up as well under scrutiny. The current system of case law is flexible enough to allow for a niche issue like this, however, its flexibility also brings with a

measure of unreliability.

The argument for an explicit law is made stronger by the fact that it would encourage sensitisation amongst the non-Indian population, lending informal support and aiding in the reduction of casteist sentiments overall even in cases where there is no tangible loss to the quality of life of the victim.

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DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES

International Conference conducted on
'Geo-political Challenges: India and her Neighbours'



L-R: Prof. Dr. Pratiba Naitthani, Capt. Alok Bansal, Dr. Sanjay Chaturvedi, Mr. Claude Apri, Lt. Gen. Syed Ata Hasnain, Dr. Puyam Singh (ICWA) and Prof. Aradhana Talwar



Capt. Alok Bansal



Lt. Gen. Syed Ata Haisnain



Keynote Speaker
Vice Admiral Girish Luthra



Principal Dr. Rajendra Shinde delivering the opening speech



Head of Department Dr. Pratiba Naitthani welcoming the conference participants



Mr. Claude Arpi, expert on Tibet, China and India.



Dr. Sanjay Chaturvedi, Dean, South Asian University, New Delhi.



Captains from Indian Navy in the audience

A National Seminar on 'Article 35 A - Conflict of Identities; Violation of Fundamental Rights'



Delegates included Mr. Garu Bhati, Mr. Kamakhya Narayan Singh, Ms. Radhika Gill, Mr. M. K. Raizada, Mr. Rajeev Pandey, Mr. Labha Ram Gandhi and Mr. Sukhdev Singh along with Prof. Dr. Pratiba Naitthani and Prof. Aradhana Talwar



L-R: Mr. Garu Bhati, Mr. Kamakhya Narayan Singh, Ms. Radhika Gill and Prof. Dr. Pratiba Naitthani



Mr. R. K. Raizada, Senior Advocate,
Supreme Court



Mr. Rajeev Pandey, Advocate,
Bombay High Court



Mr. Labha Ram Gandhi



An interactive session with Mr. Harinder Sikka,
the author of *Calling Sehmat*



An interactive session in association with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government
of India with IFS and Alumnus of Political Science Department Ms. Petal Gahlot

The Annual Intercollegiate Youth Parliament on the agenda
'Need for Uniform Civil Code'



INTERVIEWS



IN CONVERSATION WITH

IROM SHARMILA

What is causing the supposed lack of connection between the North Eastern states including Manipur and the rest of India, that remains oblivious to the issues of this area?

People in the North East who are characterised by dissimilar facial anatomy, strange culture, and socio-economic backwardness in comparison with other parts of India can't, and won't, be treated equally. Hence, North Easterners face racially motivated attacks.

You have said that AFSPA is not a remedy to this conflict but it has aggravated the situation further. How do you think that has happened and where can this connection be drawn?

The North Eastern States are hilly areas. Manipur is surrounded by 9 hill ranges. There are no railway connections and industries there. Foreigners are subject to restrictions when it comes to travelling across the North Eastern States. The mainstream parliamentarians seem to see all inhabitants in the North East as separatists possessing barbaric attitudes by and large.

Instead of trying to know the reality facing by the people here in order to provide solutions, the focus was only anti-terrorism policy that sent ceaseless waves of paramilitary forces whilst deliberately ignoring any human rights-based policy recommendations.

Do you think there has been a dearth of support for

the cause?

People living in AFSPA states are used to atrocities stemming from its imposition. The deliberate sidelining of the people's protests against atrocities by the governance system at large has extensively demoralised civil society groups in the society. After consistent years of subjection to such atrocities, the demoralisation has reached an extent wherein, even strikes against explicit violative crimes such as the force feeding of a detained individual was received with half hearted response. This difficulty in mobilization creates a dearth in support from the masses.

You have mentioned how AFSPA is not a human rights issue but rather a political issue; could you elaborate on the reason for this conclusion?

During Nehru's term in 1958, AFSPA was passed to control the small kingdoms of the North East that were annexed which had their own constitutions and nurtured themselves through poor times. To suppress retaliations against their forceful subjugation, the Indian administration imitated the tactics of the British by incorporating the "Shoot to Kill Policy" which was in force during Quit India Movement in AFSPA.

Your campaign during Manipur elections felt ambiguous to many people. Would you take that as a reason for your performance in the election? And what could be the causes of this ambiguity?

For the masses of Manipur, I was an offering to God

for a righteous cause. An offering is not supposed to feel or wish for anything outside of being sacrificed. For them, I was already sacrificed to God. So, when I resolved to change a strategy to my protest against AFSPA and declared to them for fighting the election, they all felt terribly shocked since their only wish was my martyrdom, and knowing the real happenings in Indian Electoral Politics as well as their determination to vote for me, not to trust me led to my bad defeat.

Who do you consider to be your biggest inspiration?

Nelson Mandela

What would be your message for the youth that are the readers of this magazine?

Follow your heart in any decision irrespective of bad consequences so that you may become the judge of your own conscience, for your own destiny.



IN CONVERSATION WITH

BEZWADA WILSON

Mr. Bezwada Wilson is an activist and the National Convenor the Safai Karmachari Movement against manual scavenging and various other issues interspersed with that since 1994. An excerpt from an interview with him is as follows:

There is a huge debate with regards to the manual scavengers' demand to keep the private sector away from the waste management sector. What is your take on it?

We must understand one thing very clearly that manual scavenging, under any circumstances, must be stopped. It is a completely prohibited practice by law—through the proper implementation of the 1993 law through specific law enforcement agencies. On the other hand, waste management is completely different and it can only be discussed later after this caste-based practice has been stopped. After that, it doesn't matter whether the private sector or public sector does it. What matters is how the work is carried out.

Do you believe the formation of the Safai Karmachari Andolan has led to a unification and solidarity amongst the community that was otherwise missing? How important is this unification?

Not at all. The Andolan is simply a way to bring the people onto a platform where they can be seen and heard by the masses. But the people were already unified and were leading change as a community against the evil practice of manual scavenging.

What is your opinion about the mechanization of

labour? Is it capable of bringing a change in the views of the society against communities that are forced into manual scavenging?

Firstly, we need to stop thinking of manual scavenging as actual work. It is nothing more than oppression and torture on the basis of 'caste'. It is irrelevant who does it, as long as it is unorganized, hazardous and exploitative to man, woman and child alike. So, mechanization of labour is not going to change the views of the society. A person born in the manual scavenging community will continue to be oppressed even if he doesn't take up that job, simply on the basis of his birth. This goes the same for say, a person from the community of sex workers, which is another atrocity against people.

At what level, as per you, has the implementation of Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 has resulted in being inadequate?

It's really just a matter of political will. Whenever there are any caste-based issues in the country, our leaders turn away. They rarely ever think of concrete solutions to such problems like say, issues and atrocities faced by Dalits. It is safe to say that this Act is not being implemented at all.

What is your view on the arguments that have been in public forum in regards making changes in the 'Atrocities Act'?

These changes demanded by the public are necessary. The law enforcement needs to be made more stringent, women must get their rights and there needs to be

proper rehabilitation processes for those affected by such atrocities.

