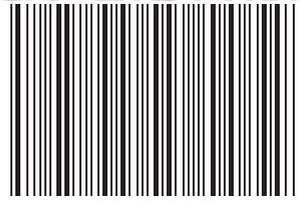


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# *Indian Journal of Social Enquiry*

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# Editorial

*Niraj Kumar*

The debate between development and democracy always comes in our minds when we start analysing the fate of developing countries of the world. People often talk about faster economic development of China as well as India. But china's case is different from that of India since it is characterised as a socialist developmental state or market socialist state. It is an authoritarian country where discipline and people's participation are not a big deal or problem. Whereas India is all together in a different league of developmental states. Any discourse on the issue must take into consideration the fact that democracy and development should go hand in hand. And therefore, India can be called a democratic developmental state. It is so called because India has maintained a decent percentage of sustained economic growth in per capita GDP and has also done well to maintain its democratic character, except for two years interlude of the National Emergency from 1975 to 1977.

What India requires is great visionary leaders to chalk out developmental goals with greater farsightedness on the one hand and a well-disciplined, well informed responsible citizens on the other. Disciplined citizens who have requisite civic sense are often viewed as the backbone of any country. Ironically when we visit India from this perspective, we identify problems on both the fronts. We have some visionary leaders who can steer through the developmental path, but their number is miniscule. On the other hand, we are way behind the other countries of the world which have developed themselves much faster. For instance, in the case of South Korea, when General Park Chun Hee took the charge, he inspired the citizens by instilling in them such patriotic feelings that if they work hard, the nation will develop and prosper, and if the

nation prospers the citizens will also prosper. In the Indian context, the need of the hour is to compare our government and civil society with the governments and civil societies of other nations in terms vis-a-vis the generally accepted criteria for democracy. Citizens should be challenged to make judgments about whether or not their government and civil society are more or less democratic and free than those of other countries. They can also introspect to gain a sense of how they can strengthen participatory democracy with developing good citizenship skills.

Many of us have children who are growing up, and as responsible parents we ensure that they receive the best of education and learn and develop necessary attitudes, values and the 21st century skills—the building blocks to 21st century learning and citizenship. The curricular developers and educationists today give clear cut guidelines to include the skills of critical thinking and problem solving, effective communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation in the core subjects. Such skills are required because as our children grow, their personal, professional and public lives grow more complicated every year in a more globally connected world.

But how many of us recognise the need to develop the democratic participation and good citizenship skills to strengthen our civil society and democratic fabric?

Just as we need to prepare our children to face the future challenges of a complex civil society, we must also recognise that a healthy democracy must foster age-appropriate instructions in civic knowledge and skills through civic engagement and the process of political mobilisation, by providing people the opportunities to participate in local groups, organisations and institutions.

Today's citizens are faced with higher expectations in both as citizens of their own country and as global citizens. And therefore, as a part of this new 21st Century Global Citizen force, the people need to prepare themselves for what they will need to know and be able to do in their local community, at work and throughout all aspects of personal and civic life. People can build these skills by applying them as they participate in society. And we know that a successful democracy thrives on active citizens who have the necessary democratic participation skills that will increase their grasp of what they're gaining, as well their overall engagement in their own welfare.

Citizen participation is at the core of democratic citizenship and democratic decision-making that brings about positive effects on the quality of democracy.

The largest democracy of the world will survive and develop resilience only when its citizens understand the importance of taking responsibility in their local and wider communities. They must participate with responsibility and develop such skills that can help them to make informed decisions.

### **Learning to Give**

For citizens to be capable of fully engaging in civic and political life, they must possess a minimum of civic skills.

### **What are civic skills?**

Civic skills include personal communication skills, knowledge of political systems, and the ability to critically think about civic and political life (Comber 2003). Civic skills thus include the abilities to communicate with elected officials, organise rallies and mobilise people to influence policy, understand and participate in local polity, and think critically about civic and political life.

### **Importance**

In modern times, it is not desirable to limit citizen participation to political decision-making, but it should also encompass local needs and communities. It is important that citizens, both young and old, see themselves as members of a civic society, so as to develop a sense of common good, and recognize their important role in achieving it. However, in order to be effective citizens, one must acquire the ability and willingness to make judgments about what is best for the whole. These judgments must always be rooted in such principles as fairness, liberty and a commitment to the greater good rather than one's own interests.

It is important to find acceptance as a member of any civic group as a worthy contributor.

There are people or groups in society dealing with high stress levels due to a variety of environmental or combination causes. Such groups are easily frustrated, resist any efforts to include, and as a result often feel rejected. Citizen groups can work to create relationships with such groups outside of conflict situations, sustain relationships during conflicts, build trust levels in them, and help them find acceptance as a member of the group and worthy individual.

Citizen forums must engage people to help them express strong emotions in non-threatening ways. They can initiate interactions with such groups. Conflicts can be avoided and resolved with others by expressing views in non-

aggressive ways. Values of sharing and cooperation; helps reduce conflicts in these situations.

Solving problems creatively, independently and in cooperation with others can be achieved in two ways—as individuals and together with others. Individuals can engage with the issue in their personal capacity in their own way. Together with others, they can work in cooperation engaging with the issue and focusing, persevering, and together solving the problem.

The democratic participation skills include accepting the unique human qualities in others. Citizens can work on this skill by going out of their comfort zones to initiate friendly interactions with others. Such forums need to ensure that all members of the group are accepted and appreciated.

Citizens need to think intelligently and ethically in social situations by accommodating others needs and perspectives at least as much as their own. Important here is to emphasise that the members should not feel pressured to show such a behaviour but can contribute with their free will.

Educating the public about civic skills helps them learn to become active citizens and emphasizes the importance of acquiring the knowledge and attitudes that will lead them to become competent and responsible contributors to the public sphere. These citizens can act responsibly and demonstrate politically correct civic virtues, social responsibility and exhibit tolerance and respect and move with a purpose to make a difference in the social and political spheres.

Civic skills provide the foundation for responsible and community-minded citizens. Those who possess and maximize the skills feel a link to their communities and contribute to the well-being of the fellow citizens.

A great skill to successfully participate in a constructive manner is to have powerful conversations and group discussions that allows citizens to work together with other members of society to achieve common goals. These skills facilitate constructive resolution of issues and then guide conversation in a productive direction.

Practice of voting and petitioning can be used to ensure that each citizen's voice is heard in the public sphere, and that a group of citizens can join hands to influence positive and desirable changes. In present-day India, voting is a right of every adult citizen, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or socioeconomic status. In order to exercise this right effectively in taking informed decision about electing the right representative is at the core of exercising a citizen's

formal expression of preference for a political candidate. It can be just as critical to individual participation in government.

As stated in the beginning that India needs to develop it faster to catch up with the West as well as to compete with China and other faster developing economies of the world. To achieve this target India must balance between a well contributing citizens and visionary leadership. The government then will fix the target and the citizens will execute by active contribution exactly in the same way as in cases of successful developers of south-east Asian countries. For the same India must develop citizens skills as mentioned in the earlier paragraphs. Right now, the problem with Indian developmental state is that people are very much aware about their rights but when it comes to take the responsibilities of a good citizen, they shy away from it. Leadership is also not bothered about the success of government's initiatives and programmes or targets, but they are more concerned about winning elections. A balance of both is needed for faster economic growth and sustained democracy.



# Communication in the Global Family

Sunil Sondhi

## Abstract

*Global development has broken through the boundaries of space, time, cultural assumptions, and the scope, structure, and function of human society. It not only demands new ways of thinking and organization, but also opens up new imperatives for investigating linkages between thought and action, knowledge and being, structure and process. These new imperatives of global development demand a new way of communication in order to achieve skill in the process of intercultural interaction. It is the purpose of this paper to examine the principles and practice of intercultural communication skill in the context of the Indian concepts of Advaita, Sahridayata, and Samdarsana.*

## Introduction

We live in times of great change and transformation. The development of communication and transportation technology and numerous social, economic and cultural changes over the last decades have been globalizing the world into a closely interconnected society. The flux and complexity of the change will continue to increase in the years ahead and challenge the fundamental assumptions and beliefs on which modern people have learned to live with. To successfully ride this turbulence of global development, citizens of modern societies will be required to acquire a set of knowledge and practices that account for intercultural communication skill. Only through intercultural communication skill can people from different cultures communicate effectively and productively in the global family.

Knowledge and practice of intercultural communication skill will not only help to transform individuals into multicultural persons by fostering multiple cultural identities, but also function to nourish an awareness of these multiple identities and extend to maintain a multicultural coexistence in order to develop a global civic culture. Therefore, intercultural communication skill is the key to cultivating ability of tolerance and mutual respect for cultural differences, which marks the enlightened global citizenship required at different levels of future human society and global family.

## **Global Development**

Two major trends account for the emergence of global development in human society: economic transformation and technology development. First, the rapid development of communication technologies over the past century has fundamentally transformed human society by linking every part of international economy into an interconnected network. The introduction of telegraph in 1844 launched the first steps of change on the planet. Followed by the telephone developed by Alexander Graham Bell in 1875, the successful installment of submarine telephone cable in 1956, the first telecommunications satellite in 1960, the fiber optic communications system utilized in 1977, and the most recent electronic mail systems such as e-mail, bulletin boards, computer, and web pages, plus the development of transportation technologies, people with different cultural backgrounds around the world have been interconnected locally, regionally, and globally for education, business, travel, and social interactions. Technology development has made evolution of global family inevitable and irreversible.

Among these communication and information technologies, internet makes the most significant contribution to the global interconnectivity. With the extensive use of networked computers, internet has blurred the line between mass and interpersonal communication and enables both personal and public messages to flow across national boundaries faster and more easily by providing an opportunity for acquainted and unacquainted individuals to communicate from different societies on a regular basis. It has been absorbed into our daily activities and integrated into the routines and structure of domestic life. The transformation of physical settings and social situations due to the usage of internet not only redefines the concepts of space and time, but also creates a global town square in which people can enjoy the freedom of

expressions. Through the process of self-image projection and reality construction on the internet, our physical being and environment are extended and new communities, which bring together people of disparate groups, are established.

Second, the innovation of communication and transportation technology has led to a new landscape of economic world. For example, companies such as Amazon, Google, Citicorp, Coca-Cola, and Sony derive over 50% of business revenues from markets other than their home countries, and companies such as Marriott, AT&T and Wal-Mart have begun to make systematic efforts towards global development during the last decade. The old structure of national economies and markets has gradually been transformed into a globalized system. From the perspective of management and communication, the process of transformation of business organizations can be described as the movement from domestic firms, multidomestic firms, multinational firms, to global firms. A global company demands the ability of transnational dynamics to understand the potential clients' needs all over the world, and then quickly transform these worldwide needs into products and services and to deliver them to the clients in a culturally appropriate and acceptable fashion.

The economic shifts in global development inevitably change the contours of the world of work and bring in new consumers, new corporations, new knowledge, and new jobs. Because the new consumers are spreading throughout the world that are difficult to be concentrated, the global market represents a great challenge on almost every aspect of human society, including technology, management, culture, language, etc. The coming of new corporations indicates the challenge to the structure of organization that requires a new corporate culture to adjust to the new environment.

In other words, a new way of managing the diverse and cross functional employees has become basic tenet for the global business to survive. The new knowledge such as ideas, processes, and information have increasingly become intangible products accompanied with the traditional tangible goods. To effectively transfer this new knowledge, the process of global business transactions must be transformed and translated into a multiple cultural form. Moreover, the global new jobs reflect a diverse workforce in which a new kind of employment relationship, embedded in cultural diversity, will be developed. Thus, an innovative plan of employees' arrangement and managerial landscape is required to maintain the flexibility for handling the diversification of the

labor force.

The process of global development not only abolishes the limit of space and time, but also extends human community into a global family. However, it also reflects a dilemma, which represents a pulling and pushing between local identity and global diversity, or between a homogenized world culture and heterogenized local cultures which may be called the dialectical contradiction between the two forces of “global paradox,” dictating the phenomenon that the more globalized the world is, the more powerful its smallest players will be. Global development then demands an integration of cultural diversity in the global community, but at the same time also reflects people's needs to develop a strong self or cultural identity. How people learn to integrate different cultural identities and interests and to negotiate and co-create cultural identity through communication in order to establish a new global civic community will decide the future of human society.

### **Theoretical Perspective**

From the scholarly perspective, unfortunately, traditional studies have seldom connected well or integrated the concepts of “culture”, “communication” and “global development”. Three established academic fields on the study of these concepts include communication studies, media and cultural studies, and global development studies.

Communication studies began after World War II and become an academic field during the 1950s in the United States. Beginning with early studies focusing on international communication and speech communication and continuing on to recently developed intercultural communication, communication studies as an academic field tends to ignore the relationship between culture and media, or how people use media in different cultural contexts, and how that closely relates to the global development of human society.

The field of media and cultural studies emerged in the 1970s in Britain on the basis of resisting the dominance of communication studies in the United States, which was more oriented towards the empirical or discovery paradigm. Yet, most British media studies focus on the role media institutions play in the process of global development. Many scholars in this area tend to take global development for granted, by not making an effort to theorize the concept. As for cultural studies, originated from the Frankfurt School in Germany, the field

suffers from the lack of concern about the impact media has on people. The problems that exist in media studies and cultural studies are like those that appear between the studies of international communication and intercultural communication. Cultural studies in Europe and in the United States mainly pays attention to cultural issues instead of media issues (Longhurst, p. 191).

More than 50 years ago Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn (1952) presented in their article *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* 164 definitions. In cultural psychology culture is most commonly applied as the term for the patterns of knowledge, beliefs and behaviour, or the set of shared attitudes, norms, values, goals and practices that characterize a group. Everybody is born into a specific, but dynamic culture that cultivates the personality and identity of every human being. Language and culture have both emerged as means of using symbols to construct social identity. Children acquire language in the same way as they acquire basic cultural norms and values, through interaction with older members of their cultural group.

The study of global development began in the early 1990s, a time when the pace of global development significantly increased its impact on human society in terms of scope and scale. Nevertheless, although scholars from different disciplines are involved in the study of global development and most agree that without media and communication global development will not emerge as a great impetus of the transformation of human society, the role of media and communication in the theorization of the concept of global development remains vague and less specified. The contribution of scholars from the field of media and communication to global development theories is far less than scholars from other disciplines such as anthropology and sociology.

The separation problem of communication studies, cultural/media studies, and global development studies in scholarly research has been gradually alleviated in recent years, but more studies in this direction are still needed. It is the purpose of this paper to integrate these concepts through the examination of the relationship between global development and intercultural communication from an Indian perspective.

As a universal concept, “communication” exists in all human societies. In other words, people in different societies must go through the process of exchanging symbols in order to achieve the goal of mutual understanding. Hence, the

development of a universal model or theory of human communication is possible, especially when applied to the explanation of, for example, the existence, nature and components of communication.

Nevertheless, while recognizing the fact claimed by scholars that “we cannot not communicate”, “Communication is symbolic, dynamic, and developmental”, or “Communication involves elements such as sender, encoding, channel, message, receiver, decoding, feedback, noise, environment, etc.”, it is important to know that the way to perceive the concept and to exercise communication activities is subject to the influence of the culture a person lives by (Adler and Rodman, p. 17).

Take one of the universal components of human communication as an example. “Encoding” is a necessary internal process of creating symbols in the sender's mind before a message can be developed and delivered to the receiver via a channel. However, in the process of encoding, Indian people are conditioned by their cultural teachings, such as “sincerity in speaking,” “silence is gold,” and “talking much errs much”, and therefore tend to be very cautious in creating symbols. The amount of self-disclosure reflected in the message is therefore less than that of Westerners, and the quality of the message tends to be more relational and other-oriented. Moreover, the belief of “harmony is a great virtue” also leads the Indians to be more restrained, indirect, and less confrontational in the process of feedback.

The diversity of languages, customs, and expressive behaviors confirms that much of our behaviour is socially and culturally programmed, not hardwired. Humans, more than any other animal, harness the power of culture to make life better. We have culture to thank for our communication through language. Culture facilitates our survival and reproduction, and nature has blessed us with a brain that, like no other, enables culture. No species can accumulate progress across generations as smartly as humans do, amongst other things, to the invention of written language. We can pass our experiences and transmit information and innovations across time and place to the future generations in a unique way. We needn't think of evolution and culture as competitors. Cultural norms subtly but powerfully affect our attitudes and behaviour, but they don't do so independent of biology. Advances in genetic science indicate how experience and activity change the brain and establish new connections

between neurons .

## **Indian Perspective on Communication**

One of the prominent trends in academic research induced by global development in the 1990s is the scholars' challenge, especially from the non-Western world, against the domination of Eurocentrism in social sciences by raising the question of appropriateness of the Eurocentric paradigm being used in different societies (Miike, 2002). The domination of Eurocentrism is caused by the attitude of Western triumphalism, which is illustrated through individualism, rationalism, and chauvinistic nationalism and eventually leads to the challenge from scholars in non-Western areas under the impact of global development.

The individualism embedded in the Eurocentric paradigm celebrates self-reliance, autonomy, independence and individual liberty, and all these tend to undermine the idea of human cooperation and tolerance; rationalism assumes that only Europeans have the right to define what and how to approach reality; and chauvinistic nationalism promotes the European-American idea as the most correct form of human societies. This dominance of Eurocentrism eventually leads to the marginalization, silence, and exclusion of other non-European paradigms. Therefore, in order to correct this problem, a culture specific approach is required to be adopted for the study of human communication (Servaes, 2000)

One way to understand more about what it means to communicate in different contexts is to look at some models that describe what happens when two or more people interact. Until about fifty years ago, researchers viewed communication as something that one person does to another. In this pipeline or linear model, communication is like a sender converts words in to a message and sends that to a receiver who in turn converts the message into words and derives a meaning. The pipeline model represents a theory of information transfer. But the theory does not explain how information or the medium exist as things. Instead, both are active and dynamic (Wilce, p.11).

The transactional communication model seems to be better at representing the way most communication occurs. The transactional model reflects the fact that we usually send and receive messages simultaneously. The role of sender and receiver that seemed separate in the pipeline model are now superimposed as those of communicators. This could also be termed as a pragmatic approach to

communication which treats communication as activity or practice. When we communicate we don't just send messages, we act in and on our worlds. This approach reflects something habitual and patterned and also to some extent reflecting shared patterns (Adler and Rodman, p. 10).

T. Oliver (1971) analyzed distinctive features of 'Indian' and 'Asian' rhetoric, and identified unity and harmony as the bases of rhetoric and communication in Asia. He argued that the manner in which Indians communicate is different from that of the Westerners. Hence, Oliver emphasized the need to understand communication in the context of culture. He further argued that by understanding the Eastern rhetoric the Westerners can better understand their own ideas of rhetoric and communication.

In 1980, the East-West Communication Institute in Hawaii hosted the first International Symposium on 'Communication Theory: Eastern and Western Perspectives'. The symposium bears significance for it marked first institutional initiatives regarding theorization of communication in different perspectives. J.S. Yadava presented a paper in the seminar and argued that *Sadharanikaran* is that concept which, in Indian perspective, refers to what is meant by communication today. Yadava considers *Natyashastra* as the source-book for theorizing communication in Indian perspective. In Yadava's words, "Bharat Muni, who is credited with the writing of *Natyashastra* codified the principles of human expression. ... Besides giving practical description of various aspects of dance and drama to the minutest details, the document is rich about the basics of human communication" (Yadava, p.177-195).

### ***Natyashastra***

The Indian concept of communication as described in *Natyashastra* is based on the '*Virat Purush*' (cosmic man) view. A natural extension of this concept is that it espouses the systems approach, the authority of Universal law, the law of *Dharma*. *Dharma* is the basic principle of the whole cosmos and it exists eternally. This natural law of *Dharma* regulates human existence and governs relations of individual beings; communication too is governed by the same law (Vatsyayan, p. 51).

In this concept, the world is an organism, a whole in which each part is interconnected and interdependent to a small or large extent. Thus, each part and activity at the micro and macro levels is interconnected and interdependent on all other parts to some extent. The neuronal networks in the

brain, which determine the functioning of mind, are an example of such connectivity. This interconnectivity and interdependence is basic and fundamental to the existence of each unit and the whole.

In this context, the concept of *bija* is a central principle of the theory of aesthetics and the process of expression and communication in Indian texts (Vatsyayan, p. 49). The word and metaphor of *bija* (seed) is used in *Chandyoga Upanishad* to symbolize the beginnings of the cosmos. In *Chandyoga Upanoshad*, Svetaketu tells his father Aruni that there was nothing inside the seed of the Banyan tree which Aruni had asked him to break and see inside. Aruni tells his son that the Banyan tree had grown from the subtle essence inside the seed which he did not see. The whole cosmic reality is that subtle essence.

The lesson of this example is that the cosmic process with its names and forms arises from the subtle essence of Pure Being (Radhakrishnan, p. 462). The three principles which emerge from single notion of *bija* are process, organic interconnectedness of the parts and the whole, and a continuous but well defined course of growth, change and renewal. The process of growth, the proliferation of each part being distinct and different and yet developing from the same unitary source, is fundamental. The complementariness of matter and energy, indeed, even the transformation of matter into energy and vice-versa, is implicit in this metaphor.

The concept of Indra's Net in *Atharva Veda* (Malhotra, p. 5-17) also symbolizes the universe as a web of connections and interdependences. It has a single glittering jewel in each "eye" of the net, and since the net itself is infinite in dimension, the jewels are infinite in number. In each jewel there are reflected *all* other jewels in the net, infinite in number. Not only that, but each of the jewels reflected in this one jewel is also reflecting all the other jewels, so that there is an infinite reflecting process occurring.

These concepts have been fully validated by modern science which has shown that every particle in the physical universe takes its characteristics from the pitch and pattern and overtones of its particular frequencies. American psychologist George Leonard (1978) writes that at the root of all existence there is play of patterned frequencies against the matrix of time. The deep structure of vibration and communication is the same as the deep structure of everything else.

Noble Laureate Ilya Prigogine has remarked that Darwin's theory of evolution was an early step in the direction of recognition in modern science of the connectivity of all forms of life with each other (Prigogine, 1997). The metaphor of Indra's net seems to correspond precisely with the theories of quantum mechanics and the more recent findings of particle physics, which has developed theorems like the following: "Each particle consists of all particles," or "Each particle helps produce other particles, which in turn produce the particle itself." It appears as if these were verses from Indian scriptures, but in fact they are theorems of modern theoretical physics. Both have significant implications for developing intercultural communication skills in the global family (Berendt, 1991).

### ***Vakyapadiya***

Bhartrihari's *Vakyapadiya* is also a relevant text in this regard. Bhartrihari is much accredited for philosophical discussion on communication, especially the word (Vak). Dissanayake (2003) sees "a refreshing relevance" of *Vakyapadiya* "to modern communication studies". He claims, "Indeed, the basic thinking reflected in the *Vakyapadiya* is in perfect consonance with some of the modern conceptualizations in the field of communication". Dissanayake considers four vital strands of thought contained in the *Vakyapadiya* for students of communication:

1. Bhartrihari's contention pertaining to the role of language in human cognition that there is no cognition in the world in which the word does not figure and all knowledge is, as it were, intertwined with language.
2. Bhartrihari's emphasis on the total sentence as the unit of meaning as opposed to most other contemporary scholars' stress on the need to recognize the word as the unit of meaning.
3. The contextualization of communication pointing out that the contextualization of utterances facilitates in the circumscribing of the field of discourse, thereby eliminating ambiguities of meaning.
4. The notion of sphota, which can be taken in the context of linguistic meaning to suggest that which discloses thought (ibid.).

In *Vakyapadiya*, Bhartrihari shows that communication involves a network of interdependent factors. From his writings it is clear that he identifies five such factors: Sound, which is primarily phonetic in nature; Words, which refers to the syntactic pattern of utterance; Meaning which is the semantic element; Intention, the pragmatic element; and Context, the situational element.

Sound occurs due to the flow of air through our vocal organ. The phonetic element is characterized by accent, pitch, and intonation that vary from speaker to speaker. Words consist of phonemes presented in a particular order. It is that to which the hearer pays attention when the speaker intends to communicate something. Thus it is the conveyor of meaning. Its role is crucial, as Bhartrihari points out, "both the speaker and the listener have to think of words first before thinking of the meaning" (Patnaik, p. 99).

Meaning is that which is conveyed and manifested through the words and sentences. The relationship between meaning and sentence is very close, because sentence has a correspondence to express the meaning. Intention of the speaker is the fourth constitutive factor. As Bhartrihari points out, "the uttered level of speech is possible because the speaker intends to communicate". The relationship between speech and intention is a relationship of cause and effect. Finally, context is the fifth constitutive factor. Bhartrihari says that meaning of an expression is not to be determined by its form only but by contextual factors also. Contextual factors like situation, propriety, place and time are more universal in nature and not related to a specific language (ibid.).

In Bhartrihari's opinion communication is not a process of directly transferring the contents of thought from the speaker to the listener. The skill to express the thought and grasp the meaning in a holistic manner exists as an inherent skill within human beings. So the expressive thought is made explicit through a stretch of words constituting the sentence. This audible stretch of words, and the sentence, presented sequentially, syllable by syllable, is the cause of the manifestation of the unmanifest and undifferentiated meaning to be communicated. But unless the listener understands the stretch of words as representing auditory and sequenceless meaning, linguistic communication is not achieved. On the other hand, such an understanding may be achieved even without hearing the complete sequence of words and sentence.

These insights from Indian texts on the structure and process of communication have been supported by recent advances and researches in neuroscience. Cognitive scientists have shown experimentally that to understand even very simple statements the brain performs a number of very complex processes, without any awareness that such processes are taking place. If we consider all that is going below the level of conscious awareness when we communicate, it is almost like a computer operating system doing

complex operations in the background as we do seemingly simple things apparently. Comprehending a stream of sound as language; assigning a structure to the sentence; giving meaning to words appropriate to the context; noticing the speaker's body language; and planning what to say in response, are some of the tasks that the brain does systematically in split second time frame (Garcia, p. 192).

The discourse on communication from Indian perspective has so far been confined to a limited domain. Such works have drawn on very few Sanskrit texts such as Bharata's *Natyashastra*, Bhartrihari's *Vakyapadiya*, and Panini's *Astadhyayi*. Few genres like rhetoric and poetics have been touched in this regard. Some have drawn on religion (*Dharma*) for understanding communication in Indian context. Among the orthodox Indian philosophical schools, *Vedanta* seems the preferred one. By virtue of its rich discursive tradition, Indian literature has far broader scope of study corpus than explored by now. Studying Indian perspective on communication needs a wider outlook because diverse and enormous sources are available in this regard and most of them are yet to be explored.

### ***Advaita***

Intercultural communication skill requires individuals to unfold and expand the personal characteristics, including flexibility, sensitivity, open mindedness, and motivation. As the centrality of the global society, the self must be mobilized to visualize its identity in the context of the unity of the underlying reality. Through the extension of personal attributes self-identity should be able to build a bridge between the personal and social life. A connection of I and thou is required to create a web of meanings shared by the global community. In other words, the ability of unfolding the self is an important way to promote creativity, learning, and innovation in the process of global development. Inability to unfold the self to face the challenge of constant changes and complexities of the globalizing society often leads to an unsuccessful ride of the wave of future society (Adler and Rodman, p. 33).

The concept of *Advaita* in *Vedantic* philosophy considers the individual human being as a co-creator, with heaven and earth, of the integrative whole of the cosmos, and he plays the most important and fundamental role in achieving the productive living of human society. Increasingly the interconnectedness of human society is creating situations and issues which

can be addressed through the principal idea of the solidarity of the universe emphasized in the *Upanishads*. Ignorance of this fundamental principle and reality is a cause of hatred and conflict (Selections Swami Vivekananda, p. 225).

Modern science has validated this principle of *Advaita* by recognizing that in order to fully unfold the potential of individual human beings, their self must be ceaselessly evolved, constantly liberated, and perpetually integrated with the Universal Self. Global development is a process in which the two extremes of extensionality and intentionality are being increasingly interconnected. In other words, the two forces of globalization and localisation are pushing and pulling, adjusting and readjusting with each other to search for an integrative and holistic future of human society (Chopra and Kaftos, p. 230).

Indian texts have described that the intrinsic value of the self is in congruence with the cosmic order, and the self is considered as capable of being mutually transmuted with the world to reach the level of ideal and authentic existence. The individual self can consciously choose to cast everything, including the development of the individual and other human companions, the frame of human society, and the achievement of value, into the mold of universal existence (Vatsyayan, p. 165)

*Vedantic* texts say that the individual self possesses four levels for consciousness: the level of gross things, the level of reason and manifest differences, the level of contemplation of unmanifested objectivity, and the level of undifferentiated Supreme Reality. The individual employs the level of gross things to empirically perceive the external world. Through human senses and their extensions, the individual comes to know the facts of the material world. This is the level of sensory experiences for the realm of time, space, and matter. The level of reason is used to attain knowledge of logic, philosophy, and mind. Through this mental eye, the individual walks into the realm of mind where memory, ideas, image, reason, and will reside. Although the level of reason often relies on the empirically sensory experiences for gaining information, it transcends the level of action especially in the areas of imagination, will, logical reasoning, conceptual understanding, psychological insight, and creativity. At the level of contemplation, the individual rises to the realm of transcendent realities that are beyond sense and reason, and reveal the truth of self-liberation. Finally, the fourth level is the spiritual experience of the real Self as an integral part of the Supreme Reality which demarcates the

sphere of time and place from the sphere of timelessness and all pervading Supreme Reality (Radhakrishnan, p. 75).

Consciousness of oneness of Self with the Ultimate Reality is dependent on the integration of three levels of action, reason, and contemplation. Unfortunately, the separation and confrontation of the three levels, represented by science, philosophy, and religion, characterizes the existence of human beings in modern age. This leads individuals to stay in the lower ladder of the development of human greatness and stop short of reaching higher levels. Common people at the first level of action can be cultivated into the second type, a learned and enlightened one, who maintain an insight of knowledge and a dignified action with the noble art of life. The continuous improvements will move the second type to an individual possessing a refined and discerning character and a balance of mind. Further refinement and cultivation transforms one into an individual whose actions are in harmony with the high standard of values that are universally acceptable in all human societies and whose thoughts and actions set a good standard for the global citizens without compromising his integrity.

In this context, there seems to be an urgent need to apply principles derived from *Vedanta* philosophy to the interpersonal and intercultural communication. The *Vedantic* concept of *Advaita* may be reduced in essence to five principles: There is the only one underlying reality there is none other; the world of plurality has only an apparent reality, like the waves of the sea; the individual ego is a transitory product of the ultimate reality individuality is ephemeral; *Atman* that appears as individual is a manifestation of the undifferentiated and unmanifest reality; *Brahman*, the ultimate reality cannot be known it can only be experienced and realised. These principles have far-reaching implications for communication theory.

One implication of the concept of *Advaita* for communication is that since there are no individual selves besides the universal self, such self-knowledge and communication within the self does not exclude what we call the world, but in fact includes and integrates them within one experience. Communication is then totally participatory, totally egalitarian, totally non-divisive and is not distorted by a false separation of subject from object.

Another implication is that *Advaita* as a mode of communication is not exposed to the risks of cultural and linguistic attenuation and it is the one that

transcends duality and multiplicity and seeks communion within. This does not require that we abandon the use of language, or abrogate any of the technologies of communication. But it does compel us to recognise that what passes for modern communication, because it is raised on a false understanding of reality, tends more and more to reinforce separation and isolation and misunderstanding, and is therefore inevitably oppressive.

According to the principles of *Advaita* once a person realises the unity of all beings then all differences, including the difference between one culture and another will vanish. It means that an individual will do the right thing in a spontaneous manner by overcoming the obstacles that the cultural barrier generally involves. There will be a rise from parochial consciousness to the universal consciousness. All his actions will arise from understanding and compassion and not just with sympathy and condescension. Such action is purely voluntary, which will arise out of love and compassion and not in obedience to any command or out of deference to any obligation. This is a state where he will overcome narrow loyalties and all kinds of hatred and create universal universal understanding with the vision of the unity of all beings (Sarvātmabhāva). And so there will be no conflicts in intercultural communication, and the consciousness of unity will lead to multicultural integration. Thus, the *Advaita* principles can act as a guiding light to develop intercultural communication skills. Such skills can positively contribute to multicultural discourse both in terms of thought and action.

Intercultural communication skill is a process of transforming and moving oneself from the lower to higher level of the developmental ladder of human beings, which represents the process of unceasingly edifying, liberating, and purifying personal attributes of the self. These personal attributes are developed under the umbrella of empathy which dictates the principle of unity within diversities and particularity identified with universality. In other words, the spirit of empathy is manifested by the interfusion and interpenetration of human multiplicities. From the human perspective, the great empathy formulates the ideal of fellow-feeling by expanding the self consciousness to the consciousness of one's fellow persons, and the entire universe.

At the global level, intercultural communication skill refers to the ability to look for shared communication symbols and project the self into another person's mind by thinking the same thoughts and feeling the same emotions as the other

person. In 1928 the English literary critic and author I.A. Richards offered one of the first—and in some ways still the best—definitions of communication as a discrete aspect of human enterprise, “Communication takes place when one mind so acts upon its environment that another mind is influenced, and in that other mind an experience occurs which is like the experience in the first mind, and is caused in part by that experience” (Gordon, N. 2016).

Individuals with consciousness of oneness of Ultimate Reality are able to show deep concern for others' feelings and reactions, to adopt different roles as required by different situations, to demonstrate reciprocity of affect displays, active listening, and verbal responses that show understanding and lead to the establishment of an intercultural rapport. Unfolding the self demands ceaselessly purifying oneself, continuous learning, cultivating sensitivity, develop creativity, and fostering empathy.

## **Sahridayata**

As a psychological process, communication reflects patterns of individual or group thinking. Through perception and reasoning process, which is predisposed by culture, individuals and groups develop a mental frame that leads them to see things and events from a specific lens. The mental frame of seeing things in a particular way, then serves as a cognitive lens through which we look at the world around us. Because we acquire cognitive lens through learning, which is embedded in the process of socialization and personal experience, the more diverse the personal and cultural background is, the more different the thought world would be. Therefore, thought process can be used as a conceptual tool for examining why people look at a specific issue or act in a unique way in solving daily practical problems.

Ethnocentric persons tend to tie themselves closely with their cultural group members, and subjectively apply their cultural beliefs to interpret external stimuli and judge others' behaviors. Parochial persons see the world solely from their own perspectives without recognizing the different ways of living among people of different cultures.

Adler and Rodman (2014) have pointed out that both ethnocentric and parochial people are incapable of appreciating cultural diversity, one of the key elements of globalizing society. Holding the perception of “our way is the best way,” ethnocentric persons do not consider that cultural diversity will cause problems for individuals or organizations. They are inclined to live in the

monocultural cocoon. By believing that “our way is the only way,” parochial persons have a strong tendency to deny and ignore the potential impact of cultural diversity. They are often blinded by their own practice and unable to detect the changes and complexity of global development trends (ibid. p. 19).

The *Vedic* concept of *Sahridayata* shows the global reach of Indian thinking in this regard. The concept of *Sahridayata* has been very succinctly explained by Vidya Nivas Mishra. The word *Sahridaya* has two components: *Saman* which mean same, equal, harmony, being and *Hridaya* means heart, or becoming. He takes help of a *Rigvedic* sutra to clarify its: “*Samanivaaakutihsamanhrydaya-nivahsamanmastusomano yathavahsusahasatih*,” that is “let our minds be in harmony, our hearts be in harmony, let our thinking be in harmony, our thought processes be in harmony so that we can live for a meaningful living of all-together” with positive attitude towards life (Mishra, p.97).

In order to foster the ability of global communication skill, the first step is to develop *Sahridayata*, referring to openness to other cultures that facilitates intercultural interactions. *Sahridayata* is the foundation of intercultural communication skill. A well-founded *Sahridayata* enables individuals to envision the coming of a global society, and then use intercultural communication skill appropriately and effectively. It fosters the ability to envisage the changing nature of the world and to engage in the process of regulating the change, and to drive for a broader picture of context in which diversity and cultural differences are valued and balanced.

In contrast to the closed worldview hold by ethnocentric and parochial thought processes, people with *Sahridayata* are able to foster a synergistic ability through a creative process of combining and balancing our own and their ways. Thus, cultural differences may lead to problems, but they as well provide advantages for nourishing personal and organization growth if we know how to recognize and use them to create positive opportunities. In other words, the openness embedded in *Sahridayata* allows change, improvement, and innovation over time, while facing the impact of cultural differences and other trends such as technological change.

*Sahridayata* calls for people to broaden and expand their thinking by eliminating those lenses one possesses about other cultures and their differences. It equips individuals with a mental ability to scan the world in a broad perspective and always consciously expect new trends and opportunities, so that personal, social, and organizational objectives can be

achieved in a harmonious way. Built on the foundation of openness, *Sahridayata* represents the decrease or absence of ethnocentrism and parochialism.

As the foundation of intercultural communication skill, *Sahridayata* is closely related to individuals' affective, cognitive, and behavioral abilities. In other words, *Sahridayata* forms a cycle of intercultural communication skill in which individuals learn to unfold the self via the internal illumination of personal affect or attributes towards global development, to reach the cognitive awareness of cultural varieties, and to develop behavioral skill of global interactions.

*Sahridayas* have “common sympathetic heart”. In other words, a *Sahridaya* is a “person who receives communication in a state of emotional intensity, i.e., a quality of emotional dimension coequal to that of the sender of the message”. In such a background, *Sahridayata* can be considered as “emotional preparedness” that “entails living amongst people, sharing their joys and sorrows but encompassing the entire humanity within, becoming a citizen of a world. With such preparedness, universalization of *bhava* (nature) is possible and *rasa* (emotional) experience is successful” (Mishra, p.93)

The concept of *Sahridayata* is related to the concept of *Vak* in Indian texts. The *Vak Sukta* of Rigveda tells us that *Vak* (speech) exists in life like the life breath, but it is not there in one life alone but in all life and above and beyond life as well. In that sense, it is the object and motive for all human life, its very purpose. The very meaning of *Vak* is therefore mutuality, sharing and the recognition of this mutuality and sharing. Only through this consciously articulated voice or language does the desire for companionship and universal well-being gets expressed and known. But this thought occurs only to those who are companionable and who have the desire for sharing and fraternity (Mishra, p.67).

The speech of such communicator searches for its receiver, half known and half unknown. Its intended meaning becomes known only to the one who waits for the words to manifest their meaning. This receiver will be only the one whose heart is in tune with the speaker, who has learnt to recognize the spirit of the words, and who has acquired the experience of feeling the vibrations of the words passing through his heart. This communion between the speaker and the listener is *Sahridayata* (Mishra, p.72).