Over a span of almost 25 years, what are the biggest successes of the Safai Karmachari Andolan?

Our biggest success, so far, is most definitely the empowerment of women. They have reclaimed their identities, alongside everyone else from the community and are fighting for their rights, are leading change within the community itself and are also becoming involved with farming and enterprise.

Where does the Andolan aim to go? What are its biggest goals in the near future?

The aim is to bring people out of this cycle of manual scavenging, to empower them and skill them for other forms of work and to achieve all of this through automotive replacements to manual scavenging. Hopefully, with this form integration of the people into mainstream society, there will be a change in the society's attitudes also.

In an increasingly polarized society, where does the transformation begin?

The change begins with the common man that believes in a caste-less, division-less and equal society; the common man that believes that every person has an equal role to contribute to the society. It is the education of the conscience.

What is your message to the youth?

The youth must be involved more proactively in the activities of nation-building, may it be in the political, social or economic sphere. They are the people who will overcome the various, deep-rooted problems of our society over time.

07.

Identity at India's Margins: Othering in the Hijra Community

Authored by: Sukhnidh Kaur

Constructions of Marginalized Identities

Identity, put concisely, is people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others (Hogg and Abrams, 2004). Such self-perception is constructed in socio-cultural and political contexts, and hence comprises of an intricate intersection of histories, cultures, ideologies, values, power, politics, cognitive and social understandings of our own selves, how we navigate the world, and our relative social standings in terms of the same. Without one or the other, we cannot truly comprehend the many connotations of identification. Several factors, hence, lead to the construction of identities, and each is important in helping us understand what they mean and how they affect our lives. Despite the necessity of factoring in each one of these aspects, we often overlook many and instead categorize communities into types and stereotypes, adopting a unilateral view of people and their placement in society.

Identities at the margins entail a unique set of complexities, because marginalized communities remain outside the mainstream of productive activity and/or social reproductive activity (Leonard, 1986), suffer a lack of access to resources, and are thoroughly demeaned in terms of economic well-being, human dignity, and physical security (Latin). India is rich in its expanse of marginalized communities. From Dalit, Bahujan, and OBC groups to sexual minorities, tribals, disabled people, minority religions, and those relegated to the bottom of the socio-economic class

hierarchy, marginality is a part of India that cannot, and may not ever, be erased.

The Problem of Othering

Given that these identities are defined and adopted in the same manner as majority identities are, but entail the relative position of subordination that is a part and parcel of identification with marginalized communities, are the consequences of considering their collective image and ignoring individual identities of those living within them more harmful at the margins than otherwise?

In short, the answer is yes, because stereotyping of these disadvantaged communities leads to 'othering', which in turn contributes to their oppression. As put by Powell, othering happens when people narrowly define who qualifies as a full member of society, often in times of societal transformation. It propagates group-based inequality, and endangers marginalized groups by putting them at risk for persecution and isolation from mainstream society (Powell, J. A., 2017).

Group-identities in marginalized communities, as mentioned earlier, are largely centered around their relative subordination. This is not just true in matters of self-identification – those on the outside also perceive these communities in a similar manner, hence viewing them as the 'other'. This presents as a problem when we consider that at the root of discrimination lies the idea that the sufferer of it is the other, an entity

removed from what lies within the norm. Hence, when this distinction of identity is made, whether well-intentioned or not, majority groups contribute to the othering of marginalized communities, and in doing so, sanction their discrimination.

Othering in the Hijra Community

The condition of India's transgender community helps us understand othering and its many implications and consequences. The difference between hijras and cisgender, heterosexual Indians is demarcated so distinctly through caricaturization in the media, the 'us vs them' debate, demonization, relegation of members to shelters, and their forced adoption of hijra farsi in a bid for self-protection, that the community is isolated and its dehumanization is not only accepted – it is widely expected and propagated. This happens because we 'other' it and view it as something that is different from the majority group, that poses a threat, and that which must be contained.

This helps us contextualize Powell's definition of othering. The majority group's collective perception of hijras as those who do not fit the bill of 'full' members of society and the resulting prejudice against the community lead to its invisibilization in conversations of fair and equal access to physical and mental healthcare, housing, political representation, and employment. An example of this is the prevalence of the hijra population asking for alms in trains, often passed off as harassing innocent commuters. The fact that hijras are compelled to do so due to lack of access to meaningful employment, and perhaps more importantly, a lack of policy measures aimed at tackling this problem, reveals our bias in the kind of communities and identities that we consider worthy of intervention and aid.

Transgender individuals were first introduced in the Indian census in 2011, and the 'third gender' count revealed itself to be 4.9 Lakh. Given the widespread stigma across the board surrounding transgender identification, however, activists rejected this number, and claimed that it should be around six to seven times higher than what the census revealed (Times of India, 2014). The transgender literacy rate was a stark 28% lower than that of the general population, pointing

to social problems such as discrimination and lack of access to educational resources encountered by the community. Employment statistics followed a similar trend, with a 10% difference skewed in favor of the general population. Only 65% of transgender persons were counted as 'main workers', i.e. those employed for more than six months in a year (Economic Times, 2018).

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha in 2016. It sought to recognize identification of transgender identity, called for affirmative action in healthcare and education spheres, and solidified the place of transgender and hijra peoples as social welfare scheme beneficiaries. Though a step forward in attempting to tackle stigma around the Indian transgender community, it failed to truly the problem of othering in an effective, in-depth manner. Members of the community are not allowed to self-identify – they must present themselves to a District Screening Committee and undergo a medical test in the presence of a medical officer, psychiatrist, social worker, and member of the transgender community to be eligible for recognition. Though it may be well-intentioned, this practice strips community members of agency and the right to reclaim identity, and this plays a crucial role in their othering. Even within the ambit of identification, the bill defines transgender as "partly female or male; or a combination of female and male; or neither female nor male" (This Week in Asia, 2018). It others because it dehumanizes and boxes transgender and hijra people as partly the rest of society, or a melding of two legitimate identities, or perhaps the most strikingly dehumanizing – as neither.

Othering also legitimizes violence and criminal action against members of the community. India has seen cases of sexual violence, acid attacks, and battery of transgender persons, typically transgender women. One example is Neha Munde, a transgender woman who was abducted, held captive, and gang-raped in a flat for two years. It took Munde an additional two years of fighting for her rights after which her complaint was filed with the help of the NHRC. Swasti, a health resource center, surveyed 2169 Indian transgender citizens and found that a whopping 44% face violence into adulthood. The 2016 bill categorizes sexual

violence against transgender individuals as a petty offence with a six-month to two-year sentence, and this is seen by the community as a gross trivialization of the crime (Chakrapani, V., Newman, P., & Noronha, E., 2018).