Deriving from this, individuals with *Sahridayata* are considered to possess five personal characteristics: First, they are culturally sensitive. Global development brings people of different cultures together in every level of communication and all aspects of life, cross-cultural sensitivity becomes a great challenge for people to communicate constructively among one another. Individuals with *Sahridayata* not only have a well-developed ego and positive concept, but also possess a sensitive heart regarding cultural diversity.

Second, they are open. Openness refers to two meanings. Personally, it allows individuals to seek continuous improvements in the constantly changing environment that characterizes the process of global development. In communication, it concerns non judgmental attitude towards culturally different counterparts. Together, openness demands a strong motivation for perpetual learning to deal with cultural differences.

Third, they are knowledgeable. Individuals with *Sahridayata* are equipped with a driving force that impels them to broaden and deepen their perspective in terms of local and global events. Knowing cultural, social, business, and other similarities and differences ensures a sound action in making decisions, solving conflicts, and riding the wave of global development.

Fourth, they are critical and holistic thinkers. In addition to being knowledgeable in accurately perceiving cultural similarities and differences, individuals with *Sahridayata* have the ability to sort out the complexity of the changing world through critical and analytical thinking. They are able to see the world not only as one, but also as an orderly kaleidoscopic many, like *Indra's* net. That is, they have the ability to think deductively and inductively.

Finally, they are flexible. Individuals with *Sahridayata* tend to show conceptual and behavioral flexibility in the process of intercultural communication. They demonstrate abilities of accuracy and adaptability when attending to diverse information and rapid changing environment. The commonality in communication nourishes the person to see the uncertainty caused by the change of global development as an opportunity for moving forward. Moreover, they respond and adjust to the change efficiently, effectively, and comfortably by altering and co-occurring verbal and nonverbal behavioral choices that mark the complex relationships of interactants in the global communication (Adler and Rodman, p. 17)

To summarize, *Sahridayata* enables individuals to regulate the complexity,

ambiguity, contradiction, and conflict embedded in the turbulent change of global development process. Moreover, it serves to impel individuals to drive for a broad perspective, to motivate individuals to learn how to respect and value cultural diversity, to expect individuals to balance contradiction and conflict inherent in the various demands for global competition and cooperation, and to propel individuals to flow with the globalizing wave as comfortable fish swimming in the ocean.

From the foregoing it is clear that communication does not depend merely on syntax, or eloquence, or rhetoric, or articulation but also on the emotional context in which the message is being heard. People can hear the speaker only when they try to move towards the speaker, and they are not likely to when the speaker's words are chasing the listeners. Even the best words lose their power when they to coerce the listener rather than reach out for his heart. Emotional attitudes are the real figures of speech. It is not surprising therefore that recent studies have found that more than 90 percent of the impression that a speaker has nothing to do with what he actually says (Maxwell, p. 49).

Thus, *Sahridayata* is the ability to learn to connect with the people in their heart and mind. An understanding of *Advaita* and *Sahridayata*, can help in building cultural understanding, and cultural adjustment through *Samadarsana*.

## **Samadarsana**

Global development involves increasing encountering of culturally diverse individuals and increasing demands of being aware of global interdependence of people and cultures. It not only requires us to develop a new mode of thinking, but also leads us to enmesh in external matters that are foreign to the city and community in which we have been living for many decades. In the process of reaching out, individuals are forced to experience different life styles, thinking paradigms, and expression patterns, and gradually broaden cultural understandings. Thus, with each new encounter, we begin to contrast cultural differences that may motivate us to prefer alternative styles of cultural expressions and engender in us a desire to retool, so that we can better function with those of unfamiliar counterparts. Cultural awareness is then a necessary mechanism, soothing the anxious and uncomfortable feelings caused by the ambiguous and uncertain environment due to cultural diversity in the globalizing process (Wilce, p. 249).

The concept of *Samadarsana* mentioned in *Bhagvadgita* is of great value to us in the modern age (Ranganathananda, p.153). *Samadarsana* means therealisation of the oneness of the Self and Universal Self. This realisation gives cognitive ability to understand one's own and another's cultures. It is the ability to acquire cultural understanding. To understand ourselves as a cultural being from our own cultural perspective is the basis of knowing our counterparts' culture. It is this mutual awareness of cultural knowledge that makes respect and integration of cultural difference possible. Thus, the awareness of cultural knowledge is a prerequisite of reducing situational ambiguity and uncertainty in the process of intercultural or global communication. The lack of discomfort, confusion, or anxiety due to the understanding of cultural differences helps individuals adapt to situational demands of global environment and cope with changing environment rapidly.

Through *Samadarsana*, we acquire knowledge and characteristics of our own and others' culture, and further draw a picture or map of the culture to reflect the degree of our understanding. Intercultural communication skill not only demands the knowledge of one's own and one's counterparts' cultures, but also requires both passive and active understanding. A passive understanding of other cultures or co-cultures only provides individuals with the feeling that they know others' culture. This kind of understanding usually is based on superficial experiences in cross-cultural settings, such as travelling to other countries, meeting people from different cultures in conferences, and having some acquaintances of other cultures. While the passive understanding only involves intellectual and rational components of knowing and will not guarantee that one can really function well or adapt to the other culture, an active understanding requires individuals to add affective and emotional elements into one's cognitive repertoire. In other words, the knowledge of self as Universal Self is involved in the active understanding that helps to develop an attitude of respect, tolerance, and acceptance of cultural differences. Thus, passive and active understandings form the continuum of cultural awareness, which indicates a developmental process.

The ability of understanding culture is the manifestation of *Samadarsana*, which comprises four steps of its developmental process: (1) Knowledge based on the superficial cultural traits leads to the reaction of unbelievability, and individuals tend to evaluate the cultural differences as being exotic or bizarre, (2) Knowledge of deeper cultural traits that greatly contrast with ours leads to

an internal conflict situation, and irrational interpretations of the differences tend to provoke feeling of frustration and disappointment, (3) Knowledge of Universal Self gradually leads us to the cognitive understanding of cultural differences and we begin to understand the existence of cultural differences, and (4) Stage of empathic awareness, we are able to see the differences from our culturally-different counterparts' position. This knowledge in turn leads to the ability of cultural immersion, or subjective familiarity, of core cultural traits that help us to live in another culture without feeling of strangeness. When we look at things from the standpoint of Ultimate Reality present in all, we see with the same eye (Radhakrishnan, 2014. p.211).

The ultimate goal of fostering intercultural communication skill is to function effectively and appropriately in interactional level. In other words, the mental, affective, and cognitive abilities must be integrated into a set of behavioral skills that lead to a successful and productive interaction in the globalizing society. Communication skill as an individual's capacity is one of the basic needs of human beings to interact and adjust effectively with other human fellows and the environment. As a common property of human behaviors, communication skill can be attained through behaviors initiated by a person in one's own right. In other words, the degree of communication skill can be measured by the extent to which an individual produces an intended effect from interaction with his or her human fellows or the environment. Intercultural Communication skill is also increased through socialization, and it is learned not only incidentally, but also through consciously managing the interaction.

In this sense, intercultural communication skill depends much on the ability of empathy or commonality which is based on level of individual consciousness and sensitivity. The level of individual consciousness depends on a spiritual understanding of oneness, or *Advaita*, not only at the human level but also at the level of the Ultimate Reality of the cosmic process. Sensitivity towards the fellow human beings demands a feeling of *Sahridayata*, of shared heartbeats, and a *Samadarsana* or view of all human beings and indeed all life as manifestation of an underlying unity of existence.

*Samadarsana* leads to effectiveness and appropriateness, two components of intercultural communication skills. Effectiveness refers to individuals' ability to select among a set of communication behaviors to accomplish specific goals

in the process of global communication. These specific goals include getting relevant information about these goals, accurately predicting the other's responses, selecting communication strategies, and correctly assessing the results of interaction in a multicultural context. More specifically, effectiveness is the ability to maximize the functions of communication in terms of influencing and managing the communication process or environment, comfortably sharing feelings with culturally different counterparts, informing the necessary cultural cues, streamlining the communication process, and imaging the picture of cultural similarities and differences.

Appropriateness is the ability to meet the contextual requirements in the global communication, or to recognize the different sets of rules in different situations. It indicates the right quantity of message sending, the consistent quality of message delivered, the relevancy of the topical messages and situation, and the manner of expression. This ability of maintaining the face of one's culturally different counterparts within the constraints of the situation is parallel to the verbal and nonverbal context, in which both kinds of expressions are making sense to participants; to the relationship context, in which the structure and delivery of the messages are consonant with the particular relationship between the participants; and to the environmental context, in which the constraints induced from the symbolic and physical environment and imposed on the interaction are well considered by the participants. Altogether, intercultural communication skill is the ability of participants to execute communication behaviors to elicit desired responses in a congenial and cooperative environment without violating their counterparts' norms and rules.

Successful interaction based on intercultural communication skill is embedded in the two aspects of the globalizing society: people and environment. From the perspective of people, intercultural communication skill demands a set of behavioral skill, including language ability, behavioral flexibility, interaction management, and identity maintenance. From the perspective of environment, intercultural communication skill requires the ability to understand and manage changes or complexity of global practice. These competencies can best be achieved through an understanding and practice of the principles of *Advaita*, *Sahridayata*, and *Samadarsana*.

## Conclusion

The trend for indigenous scholarship in the field of communication is getting strong because of the impact of globalization in economic, social and cultural fields. While dealing with the emergence of indigenous scholarship, three issues are worth discussing for those working in the area of communication, i.e., cultural changes over time, the potential problem of dichotomy, and the universalization of indigenous concepts.

First, culture is dynamic. It constantly changes over time because of the impact of economic and technological change, natural and man-made calamity, cultural contact, and other possible environmental factors. When culture changes, cultural values change too, which results in the alternation of the significance of key concepts previously used to represent the culture or explain the behaviors of people from the culture. Scholars must be cautious in treating culture or cultural values as a static variable in conducting the study from the indigenous perspective by closely observing the representation of the concepts during the study. For example, are the key concepts included in this analysis really relevant to the contemporary Indian culture or just reflecting the traditional Indian cultural values? It is legitimate for one to question the contemporary representation of these key concepts or the possible transformation of the meanings of these key concepts in different ages. As Swami Vivekananda repeatedly emphasized, concepts like *Advaita* have to be tested and accepted at the altar of *Anubhava* instead of being received as eternal truths given to us by the sages in the past for all times and places (Rambachan, p.94-97).

Second, the tendency of dichotomizing culture is a common problem in the research community, especially in the study of intercultural communication. A potential pitfall of dichotomizing culture stems from the attempt to severely delimit the intellectual inquiry by overemphasizing the necessity of employing the culture specific or parochial approach to the study of human communication. The dichotomy problem is displayed in three modes: the indiscriminant treatment of cultural values, the insider's privilege, and the blind acceptance or rejection of foreign elements.

A more appropriate attitude is to treat culture values as a continuum in which each culture or society tends to orient more to one end and show less emphasis on the other end. In other words, the Indian approach may be more

collectivistic oriented, but that doesn't infer that there is no individualism existing in Indian society. It can only infer that Indian people tend to be less individualistic in interaction. It is a more or less rather than an either-or situation. Moreover, the argument that only Indian scholars have the ability to know their own culture is also not warranted, because Western scholars may see what an Indian scholar cannot see about his culture due to the limitations of the world view from within India. *Rigveda* sums up the limitless open mindedness in Indian texts in one all encompassing phrase "Let noble thoughts come to us from all directions" (Saraswati, Dayanand, p. 533).

As to the problem of the blind acceptance or the sheer rejection of foreign elements, it is just an irrational or ignorant expression, because while each culture or society is unique by itself, no human society today is an isolated island, thus the commonality of cultural values is not uncommon. All these demonstrate that the gap of cultural values among different cultures should not be a discrete or insurmountable one. We may ask: Are all the key concepts used to explain Indian communication behaviors solely belonging to Indian culture? The answer should be no, because the concepts may well be reflected in the communication behaviors of people from other societies, only with the difference of the degree of emphasis.

The commonality of cultural values in different societies provides a possibility or represents an ideal goal of indigenous scholarship for the establishment of a global or universal model of human communication. In recent years a group of scholars in psychology have contended that the ultimate goal of developing indigenous psychology is to help produce a global or universal psychology and people in different societies should possess identical psychological functioning. Unfortunately, scholars in the field of culture and communication tend to treat culture as a stable system and overemphasize the differences of specific styles of communication in different cultures. This oversight of the invariance in functioning of communication in different cultures often leads to factual incorrectness and theoretical misleading. Hence, on the basis of the existence of the identical deep structure of human cultures, the idea of one mind many mentalities, and universalism without uniformity can be proposed to serve as the principle of the inquiry of into intercultural communication.

This argument provides an opportunity for scholars to elaborate on what are the principles of intercultural communication skills behind the key Indian

concepts like *Advaita; Sahridayata; Samdarsana; Bija; Vasudhaiva Kutumbkama; Sadharanikaran; Rasa; and Bhava*. The principles of intercultural communication skills behind these concepts can help in developing a global or universal model of human communication in order to better understand and communicate with people in different societies, and to enrich the literature in this line of research.

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# Relevance of Sant Kabir Das's Syncretism in the 21st Century

Prabira Sethy

## Abstract

*The article begins with an attempt to reconstruct Kabir's biography by analysing where Kabir was born, who were his parents and when he was born which has been shrouded in the mists of mystery. Then, the article goes on to exhibit Kabir's philosophy about syncretism by bridging the gap in between rich and poor, higher and lower castes, and the Hindus and the Muslims people by his message to maintain equality, love affection and cooperation to one and another in place of enmity, jealousy, egotism, disparity and has shown the way to the human beings to love for one another.*

*Harsh words is worst of all*

*Burns its target to ash*

*Sweet word is like Heaven's nectar*

*It pleases cools, does not harass.*

## Introduction

Kabir is widely regarded as one of the most outstanding religious figures of medieval India. He was a reformer and a versatile preacher of religious truth. He was a good observer and pointed out every disorder in the society as he was determined to change it. He was always seized with several problems of the

society and found some solutions to them. He wanted to bring the people out from their mundane life by showing them the right path. He counselled like a friend, enlightened like a teacher and showed the right path like a preacher. He talked of several social evils just as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Gandhi and Ambedkar did several centuries later. He is considered a people's poet, a *Vaishnava* reformer, one of the founders of the deistic movement in India, a radical social critic, a messenger of inter-faith harmony, an anti-caste evangelist and a benign humanist in several ways.

Kabir strongly denounced asceticism, fasting, bathing in rivers and becoming *Sanyasins* without a sense of personal devotion to God. He also laid emphasis on a sternly ethical code of life both for the *Guru* and the householder. His criticism of laying emphasis on the external of religion was not confined to the *Brahmanas*, but extended equally to the Muslim *Shaikhs* and *Mullahs* for their empty insistence on *roza*, *namaz*, etc.

Kabir was strongly opposed to reliance on religious authority and revealed scriptures. For him, the only true path was reliance on constantly repeating the name of the one God whom he identified as Rama, Hari, Govind, Allah, Khuda, Sahib, etc. Tara Chand says that Kabir's mission was to “preach a religion of love which could unite all castes and creeds” (+++). Kabir certainly believed that God is one and different religions were different paths to Him. His own path of love and devotion to God was one which could be followed by all, irrespective of their religions.

An even more important aspect of Kabir's teaching was his emphasis on human equality. He denounced inequality based on caste, station, race or wealth, and criticised the wealthy and the powerful for their pattern of life. This strain is largely missing in the writings of the Sufi Hindu saints for whom God was the creator of everything. According to them, God designated the rulers and the slaves, and the rich and the poor. This was not for Kabir. He voiced the sentiments of the poor and the oppressed. He wanted a change in their lives but suggested no way to do so. Perhaps he hoped for a change in attitudes through the message of love and fortitude.

### **Life Sketch**

Sant Kabir Das has been acclaimed as one of the most outstanding of the saint-poets of *Bhakti* cult (devotion) and mysticism of medieval India. The period in

which he lived is also not yet confirmed by the historians. Some people believed that he was born in 1398 A.D. and some others in 1440 A.D. There are different opinions among the scholars about his birth place. Some scholars opine that he was born in Benaras while for others he was born at Maghar 200 kms away from Banaras. There are different versions about his birth story. According to some, he was found on a lotus leaf in a tank in Benares, while others say that he was the son of a Hindu *Brahmin* widow who left him immediately after his birth to hide her shame. He was brought up by Muslim weavers who christened him Kabir, which means 'The Great' in Arabic and it is the 37<sup>th</sup> name of God in Islam. Since Kabir had received no schooling, formal or informal, it is said that he was a born saint-poet. Kabir adopted the profession of his Godfather but being a man of sober and serious temperament, he spent most of his time in solitude and meditation. This child grew up to be the celebrated Saint Kabir who gained support because of his immensely popular *Dohas* (couplets) and *Bhajan*s (devotional songs) of great spiritual fervour and poetic quality. Mysticism appears to have been an inborn element in his nature.

Kabir was remarkable for his spiritual earnestness and this was apparent at the very outset. His discipleship was the first step to it. Ramanand, the great saint of the Order of Ramanuja, accepted only Brahmins as his disciples. All entreaties to relax the rule proving futile. Kabir, one day hid himself under the steps of the *ghat* at Banaras, where Ramanand used to go very early in the morning for a bath. Unknowingly as he passed, his foot fell on Kabir, to the great joy of the latter. The Master, in sheer agony of having crushed one of God's own creatures, cried out, 'Rama', 'Rama'. Kabir took it as his initiation *mantra*. Since then he called himself the disciple of Ramanand, and began to recite 'Rama'. When Ramanand saw the earnestness of Kabir, he accepted him as a disciple, and his association with his *Guru* was a long one. It was with him that he learned the worship and practice of the impersonal aspect (*Nirguna*) of the Lord (Behari, 1991, pp. 222-223). Under Ramanand's influence, Kabir adopted a number of Hindu notions, though much of his own doctrine and some of the language were borrowed from the Nestorian Christianity of South India.

According to historians, he married twice, and his wives were ever obedient to him and ministered to his special mandates to feed every mendicant who came to his door. Among the contemporaries with whom Kabir was said to have matched his wits or engaged in friendly controversy were Gorakhnath (who in

fact, lived long before him), Nanak, the emperor Sikander Lodi (who later persecuted him) and Sheikh Taqqi. Popular with the masses but persecuted by the ruling classes, Kabir was exiled from Banaras, and his subsequent wanderings took him from Bukhara to Kalighat. He visited Persia, Afghanistan and other places in the Middle East before settling down to end his days in Maghar in Northern India. It was commonly believed that those who died in Banaras received salvation, while those who died in Maghar went to hell. Kabir deliberately chose to die in Maghar to show his contempt for such puerile superstitions. It has also been said that when he died, his body was covered with a sheet. His Hindu disciples wanted to take it for cremation, while his Muslims disciples wished to bury it. They argued and quarrelled. But when they lifted up the sheet they found the body for which they were quarrelling had disappeared and in its place were a bunch of fresh flowers. The Hindus burned half the flowers at Banaras, and the Muslims buried the remaining half at Maghar (Walker, 1983, pp. 506-507).

Kabir's simple couplet compositions, *Doha* (two liners) and *Chowtai* (four liners) are very popular. His writings - *Bijak*, *Sakhi*, *Granth*, *Kabir Granthawali* and *Anurag Sagar* – proves his universal view of spirituality. He transcended the bounds of religion, rose to greatest heights in his spiritual thoughts and broke into spontaneous lyrics and *bhajans*. Kabir expressed his poems orally in vernacular Hindi language. He used native language with local idiom and popular expressions. He used the simple and crisp language of everyday usage and revealed astonishing truths with accuracy and persuasiveness. His works are read with a lot of reverence by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. He is universally recognized as a unique person. After his death, the followers of Kabir, both Hindus and Muslims, became known as *Kabirpanthis*. The devotees as well as the priesthood of the *Kabirpanth* retain their distinct identity up till this day. His followers number about half a million and are mostly found in Uttar Pradesh.