A Complex Process

'Othering' also affects marginalized communities internally, and entails several complex dynamics. For example, today, caste is an important political identity. Appropriation of power within the subaltern is observed very frequently, and powerful OBC communities can be seen hijacking narratives of the weaker sections within their own categorization – who are, again, othered – and not allowing them a seat at the table. An example is Mayawati's BSP leader's categorical snub of dalit political voice Jignesh Mewani, which can be seen as her reacting to what she sees as a threat to her consolidated Dalit vote bank. A lesser known and often lesser acknowledged demarcation is also seen in South Asian Muslim communities. While Islam does not recognize caste, there is a distinct ethnic segregation between Ashraf (descendant of foreign conquerors) and Ajlaf (descendants of local converts) Muslims. Ashrafs are disproportionately represented as minority representatives in many legislative, judicial, and executive capacities, and the implications of othering are seen once again.

Simone De Beauvoir talked about a male dominated culture wherein the woman is part of the least favored social group in a man-woman binary, and hence othered. When intersectionality is brought into the picture, however, we get a closer look at aspects of caste, class, non-binary gender identity, non-heterosexual sexual orientation and so on. In this way, othering can exist in layers and intersections, often requiring a far deeper and complex understanding of what it is, why it exists, and how it can be tackled. Within a similar feminist framework, Professor Sarojini Sahoo said that even though men and women may be equal, women possess a discrete identity that is independent of the male definition of woman (Capt. Dr. Nawale, A., 2013). Intersections, in context of Sahoo's idea of discrete identities, allow us to understand that all 'othered' identities – whether hijra, or dalit, or several others at the margins – are constantly viewed in terms

of majority identity, and hence othered as an normal, unchallenged way of life.

Conclusion

Othering can create internal fractures in what would externally be perceived as vastly monolithic identities, and they pose yet another compelling question: Does othering affect constructions of identity at India's margins, or do these constructions lead to othering?

The answer is both, because othering becomes a catalyst in a vicious cycle of oppression. Majority groups other because they do not like those who are different from what is considered 'normal', and this in turn isolates the othered group further away from the favored group. As this cycle continues, communities on the margins find it increasingly difficult to assimilate themselves with mainstream society or lead a life of dignity. Othering, in this way, becomes a direct consequence of viewing these identities as cohesive wholes, and continues to contribute to the dehumanization and oppression of people at India's margins.

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08.

The Identity Struggle

Authored by: Supriya Ravishankar

There are some realities that are bigger than us, so much so that we tend to identify each other and even ourselves by what we are rather than by who we are. We adopt an identity we inherit and we characterise an entire class of people based on our understanding of their collective identity. Our genetic composition plays a huge role in this as it gives us a race. With that comes a country, a language, a culture, a caste, an occupation to even a surname. We are born into social groups that we live our entire lives in. We are chaperons and custodians of the group and protecting what it stands for becomes protecting what we stand for. We don't lose this feeling even when we migrate from one place to another because of how dearly we hold onto what we are. This is our identity.

Identity is however more central to some social group over others, one such group are tribals. Their identity is something they not just inherit but have protected vehemently. Over time however, this has changed. One of the primary reasons for this is because today, their biggest enemy seems to be the forces of modernisation. Modernisation can strike in two ways. One, it compels them to alter their way of life, often leading them to forgo their rich cultural legacy completely. This includes the disintegration of traditional knowledge. Here, their identities begin to alter. On the other hand, there is infiltration of modernisation in the way of life of tribals but in this case, their identity does not alter, it adapts. There is both the work of modern forces as well as the constant attempt to preserve their inherited identity.

In India, we are extremely conscious of our identity,

especially local identity. Labels are pivotal especially those that characterise a group as socially or economically backward. Terms such as 'Dalit identity', the 'Backward Classes' are part of mainstream parlance and become significant if not the predominate aspect of the identity of these social groups. Most of the time however, these labels are attached for the sake of electoral gains or vote bank politics. So the question arises as to to what extent do these labels compel tribal to either alter or adapt their identities?

This November, I had the opportunity to visit Uttarakhand. As a group of 7 people, we visited the Kuflon region in Uttarkashi where we visited 3 villages. Here, we were told that the entire Uttarkashi region was given OBC status. This leads to the Hypothesis of this paper and that is has labelling the Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand led to the alteration of the adaption of the local identity of the tribals? Before this question is answered, It is important to elucidate what exactly OBC is and whether it has been beneficial

India is a country of great prosperity but unfortunately also with great disparity. There is a monopolisation of resources by a small percentage of the wealthy. Adhering to the socialist pattern of economy, it is the duty of the state to minimise these discrepancies, to empower the socially and economically backward. Therefore, under article 340 of the constitution, it is stated that

"The President may by order appoint a Commission consisting of such persons as he thinks fit to investigate the conditions of socially

and educationally backward classes within the territory of India and the difficulties under which they labour and to make recommendations as to the steps that should be taken by the Union or any State to remove such difficulties and to improve their condition and as to the grants that should be made for the purpose by the Union or any State the conditions subject to which such grants should be made, and the order appointing such Commission shall define the procedure to be followed by the Commission”

This was the result of the Mandal commission report that declared over majority of the population to be belong to the Other Backward Class category. The Government of India is to ensure their social and educational development — for example, the OBCs are entitled to 27% reservations in public sector employment and higher education. However, it is not binding on them to declare groups as OBC. Overtime however, and with the government having the power to decide who constitutes to be socially and economically backward, the list of eligible groups under the OBC category has proliferated. The Supreme Court of India in *Indra Sawhney and others vs. Union of India* case (1992) had observed that there is no constitutional or legal bar on states for categorising OBCs as backward or more backward. It had also observed that it is not impermissible in law if state chooses to do sub-categorisation. This has been used both by caste groups demanding OBC status such as by the Marathas in Maharashtra for example as well as by politicians in their game of vote bank politics. Therefore, yes the OBC categorisation is important but at the same time, yes, it is being misused.

While collecting data in Uttarakhand (in the area of Kuflon in Uttarkashi), we were told that the entire Uttarkashi district that has over 600 villages was declared as OBC. Ironically, the region is inhabited primarily by tribals and people who are from the so called forward castes. A pertinent point is to be made here and that is that the local tribals are being relegated as backward based on contemporary understanding of backwardness, a definition tinted by neoliberal values. In fact, before modernisation set in in the district, the tribal community lived a self sustaining life. For

A pertinent point is to be made here and that is that the local tribals are being relegated as backward based on contemporary understanding of backwardness, a definition tinted by neoliberal values.

example, they used to obtain water for their homes by going to the river. The state government had pipes installed for them and now they have to pay taxes on water. They have been given the label of backward however people do not see each other this way.

We conducted interviews in order to collect data on the impact of the OBC status on the community. Our sample audience consisted of 12 working men across 2 villages between 30-50 years of age. The first question we asked was if they were aware of the fact that Uttarkashi was given an OBC status and do they know when this took place. They all answered saying that they knew. When asked if they had OBC certificates, they said that some of them did while others didn't. As for the repercussions of being categorised as OBC, through interviews that we conducted, the respondents said that the status is only beneficial in the realm of education for their children. What is to be noted is that under article 21A and the right to education act, irrespective of any category or label, all children below the age of 14 have the right to free and compulsory education and it is the responsibility of the state government to ensure the same. The respondents went on to say that they enjoy the benefits of both being under the ST category as well as the OBC category yet, in terms of other concessions, they are unfortunately facing hardships. Many even migrate out into bigger towns or cities such as New Delhi in search for jobs to make ends meet. This is because with the coming in of modernisation, the cost of living has also increased. For example, the cost of agricultural implements, transport charges all have

to be born by them. A respondent went on to even say that granting a region as OBC allows the state to obtain more funds from the centre in the name of investing in the community however these funds and the projects started in their name leads to no real benefit. This is because half the money is siphoned away and though projects generate employment, this is only temporary in nature. They however said that despite the fact that obtaining the OBC status has had no significant impact on their standard of living, they still would not wish to do away with it because of the benefit their children receive in terms of education.

The point is therefore that being labelled as economically and socially backward has had no impact on their identity in totality. Their idea of identity is based on their culture, traditions that they have inherited from one generation to the next. People of the hilly regions more than ever cling onto this identity. From how I see it, their identity consists of core values and peripheral values. The core values are what makes them who they are. This includes their local Gods (who they call as the Devta), their folklore and language, their traditional occupations (agriculture and forestry) and so on. The periphery components include their homes, their education, means of transport and so on. Through observations, one could conclude that the peripheral components of their identity has definitely undergone a change. Many of them live in houses made on concrete now, they send their children to local schools and even use vehicles to go to local towns to sell their produce. They use western medicines rather than local herbs. However, their core identity that is their religion, their language although undergoing a fight with the forces of modernity are very much still the same to a very large extent. The OBC status for them is therefore a tool to satisfy the needs of the peripheral components of their identity.

Their identity is therefore under threat. It is under threat from the people in power who wish to reconfigure it. From the government who frames laws such as the Forest Act that puts restrictions on access to resources that they traditionally had monopoly over. This compels them to go into the mainstream whether they have to compete with people from all over the country. Many of them lose this fight. Their

identity is also threatened by the internal disparities they face for example many youth chose to leave their villages and entire more modern occupations, adopting more populist identities leaving the older generations behind, bewildered. This community has therefore adapted and not altered its identity but everyday is a constant struggle.

09.

I & I: The Identity and Influence of Rastafari

Authored by: Abhishek Krishnamurthy

Rastafari and the Black Identity

In Iyaric, the word “Babylon” is used to represent the White Man, the White Culture and all the evils associated with it.

Herbert Spencer’s Survival of the Fittest was as much as psychological prophecy as a physical one, and the methods adopted by social groups to convince the other communities, the people at large, and themselves - most importantly - that they are right, that they are true.

It may thus come as no surprise, that Christianity - texts and all - has been analysed, criticised, polarised, and deduced to be a tool of the ‘White Man’ or *Babylon*; the imperialist, the oppressor. This imperialist oppressor who held the reins of the world in their hands at one point gave rise to a way of life that denounced Orthodox Christianity as another method of control by the fair-skinned populous. The Colonisation of Jamaica by the British Imperial Powers had a massive influence on the Rastafari identity. The slaves who toiled day and night on plantations had their first brush with racial segregation and discrimination; it laid down their identity as perennial servants to the White Man.

This proved to be one of the driving forces behind the Rastafarian purpose and has been instrumental in the bond between Rastafari and Black Power. The *Black Man* decided - no more subjugation to a “superior” power. No more subjugation to oppressive rules. If the tortured slaves had a home, it was Africa. If the

distraught, harrowed Jamaicans had a home, it was Ethiopia.

Marcus Garvey, the liberator, the saviour. Garvey’s persona could perhaps best be expressed by quoting Kendrick Lamar in *HiiPower* - “Last time I checked, we was racing with Marcus Garvey; on the freeway to Africa, ‘til I wreck my Audi” (Duckworth, 2011). Considered by several Rastafari as the man who pulled them out of their stupor, Garvey is responsible for spearheading one of the biggest Afro-Centric movements of the 20th century. Founder and Director-General of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, Garvey undertook extensive ventures that centred around the improvement in the condition of downtrodden races, with special emphasis upon empowerment and self-respect of the community at large.

By predicting the existence and arrival of Haile Selassie I, he managed to drive home the belief that the African identity was paramount; could be the cause of national and regional pride (Mulder, 2016). Garvey was one of the biggest proponents of unshakable faith in the Pan-African identity. His speeches usually centered around Africa as a space that accepted the defeated and downtrodden with open arms; he laid a very special emphasis on Ethiopia, partly owing to the fact that Ethiopia at the time was one of the most prosperous nations, capable of holding its own against the interferences of Babylon (Dagnini, 2009).

With Africa being proclaimed as the home for the

Black, Jamaicans gravitated towards the identity of Rastafari.

Haile Selassie I, born as Ras Tafari Makonnen, was the Emperor of Ethiopia from 1930 until 1974. His coronation led to considerable activity within the Rastafari community, on account of their belief in the prophecy of Ethiopia as the promised land. Viewed by Rastafaris as the Second Coming of Christ, he was looked up to as the force that would eliminate perils faves by Rastafari.

Haile Selassie I never fully accepted the identity that was given to him by the emerging Rastafari Movement - which was taken as a sign of humility and solidified the belief of the Rastafaris (Olsen, 1995). But he never dismissed their inhibitions completely. This stance of his comprises the core of Rastafari. The masses were only too happy when they found what they believed to be the Second Coming of Christ, and took to Africa (some literally, most spiritually) to pledge their faith to Haile Selassie I (Dagnini, 2009).



Haile Selassie I

(Source: <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/haile-selassie-i>)

Selassie's importance to Rastafari identity is spiritual; he did not make rousing speeches about the importance of Black Power nor admonish the ways of the White or treat them with suspicion and distrust. That he did not engage in these acts of tangible vengeance

was a message to the Rastafari community that racial differences need not prompt them to violence or give up on the white-dominated global sphere. By instilling in them a sense of pride, he managed to solidify their identity, thus leading to a period of Rastafarian flourish all over the world. Remembered with a sense of reverence and gratitude, Haile Selassie I ended up becoming a Rastafari prophet without ever taking the role.

Rastafari as a Product of Its Environment

In Iyaric, "Dread" is used to refer to a Rastafari, perhaps about 'dreadlocks' - the preferred hairstyle for most Rastas.

Leonard Howell. *The First Rasta*. Howell is responsible for the independent and self-sustaining nature of Rastafari communities across the world today. Howell's primary areas of influence was enabling the black community to hold their own and free themselves from the shackles of the conventional race order. He appealed to the people to maintain a steady belief in the Jamaican identity, and channel it to achieve their ends without succumbing to oppression and misery.

But Howell is perhaps recognised the most for his conception of Pinnacle - the first Rastafari community in Jamaica, and the world (Dagnini, 2009). Pushed to his tether's end by the indifference of the Jamaican establishment to the condition of Rastafaris, he set up an residential community that was meant to be a home for Rastafaris. The growing of cannabis was their mainstay, seeing as the land there was most suited to the crop. It may thus come as no surprise to a lot of people that the spiritual use of marijuana in the Rasta way of life stems from this agricultural initiative. With their residential, occupational and legal troubles taken care of for the time-being, the Rastafaris would soon focus on the development of this religious movement, the role played by Africa in it, and how they had managed to create and sustain a home of sorts for themselves and other of a similar kind. This solidified the pride they had begun to develop for themselves and would prove instrumental in the tough attitude adopted by them towards hostile external factors.