An analytical examination of the views and mode of preaching adopted by Kabir suggests that he had borrowed from many sources. Kabir is taken to be a saint of the *Nirguna Pantha*. That he was indebted to the Hindus for his views on *Brahma* and *Maya* is amply proved by the utterances attributed to him. But he brought in elements of the *hathyog* of *Vajrayanis* and *Gorakhpantis*. In imitation of the *yogis* and *siddhas* of these two sects he too has indulged in boastful assertions about his knowledge of the ultimate reality. This was a

cover for his utter ignorance of the scriptures. He tried to establish his superiority over the *pundits* and the *mullahs* by hurling abuses and passing unilateral strictures on them. He was indebted to the *Sufis* also from whom he learnt much of mysticism. From the teachings of his Guru Ramanand, he incorporated the elements of nonviolence, morality, *bhakti* and *prapatti*. Thus he held on to certain spiritual concepts on the basis of meditation over what he had heard from others and what he acquired by his own *sadhana* and personal experiences. This formed the crux of his teachings. His utterances have been grouped together as *Ramainis*, *Sakhis* and *Sabads* and they are collectively called the *Bijak* (Pandey, 1990, pp. 334-335).

### **Sant Kabir Das and his ideas about Syncretism**

The Dictionary meaning of syncretism defines it as an attempt to unify or reconcile differing schools of thought. Here it can definitely be said that the synthesis of different and contradictory ideologies are the base of syncretism. From this point of view Kabir tried his best to bridge the gap in between the king and the subject, the rich and the poor, the higher and lower castes and the Hindus and the Muslims in medieval India. Kabir spread his message to maintain equality, love, affection and cooperation to one and another in place of enmity, jealousy, egotism, disparity and has shown the way to the human beings to live for and with one another. Kabir's apparently simple '*Dohes*' contains the essence of the great philosophical ideas of syncretism which have immense significance in contemporary times.

### **Criticized the Caste System**

In his crusade against everything that was meaningless and unreal, Kabir naturally uttered strong denunciatory words against the caste system. It has been acknowledged unanimously that the strongest indication of Islamic influence on Indian thought is the rejection of caste system by some Indian mystics, such as Namdev, Ramananda, Nanak, Appar, Basava, and Kabir. But unlike some *bhaktas*, Kabir rejected the caste system for social reasons. It is in this sense that Kabir is regarded as the crusader of revolutionary ideas in medieval Indian society. Kabir simply could not tolerate the division and distinction between man and man. He urges us to forget our sense of distinctions between man and man and become humble like an ant. He says:

*Jaati na pucho saadhu ki puch lijiye sab gyan,  
Mol karo talwar ka padi rehan do myan*

It means we should not enquire about the caste of the saints but seek their

wisdom instead. Sharpness of a sword counts more than the metal with which it is made of.

Thus this reformer and saint fearlessly preached the gospel of social equality, imparting with force and preaching by practice the gospel of his Guru, Ramanand.

*Jati pati puchai na koi  
Hari ko bhaje so Hari ka hoi*

It means none shall inquire into thy caste. He who shall recite the name of the Lord will be claimed by Him.

There are verses which Kabir directed against the *Brahmans* themselves who consider impurity and caste *defilement* in almost everything. The *Brahmans* censured Kabir for not paying due attention to caste rules. There are many stories told about Kabir's confrontations with the *Brahmans* on the question of the caste. One of these stories is told with regard to Kamali, Kabir's daughter. It is stated that when she was 20 years of age, while drawing water from a well, a *Brahman* named Har Deva, asked for a drink, but was afterwards horrified to know that he had taken water from a weaver's daughter. The matter was referred to Kabir. The *Brahman* complained that the girl had *defiled* his caste. On that Kabir said the *Brahman* to have fallen at the feet of Him and to beg his forgiveness and to be received by him as his disciple. Kabir accepted him, and Kamali was given to him in marriage.

## **Raised Voice against Sati and Child Marriage**

Kabir concerned himself not only with the matters of religion, but also with those social evils which the Hindus used to practise in the name of religion. One such superstition which obtained wide currency in the Hindu society of those days was the practice of *Sati*, i.e. burning of a widow on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband. Kabir rejected the idea of salvation by *sati*, and condemned the practice. Thus, Kabir raised his voice against the custom of *Sati* and child marriage, the two evils which were purely social in character.

## **Concept of Universal Humanism/One Humanity**

### **Equality of All Men**

Following on his view of one God, Kabir preached the principle of equality of all men. Egalitarianism is the second great principle of Islam which Kabir accepted under the influence of Sufism. When the low-caste weaver Kabir

began preaching the same to men of high caste, he was reproached for his daring.

### **Unity of Human Beings**

Kabir took great pains to try to articulate his view about the unity of human beings. According to him, while religious differences are only fortuitous, the essential humanity is always the same. And when Kabir says that “all have come from the same country”, that is, it was all one human, thus one nation, “but the evil influences of this world have divided us into innumerable sects”, his conception of the oneness of human beings is in uniformity with that of the Qur'an. Hence he says:

*O' Saints! I have seen the ways of both. In their  
Pride the Hindu and the Turk don't recognize me....*

*The way of the Hindu and Muslim is the same.*

*The Satguru (God) has revealed it to me.*

*Here what Kabir says:*

*Rama and Khuda are one and the same.*

*(Bijak, Sabda-10)*

### **One Human Race**

In accordance with his concept of one human race, Kabir forcefully and with reasoned arguments denounced the Hindu Caste system. In his efforts to convince the Hindus about the reality of humanity, Kabir traced the beginning of the human race to Adam and says:

*Adam who was first did not know  
whence Mother Eve came.*

*Then there was no Turk (Muslim) nor Hindu ...*

*Then there was no race, no caste,*

*If thou think the Maker distinguished castes:*

*Birth is according to these Penalties for deeds.*

*Born a Sudra, you die a Sudra;*

*It is only in this world of illusion that you assume the sacred thread...*

*If you milk black and yellow cows together,*

*Will you be able to distinguish their milk.*

*(Bijak, Ramaini - 62)*

## **Monotheism**

### **Emphasized the Unity of God**

According to Kabir, the supreme reality is one although it has been called by different names such as Sahab, Allah, Khuda, Rama, Rahim or Brahma. Wisdom consists in getting at the basic unity underlying the multiplicity of names. After his spiritual awakening, one of the fundamental ideas which Kabir expressed in clear terms is his concept of God. It is generally held that under the influence of Sufism, Kabir denounced idolatry, image worship and polytheism, and adopted the strong monotheism of Islam. As a result, he at first taught and emphasized the unity of God. Hence Kabir says:

*He is one: there is no second*

*(Bijak Sabda - 43)*

*Rama, Khuda, Sakti, Siva, are one: tell me,*

*Pray, how will you distinguish them?*

*(Bijak Sabda - 48)*

*The one Name, like the tree of life, Seventh mankind,*

*They who are regenerated by God shall never alter,*

*Saint Kabir, I have recognized God's name.*

*(Adi-Granth, Gauri - 37)*

### **Believed in Oneness of God**

Kabir believed in the oneness of God, irrespective of the names by which human beings addressed Him. Having given a simple description of the oneness of God, Kabir tells us that the different appellations of God are only experiences of one and the same truth. According to him, it matters little by what name we call Him. Thus he says:

*Brother! From where have the two masters of the universe come? Tell me, who has invented the names of Allah, Rama, Keshab, Hari and Hazrat? All ornaments of gold are made of a unique substance. It is to show the world that two different signs are made, one is called Namaz, while the other is termed Puja. Mahadev and Muhammad are one and the same; Brahma and Adam are one and the same, what is a Hindu? What is a Turk? Both inhabit the same earth. One reads the Veda and the other the Qur'an and Khutbah: One is a Mawlana (Mawlawi/Mullah) and the other a Pandit. Earthen vessels have different names, although they are made from the same earth, Kabir says: both are misled, none has found God.*

*(Bijak Sabda -30)*

In another *Doha* he says:

*Hindu says Rama is dear to him*

*Muslim says Rahim*

*Both Quarrel, fight and kill each other*

*Not knowing the root of things.*

It means the Hindu proclaims that Rama is the God dear to him while the Turak (Muslim) declares Rahim as his God, but not knowing that fundamentally both are one and the same, instead they quarrel over this, fight each other and court death. God of the universe is only one and the different names given to Him in different faiths cannot create more than one God. Both Hindus and Turaks should realise this and refrain from hostilities over inessential matters.

## **Hindus and Muslims are the Children of One God**

The entry of Kabir into the fold of the *Bhakti* movement proved most fruitful in bringing about reconciliation between the Hindus and the Muslims. Kabir addressed mixed gatherings, consisting of Hindus and Muslims and made disciples from both. Kabir's idea of one God and one-humanity is truly Islamic. As a matter of fact, this is the key conception of Kabir according to which he refused to find any distinction between Hindus and Muslims and on the basis of this unity in principle and substance he tried to find a *modus vivendi* between the two communities. By using terms employed by both systems, Kabir tells us that it is only the difference in names. Finally, in the *Upanisadic* style, Kabir tells us that the Hindus and the Muslims are only different manifestations of the same substance. Therefore, they are the children of one God.

## **God is Omnipresent**

Sant Kabir elaborates the theme of God's omnipresence and condemns the narrow-mindedness of the two communities i.e. the Hindus and the Muslims - who try to keep God confined to their respective places, whereas Kabir asserts that God is universal and is present everywhere especially in the human heart. Thus he says:

*'If God dwelt only in the Mosque, to whom  
belonged the rest of the country?*

*They who are called Hindus say that God dwelt in an idol: I see not the truth is  
sect. O' God,  
whether Allah or Rama, I live by Thy name, O' Lord show kindness unto me.*

*Hari dwelt in the South, Allah has his place in the west.*

*Search in thy heart, search in thy heart of hearts; there is His place and adobe.'*

*(Adi-Granth, Prabhati -2)*

In other words, it means if God is in the mosque only, then to whom does the rest of the country belong? If God be inside the mosque and Rama within the image, then what lies outside? If Hari is in the South and Allah is in the West and look within your heart, for there you will find both Karim (the merciful Allah) and Rama.

### **Transcended Religious Differences**

There is no reason to doubt that he transcended religious differences as he never showed any preference for either of the two religions. But his use of different names for God, mostly Hindu names, and his mention of the some Hindu deities and narrations of stories connected with them simply indicate his acquaintance with both the religions. Having transcended religious differences, and in his intense desire to see all religions united, Kabir did not make any distinction between the two faiths, and thus accepted all Gurus and Pirs. For the syncretic nature of his teachings, Kabir has won an undisputed recognition as the best representative of the trend engendered by the interaction of Hindu-Muslim ideas. In doing so, he kept himself completely free from sectarian outlook and dogmatic mentality.

### **Bhakti or Devotion should be Emotional and Unalloyed**

According to Kabir, the ultimate reality is formless and yet the master of this universe. His consort *Maya* has distracted everybody. A loving devotion to Him will bring deliverance from *Maya* by His grace. Thus by the fusion of the formless with the form, a basis for *bhakti* has been devised. The *bhakti* or devotion should be emotional and unalloyed. The repetition of His name need not be done with the help of an objective rosary but it should be an internal and intermittent affair. The search for the Divine should be conducted not outside but inside one's own self. Consequently, worshipping a stone idol or shouting in the mosque is meaningless. Ritualism, pilgrimage to holy places, and *Haj* are all useless. What is needed is the purity of emotion, fear of the Lord, moral conduct, and an attitude of fraternal affection for all and not violence and bloodshed in the name of religion. In the search for the Divine within oneself,

he has recognized the value of exercises prescribed by *hathyoga*. He rejects the spiritual significance of dance and music as practiced by the Sufis and recommends instead listening to the *nad* or music within. Nor does he attach any merit to scriptural learning .

### **Asked Hindus to Give-up Centuries Old Practices**

Turning to the Hindus, Kabir asked them to give up what Hinduism had been practising for centuries, such as ceremonies, sacrifice, lust for magical powers, idol and temple worship, repetitions of mantras, pilgrimages, fasts, innumerable Gods and Goddesses, bathing in the holy waters, religious monopoly of the Brahmans, prejudices concerning untouchability and food, penances and yoga and sectarianism. He unequivocally condemned the doctrine of incarnation (Avatarabad). In Kabir's view it is neither rewarding to offer worship to the stone idols in the temple (instead of the God within) as do the Hindus nor to take shelter of no God for attaining salvation (as do the Muslims). He holds that God who dwells in the heart of every being is the one whose shelter has to be sought by complete self-surrender to Him. Though his vocabulary is replete with Hindu spiritual concepts, he strongly opposed dogmas prevalent in all religions. In his old age, Kabir decided to go to Maghar and die, just to break the blind belief that when people die in Maghar, they go to hell.

### **Laid Stress on Religious Toleration**

Kabir was one of the most outstanding *Bhakti* reformers who did his best to bring the Hindus and Muslims close to each other in all walks of life. Kabir laid stress on religious toleration and taught a lesson of brotherhood to the Hindus and Muslims. He suggested that people should speak in a palatable manner avoiding any kind of friction and disharmony:

*Aisee vani boliye, mun ka aapa khoye  
Apna tan sheetal kare, auran ko such hoye*

It means speak such words which will keep mind and body composed and give the listener joy.

Kabir's poetry solely aims at bringing an attitudinal change in the individual and thus reforming the society. In one of his couplets, Kabir says that the individual should not blame others and indulge in mud-slinging act but should clean one's own self:

*Bura jo dekhan main chala, bura naa milya koye  
Jo munn khoja apnaa, to mujhse bura naa koyee*

It means I went on the search for the bad guy, but guy I couldn't find. When I searched my mind, then no one is as bad as me (Krishna, 2016, pp. 108-110).

### **Earning Livelihood by the Sweat of Brow**

Kabir was not in favour of renouncing the world and going to forests or hills in search of true knowledge or salvation instead he advised his followers to earn their livelihood by the sweat of their brow and perform all the duties as householders while leading as honest, noble and dedicated life. Kabir's idea was to educate the individual and wean him away from illusion, ego, and thirst for wealth. Kabir also does not believe in earning more money than required. Through his *doha*, he exhorts:

*Sai itna dijiye, ja mei kutumb samaye  
Main bhi bhukha na rahu, sadhu bhukha na jaye*

It means God, give me this much wealth, just enough to take care of my family, I don't remain hungry and the saints coming to me should not go hungry. Likewise Kabir advises us not to daydream and chase mirages. In his *Doha* he says:

*Chaah miti, chinta miti, manwa beparwaah  
Jisko kuch nahi chahiye, woh*

*Shahenshah*

It means if your wishes end, then your anxiety and trouble will also end, and your mind will be fearless. One who doesn't need anything is a real king.

### **Believed in Service to the Mankind**

Sant Kabir believed in the purity of the soul and service to the mankind. He says in a *doha*:

*Bada hua to kya hua, jaise ped kahjoor  
Panthi ko chaya nahin, phal laage atidoor*

What use is a date palm which grows tall? It gives no shade and its fruit are quite far-off and inaccessible.

Kabir asks what good is our so-called eminence, if it is neither compassionate

nor helpful to others. He emphasises that we should shed our greed, selfishness and insecure tendencies and establish ourselves in such a way that we should be willing to give and share. Only then we will be blessed and become a blessing to others. Kabir compares such a vainglorious person with a date palm which though very tall is of no avail to anybody.

Similarly with regard to charity he says in a *doha* that:

*Amassed wealth should be taken in hand  
And given away in charity  
There is no market ahead for spending it  
On purpose better than bounty.*

It means amassed wealth is best spent on charity to the poor and needy. There is no use hoarding wealth with the hope of spending it later. After death one will have no chance to lay his hands on it.

### **Concerning the institution of Marriage**

Marriage is a sacred institution. Kabir has criticised the Muslims for having their marriage relationships within the family and among the near and dear relatives.

### **Opposed to Economic Inequalities**

The disparity of economic distribution was fully reflected in the utterings of the Mahatma, Kabir. The state's exploitation, the tendency of luxurious life, undue taxes, natural calamities, foreign plunderers, distinction of Varna-Dharma, lack of equal opportunities, slave system etc. can be counted as causes of economic disparity. Kabir saw these situations minutely. His aim was to reform society which was not possible without prevention of disparity. Kabir himself was poverty stricken, who listened to the pains and the sufferings of the suffering Dalits and the exploited people and was prepared to solve it by his own utterings. Kabir points out that the humble and small man should not be disparaged because of his humble and low position; he should be given due respect, and honour as any other man. In his couplets, Kabir cautions not to oppress the weak as his sigh of sorrow is capable of causing ample harm to the oppressor elsewhere.

### **Property not an Individual's Right**

In Mahatma Kabir's perspective it is injustice to link property with individual's

rights. He also very categorically said that it is ignorant to keep the feeling of mine and thine with property. It is an evil to feel proud on the basis of property. It is your due (right) to possess property as required for your maintenance and safety. From Kabir's point of view, the tendency of gathering more and more property creates obstacle in making an individual honest. According to him, wealth is the main reason for all the evils. Kabir implies that man should not hanker after wealth in excess of the minimum need. He said that one should not feel sad and happy having seen the property. He wanted to give equality and respect to the poor and the rich respectively. He also wanted to bring an end to egoism which is linked with the possession of property and post and power. According to him, the material wealth and prosperity cannot make a man happy and contented. So Kabir says in doha:

*Save only that wealth  
That later may be useful  
And if you carry it on head in a bundle  
To others will not be visible.*

It means spiritual wealth, being invisible to the eye, is not subject to theft or burglary. Kabir indicates that man should collect and save that wealth and not the worldly riches. The former will bring him emancipation while the latter only worries and miseries.

## **An Appraisal**

On his death, Hindu influences found their way back into Kabir's sect. The use of the rosary was introduced, though he had been against it. He opposed idolatry, yet his image and his book are both worshipped. He rejected the doctrine of divine incarnation yet he himself is now regarded as an incarnation of the Supreme. The views of Kabir are not very systematic or well-reasoned for he was no learned philosopher. On the contrary, there are even contradictory statements. But his attacks are sharp and telling. Although his diction is not urbane or polished, the turns of phrases coined by him are saved from drabness by his high genius. Some of them are indeed marvellous and truly mystical. Some of his statements are couched in paradoxes whose correct meaning is difficult to unravel.

## **Conclusion**

The preceding discussion suggests that Kabir is one of the greatest mystics of

India. He spent much of his time in the company of ascetics, saints and Muslim Sufis. With filial attachment to both religious communities, Kabir was free from religious prejudice against either. He rubbed shoulders with *Bhakti* reformers as well as the *Sufi* saints. Though intensely religious in outlook, he was not a slave of either Hinduism or Islam. He was a man of absolutely independent thoughts and boldly criticised the evils of both the religions. He denounced the *Brahmins* and the *Mullas* alike to be the sole custodians of their religious orders and took them to task for their orthodox and exploitative attitude. He refused to accept the sanctity of the *Vedas* as well as the *Quran* to be 'the revealed scriptures'.