The reader may have noticed by now, that every sub-topic in this paper begins with the explanation of a word

in *Iyaric*, the language of the Rastafari people. *Iyaric*, in its essence, is the English language suitably modified to differentiate it from the traditional variant spoken by Babylon to separate the Rasta from the White Man and to shed the psychological inhibitions that come with adopting the language of the coloniser (Manget-Johnson, 2018). By editing the English language to make it their own, the Rastafaris have symbolically surmounted the Imperial Britain's greatest weapon - its tongue

Rastafari and The Cultural Identity

In Iyaric, "Bredrin", a modification of 'brethren', is used to refer to one's close friends and associates.

Arvon Road in Islington, London, is perhaps most famous for a certain wall that displays three words of graffiti – *CLAPTON IS GOD*. Such was the manic popularity of English guitarist Eric Clapton in the yesteryears of British culture, known for his stint with supergroup Cream, his collaborations with other eminent artists, as well as his solo works. It therefore may come as no surprise, that when Clapton covered Bob Marley's 'I Shot The Sheriff' in 1974, an entire generation of young students, hippies, and mods were turned onto what many consider to be Jamaica's greatest gift to the world – reggae music (Marley, 1974).

Why would he burst through the scene as the Son of Reggae, why was he the Poster Boy for an entire religion? In true reggae fashion, some questions are better left unanswered for they have no answer. What is of certain truth, however, is the fact that Bob Marley was Jamaica's superstar, and he never hesitated to give back to his motherland. The One Peace Love Concert of 1978 in Kingston, Jamaica is testament to this fact – Marley, exiled in London after concerns for his life, returned to the homeland and tried to quell the political gang-war that had ensued at the time by putting up a show for the confused, frightened and tired citizens. As the Concert ended, Marley held the hands of the squabbling parties and muttered *One Peace Love* – for that minute, all of Jamaica was one.

The Influence of Rastafari in Jamaica

In Iyaric, "Reasoning" refers to discussions held by Rastafaris on a variety of topics, coupled with the

smoking of the ceremonial herb.

Perhaps one of the most startling aspects of the Rasta-Jamaica arc would be that cannabis continues to remain criminalised in Jamaica and continues to exist as a topic of considerable debate. This could come as a surprise to the layperson, for the smoking of cannabis is nothing short of a sacrament in the Rastafari way of life. They say that the smoking of the *herb* is not a means of merriment; Rastafaris have been known to engage in deep discussions regarding God and Politics while taking drags from a *chalice*. The fact that the very possession of the substance - let alone the consumption - is a blatant violation of the law has resulted in the Rastafaris constantly getting into scuffles with the government, over what they perceived to be an insult to their faith. (Campbell, 1982).

In 2015, however, the Jamaican government did legalise cannabis for spiritual Rastafari use, though the extent of its implementation is still not all that credible. Legal agencies are not fully aware of the extent and scope of the law and may thus continue to harass the Rastafaris.

Another notable area of conflict is the Rasta belief of maintaining *dreads*, or dreadlocks; matted, uncut hair that can grow as much as it can. This tradition of sorts is said to have been pioneered by the Youth Black Faith, perhaps about several instances in the Bible where letting the locks of one's head grow long is a symbol of one's union with a higher power. While there obviously exists no legal barrier to this personal choice, these dreads are often associated with violence by the general populous of supposedly law-abiding citizens; instances of unjustified violence against Rastafaris with dreads have been recorded since the days of the Pinnacle.

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10.

Natural Allies or Opportunists: Decoding the Shia-BJP Alliance

Authored by: Alensandra Prakash

Democracy is a very unique political experiment which claims to give power to people in decision making. In simple words, empowering people to have a say in matters that affect their lives. Although, democracy was introduced in ancient Greece, the franchise was limited only to select citizens; women, slaves and soldiers were excluded. Until 1900s there was always a systemic exclusion of one or the other class. All men and women were not considered as equal in value and as a result, only people belonging to certain families were given the vote. In some empires wealth and positions in society was a criteria for vote. But with democratic revolutions and spread of ideas of equality, liberty and fraternity and abolition of slavery it was difficult to suppress peoples' right to vote for long. In the 21st century, most of the functional democracies gave franchise to all.

There are two types of democracies - direct and indirect. Direct democracies are those where people directly participate in all governmental decisions and laws through voting whereas indirect democracies have election of the representatives and legislations are passed by the representatives themselves. Scandinavian countries like Sweden, Norway and Finland are direct democracies, owing to their small population and homogeneous culture. Even though, direct democracy is highly successful in those countries, it is impractical in countries with large population and greater diversity like India. So Indian Constitution makers decided to have an indirect democracy with parliamentary form

of government with multi party system and coalition politics. This eventually led to vote bank politics or community politics in which each community votes the political party that woos them. Thus, political parties started to devise formulas on how to win maximum votes through carefully balanced alliances. So in the vote bank politics, communities which formed a minority in number were of no use to these political party and were thus neglected.

Identity Crisis and Diversity

In such a scenario, the fact that identity crises may arise is not rocket science. Even if one has multiple identities, in a democracy, with vote bank politics, the identity which fetches one votes becomes more useful and thus more expressive compared to other identities. It leads to that particular identity to supersede all other identities. This phenomenon occurs also when one is persecuted for their specific identity. For example, the blatant anti-semitism of Europeans united Jews across all countries divided by race, language and factions and they were determined to form a Jewish state.

But all doesn't end well. Vote bank politics in most cases will end up in polarisation of communities and disrupt the peace and harmony in society leading to communal riots. But as society consists of a considerable number of people who are politically unaware, they are unable to comprehend the shrewd and divisive agenda of different political parties.

In a such a complex society divided by caste, religion, language and region it would be unfathomable to learn, that a minority is voting for a supposedly majoritarian fundamentalist party. But it is true for a minority within a minority. One section of Shia Muslims in Uttar Pradesh votes or atleast support most policies of the Bharatiya Janata Party (JP) which project itself as nationalists with Hindutva ideology. But this phenomenon is not only limited to Shias. The Muslim Druze population in Israel overwhelmingly support the state of Israel and not Palestinian cause unlike their fellow Israeli Arab Muslims. So what explain this seemingly shocking phenomenon. It will be over the top to call it self hating or Stockholm syndrome. Another extreme comparison can be drawn by comparing it to the Jewish associates of Nazis who betrayed fellow Jews. That's however less likely to be the case in a democracy which gives people equal rights at least in a constitution.

If that is indeed the case, then what explains the support enjoyed by BJP from the Shia Muslims apart from the traditional Hindu upper caste votes. The answer is not outright. The very first thing needed to be understood is human psychology and that everyone does not follow clear-cut policies and values, no matter how much they try to conform to a fixed pattern. To understand the reasons why a large number of minorities within a minority vote parties which at first glance are against their aim, one need to analyse the real circumstances which force them to do so. Shias and Hindus shared historical affinity and ties. Majority of Nawabs of Oudh were Shias and their close affinity with Hindus in their kingdoms made them more cosmopolitan and inclusive.