Kabir raised his voice against the custom of sati and child marriage and these two evils which were purely social in character. Kabir strongly opposed the idol-worship, caste system and untouchability as practised by the Hindus and simultaneously condemned the orthodoxy and the meaningless rituals of the Muslims. He exposed the futility of offering five daily prayers in the Mosque without the purity of the heart and sincere dedication to God. Kabir had full faith in the Hindu doctrines of *rebirth* and *karma* and stood for purity of life, complete self-surrender to God and His devotional worship for the attainment of *mukti*. Kabir's teachings has more relevance even today in India when dissenting views are often exiled and forced out of the public sphere by state interference and by religious and social groups within the civil society. By claiming offence, these groups make threats to the public order, pressurising courts and authorities to invoke colonial-era restrictions on free speech. Books and documentary films are frequently banned. Publishers are intimidated into censoring their authors. It is suffice to say that Kabir's teachings were in perfect harmony with the social and religious needs of the times and he identified himself completely with the concept of an integrated Indian society and won the hearts of millions. Thus, Kabir's concept of syncretism has contemporary relevance to the modern society which is torn to pieces in the name of sectarianism, racism, caste system and gender discrimination.

According to Kabir, God is formless, *nirguna*. It is necessary to have a preceptor to realise Him. He is to be found neither in the temple nor in the mosque; neither in Banaras nor in Mecca, but only in the heart of his devotees. So in *one of his dohas* he says:

*I am neither in temple nor in mosque,  
I am neither in Kaaba nor in Kailas;*

*Neither am I in rites and ceremonies  
Nor Yog and renunciation  
Lamp burns in every house, O Blind One  
And you cannot see them....  
Your Lord is near, yet you are climbing the Palm tree to see Him  
Yoga and the telling of beads  
.... these are naught to me.*

*(Chopra, Puri & Das, 1974, pp. 89-90)*

Kabir emphasised on the unity of God and preached the path of love, devotion and *bhakti*. He permitted the adoration of Vishnu, Rama, Hari (a form of Vishnu), Govinda (Krishna), and Allah, which he said were merely names for the One Supreme Deity. He accepted karma and transmigration, but like Ramanuja found a way out of the remorseless bonds of karma by preaching that the love of God can bring salvation. He upheld a high moral code, stressing truthfulness, mercy and self-control. Thus he has tried to bring to bring out the fundamental unity of Islam and Hinduism.

Kabir imbibed the tenets of both the religions, Hinduism and Islam, stood for Hindu-Muslim unity and declared that 'Allah and Rama' were the names of the same God. The people of both the religions should not fight and kill to each other. The essence of both religions is the same. Kabir's *Doha* says:

*The Hindu says Ram is dear  
The Muslim says Rahiman  
They quarrel, fight and kill each other  
Never knowing the essence.*

A number of people felt strongly drawn towards him so that many Hindus and Muslims became his followers.

Kabir pours ridicule on idolatry, polytheism, priest craft (*Qazis* and *Brahmins* both deserve hell), world renunciation, and religious ceremonial in a number of apothegms called *Sakhi* which are still current and popular as are also his doctrinal poems known as the *Ramaini*. A collection of these called the *Bijak* (treasure) forms the scriptures of the Kabir *Panth*. He questioned the validity of the Vedas and Puranas, and was critical of parts of the Koran. According to him, the Vedas are empty words. He dubs the Brahmins and the Mullahas as ignorant, credulous, vain, and misguided and exhorts them to accept the Truth.

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# Impact of Yogic Asanas at Different Altitudes

**Mukesh Agarwal**

People search for simple, but ideal system of training the mind and body for complete fitness. This can be achieved through the ancient practice of yoga. Hatha yoga is the physical practice of yogic movement that involves moving in and out of different positions. In ancient India, there are hundreds of these exercises practiced by people to attain fitness and complete health. The practice involves controlled breathing and meditative exercises through the Yoga Sutras. Currently, there are many different styles of Yoga like Hatha Yoga, Astanga Yoga, Iyengar, Sivananda, Bikram Kripalu, Vinyasa, etc. The practice of Yoga is meant to challenge and inspire to greater physical, mental and spiritual heights. Yoga also focuses on breathing, which strengthens the cardiopulmonary system. Good posture develops greater skill and confidence in mind and body. And last, but not the least, yoga teaches one to relax the mind and body as a vital element of one's practice.

In this fast-paced, constantly moving world, practicing yoga allows time to stop and make the person aware about oneself. It is a time to be one with the body and to let go of all the distractions and worries of the world. Some hatha yoga postures can be risky and unwise for many people to practice like performing headstands, doing full backbends, and even crossing the legs too much can strain the neck, spine and knees. Yoga has positive impact on the body of the individual which is not limited to physical aspects only, but also covers mental, physiological and other aspects. The physiological functioning strengthens the internal organs and organ system to make the body fit. The relationship between oxygen consumption and heart rate in any individual is a measure of the amount of oxygen delivered per heart-beat, which in turn reflects the stroke

volume. When looking at population data, rather than individual data, at different work intensities, it has been established that the maximum possible heart rate and aerobic efficiency are age and sex related. Aerobic function tests should only be seen as giving a broad indication of any individual's aerobic capacity.

This study was conducted to assess the impact of yogic asanas in relation to the youth of different places. The youth from the different altitudes is tested in terms of physiological functioning and its effect on yoga training. Various studies were conducted on the effect of yoga in different groups of people.

## Reviews

Jain and Talukdar (1993) studied the effects of a yoga therapy program on 46 patients of chronic bronchial asthma including exercise capacity, pulmonary functions and blood gases. Exercise capacity was measured by 3 tests: (i) 12 min Walk Test (ii) Physical Fitness Index by modified Harvard step test and (iii) Exercise-Liability index. Yoga therapy resulted in an increase in pulmonary functions and exercise tolerance. A one-year follow-up study showed a good to fair response with reduced symptoms scores and drug requirements in these subjects.

Innes, Bourguigno & Taylor (2005) reviewed research published between 1970 and 2004 on the effects of yoga on insulin resistance and cardiovascular disease. 70 studies were identified, including 1 observational study, 26 uncontrolled clinical trials, 21 non-randomized controlled clinical trials, and 22 randomized controlled clinical trials. These studies provide evidence that yoga can improve many physiological indicators of insulin resistance and cardiovascular disease, including glucose tolerance and insulin sensitivity, lipid profiles, anthropometric characteristics, blood pressure, oxidative stress, coagulation profiles, sympathetic activation, and cardiovagal function. Yoga is also associated with improvement in several clinical outcomes, such as need for drug therapy, progression of disease, and incidence of additional illness episodes.

Kirkwood, Rampes, Tuffrey, Richardson, Pilkington & Ramaratnam (2005) reviewed controlled clinical trials on the effectiveness of yoga for the treatment of anxiety and anxiety disorders. The review covered major databases, as well as organizations such as the International Association of Yoga Therapists and the Yoga Biomedical Trust. Only eight controlled clinical trials were identified.

The tradition/approach to yoga varied among studies, and studies focusing on meditation only were excluded. Most yoga interventions included asana, breathing, and relaxation. One study compared Kundalini yoga to mindfulness meditation and relaxation, and found that yoga was more effective in reducing anxiety than mindfulness meditation and relaxation. Several studies compared yoga to anti-anxiety medications, and reported greater improvements from yoga than medication.

Deng & Cassileth (2005) reported promising results in a preliminary study of yoga for insomnia. 20 participants (18 women, 2 men, ages ranging from 30-64) with chronic insomnia (experiencing insomnia for longer than 6 months) practiced yoga daily for eight weeks. Participants received only one yoga training session, and practiced on their own for the duration of the trial.

### **Methodology and Procedure**

Total 399 subjects or youth were randomly selected from three different regions of the country in terms of altitude difference i.e. Shimla, Delhi and Mumbai. The subjects were identified with selected physiological parameters measurement followed by three-month Yogic asanas training and thereafter post physiological parameters measurement. The data was analyzed by the independent t-test followed by Kruskal – Wallis Non Parametric tests.

### **Result**

#### **Pre-test**

The physiological parameters were compared for three altitude i.e. Pre-test.

**Null Hypothesis,  $H_0$ :** There is no significant difference between this phase of Shimla (represented by 2), Delhi (represented by 5) and Mumbai (represented by 8) at 5% level of significance.

**Alternate Hypothesis,  $H_1$ :** There is a significant difference between phase 2 of Shimla (represented by 2), Delhi (represented by 5) and Mumbai (represented by 8).

**Test Criteria:** Reject  $H_0$  if the significant value is less than 0.05.

**Ranks**

	Phase	N	Mean Rank
BMI	2	83	53.42
	5	23	99.74
	8	33	90.97
	Total	139	
Fat	2	83	68.33
	5	23	75.54
	8	33	70.35
	Total	139	
BMR	2	83	44.66
	5	23	102.91
	8	33	110.80
	Total	139	
W_H	2	83	47.10
	5	23	97.87
	8	33	108.18
	Total	139	
PR	2	83	68.13
	5	23	78.22
	8	33	68.98
	Total	139	
S_BP	2	83	66.70
	5	23	72.22
	8	33	76.76
	Total	139	
D_BP	2	83	65.37
	5	23	84.09
	8	33	71.83
	Total	139	
TLC	2	83	67.76
	5	23	12.00
	8	33	116.06
	Total	139	

**Test Statistics<sup>a,b</sup>**

	BMI	Fat	BMR	W_H	PR	S_BP	D_BP	TLC
Chi-Square	35.559	.582	82.130	67.665	1.158	1.560	3.993	91.167
Df	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.748	.000	.000	.560	.458	.136	.000

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Phase

**Conclusion:**

The significant values for all the variables except Fat, PR, S\_BP and D\_BP are less than 0.05 hence we reject Ho and conclude that the first phases of the three cities differ significantly from each other for all variables except Fat, PR, S\_BP and D\_BP.

**Post Test**

The post test result analysis was carried out i.e. after exposure to three month Yogic asanas training to the subjects.

**Null Hypothesis, Ho:** There is no significant difference between phase 3 of Shimla (represented by 3), Delhi (represented by 6) and Mumbai (represented by 9) at 5% level of significance.

**Alternate Hypothesis, H1:** There is a significant difference between phase 3 of Shimla (represented by 3), Delhi (represented by 6) and Mumbai (represented by 9).

**Test Criteria:** Reject Ho if the significant value is less than 0.05.

**Ranks**

	Phase	N	Mean Rank
BMI	3	83	53.55
	6	23	99.09
	9	33	91.09
	Total	139	
Fat	3	83	64.65
	6	23	80.20
	9	33	76.35
	Total	139	

	Phase	N	Mean Rank
BMR	3	83	45.26
	6	23	103.46
	9	33	108.91
	Total	139	
W_H	3	83	50.77
	6	23	83.54
	9	33	108.94
	Total	139	
PR	3	83	68.37
	6	23	77.09
	9	33	69.15
	Total	139	
S_BP	3	83	64.04
	6	23	78.26
	9	33	79.24
	Total	139	
D_BP	3	83	63.29
	6	23	92.52
	9	33	71.18
	Total	139	
TLC	3	83	67.86
	6	23	13.65
	9	33	114.67
	Total	139	

**Test Statistics<sup>a,b</sup>**

	BMI	Fat	BMR	W_H	PR	S_BP	D_BP	TLC
Chi-Square	34.894	3.760	78.026	52.511	.862	4.557	9.622	85.876
df	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.153	.000	.000	.650	.102	.008	.000

a. *Kruskal Wallis Test*

b. *Grouping Variable: Phase*

## Conclusion

The significant values for all the variables except Fat, PR and S\_BP are less than 0.05 hence we reject Ho and conclude that the first phases of the three cities differ significantly different from each other for all variables except Fat, PR and S\_BP.

Phase wise comparison for exercise regime 'Yoga' taking grouping variable 'city':

The significant p-values for the variables are as follows:

Variable	Phase	Phase(Pre test)	Phase 3(Post test)
BMI	.000	.000	.000
Fat%	.572	.748	.153
BMR	.000	.000	.000
WHR	.000	.000	.000
PR	.566	.560	.650
SBP	.313	.458	.102
DBP	.045	.136	.008
TLC	.000	.000	.000

Under phase of pre-test, there is significant difference between mean ranks of all the variables in three cities except for the variables Fat, PR, SBP and DBP.

Under phase of post-test, there is significant difference between mean ranks of all the variables in three cities except for the variables Fat, PR and SBP.

## Main findings and discussion of result:

The study was conducted on youth of three altitudes viz. High (Shimla) Plane (Delhi) and Costal (Mumbai) for their physiological parameters viz. BMI, Fat%, BMR, WHR, PR, BP (SBP & DBP) and TLC in respect to the available fitness regime viz. Yogasana, Aerobics and Aeroyoga.

Total 300 youth (subjects) were randomly selected for three-month Yogic asanas training from three altitudes. Though the environmental conditions, fitness of participants, their socioeconomic conditions etc. were kept in abeyance as matter of limitation of the study, moreover the ratio between male

and female were also treated as insignificant for the study.

The entire subjects were treated with three-months Yogic asanas training. The entire lot of students were again evaluated physically and physiologically with standard equipment.

The statistical analysis of the variance (Physiological Parameters: BMI, Fat%, BMR, WHR, PR, BP (SBP & DBP) and TLC) were done among three groups (Altitude wise: Shimla, Delhi & Mumbai). The result reveals that there was a significant difference among the three altitudes in BMI, BMR, WHR and TLC before and after Yogic asanas training; whereas there was no significant difference in Fat% and PR.

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# Quest for Democratisation of Judicial System

Subodh Kumar

## Abstract

*The suppression of power was done to check the arbitrariness of the executive legislative and judiciary. The democratization of democracy can only be possible when there is no interference in these processes. Today, there has been a remarkable achievement of equality, liberty, and fraternity through constitutionalism. This was possible only when Judiciary is independent. To enhance the belief in institutions of judiciary, more pragmatic and decentralized approach is needed. This will enhance the faith and trust in judicial institutions. Through democratization of judiciary, constitutional democracy and republic will achieve the aims and objectives of our constitution.*

Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws* advocates separation of powers where political authority of the state is divided into legislative, executive and judicial powers. The separation was done to preserve liberty and, as the institutional requirement of a representative democracy. Hence, Judiciary checks arbitrariness of the Executive and Legislature and is the custodian of the constitution. To ensure its independence elaborate provisions have been made in the constitution under Article 124, 217, 233, 234 and 235. Moreover, the democratisation in actual sense can only be possible when there is no interference in the processes of judiciary, i.e., from appointments of judges to pronouncement of the verdicts. Today there has been a remarkable achievement of liberty, equality and fraternity through constitutionalism. This is possible only when our judiciary is independent. But, to enhance the

belief in the institutions of judiciary, we have to make more transparent approaches towards appointments of judges and pronouncement of verdicts. To make the processes of appointment of judges transparent and "just". Rastriya Lok Samta Party, a member of the ruling National Democratic Alliance has launched a nationwide movement "**Halla Bol Darwaja Khol**" to evolve a consensus on democratisation of the appointment of processes judges in higher judiciary. This is the first time in the history of Independent India, where political party is demanding for more transparent methods for the appointments of judges in higher judiciary, so that principle of equal opportunity should prevail.

When we analyse the political history of *Democratization of democracy* and its three pillars, we find that in 1225, there was a revolt in Britain, which led to establishing the principles of the of "Rule of Law" through *Magna Carta*, The process of democratisation continued with the establishment of constitutional monarchy in 1688 through Glorious Revolution, a year later in 1689, through *Bill of rights*, parliamentary supremacy was established in Britain Democratisation of. Democracy witnessed its first prime minister Robert Walpole in Britain (1714-1742). The irresistible revolution continued and in 1789, French Revolution marked the celebration of liberty, equality and fraternity across the world. Ernest Barker says justice is a tread which passes through liberty, equality and fraternity. These ideas has been enshrined in our constitution, and describe the "Preamble" of the Indian Constitution as one of the finest treatise in social justice.

In order to ensure justice, the framers of the constitution enshrined the idea of liberty, equality, fraternity and justice. We all know that "the Government of India Act 1935" has been accepted as a "model while framing the constitution" for free India. The framers of the Government of India Act 1935, showed their disinclination to Separate Executive from the judiciary. The provincial services commission was given a role in the matter of selection of members of subordinat Civil Judicial Service. Moreover, the Secretary of State's Services, namely, Indian Civil Service and the Indian Police Service were to lapse on the advent of freedom. Till 1947, there was a Quato for members of I.C.S. to be posted as District and Sessions Judges and who in turn got elevated to the High Court. But when, Secretary of State services lapsed and were replaced by I.A.S. & I.P.S. respectively. A policy decision was taken not to post any members of I.A.S. & I.P.S. to judicial posts. This was the starting point in independent India

of separating executive from judiciary.

Constituent Assembly members believed that unity in diversity, spirit of democracy and social revolution must be like seamless web in order to construct modern India. This, led to the incorporation of provisions relating to independence of judiciary in the Constitution. The appointment of judges of Supreme Court and High Court is governed by Article 124(2) and 217(1) of the Constitution respectively. The President appoints the judges of the Supreme Court after the consultation with the Chief Justice of India.

Over the period, the appointment of judges has emerged as a contentious issue, with constant friction between the executive and the judiciary. The Law Commission's recommendations that Chief Justice of India should be chosen not merely on the basis of seniority but should be the most suitable person, whether taken from the court, the bar or the high courts. This recommendation was used for personal benefits by Indira Gandhi in 1973, where she appointed Justice A.N. Ray as Chief Justice of India, superseding three senior most judges. In 1977, Indira Gandhi once again committed same mistake and appointed Justice H.H. Beg as Chief Justice of India superseding Justice H.R Khanna. These two appointments transformed independent judiciary to committed judiciary, which led to unrest in the judicial fraternity in particular and civil society in general. These appointments are the geniuses of collegium system in India, which resulted into three judges case. In the First Judges Case (1981); *S.P. Gupta vs Union of India*, the Supreme Court led by P.N. Bhagwati came down in favour of the executive by pointing to the fact that "to consult" does not mean that the power of appointment is with the Chief Justice. The power of appointment resides solely and exclusively in the central government. A similar judgement was given by the court in *Sankakhand Seth's Case* (1977), while interpreting the words "constitution" the Supreme Court rule that the term never mean "concurrence".

In the second judges case, the Supreme Court Advocate-on-Record Association vs Union of India (1993), the Supreme Court led by Justice J.S. Verma overruled the judgement of the first judges case. Justice Verma held that "constitution" really meant "concurrence" and that the Chief Justice of India views enjoys primacy since he is "best equipped to know and assess the worth" of candidates. The judgment evolved a new system i.e. colligium for appointment and transferring judges in the higher judiciary.

## Quest for Democratisation of Judicial System

The working of collegium system was clarified in the third judges cases (1998); led by Chief Justice of India S.P. Bharuchia with reference to President K.R. Narayanan's presidential reference to the Supreme Court over the meaning of the term "consultation". The collegium will comprise the Chief Justice of India and his four senior most colleagues. In the case of appointments to High Court, the collegium will be Chief Justice of India and two senior most colleagues. This judgment completely excluded the role of executive in the process of judicial appointment.