The pair of fish in the Uttar Pradesh Government's logo was adopted from the logo of Oudh rulers while the bow and arrow was used to denote Lord Rama. There are also other cultural and religious factors which unite Shias and Hindus. Shia Nawabs were more inclusive and tolerant compared to their Sunni compatriots. The concept of ghats were exclusive for Shias, but Shias also got their first ghat – Mehdi ghat, post 2014. Shia Nawab Asifuddaulah gave equal land to Idgah and Ramlila and Nawabs also celebrated the festivals like Holi, the popular Hindu festival.

Shia - Sunni Conflicts: Local and International

Coming to Shias in India , there are about 70 million in number among the 170 million Indian Muslims. The main factor which brought them closer to BJP is the lukewarm policies of Congress. While the Sunni and Shia Muslims overwhelmingly voted for Congress, most of the important positions such as Ministries , Minority Commission chairmanships, All India Muslim Personal Law Board chairmanship etc were given to Sunni Muslims. Many Shias felt that All India Muslim Personal Law Board caters only to Sunnis and Sunni interpretation of marriage and divorce is followed.

Globally Shia Muslims form 15 percent of the 1.6 billion Muslims and are largely concentrated in Iran, India, Pakistan and Iraq . The difference between these two factions is historical. The succession crisis following the death of Prophet Muhammad was the primary cause of rift. While Sunnis supported Prophet's father in law Abu Bakr , Shias supported his son in law Imam Hussein. Finally Abu Bakr became the Caliph and the political differences between the two opposing groups was solidified into two sects.

Geopolitical conflicts is other major reason. With the success of Islamic revolution in Iran and the Arab spring in 2011 , Sunni Arab countries lead by Saudi Arabia feared that Iran is exporting their model of revolution into other countries and the relation began to sour. With the rise of Daesh (ISIS) and the Syria conflict, Iran was on the Assad side and Arab countries on the opposing faction. The Muslims in India were also closely following these events. Most Sunnis started to support Anti- Assad faction and Shias supported the Shia Iran and Assad. So there were differences arising amongst both the groups.

Pakistan is one of the country which constantly make headlines in Indian Press mostly for all wrong reasons. The politics in Pakistan is closely followed in India and is a sensitive issue among the masses. Pakistan has 98 percent Muslim population with Sunni Muslims being the majority . Even though , the founder of the nation is a Shia Muslim, Shias along with Ahmadis and Sufis are not treated equally at Pakistan. There are serial bombings at Shia and Sufi mosques by Sunni

extremists. Many of the Shias were disillusioned with the idea that a Muslim majority nation will be tolerant to all the Muslims with the example of Pakistan. Some Shia Muslims in India felt that they are treated more fairly in India compared to Pakistan.

Also Shia Muslims in India felt that the Sunni extremists in India are maligning the name of Islam and thus making Hindus hate them more as they don't understand the divisions within the Muslim communities. So due to terrorist activities by terrorists like Dawood Ibrahim who belongs to Sunni Islam, all Muslims regardless of their sectarian differences were targeted in riots by Hindu extremists as seen in Bombay riots.

Shia politician Syed Waseem Rizvi from India's most populous state Uttar Pradesh felt that Sunnis take all benefits from Government welfare schemes meant for Muslim minorities and neglects Shia interests. He added that politicians looking for Muslim votes are catering the majority Sunni interests.

Congress' Loss and BJP's Gain

Congress, the Grand old party always claims to be secular and a protector of Muslims from the ideology of Hindutva. But many Muslims felt that Congress was using them just as vote banks and did not do much to alleviate the main problems faced by the Muslim community. Moreover throughout the Congress rule, most important positions were given to the Sunnis and the Shi'a Muslims were side lined by the Congress leadership. They felt that they are politically killed by the Congress, i.e. not given enough opportunities and positions in the governance.

As much as the Congress inaction drove the Shias away, BJP action made them closer to BJP. Their support for BJP is not because of their admiration of the Hindutva ideology but to shield themselves from the Sunni majoritarianism. Shia youth leader Shamil Shamsi who heads Husaini Tigers started the Shia Gau Raksha Dal with the aim to expand to other states with the aim of cow protection and they have also announced a bounty of INR 15 lakh on televangelist Zakir Naik.

Conclusion

But obviously not all Shia leaders think the same.

Some blame Muslim Rashtriya Manch for trying to side with Hindutva extremists and thus dividing Muslim votes. Maulavi Gholam Al Gulzar, a prominent Shia scholar condemned Rizvi's rant that Muslims speaking out against Hindus over Ayodhya dispute should go to Pakistan. Rizvi also requested Prime Minister Modi to shut Madrasas as they have become breeding grounds of extremists.

BJP also rewarded their Shia supporters. BJP could win Uttar Pradesh due to overwhelming Shia support. Alleged discrimination by Samajwadi Party and its MLA Azam Khan added fuel to the fire. So Shias resigned from Samajwadi Party in large numbers and joined BJP. Shia community hoped to assert their presence in Yogi Adityanath's cabinet. The alignment of Shia community with BJP can be traced back to Vajpayee government's rule in 1998 when he lifted a 20 year ban on Shia procession. Due to Shia-Sunni violence, the Muharram procession was banned by the state government in 1977. It was after Vajpayee government's relentless intervention that Shias were able to stage an Azadari procession in 1998 January (21st day of Ramzan). Vajpayee also won 5 times from Lucknow which has considerable Shia presence. BJP ministers including defense minister Rajnath Singh can be seen in different Shia gatherings. Sufi - Shia alliance favoured BJP in 2017 Uttar Pradesh elections.

Union Minority affairs minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, National Committee for Minorities chairman Syed Ghoul Hazan Rizvi, Uttar Pradesh Minority Commission Chairman Harder Abbas, and Uttar Pradesh Minority affairs minister Mohsin Raza were given these positions under BJP government. All of them are Shias and this shows that BJP clearly favours Shias compared to the majority Sunnis.

All these signs do suggest that this alliance is here to stay. The longevity of this will depend on how long BJP stays in power. Obviously yearn for power is one of the factors and Congress and Sunni leaders have much to introspect if they don't want to forever lose the Shia minority. Branding whole of BJP Shia supporters as traitors or selfish will be a wrong way of assessment. Man is a social animal. He needs recognition and acceptance from society. Every community after their

basic food, shelter and clothes needs want positions of power mostly for prestige but also for putting forward the well-being and objectives of communities in a more popular front. In democracies , the yearn power even exceed the yearn for basic facilities mostly because unlike dictatorships, there is a greater possibility to succeed and they perceive power as a means to achieve basic needs. Thus in such an atmosphere of politics, it is impossible to stop alliances which are so odd in public eye such as the Shia – Sunni alliance in India. Calling them all sorts of wrong names like Uncle Tom (to call Republican supporting Black Groups) which will only further alienate that sections.

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11.

Who is Us: The Language of Identity

Authored by: Charuta Ghadyalpatil

“The only languages that do not change are dead ones.”
– David Crystal, *Language Death*

The English language, although not statistically the most widely spoken language, enjoys a unique position in the world today. It has the potential to let a Turkish student read what an Irishman might be writing about on his blog.

This is English in its role as a lingua franca, or a connecting language. History has seen many of these: from Aramaic to Greek to Latin to French to Arabic. The role of a lingua franca is to facilitate communication between groups that would otherwise remain isolated from each other. It exists for the purpose of widening communication among people, as opposed to a vernacular or native language, which more or less is an exclusive club. In other words, people want to connect with, to quote Edmund Burke, ‘the enlarged publick’ (Quirk, 2000)..

What is common for most languages that became the connecting forces is the power and hegemony that backs them. There is a close link between cultural power and dominance of a language:

“Without a strong power base – political, military or economic – no language can make progress as an international medium of communication. Language has no independent existence; it exists only in the brains, mouths, ears, hands and eyes of its users. When they succeed on the international stage, their language succeeds. When they fail,

their language fails.” (Crystal, 2003)

Which language becomes the dominant one does not lie in the grammar or the syntax of the language. It lies in the ideological base that supports it. English enjoys a position of power because it is the language of two nations that have historically enjoyed a very powerful position in world history. From being the language of the leading colonial power in the 17th and 18th centuries to being the language of the leading economic power in the 19th and 20th centuries, English happened to be at the right place at the right time (Crystal, 2003). With its power base in place, English was free to expand and flow into mass media, culture, sport and every other imaginable sphere. Today it is the language of democracy, freedom, and individualism – the ideological foundation for potent forces like globalisation and free markets..

Language, is a product of culture and must always to be seen as part of a larger social context. These are words that enable people to manoeuvre their reality (Comrie, n.d.). On the other hand, sociologist Michel Foucault saw language in terms of discourse. Discourses, according to Foucauldian theory, are powerful and totalising: capable of dictating what can be said and what cannot. Language, which lies at the heart of discourse, carries historical baggage. (Discourse, n.d.; Evans, *The Identities of Language*, 2015).

For Ludwig Wittgenstein, words represent concepts or mental representations that are triggered when certain words are used in certain ways. People learn

the meaning of words by hearing other members of their linguistic community use these words in specific contexts. A word has a certain meaning as long as a community uses it in a certain way (Biletzki & Matar, 2018). As a result, words can change meanings, acquire new meanings and lose old meanings.

Wittgenstein's philosophy ties meaning to a community, thus turning it into something that is derived from everyday lived culture. As a result, a group's language also carries with it the values on which the society is built. When people become members of any group and speak its language, they see the world through the pool of knowledge they have at their disposal (Evans, *The Identities of Language*, 2015).

A person's identity is, poetically, what sets them apart from others. It is both, social and personal. In a social sense, identity has to do with what social categories people identify themselves with based on norms and attributes of membership. In a personal sense, it is tied to self-esteem and notions of what lends people their dignity. For the purposes of this work, identity shall be looked at in its social sense. This is the identity that comes from identifying with a group, and is formed in the context of a social reality. Basing itself on this definition, identity is seen as something that is constructed – much like meanings (Fearon, 1999).

Identities are built out of what a person's social position enables them to say in a society charged with power and politics.

Building Identities

Identity, like language, grows within a context, more specifically within that of discourses. Discourse comes with its own baggage of power dynamics. By linking discourse to power, language and meaning become something that are actively constructed by people. Identities, then are formed out of this meaning. They can be developed, reconsidered, forced upon, or even given up by altering the discourse (Rassoka, 2010). As

a result, social identities are rarely stable, univalent concepts: they evolve, simply because people's language evolves.

Along with the lexical and grammatical meaning of words, meaning is also affected by who is speaking and what position they are speaking from. It is a product of agency and power within the structure (Discourse, n.d.; Evans, *The Identities of Language*, 2015). Identities are built out of what people are enabled to say by their position in a society charged with power and politics. A black man in pre-Civil Rights Movement America, therefore, would always be identified as less human, even if said black man possessed the lexical and grammatical tools necessary to define himself as something else.

Given that language affects the kind of worldview it stands by and the human search for meaning, different groups put forth different languages to understand their world and claim their identity in it (Chassy, 2015). This is essentially a political purpose – that of generating an ideology using available tools. When language and the resulting identity become a rallying point for people to imagine their communities, people become a part of a political society wherein they look for a share in power.

The most noticeable role of language in politics in this context has been that of an ethnic marker. The ethnic consciousness that comes from a common language has translated itself into a national awakening or the birth of a national identity. Given its exclusivity to a people, such a language becomes, more often than not, a matter of pride because it is so closely tied to a sense of dignity.

For instance, the credit for the creation of a national identity among the Polish peoples goes to the use and projection of the Polish language as a matter of ethnic pride by the people. While to all intents and purposes, every Polish-speaking individual was set apart (discriminated, even) from the majority under Russian repression, speaking Polish meant that Poland was not dead yet. It was a matter of pride for the romanticists and the poets that wrote glorified tales and created the opera: something that went a long way in creating a

national consciousness. (Coleman, 1934)

Such use of language has been a noticeable characteristic of our world. The idea of nations being imagined communities rests on the idea that language makes its speakers aware of the extent of said community, thus also lending them the ability to imagine it as a national and/or ethnic category (Anderson, 1983). Today, with (relatively) stable nation-states, being able to speak the 'national language' is considered an important marker of national identity (Stokes, 2017).

Closer to home, in India, state boundaries have been drawn and redrawn based on linguistic ties. Within these linguistic states, too, tensions have brewed over regional variations. The south Indian state of Karnataka presents a microcosm of India in the 1950s: with multiple linguistic minorities, from communities speaking Konkani and Urdu to Telugu, Tulu and Kodava (The Economist, 2013). Karnataka has also been at loggerheads with Maharashtra over districts regarding their linguistic make-up. Anti-Hindi agitations have dotted the Indian south in her early independence years. Regional politics based on linguistic loyalties has been a recurring theme in recent decades of the Indian political landscape.

The role that language plays in all of the aforementioned instances is that of erecting boundaries around the community that speaks it. By being specific to a group of people, languages confer on their speakers a distinctive identity that sets them apart from others in a social and/or political context. It unites people based on a commonality that is drawn from something that is everyday, something that is lived. These are languages we learn to identify with others who speak them, as well as to exclude those who do not (Quirk, 2000).

When it comes to sustaining that identity and communicating it to the world – to a wider community – people need something more than a native language or a mother-tongue. This is where a lingua franca comes in. It is a binding force, much like any other language, binding its speakers in a large, wildly heterogeneous community with multiple points of power and multiple identities.

Sempur Lingua Mutantur¹

When these vastly different people start speaking a language, they basically acquire the right to alter it. And while each language, in terms of discourse, is a powerful external reality, people can, over time, change the language they identify with. This is because, to borrow from Wittgenstein, meaning resides in conventional agreement (Rassoka, 2010). The English-speaking community is, however large, a group of speakers, all of whom bring their identity to the field and – in time – alter its dynamics. Today, countless groups are doing so – sometimes intentionally, sometimes not so much.

When people start speaking a language, they basically acquire the right to alter it.