When we analyse the appointments of judges in the higher judiciary, we find that collegium system has not been transparent in accommodating or giving representation to the diverse Indian society. There has been a negligible representation of S.C., S.T. and OBC and minorities in the higher judiciary. Gender disparity is also witnessed in the higher judiciary only approximately 10 per cent representation of women is there in the higher judiciary. The appointment process reflects the notion of 'Circulation of Elites'. Due to this, Karia Mundra Committee, recommended reservation in higher judiciary. To, overcome the flaws of appointments in the higher judiciary on All India Judicial Services has been the demand of various commissions. The 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 116<sup>th</sup> Law Commission recommended creation of an All India Judicial Services, so that right to equal opportunity should become the guiding force in the appointments of judges in higher judiciary. Similarly, in 1961, 1963, 1965 Chief Justice Conference, they recommended the creation of an "All India Judicial Services". In 1976, 42<sup>nd</sup> Amendment, All India Judicial Services provisions were amended in Article 312 clause (3)(4). In 1990, V.P. Singh Government introduced 67<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment for creation of All India Judicial Commission, but his government did not last long. In 1994, All India Judges Association and others vs Union of India, gave a verdict that an All India Judicial Services should be set up and the Union of India should take appropriate steps in this regard. In 1999, National Judiciary Pay Commission recommended creation of an All India Judicial Services. In 2013, Constitutional Amendment (120<sup>th</sup> Amendment Bill) was introduced in Parliament to establish a Judicial Appointment Commission to appoint judges to the Supreme Court and the High Court.

In 2014, National Democratic Alliance led by Shri Narendra Modi introduced its first Constitutional Amendment Bill (121<sup>st</sup>) in Parliament for the creation of

National Judicial Appointment Commission (NJAC). Parliament after a long deliberation passed the Bill in 2017, so that transparency and equal opportunity should be provided in the processes of appointments of judges to higher judiciary. The Commission would consist of 6 people – Chief Justice of India, the two senior most judges of Supreme Court, Law Minister and two eminent persons. These eminent persons are to be nominated for a three years term by a Committee consisting of Chief Justice of India, Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha and must have at least 1 women/SC/ST/Minority/OBC representation. The five judge bench of Supreme Court rejected NJAC Act by 4:1. Justice J. Chelmswar gave dissent. They were of the view that it infringed on the Independence of the judiciary which is basic structure of the Constitution. But, the court asked the executive to prepare a Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) in consultation with the Chief Justice of India to enable transparency in the appointment of judges. Similarly, on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018, Supreme Court bench led by Justice Adarsh Goel and U.U. Lalit accepted the pitfalls of colligium system and it argued for creation of a better system. Moreover, On 11<sup>th</sup> May 2018, Supreme Court bench accepted that there is a need for creation of national tribunal commission so that appointment of judges should be transparent.

When we analyse the appointment processes in different countries we find that colligium system does not exist anywhere in the world. In all other countries the “WILL OF THE PEOPLE” gets reflected in the appointment processes. In U.S.A., Article III of the United States constitution establish the federal courts as part of the federal government. Judges are appointed by the President, the legislative committee forward the names to Senate, then Senate pass the names and then which later, President appoints judges. In Britain, judges are appointed by five member commission. In Canada, judges are appointed by a panel led by five members of Parliament. In France, judges are appointed by President after the approval of Special Panel.

## **Conclusion**

After 1989, the world saw democratisation of democracy across the world, including India. The democratisation helped the alienated sections of the society in the process of decision making. Almost every institutions in India accepted and celebrated the processes of democratization and the will of the people prevailed. But, judiciary in the only institution where we see the

circulation of elites process for appointments to the higher judiciary. This needs to be transformed. The irresistible revolution of liberty, equality and fraternity will create a democratic pressure from below that will democratize the processes of appointment in higher judiciary. In this way the credibility, trust and faith in judiciary will be upheld. Along with merit and seniority, the diversity in the processes of appointment should be the guiding principle. This will uphold the will of the people and will strengthen constitutional democracy and republic.

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# Federalism in Asia and Africa beyond India

Niraj Kumar

## Abstract

*Federalism, first born in North America in pioneering presidential-federal and parliamentary-federal forms in the USA and Canada respectively, is not particularly popular in Asia and Africa. Only five of Asia's 48 sovereign states have adopted some kinds of federal or quasi-federal forms of government. In Africa it is even more unpopular. Of 54 African states, only three can be counted as some kind of federal or hybrid federal formations. I offer some speculative but empirically and theoretically relevant explanations why it might be so.*

**Keywords:** *Presidential-federal government, Parliamentary-federal government, Federal structure, Federal division of powers, Quasi-federal, federal second chamber, Independent judiciary*

Federalism has been particularly popular in Asia, the world's largest continent. Only five out of the continent's 48 sovereign states have adopted some form of formal or substantively federal constitutions : India (1950), Pakistan (1956, 1962, 1973), Myanmar, formerly Burma (1947, 1974, 2008), Malaysia (1956), Iraq (2005), and Nepal (2015). The first four were British colonies that attained independence after the Second World War. The first three had been governed under the Government of India Act, 1935, enacted by the imperial power in London. Malaysia too, in its earlier incarnations as Malayan Union and Federation of Malaya, had been governed by the British under an act similar to the Government of India Act, 1935, was itself modelled after the British North America Act or Canada Constitution Act, 1867. The

constitution of India and first post-independence constitutions of Pakistan, Burma, and Malaysia and their centralised parliamentary-federal constitutions owed heavily to the colonial India and Canada constitution Acts mentioned above. Nepal and Iraq too had some British connections. The former was a protectorate of the British in India during 1850 and 1923 and thereafter a sovereign monarchy until 2008 when it became a republic. A part of the Ottoman Empire until the First World War, Iraq was placed under the British Mandate under the League of Nations from 1920 to 1932, when it became an independent monarchy. After a decade-long civil war, a comprehensive peace agreement between the Government of Nepal and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) in 2006 set Nepal on a course of democratisation and constitution making featured by the abolition of monarchy in 2008 and adoption of a parliamentary-federal constitution and an independent judiciary with powers of judicial review in 2015. From its gradual independent statehood in 1932, Iraq experienced a series of monarchical, military, and republican autocracies until the ouster of Saddam Hussain in 2003 by the United States of America-led coalition force. Following the US withdrawal, Iraq adopted a centralised parliamentary-federal constitution made by an Iraqi drafting committee and ratified by a popular referendum in 2005.

The general direction of constitutional change in Asian federations is towards centralised parliamentary-federalism in India and a variegated hybrid of 'semi-democracy and minimalist federalism' in Malaysia, which have worked reasonably well, though not without problems, for over a half a century (Case, 2007, pp. 124-143). Nepal has just adopted a model of federalism broadly similar to India, but has faced instant serious discontents and violent protests from sizeable sections of the population among the Madhesis and Tharus in Southern Nepal (The Terai) bordering India on territorial rather than ethnic provinces and discriminatory citizenship clauses. In any case, its working in highly politicised and socially fragmented Nepal is still in the future. Ambivalent between parliamentarism and presidentialism, militarism and civilianism, Islamic democracy and Islamic jihadism, Pakistan has never settled for a democratic constitution, let alone federalism and constitutionalism, notwithstanding a half-hearted parliamentary federal 18th Constitutional Amendment (2010). Following the record of failed federalism in 1971, prognosis of its future is haunted by the spectre of a 'failed state'. The

best that can be said about it at the present is,

Even with the relatively powerful parliament, independent judiciary, free media and vibrant civil society, Pakistan has yet to fully right itself on the path of substantial democracy and democratic federalism based on a complete autonomy for the constituent federating units (Chandido, 2013, p. 2)

The constitution of Iraq describes the state as federal, democratic, and parliamentary under which the cabinet is continuously accountable and responsible to the legislature. Provisions regarding judicial independence appear somewhat ambiguous or insufficient. Status, structure and procedures of subnational units are subject to further parliamentary legislation or constitutions of the regions. The existing region of Kurdistan with its 'regional' and federal authorities is recognised by the constitution keeping the door open for creation of further regions. Division of powers provides for exclusive federal powers as well as those shared with subnational regions and governorates, the latter coming directly under the federal authorities. Even eight years after promulgation of the constitution and three rounds of elections, Iraq continues to be one of the most dangerous, unstable and corrupt countries in the world (Jawad, 2013). Among the major impediments to peace and stability, in the opinion of one observer, are the constitution's vagueness and ambiguities, the excessive concessions granted to the Kurds on the issues of federal government, natural resources, and Kirkuk crude oil (Jawad, 2013).

Beginning as a promising parliamentary federal republic in 1948, Burma suffered a military coup in 1962. After 26 years of its rule, the Army government promulgated a presidential constitution in 1008 with 25 per cent of seats in the Parliament reserved for the Army and key ministerial offices also reserved for them. In October 2015, President The in Se in held peace talks with rebels of eight regional ethnic groups and held national elections in November 2015, in which the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by the Nobel Prize Winning Aung San Suu Kyi won an impressive victory with the agenda of amending the military made constitution of 2008. Observers are keeping their fingers crossed regarding the prospects of the intended amendments in the present constitution.

Africa, even less than Asia, has not been a hospitable continent for federalism. Presently, among 54 African states, only three can be counted as some kind of

federal political systems: Ethiopia, South Africa, and Nigeria. During the 1960s and 1970s, in the wake of decolonisation from European powers, several federal experiments were made but none survived in the face of relentless trend towards single-party states and military dictatorships. As Michel Burgess (1912, p. 13) in his short survey of federalism in Africa noted, “The early appeal of the federal ideal among several groups and communities in some newly independent states quickly faded and had all but disappeared by the early 1970s. The Congolese (Zaire) federation (1960-65) was abrogated in 1965, Uganda's federal system (1962-66), originally designed to accommodate the Kingdom of Buganda, went the same way in 1966 and the Anglo-French project of the Cameroonian federation (1962-72) was abolished in 1972. Federal experiments were similarly undermined in Kenya, Sudan, and Ethiopia leaving only Nigeria, and Tanzania-itself only a borderline federacy with the islands of the Zanzibar and Pemba (having only 5 per cent of the total population) as the sole remaining federal survivors in the 1970s.

In this desolate scenario, the 1990s witnesses some new federal sprouts and plants in Ethiopia (1995), South Africa (1996), and Nigeria (1999) having a longer defunct federal past than others. Over the last four decades, Ethiopia went through the end of the imperial era as well as the military regime (1974-1991) and a dramatic shift from a centralised unitary state to a somewhat unconventional parliamentary-federal constitution brought into existence liberation movement in a country that was not a colony waged by ethno-linguistic groups in different parts of the country. The executive comprises a nominated president indirectly elected by the Parliament and the Prime Minister elected by the House of People, the popularly elected parliamentary chamber. The federal second chamber, the House of Federation, has a special say in matters concerning nationalities and division of revenues derived from joint federal and state taxes among the two orders of governments, on the proposal of the federal executive. The President and Vice-President of the federal Supreme Court are nominated by the Prime Minister and approved by the House of People. Other judges of the Supreme Court are nominated by a federal judiciary administrative council and approved by the House of People. The constitution provides the power to 'interpret' the constitution to the House of Federation, uniquely in the world. The constitution also establishes a related institution, the council of constitutional Inquiry, consisting of the members of the judiciary, legal experts appointed by House of People's Representatives

and three persons designated by the House itself from among its members to examine the constitutional issues and submit its recommendations to the house for the final decision. Matters in this context are referred to the council for interpretation by a court or the 'interested party', to a dispute (University of Pretoria, 2004).

South Africa has adapted its British Westminster constitutional heritage to its needs and also added on a weak form of federalism, and the term itself does not appear in the constitution or in official documents (Murray, 2006, pp. 258-88). Legislature and executive on the parliamentary model are established at both the federal and provincial levels, but the federal government is very strong. The bicameral parliament comprises a directly elected National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces consisting a ten-member delegation from each province, which includes members of the provincial legislatures (drawn from different parties) and the executive. They must vote as instructed by provincial governments. This is designed to ensure provincial participation in the federal legislation which the provinces must implement. The federal cabinet is headed by the President who is functionally equivalent to the Prime Minister in a parliamentary system. Elected from among the members of the National Assembly, he resigns as a Member of Parliament and forms his cabinet from among his cabinet from among the members of the National Assembly.

The judiciary is structured as a common national hierarchy of courts, with the constitutional court having the final power of interpretation of the constitution and power of judicial review of federal and provincial legislative and executive acts.

After its independence from the British rule in 1960, Nigeria began as a parliamentary monarchy under the British and adopted a parliamentary federal republican constitution in 1963 but it was overturned by a military coup in 1966. The present constitution of 1999 was bequeathed to the people by the military after the last spell of its authoritarian rule (1983-1999). The 1999 constitution harks back to the 1979 constitution which had turned its back to the parliamentary federal system and adopted a presidential system of government. Constitutional power in the federation is heavily skewed toward the federal government in Abuja whose primary task is seen by national and military elites to hold the country together (Burgess, 2012, p. 11).

In sum, the three present African federal political systems are more African than European. Nevertheless, Ethiopia broadly reminiscent of parliamentary-federations of Europe, South Africa leans somewhat towards the commonwealth parliamentary-federations, and Nigeria reminds one of the Latin American presidential federal systems.

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# Growth and Poverty –Issues, Myth and Challenges

Abha Mittal

## Abstract

*In more than half century since its Independence, India has accomplished many notable social and economic achievements. Among these are the eradication of widespread famine, a reduction in population growth, some lowering of caste barriers to economic opportunity and the creation of a large pool of technical and scientific talent. While it has also managed to reduce poverty in that period, only since 1975, when growth accelerated, has the decline been fairly steady. India's progress in fighting poverty has been modest when compared with some of its Asian neighbours. Between 1970 and 1993, for example, the proportion of Indonesia's population living in poverty dropped from 58 to 8 percent, an annual decline of nearly 10 percent. India's poverty continues to be predominantly rural although rural poverty declined faster than urban poverty. Moreover, the decline in national poverty seems to have been driven mostly by the decline in rural poverty.*

*The real issue in establishing a development strategy is whether growth and distribution are independent of each other or, strongly inter-related. Is it the case for instance that faster growth tends to reduce inequality or on the contrary, to increase it? Could too much inequality in a given country act to slow down or, to accelerate growth? All these questions have concerned economists in the last decades and probably will keep doing so for the years to come. Therefore, while preparing a development strategy for our nation, the main issue before the economists is whether to focus on increasing growth or by reducing poverty or by removing inequality or removing unemployment.*

*Thus, unemployment, poverty and inequality are the major challenges that economy is facing at present. Unemployment, poverty and inequality do effect our sustainable economic growth of nation. Economic reforms, changes in industrial policy and better utilization of available resources are expected to reduce the problem of unemployment and poverty that results from them. Generation of employment opportunities and equality in income distribution are two factors that are of utmost importance to deal with the problem of poverty and unemployment. India therefore urgently needs to formulate an anti-poverty strategy that is fiscally sustainable and more finely targeted to those who truly cannot benefit from the opportunities offered by growth. According to Galbraith - "We now get the larger part of our industrial growth not from more capital investment but from investment in men and improvements brought about by improvement men". Economists are of the view that it is the lack of investment in human capital that has been responsible for slow growth of LDCs. The vicious circle of poverty can be broken only by investment in man. Neighbouring countries in Asia that have combined pro-growth development policies with investments in the health and education of their people have seen economic growth and poverty reduction. By maintaining its commitment to economic liberalization, and redirecting towards infrastructure, health, and education the large resources now absorbed by subsidies inter-alia for power, irrigation, and fertilizers, India can give its long battle to reduce poverty a new impetus.*

In more than half century since independence, India has accomplished many notable social and economic achievements. Among these are the eradication of widespread famine, a reduction in population growth, some lowering of caste barriers to economic opportunity and the creation of a large pool of technical and scientific talent. While it has also managed to reduce poverty in that period, only since 1975, when growth accelerated, has the decline been fairly steady. The centrality of growth is that the rates of growth that India could achieve was due to its market oriented development policies and a better integration into the world economy. This is a promising development because the last few decades have shown the extent to which the poor stand to gain from acceleration in growth. The latter widens opportunity, provides the resources needed to invest in human development, and creates the very foundation that will increase returns to human capital – and thus families' willingness to send their children, including girls, to school.

The real issue in establishing a development strategy is whether growth and distribution are independent of each other or, strongly inter-related. Is it the case for instance that faster growth tends to reduce inequality or on the contrary, to increase it? Could too much inequality in a given country act to slow down or, to accelerate growth? All these questions have concerned economists in the last decades and probably will keep doing so for the years to come. Therefore, while preparing a development strategy for our nation, the main issue before the economists is whether to focus on increasing growth or on reducing poverty or removing inequality or removing unemployment. Thus, unemployment, poverty and inequality are the three major challenges that economy is facing at present. Unemployment, poverty and inequality do effect our sustainable economic growth of nation.

Growth is essential for reduction in unemployment, poverty and inequality in income. This is possible if:

Wages of the lowest paid rise faster than the average wage.

Government benefits, such as; unemployment benefits, sickness benefits and pensions are increased in line with average wages.

Economic Growth creates job opportunities, which reduce the level of unemployment.

Government should thus increase the growth of nation for removing the problem of poverty and inequality. But the government support is not enough to raise the standard of living of our country like that of other developed nations. We at times think that problem poverty is only being hungry, less clothing and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty.

Poverty reduction in a given country and at a given point of time is fully determined by the rate of growth of the mean income of the population and the change in the distribution of income. As the problem Unemployment leads to financial crisis and reduces the overall purchasing capacity of the nation which results in poverty, increasing economic growth of the nation helps in reducing poverty and income inequality to little extent by changing income distribution.

Poverty has been in existence since immemorial time but the description interpretation and methodology to measure the incidence of poverty has changed from time to time with economic development. Poverty is a very complex phenomenon although poverty and poor looks very simple it is not

very easy to estimate. Poverty has been hijacked by economists and has been exposed by them by taking income and consumption without taking into account sensitivity.

Poverty is more a social phenomenon than economic in which a section of the society is unable to fulfill even its basic necessities of life. When a substantial segment of a society is deprived of the minimum level of living and continues at a bare subsistence level, that society is said to be plagued with mass poverty. Although the definition of poverty differs from country to country, but all of them are conditioned by the vision of minimum or good life obtaining in society e.g. concept of poverty in USA would be significantly different from that in India because the average person is able to afford a much higher level of living in the United States.

Poverty Line in 2006 Annual Family Income

US \$20,650(family of 4)

India \$107(Rs.4800/annum-i.e. Rs.400/math) for family of 5

BPL is an economic benchmark and threshold used by GOI to identify households in need of govt. assistance and aid.

Poverty in India is widespread, and a variety of methods have been proposed to measure it. (Erenstein, 2011) Different Criteria Used For Identification of BPL:

1. Dandekar and Rath's Criteria

Estimated poverty on the basis of calorie intake

2400 cal-----rural

2100 cal-----urban

The cost of grains (about 650gms) that fulfill this calorie requirement was calculated.

This cost was the poverty line

YEAR	Per Capita monthly expenditure To buy minimum calorie requirement)	
	RURAL	URBAN
1965 (base yr 1960 61)	Rs.15	Rs.22.50
1978 (base yr 1973)	Rs.61.80	Rs.71.30
2005 (Less than Rs.10/day USD 0.22)	Rs.276	Rs.296
2007	Rs. 368	Rs. 560

2009 (Tendulkar Committee)	Rs.816/month Or Rs. 27/Day	Rs.1000/month Or Rs.33/Day
2009 (Rangarajan Report)	Rs.972/month Or Rs. 32/Day	Rs.1407/month Or Rs. 47/Day

## II. World Bank Criteria

		% of population BPL
Early 1990s	minimum earning required (to live APL) \$-365/yr i.e. \$-1/day/person	75%
CRITERIA REVISED Reason: Higher Cost of Living (In 2005)	\$-1.25/day	42% (456 million)
In 2014	\$1.78/day(on 2011 PPP basis)	
In 2015	\$1.90/day	
Nov. 2017	World Bank started : 2 International Poverty Line: Lower Middle Income Line: \$3.20/day Upper Middle Income Line: \$5.50/day	India falls in Lower Middle Income Line 60% Population are Below Poverty Line

## III. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

It uses a different measure of poverty which suggests that 61.5% of the people in India are actually poor. The gauge Capability Poverty – a concept originally mooted by Amartya Sen – is different from income poverty in that it measures not incomes, but the capability of an individual. According to Amartya Sen Not only calorie intake but also human factor should be taken into consideration.