Sometimes, the language changes because the values that the society stands for change. These alterations are not limited to ethnicities. Words and concepts like equality, liberty, freedom, democracy only exist today because we believe in their sanctity and in upholding them as values. Another category is that of resistance languages. These come from groups that challenge the socio-political status quo. The language of socialism grew as one of resistance. Its success lies in the presence of 'minimum wage' and 'labour rights' in our discussions.

Feminist language lies, to a large extent, in resistance. The social and political success of the movement is evident in the language we speak. For one, words like patriarchy, misogyny, male gaze, and the likes are more common in our discourse than ever before. Lecturers at Cambridge University are advised against using words like 'genius', 'flair' or 'brilliance' because they are conventionally associated with men (Telegraph, 2017).

Over time, feminism enveloped and fostered the growth of debates on sex and gender. The success of the feminist and the LGBTQ rights movements lies in

¹ "Language is always changing."

how they forced us to collectively reconsider sex and gender: evident in the language we speak, particularly the English language. 'Roger's husband', perhaps not a comfortable notion for most people, still exists as a concept, because the social context for it does. Here is also an instance of already existing words acquiring new contexts. Then there is the non-binary language, with its gender-neutral pronouns like 'them' and 'they' that are specifically singular. While these concepts go against the very ingrained grammatical structure that has persisted for hundreds of years and is met with opposition almost every day, the fact that these meanings exist is a victory for LGBTQ identity.

The political movements that these identities gave rise to have altered social and political discourses. They have, obviously, faced conservative backlash. And these discourses are far from being the dominant ones. But they exist, their language exists. With this language come new meanings and new ways of defining and perceiving ourselves and others. And in keeping with the Orwellian lesson on politics and language – to change mindsets, one must change the language – language, identity and politics forms a feedback loop: providing people the tools to construct their identities, which act on the culture they are born in to create a new culture that provides even more tools to the very same people that created it.

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DEPARTMENT REPORT 2018-19

The Xavier's Political Science Association (XPSA) organises different politically and socially relevant activities, pertaining National and International issues. The theme for the academic year 2018-19 was "The Idea of Identity" and hence this theme was followed for all the events and activities conducted throughout the year.

We began our activities with an interactive session, with Lieutenant Commander Mr. Harinder Sikka, author of "Calling Semat", which was adapted for the famous Hindi movie Razzi. He has produced a film Nanak Shah Fakir which won acclaim at Cannes, Toronto and Los Angeles international film festivals. He enlightened us with his discussion on his experiences with Sehmat, spiritualism and Patriotism. A very motivated speaker, Mr Sikka, guided the students on dealing with challenges in life.

The next activity was the Parimal K. Shroff National Essay Writing Competition, held in the month of September with the topic "Politics of Identity". We received entries from undergraduate students from all over the country and cash prizes was given to three best essays.

Another event that was held in September was a research paper writing workshop by Professor Kannamma Raman, who recently retired from Civics and Politics department of Mumbai University. Prof. Raman provided a detailed presentation to the students on various aspects of writing a research paper and the key components of a good research. She also taught us about referencing and primary research which is an important component in any academic pursuit.

The Xavier's Political Science Association held a National Seminar on 15th November. The National Seminar titled "Article 35 A- Conflict of Identities & Violation of Fundamental Rights" perfectly fits our theme for XPSA activities this year- "The Idea of Identity". It was an interactive session with the experts on the subject and the victims of Article 35 A — The speakers were - Adv. R. K. Raizada, (Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India and Additional Advocate General, Uttarakhand), Adv. Rajeev Pandey, (Advocate, Supreme Court and Bombay High Court), Mr. Garu Bhati and Ms. Radhika Gill, representing the the Valmiki community, Mr. Labba Ram Gandhi and Mr. Sukhdev Singh, who represented the West Pakistan Refugees, and Mr. Kamakhya Narayan Singh, (Director- Travel Xp channel and documentary maker). Very little information is available in public domain about the issues of the victims of 35 A. This seminar was an eye opener to the crisis at hand as the reality of the hardships faced by the very people of Jammu and Kashmir, their longing to belong, reached to the audience.

On 4th January, 2019 XPSA in association with Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India hosted an interactive session with Ms. Petal Gahlot, an alumnus of our dept, an IFS, currently on diplomatic mission in the USA. Ms. Gahlot gave us an insight on 'Avenues of Diplomacy and Foreign Policy'. She also spoke about the preparation and practice that goes into acting a civil service exam. Her openness about her challenges in her career was an eye opener and gave the audience an honest view of what civil service is all about. It was a very fruitful exercise for the students who wish to pursue a career in Civil Service.

In the same month the XPSA organised its flagship event, Intercollegiate Youth Parliament with the topic "Need for Uniform Civil Code?" Uniform Civil Code has been a point of debate for years and XPSA presented a

platform to the participants to come, Reason – Rebut – Resolve and step into the shoes of the policy makers and voice out their opinion.

Keeping in mind the current geopolitics around India. On February 7th, 2019 the Xavier's Political Science Association organized an International Conference in Collaboration with the Indian Council of World Affairs. The topic for the International Conference was "Geopolitical Challenges – India and her Neighbours." The Keynote speaker was Vice Admiral Girish Luthra who is a flag officer commanding in chief, western naval command of the army. The other esteemed speakers were Capt. Alok Bansal, an expert on South Asian, defence and Maritime issues who has produced extensive literature on issues such as Pakistan's occupation of Kashmir and Indo-Pak relations, Lieutenant General Syed Ata Hasnain who is a retired three star General of the Indian Army and he has commanded Army Corps in Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Claude Arpi is a French scholar and journalist who has extensively written several articles and books on Tibet, China, India and Indo French relations, Dr Sanjay Chaturvedi, the Dean of Social Sciences at the department of International relations at the South Asian University in New Delhi and has expertise on India's International relations and Dr. Puyam Singh, a research scholar with the ICWA, who spoke on the India China relations. The participants were mesmerised by the speakers and their Knowledge. It was a learning experience for them all as they got insights to lot of practical and on field information which they wouldn't have read otherwise, related to Geopolitics.

It has been my privilege to be the Chairperson of such an active and involved committee. All our activities have been possible only through the expert guidance of Dr. Pratiba Naitthani, the Head of the Political Science department. She has been the driving force behind the success of our activities and events as well as Dr. Aradhana Talwar who has constantly encouraged us to give our best.

The Xavier's Political Science association had several politically and socially relevant activities this year with a huge success in all the activities. I am extremely great full to Dr Pratiba Naitthani, because of her support and guidance each went was a success. Also, the department is thankful to our college Principal Dr Rajendra Shinde who has always encouraged us in our activities. I would also like to thank my committee, Bhavya, Ajunee, Supriya, Shalini, George and Yash from TYBA, Abhishek K and Mariya from SYBA and Abhishek G and Rajpriya from FYBA and the all the volunteers without whom all our endeavours would not have been possible. It has truly been an honour to work with such a good team. We all have worked towards bringing XPSA to greater heights. I would like to wish my successor luck and I am sure that our legacy will be upheld for the years to come.

Diliaca Rodricks

Chairperson

Xavier's Political Science Association, 2018 -19