The Capability Poverty Measure (CPM) comprises three broad elements:

1. The proportion of children under five who are underweight. This is correlated with the capability to be well-nourished and healthy.
2. Proportion of births unattended by trained health personnel.
3. Female illiteracy rate for women over 15.

To construct CPM, these three measures are combined in the form of simple arithmetic mean of each. The result expresses the percentage of a country's population that is capability-poor.

## **IV. Human Development Report (1990) HDR (1997)**

**HDR States** – “Income is a means, with human development the end”. It redefined measures of human development and developed 3 measures:

1. Human Development Index (HDI)
2. Gender related Development Index (GDI)
3. Human Poverty Index (HPI)

According to Sen, we should be not only concerned with the number of people living below the poverty line but also with the amount by which the income of the poor fall short of the specified poverty level and bigger the short fall from the poverty level, greater should be the weight per unit of that short fall in the poverty measure.

### **Three indicators are used for the construction of HDI:**

- i) Life expectancy at birth.
- ii) Educational Attainment Index (EAI) shown by adult literacy (with two third weights) and combined enrolment ratio (primary, secondary and tertiary with one third weight) (expansion of knowledge and awareness)
- iii) Real per capita GDP (PPPUS\$) – standard of living index.

### **Countries are grouped under three categories**

1. High Human Development Group – In the HDI range 0.8 and above
2. Medium Human Development Group – Countries in the HDI range 0.5 to 0.8
3. Low Human Development Group – Countries in the HDI range less than 0.5

India ranks in Medium Human Development Group. It was at No.138 in HDI in 1994. It improved its position to No.121 in 2017(out of 188 countries Norway ranks 1st)

### **Human Poverty Index (HPI)**

HPI concentrates on deprivation in three essential elements of human life already reflected in HDI:

1. Longevity – Percentage of people expected to die before the age 40
2. Knowledge – Percentage of adults who are illiterate
3. Decent living standard – It is represented by a composite of three variables – the percentage of people with access to: a) Health services b) safe water c) Percentage of malnourished children under five.

The official measure of Indian government, before 2005, was based on food security and it was defined from per capita expenditure for a person to

consume enough calories and be able to pay for associated essentials to survive. (Planning Commission, Government of India, 2012)

Since 2005, Indian government adopted the Tendulkar methodology which moved away from calorie anchor to a basket of goods and used rural, urban and regional minimum expenditure per capita necessary to survive. However, in 2014 the Rangarajan Committee changed the methodology which stated that it should be based on “ability to save”.

According to Sen, we should be not only concerned with the number of people living below the poverty line but also with the amount by which the income of the poor fall short of the specified poverty level and bigger the short fall from the poverty level, greater should be the weight per unit of that short fall in the poverty measure.

The different definitions and different underlying small sample surveys used to determine poverty in India have resulted in widely different estimates of poverty from 1950s to 2013. In 2013, the Indian government stated 21.9% of its population is below its official poverty limit. The World Bank, in 2010 based on 2005's PPPs International Comparison Program, estimated 32.7% of Indian population or about 400 million people, lived below \$1.25 per day on purchasing power parity basis. (The World Bank, 2012)

### **Population Below The Poverty Line (in %)**

	<b>2011-12</b>
Planning Commission	22%
World Bank (Based on 2005 PPP 1.25\$/day)	23.6%
Millennium Development Goals	21.9%
Tendulkar Report	21.9%
Rangarajan Report	29.5%

*Source: Compiled by the author from various sources*

The World Bank reviewed and proposed revisions in May 2014, to its poverty calculation methodology. According to this revised methodology, the world had 872.3 million people below the new poverty line, of which 179.6 million people lived in India. In other words, India with 17.5% of total world's population had 20.6% share of worlds poorest in 2013.

In spite of differences in methodology there is a general consensus on the fact that percentage of population below poverty line has started declining due to high growth rate and poverty alleviation programmes. The magnitude of decline in poverty is significant but not dramatic, it remains painfully high. Because of India's rapid population growth rate, economic growth has not been

sufficient to reduce the absolute number of poor, which increased from around 200 million in the 1950s to 872 million in 2013. This leaves India with the largest concentration of poor people in the world, particularly in the villages — fewer than 5,000 people — where 60 percent of all Indians live.

India's progress in fighting poverty has been modest when compared with some of its Asian neighbours. Between 1970 and 1993, for example, the proportion of Indonesia's population living in poverty dropped from 58 to 8 percent, an annual decline of nearly 10 percent.

India's poverty continues to be predominantly rural although rural poverty declined faster than urban poverty. Moreover, the decline in national poverty seems to have been driven mostly by the decline in rural poverty.

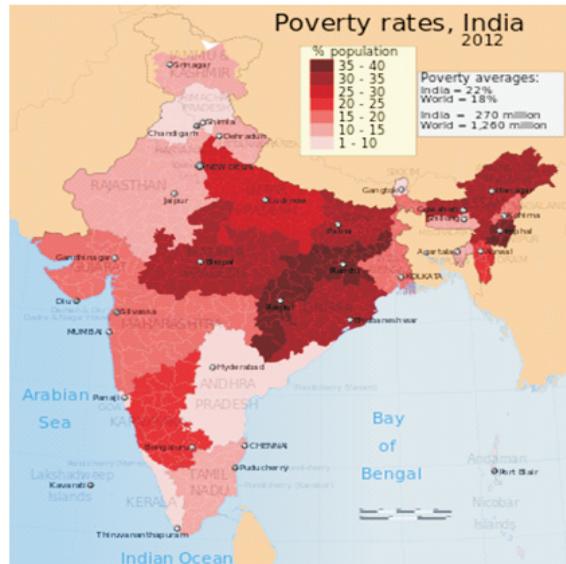
Over the last decade, poverty has witnessed a consistent decline with the levels dropping from 37.2% in 2004-05 to 22.0% in 2011-12 out of which 25.7% of people in rural areas were below the poverty line and 13.7% in urban areas. Nearly 20 million people were pulled out of poverty every year. While experts welcomed the decline in poverty, they flagged concerns such as the comparability of the numbers. Poverty in India declined to a record 22% in 2011-12 based on the Tendulkar methodology, which was criticized for fixing poverty lines that were too low at Rs.22.42 per person per day in rural areas and Rs.28.65 in urban areas. (India Today, September 21, 2011)

The Planning Commission's calculations were stated as statistical jugglery. "This a gimmick—let them explain that if this is the rate of poverty decline then when in 1971 they gave the slogan of Garibi Hatao (eradicate poverty), even after 42 years why is poverty still a problem," said Prakash Javadekar. The Myth is government's estimate showed poverty levels were coming down since the new poverty line for rural India is Rs 356 a month and Rs 538 a month for urban India. Those spending less were categorised as poor. This means daily bus fare of a labourer is sufficient to keep him above the poverty line.

While total overall poverty in India has declined, the extent of poverty reduction is often debated . One theory is that this is the outcome of the trickle-down impact of the record growth witnessed in the first decade of the new millennium. This growth, though, has not been accompanied by a commensurate rise in employment, implying that its benefits have not really trickled down. Still, the growth did result in higher tax revenue, enabling the government to fund a large social sector spending programme. Alternative theory viewed that these programmes, which included schemes such as the rural job guarantee one, played a significant part in reducing India's poverty levels.

The two theories, in some way, mirror the ongoing debate between Professor Amartya Sen and economist Jagdish Bhagwati. While Sen makes a case for integrating development expenditure with growth to combat poverty, Bhagwati argues that rapid growth should be the priority, with the resulting trickle-down taking care of the under-privileged.

Poverty rate map of India by prevalence in 2012, among its States and Union Territories.



Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org>

Although the Indian economy has grown steadily over the last two decades, its growth has been uneven when comparing social groups, economic groups, geographic regions, and rural and urban areas. Between 1999 and 2008, the annualised growth rates for Gujarat, Haryana, or Delhi were much higher than for Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, or Madhya Pradesh. Even after more than 50 years of independence India still has the world's largest poor person in a single country. They live on less than \$1.25 / day. What is more shocking that poverty level is not uniform across India? Poverty rates in rural Orissa (43%) and rural Bihar (41%) are among the world's most extreme. On the map of poverty in India, the poorest areas are in parts of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal.

## Relationship between Education and Poverty

It has been rightly said that the best way to cure poverty is education and training. More educated a person is, greater is his capability to do with existing resources and greater is his capability to generate new resources and thus faster will be the economic development of India. This is because Human resource development helps in:

1. Better use of capital goods
2. Better use of improved knowledge and
3. Modernization of attitudes.

According to Galbraith - “We now get the larger part of our industrial growth not from more capital investment but from investment in men and improvements brought about by improvement men”. Economists are of the view that it is the lack of investment in human capital that has been responsible for slow growth of LDCs.

The vicious circle of poverty can be broken only by investment in man. Neighbouring countries in Asia that have combined pro-growth development policies with investments in the health and education of their people have seen economic growth and poverty reduction. India, however, has not accorded sufficiently high priority to the education of the poor and 33 million of its 105 million 6-to-10-years-olds are not in school. These youngsters are not offered the opportunity to develop the skills needed for upward mobility. Along with the neglect of primary education goes that of gender discrimination, which condemns a much greater proportion of girls and women to illiteracy and to ill-health. Reducing the gender inequality among the poor requires a determined effort to focus on improved health care for women, maternal health care in particular, combined with basic education. India's health system needs to put a new emphasis on basic care. Doing so will improve not only the life span and well-being of poor women and their ability to determine what family size they want, but it will also contribute to the economic health of their families, and consequently of India's society. And since poverty is not the only source of India's gender disparities, a determined government effort to eradicate such disparities is urgently needed. One of the objectives of UN Millennium Declaration for 2015 is to achieve universal completion of primary schooling and achieve gender equality in access to education.

**Incentives and Regulatory Framework.** During the last few decades, India's inward-looking and public sector driven industrialization strategy led to rates of growth and poverty reduction far more modestly than those witnessed elsewhere in the world, particularly in South East Asia. The economy has responded well to the reforms, and the government has made it an explicit objective to accelerate the development of the country's human resources. The last five years have shown the rates of growth that India could achieve with market oriented development policies and a better integration with the world economy. There is much that remains to be done to sustain this growth. Reforms are particularly needed to reduce the country's persistently high fiscal deficits, overcome its tremendous infrastructure problems, improve the

efficiency of its financial system, and liberalize parts of the economy that remain heavily regulated — such as agriculture, small scale industry and urban land markets. By maintaining its commitment to economic liberalization, and redirecting towards infrastructure, health, and education the large resources now absorbed by subsidies inter-alia for power, irrigation, and fertilizers, India can give its long battle to reduce poverty a new impetus.

## **Conclusion**

The real challenge is to establish a development strategy for reducing poverty which lies in the interaction between distribution and growth and not in the relation between poverty and growth on one hand; and poverty and inequality on the other; which are essentially arithmetic. It is evident from various sources that worsening of distribution tends to increase poverty. Economic reforms, changes in industrial policy and better utilization of available resources are expected to reduce the problem of unemployment and poverty that results from them. Generation of employment opportunities and equality in income distribution are two factors that are of utmost importance to deal with the problem of poverty and unemployment.

Thus, growth is essential for (income) poverty reduction under the assumption that the distribution of income remains more or less constant.

There is little evidence that anti-poverty programs have yielded gains in the living standards of the poor commensurate with the significant resources that the country allocates to such programs. Many recipients of their benefits are widely recognized as amongst the poor. At the same time, many of the poorest people do not use these programs while many of the non-poor benefit from them. There is a consensus that public works programs have been among the most successful attempts at reaching the poor. India therefore urgently needs to formulate an anti-poverty strategy that is fiscally sustainable and more finely targeted to those who truly cannot benefit from the opportunities offered by growth. To increase their cost effectiveness and extend their outreach to the very poor, safety nets need to be targeted to those who either cannot participate in the growth process or face continuing exposure to risks, which are outside of their control. Rural households are largely uninsured against agricultural yield shocks, for example. Effective safety nets that insure the rural poor against income fluctuations — such as public works programs — are essential in overcoming an important market failure.

Every kind of government expenditure is justified in the name of poor no matter whether the expenditure is on atomic energy, entertainment of VIPs, amusement park - which has no direct relevance to poverty, but everything is justified in the name of poverty eradication. It is like a theft of funds from consolidated fund of nation drawn in the name of poor. The non commitment to poverty eradication process caused the issues of poverty unsolved. The poverty as a topic of research is no more appealing to the academicians. If definition of poverty do not help in eradication of poverty through sound social security, then it is better not to define it as it does more harm to poor than any good to them. Slogan for reduction of Poverty should not be “Garibi Hatao” but “Amiri Hatao”.

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# Spiritual Media for Social Change

*Sudhir K. Rinten*

## **Abstract**

*Indian Media coverage is dealt in materialistic perspective due to various reasons. Content, coverage style, presentation and portrayal all are affected by contemporary 'peg' of pulling audience in to the content. Media ignores humanitarian approach in different walk of media activities. They gather and present information without keeping in mind the ethico-legal and socio-cultural aspects of affected parties. 'Journalistic sense' and 'news value' are examined on the basis of materialistic approach of media management. Requisite of the content is superseded by wow factor of the content. In such an environment spiritual media and professionals with spiritual understanding may provide a solution to the problem. This paper suggests the spiritual media as only alternative.*

**Keywords:** *Media, Spiritual, Ethics, Karmyoga*

Media is not merely a source of information; it also functions to regulate the society in their socio-cultural and behavioural aspects. It helps the society in achieving material growth in terms of awareness related to various economic indicators. From their understanding of daily consumption to social practices, it has affected the human life to a great extent. It has an impact on socio-cultural practices and also on the thinking of the society regarding the same practices. With such an ability to influence society, media is affecting the 'mood' and 'minds' of humans as per their perceptions and reflections. With contemporary interventions in human life, media have played a vital role in the overall development of the human race, but at the same time, it has been

dividing us through opaque boundaries of ethnicity, religion, class etc. This process is not compatible with the basic nature of human being that is being humane.

With such a great power, media should drive through the urge of social innovations that leads societies to social change towards the acceptance of various practices, values and culture. When media professionals fail in doing so, it affects the life of its consumers adversely. Its impact on the human thinking, behaviour and perception has already been established by various researches. Obviously, the young minds are more vulnerable to such irresponsible communication behaviour. Media's impact on young minds is disrupting them, an 11-year-old child of class sixth, committed suicide due to such negligence by advertisers. As promised by the advertiser, the health supplement failed to increase his height as a result of which, the child succumbed to the stress and trauma. After having absolutely no progress, the disappointed child decided to hang himself.

Here arises a question, what kind of social innovations and social change will be brought to us through this materialistic perspective of media? How will it sustain humanity? Do we have any option to reject the materialistic growth model?

According to Sharon Janis, "the spiritual way is to see beyond mere outer appearances and the five senses to an intuitive perception of the causes, behind outer conditions. Someone with a spiritual approach may change and uplift their world by first transforming and improving his or her own vision". Contemporary media is concentrating on 'Report Gathering Process' which is an outcome of the materialistic approach where suitability and acceptability are much more important than the ethical coefficient. In this phenomenon 'impact', 'circumstances', 'requisite' and 'news value' of the content are ignored by content manufacturers. Nowadays, the materialistic coefficient of the news report might be at some height but the spiritual coefficient of news is missing, which leads to insensitive, immoral and biased reporting rather than a holistic presentation of news.

If communication industry encapsulates, envisages and calls for the inculcation of human values which are common and universally exposed in precepts of all beliefs, it can be considered as spiritual communication. Even, different schools of communication admitted norms and values as indicated in

'Gita' long back. Communication Spirituality is broad and universal in its approach, application, and adoption beyond the narrow confines of caste, creed, community, color, language, sect, sex, nationalism, regionalism, race and religion.

It stands firmly on the pillars of 'Duties' & 'Responsibilities'; as recited in KARMYOGA of The Gita. So, promoting spirituality in communication will help us nurturing practical wisdom and universal values among masses. It will empower people and endow them with peace, stability; creativity etc. Media is a teacher, philosopher, guide and mood manager. It affects the process of human development through solidarity and cooperation amidst diversity. The importance of the media in the human life is supported by different researches along with its effect on the socio-cultural & financial environment. It is also visible in different news that society is in a dearth of communication message for their peace and satisfaction. The issue of spiritual coverage gets importance over quick news flow.

In my opinion the first step in spirituality starts with ethics, which does not simply ask how to live well, it asks how we should live well ethically, that is, in goodness and in cordial manner with each other, a task that may require us to forego personal benefits, to carry out duties or to endure persecution. Ethical reasoning is about how people interpret, balance and modify their principles in light of new facts, new technology, and new social conditions (Ward, 2007). Journalism ethics is essentially a practical activity (Black J & Barney, 2004) which leads to Truth, Fairness & Objectivity. The same has been sketched in Gita in form of

**Na Karmanamnarabhyan Naishkarmyah Purushoshrte  
Na Cha Sannyasanadev Sidhim Samadhigachhati.**

*(Verse 4 Chapter -3)*

A person can never achieve freedom from reactions to activities without first performing prescribed Vedic duties; neither can perfection be attained by renouncing them as well.

In his book Utilitarianism and other essays (2004), J S Mill argued that ethical actions are those that generate the 'greatest good for the greatest number of people' on other hand the consequentialist theory holds that the ethical value about bad & good of an action should be judged on its consequences. Action themselves lack inherent value but can be appraised on the basis of their

outcome. In BHAGWAD GITA the God himself describing the fact to Arjuna :

**Yasitvaindriyani Mansaa Niyamyarbhate Arjun  
Karmendriyaih Karmyogamsakth Sa Vishishyate**

*(Verse 7 Chapter -3)*

But anyone who regulates the senses by the mind, begins the science of uniting the individual consciousness with the ultimate consciousness by the action of the working sense organs without desire for results, he is superior.

**Yagyarthatkarmanoanyatr Lokoayam Karmbandhanah  
Tadartham Karm Kaunteya Muktsangah Samacharah**

*(Verse 9 Chapter -3)*

This whole world is bound by action except for actions sacrificed unto the supreme lord; being free from attachment, perfectly engage in action for the purpose of sacrifice.

**Tasmaadasaktah Satatam Kaaryam Karma Samachara  
Asakto Hyaacharankarma Paramaapnoti Puurushah**

*(Verse 19 Chapter -3)*

You must always fulfill all your obligatory duties without attachment. By performing actions without attachment, one attains the Highest.

Undoubtedly, the supreme lord of media professionals is neither the organization nor the market forces, it is the audience. The act or KARMA should be in accordance with the welfare of the masses; surprisingly this coefficient is missing in the coverage of contemporary Indian media. Media, in the past few years, have overstepped the bounds of ethical and responsible behaviour. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Media have misused its power and have compromised with the morals for the sake of sensationalism. One of the cases that must be discussed here, in reference to the above mentioned statement would be of a young woman named 'Gudiya'. She belonged to a poor family in Meerut and was married to a soldier, who had been sent to fight in Kargil after the wedding. For five years, the family had no clue of Arif, Gudiya's husband's whereabouts. It was thus presumed that he would not return and Gudiya got married to someone else. When she was eight months pregnant, Arif returned. The case caught media's attention and after a series of speculations, debates and trials by media, Gudiya was under immense pressure and she decided to remarry her first husband. After her second pregnancy, Gudiya fell ill and died of septicemia. But Gudiya's story was no

more important to the Media because they could not 'sell' it to the audience.

The Aarushi Murder Case would always be the greatest example of gross violations of privacy, dignity and ethics. After the murder of 14-year-old Aarushi Talwar and the family's domestic help Hemraj, the case became the only important coverage for the Indian media. From objectionable allegations to acts of presumption and imagination, media did all that it could to tarnish the image of not only the parents but also the deceased souls. With media going overboard with the coverage of the murder case, the Supreme Court on August 6, 2008 had to step in to criticize media for its actions. Not only then but even in May 2008, during the hearing of a case related to corruption in Judiciary, it talked about the damage that had been done to the Talwar couple after excessive and unnecessary media coverage.

Media has terribly failed in working for social welfare. The same argument of fulfilling the duties along with considering the betterment of society is supported in UTILITARIANISM, where they advocate that an action should have positive consequences for as many people as possible.

In his theories of SARVODAYA, Mahatma Gandhi too supported the cause and its impact on all, not only on the majority. Gita too has stressed on the same track of larger acceptance of its outcomes but it holds that the karma should be more important and fair without any obligation of outcome or perspective.

**Na Me Parthasti Kartavyam Trshu Lokeshu Kinchan  
Nanvaptmavptvyavatavyam Vart Ev Cha Karmani**

*(Verse 22Chapter -3)*

O son of Partha, there is no work prescribed for me within all the three planetary systems. Nor am I in want of anything, nor have I need to obtain anything--and yet I am engaged in work.

The basic news aesthetics lies in Facts, Balance & Trustworthiness. Sharon Beder (2004) says in news reporting, credibility is everything and it is easy to lose and difficult to get back. Any deviation in Fact & Balance will affect credibility. So it is important for media professionals to be in line with. Trends show that the coverage of media industry is much more inclined towards attention-grabbing formulae. Sports, Entertainment and Crime are major content which affects audiences negatively. In a spiritual way of coverage will be attentive enough about its impact and effects. In Gita, God, himself expressed that larger public will follow the same tact which will be shown by

him. What Media is reflecting is not just information but also the path to be traveled upon. Obviously, exposure of media is playing a vital role in describing the life, society and the system. Media is affecting as much as a teacher, motivator or philosopher in an individual's life. If the media is not ethical and spiritual, the responsibility of media will not be fulfilled. That is why in Gita it has been mentioned that:

**Yadi Hahyam Na Varteyam Jatu Karmanyatandritah  
Mam Vatmarnuvtarnte Manushyah Parth Sarvashah**

*(Verse 23Chapter -3)*

For, if I did not engage in work, O Partha, certainly all humans would follow my path.

**Utsideyurime Lokaa N Kuryan Karm Chedahm  
Sangkarasy Cha Karta Syamupahnyamimah Prajah**

*(Verse 24Chapter -3)*

If I should cease to work, then all these worlds would be put to destruction. I would also be the cause of creating unwanted population, and I would thereby destroy the peace of all sentient beings.

**Na Budhibhedan Janyedgyann Karmsanginamam  
Joshyetasarvkarmani Vidwanyuktah Samacharan**

*(Verse 26Chapter -3)*

Let not the wise disrupt the minds of the ignorant that are attached to furtive action, they should not be encouraged to refrain from work, but to engage in work in the spirit of devotion.

Establishments and regulators of media industry should sense such spiritual vibes in all efforts of media task. Their negligence towards their 'Karmyoga' may affect society at large. Their spiritual efforts will show the path to success, joy and peace.

Kant also feels that 'it is the intention behind an action that rendered it ethical or unethical. Only the positive intention may give a positive output'. He suggests three basic formulae to operate in communication phenomenon

1. Motivation by principles
2. Treat people as an end in themselves &
3. Decisive

Contemporary Media is far behind and depicting stories on the basis of availability of resources & content. In the spiritual pattern of media, all those aspects suggested by Kant can be addressed without any deviation of socio-economic constraints.

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# Status of the Tribal Women in Assam

*Kingaule Newme*

## **Abstract**

*In the tribal society, customary laws and practices have acted as the biggest stumbling block for empowering women. Zeme Naga women in Assam do not enjoy equal political and social status with men. Women perform diverse roles in the society. Traditionally, women had four fold role to play such as a daughter, wife, housewife and a mother. From the childhood women are taught to believe that they are inferior to men in every sphere of life. Traditions and religion have a strong influence on women in guiding their lives from birth to death. The Zeme follow the Patriarchal system of family, who holds the absolute power as well the full responsibilities for protection and looking after the welfare of all dependents and the maintenance of his family. The descendant is always traced down from the male members only and the supremacy of male had been the unquestioned norm of social governance since the ancient times. After the death of the father, the head of the family is taken over by the eldest son of the family. Therefore after the first child, the birth of a son is preferred and the family with more sons are respected by the people whereas the family with many daughters are regarded to be the end of the generation of that family. This paper tries brings out the different position of a women in the Zeme Naga society.*

**Key words:** *Women position, Zeme Naga, Assam*

The Zeme are an indigenous group of people belonging to Mongoloid race and they are one of the sub-groups of the greater Naga community. They are found in Nagaland, Manipur and Assam in the district of Dima Hasao (North Cachar

Hills). Although they speak different dialects, the Zeme, Liangmai, Rongmei and Puimai belong to one community Zeliangrong as they share common ethnic origin, culture, social structure, linguistic roots etc. (NriameNakaulang, 2012).

### **Social Status of Zeme Woman**

In the Zeme society, customary laws and practices have acted as the biggest stumbling block for empowering a women. Zeme Naga women in Assam do not enjoy equal political and social status with men. Women perform diverse roles in the society. Traditionally Zeme women had four fold role to play such as a daughter, wife, housewife and a mother. From the childhood a women is taught to believe that they are inferior to men in every sphere of life. Traditions and religion have a strong influence on women in guiding their lives from birth to death. In the Zeme society, the birth of both male and female is welcomed by the family but they prefer first child to be a girl for a reason. First, she can help her mother in the household works and secondly she can look after the younger ones like a babysitter. The Zeme follow the Patriarchal system of family, who holds the absolute power as well the full responsibilities for protection and looking after the welfare of all dependents and the maintenance of his family. The descendant is always traced down from the male members only and the supremacy of male had been the unquestioned norm of social governance since the ancient times. After the death of the father, the head of the family is taken over by the eldest son of the family. Therefore after the first child, the birth of a son is preferred and the family with more sons are respected by the people whereas the family with many daughters are regarded to be the end of the generation of that family.

Since childhood woman is taught to be obedient, quite, submissive and work hard and endure hardships without any complain to be called as a real girl. They were not allowed to argue or even fight for their rights but to surrender in every situation. If they do so they are considered as a child not discipline by the parents. A girl child started sacrificing when they are as small as 4 to 5 years of age. They carry water, look after the young ones, do the household works, cutting firewood etc. As they grow bigger they started going to field for cultivation with the parents. In reality woman are taken for granted to be the helper where the family gets utmost advantages. From childhood she is trained and expected to acquire the character of self-denial and shape up her femininity which is very important for the girl. She has to act as a constant helper and a companion to the mother.

Marriage marks the second major transition in a woman's life. Social negotiation for marriage begins with parental interactions. The boy's parents either send proposal to the girl's parents which are the usual practice. Though a girl is always consulted before selection of a groom, she does not have complete freedom in this regard. The choice of groom is closely controlled by the parents and close relatives. The customary practice of wedding begins as the process of the groom's party consisting of his parents, relatives and friends arrive at the bride's house. Usually the party comes a day in advance. At night, the bride price (*Hemipeibe*) is settled through mutual negotiation. The boy's party enquires from the girl's parents if they would like to take '*Pumsanggei*' (virginity price). The matter is confirmed after consulting the bride. Virginity is a social value. Therefore, it is prestigious for the parents to take its price.

A Zeme girl starts weaving cloths from the day of her first thought of getting married. On her loom she captures her dream in the form of a special cloth '*Paiso*' for her would be groom. *Paiso* means a double shawl which will be weaved specially by the bride and will be given to the groom on the wedding day. The groom dresses up on *Paiso* on the wedding day. Though it is not counted as dowry, but the bride who did not carry much of the shawls are talked about by the groom's villagers and is looked down by them.

Once a girl is married, her ties to the natal family become weak. She has to find her place in the new family, and establish her status in the new role of a wife, daughter-in-law and mother. She looks after her husband's family, performs household and field works. She has to bring about a shift in her loyalties and habits, in order to adjust and get completely absorbed in her new family. Women after her marriage are expected to be under the guardianship of her husband. Customary and moral values demand that she treats her husband as master and head of the family. She should possess qualities like fidelity, faithfulness, devoted, loving, generous and kind-hearted. She is expected to be submissive, humble and quiet at every place of public gatherings or any functions. All her contribution and charity works are for the welfare her family. What she should think first is not about her life but her husband and the family. She compromises or sacrifices what she likes to do. Her likes and dislikes are never asked.

Women are believed to be in a delicate condition during menstrual periods and is not good for them to do hard work. However girls continue to work in the fields and home during menstruation. Women feel ashamed if others notice

that they are menstruating. Thus they live in a world of self-denial and self-restraint, continuing to act normal on all days, despite the pain and weakness they go through those periods. Because of her menstrual cycle they were considered bad men to many of men stuff. For instance, they are not allowed to touch their hunting tool like spear, dao, rifle etc. considering unlucky. Divorce is permissible, but the case is rare in the community. Divorce may be granted if the witnesses and the elders give their approval and on the grounds of breaches of commitment by either party such as in case of adultery, ill treatment etc. Both the divorcee is allowed to re-marry. In case of divorce from the wife, bride price is to be returned to the husband parents.

Death is a natural process from which no one can escape. But if a pregnant women dies during the labour or die unable to give birth are considered as unnatural and are not given normal death burial but leave her in the house and the family will lock and abandon the house. They believe that if she was not left like that and abandon the house their descendants will inherit that kind of problem in near future which was regarded as bad disease.

### **Woman and Inheritance**

Being the patriarchal society, the Zemes inheritance of property is the right of the male child only. They not only enjoy the authority power but inheritance also. The ancestral property is divided equally among the sons. Daughters do not inherit the ancestral land and other immovable property. However, they can inherit movable properties such as their mother's ornaments and weaving tools, livestock, agricultural implements, kitchen appliances, clothes and ornaments. Thus, we notice an unequal distribution of ancestral property, which imposes further subjugation of women and makes it impossible for women to attain economic independence, which is the first step towards improving their social status. Women remain insecure both in their natal and conjugal homes. We find gender-based stratification. Resources are unequally distributed between women and men. Women, though inactive in social activities, they are no less important in the household activities. In Zeme society, a widow has no right over her children if she goes back to her father's home. If a man divorces his wife, all the common living properties will be divided. But all the children both boys and girls will belong to the husband. The bride price will be repaid back in full. But if the wife divorces her husband, she gets nothing; she has to return to her parents empty handed.

## Political Status of a Woman

Being the patriarchal society, age-old customary laws and practices always excuse to exclude women in all spheres. Women do not enjoy equal social and political status as compared to men. Being under such law since time immemorial, the women's position and power in the society have imbibed in them for long that even after so many social changes taking place in the society they live in, most of them are still chained by those laws.

The Zeme village leadership is virtually in the hand of *Pedeipeu* (landowner) who is assisted by the village priest (*Tingkupau*) and elders of the village. Newme (2010) writes that in every village there is a traditional village council called 'KeloSamkahekibe' comprising of all adult male members of the village. Despite the presence of educated women in the present times, women are not selected to be the executive member of the Village Council or Zeme Council. They are taken just as the member. Whether they come to a meeting of the Council or not are not given importance, which is the reason of the less participation of women in village council or any decision making body. The women too feel inferior to stand up and speak out in the public what they wanted to though they feel like. It is not that they are not allowed to speak but final decision is always taken by the male. Through the interview it reveals that few women who could speak out in the Council also will speak out what they thought of on any issue but they end up saying that the final decision is yours (i.e male members) which means that their voice may be accepted or rejected by the male members.

Till today there were only two women candidate among the Zeme who contested in the election of District Council i.e MAC (Member of Autonomous District Council). According to one candidate age 46, she decided to join politics because she was not satisfied with the work of the Zeme(male) politicians whom the public have selected. She being the social worker earlier believes in herself that she could do better than the male politicians. But she also being a women have to experience the force to pull her down from her decision. She said that there were some who believe in her that she could do far more better than others but at the same time some have criticise her that she being a women is not fit to be a leader as women have a chicken heart. A woman is not fit to be a leader or to rule us etc. She said that she is like a peacock who wanted to show that she can do what other (male) politicians cannot do. She has a heart to develop the Zeme people living in Assam which is the main reason for her to join politics.

Another woman politician age 38 in her in-depth interview revealed that she had never thought that she herself will become a politician though she involved herself in social works. She joined the party and work for the party with a hope of getting job. Despite her dedication and hard work she was never given what she had asked for i.e a small job. The political leader helps only those whom they favour overlooking what she had done. With all the difficulties she faced, she realized that she herself should join and contest and help many people who had been like her. When she join the politics she learn more about it and realized however educated you have been, political leader who may not be educated much have the same power and that is why she stood up and contest against men politician. She also realized that in order to get equal status with men, women have to really get good education and know about their rights. She said that in the areas where she contested, she found women voters more than men. They were approximately 80% when men are 60% (approx). Politician as a woman, have to work more harder than men as it has been always men all those years so to convince and change the people the way they look at women have to be told in a convincing way is what she commented. She is confident that if the public supports her then she could bring more development in the area because as women she knows every little thing which is overlooked by many men.

Although there were women (though few) stepping out to join politics, they get less support due to the male dominion in the Zeme society. They have stood up to contest but they could not win which shows that women are not favoured in politics or decision making body. In government sector, they may be trying to give equal status but when it comes to the social life like marriage decision, land, village administration, family, religious activities etc. women are powerless. In the recent times, Zeme women started enrolling themselves as members of political parties and working for it though the numbers are still very few. Some opined that if women stand up and give a wise suggestion, men may accept to what she say, but the society norms and system have made the women lack confidence in herself and dependent on men.

### **Economic Status of Zeme Woman**

In the olden days, since the head-hunting practice was there, the protection of the village and the people from enemies was the first priority of men. Therefore it was the women who did all the cultivation in the fields. Men do the heavier works like hunting, building house, fishing etc. but all the works that a woman

does have more economic value. They cultivate the land, they carry, they pound the rice, cook, they carry water and firewood, spin, dye and then weave the clothes for the family use. It is the women who do all the works to raise the family and give the daily food.

In earlier times, men never do the household works or cultivate the land for a reason of giving safety and protection. But at this age, when there was no more headhunting or war, the womenfolk still continue to do all the duties and responsibilities they perform before but on the other side the men folk stay away from domestic works and have more leisure time which a women hardly get to enjoy tied with all domestic works. Since they have no more duty to guard the village or protect the family from enemies men got more leisure time. They pass their time gossiping and drinking rice beer which was again prepared and served by women like a waitress.

Women gets up early in the morning and goes to fetch water from a far stream, she returns home, pounds the rice and cook food, feed their pig or chicken etc. and get ready to go to their field with a lunch pack. After a hard day work she returns home and again cook for the family again then retire to bed. She wakes up before anyone gets up and sleeps when everyone asleep. A woman who wakes up late is talked about by the villager as lazy and considered not to be feminine which is a shame for them. If a man wakes up late, the reason given to them is that they are men, so it can be. A men look up to women for their wife not based on their beauty but by their skill and hard work in all work they perform. Women due to her full participation in household economic activities are regarded as important asset. Therefore when a man marries a girl they have to pay a bride price as a compensation to the girl's parents.

Till today a women play & a very important role for the economic development of the family. They fully involve in domestic affairs. Nowadays, women have stepped up to take care of the activity outside the house as well. Women handle all the household tasks, irrespective of traditionally ascribed gender roles. Women have started doing small business or selling the vegetables for helping the family economically which provides not only for daily food but for their children education too. They mainly cultivate paddy, yam, chilly, wheat, maize, beans, ginger, brinjal etc. In the earlier days the people produce only for their consumption but these days we can see women working harder to produce more for sell to meet the economic needs. We also can see women buying the village produced vegetables with a cheaper price and selling again with little

profit. Spinning and weaving were significant industry among the Zeme. But in recent years, mill made yarn by virtue of its easy availability and cheapness, is substituting the thread spun locally. Indigenous spinning is less practiced but weaving however continues to be popular.

### **Religious Status of a Woman**

Women have no place in the religious activities. They are considered unclean due to the menstrual cycle she undergoes every month. All the religious activities are performed by the male members of the community. She cannot even go to the temple during her menstrual period. Coming of Christianity bring some changes like they could pray or attend church during their cycle but they have no power or authority in the church functioning or activities. Women may study a theology but they cannot become a pastor or church leader. Women were not given to share the sermon in the Church except in their own fellowship. They were given only for Bible reading but not more than that. According to some women, a woman is like a housewife even in the church. They have no say over the bigger issues except to nod down to what men decided. In the present times everyone realised the importance of women role in every sphere of life but they are not given equal status in every area.

### **Educational Status of Zeme Woman**

In olden days morung is the only social institution where the youth learn the spirit of community living, moral values, social etiquettes, other skill like weaving, spinning etc. But with the introduction of modern education, the morung is not as active as in earlier days. Parents started sending their children especially the boys to school. But parents, mostly in rural areas fail to see why their daughters must be educated, as for her training in household chores is considered important. Even in terms of investment, parents find it more reasonable to spend on sons' education than the daughters as the daughters will become the part of husband family after their marriage. They considered her to be the others property saying that bringing up the girl is like taking care of other pig(which is to be taken away some day). Although they are sent to schools, girls and young women are expected to manage both educational and domestic responsibilities which often results in poor academic performance and early drop-outs from educational institutions. The Zeme believe that the daughters are not their real children but they are the care taker before they find their real home.

At present time, in a village women education is also encourage and ask the parents to sent them to school but when it comes to family level it is not so practical. Family wanted to enjoy the girl's service before they go away from their house. If the girl complete the education level i.e LP available in their village, the parents will no longer sent them out for higher education, even to M.E or High School. Thus they become the baby sitter while they are small and as they grow bigger, they join in all the works of family equally with her mother and become like a small mother.

Now a days, parents are also becoming a bit wiser than earlier days. They sent their children in better institution and we could also see many small girls going to school. But till today girls who are doing higher education and studying the professional course are still countable among the Zemes in Assam. If the family is facing financial problem, and one has to sacrifice from doing higher studies, the parents will request their daughter to give up but never the son. Till today the parents in the Zeme society give more preference to boy's education than girl. They give more important to the gender than the brain.

### **Conclusions**

The Zeme Society has undergone many changes. They have entered into modern era. But till today the Zeme society have not developed much. Some opined that when men suppress women from exercising their rights, problem and conflict starts in the family. Men in the Zeme society did not treat their wife as a servant but still they expect them to do the work according to them, as if they are paid for their daily work. When comes to the family matters, a women have no say, if they wish and say anything they will asked them to keep quiet and say that their voice have no weight. Many men say that they have to do what they were ask to do not interfering in other things. If men and women have same freedom and equal rights and respect each other there will be peace and development is what few women suggested. Therefore, women can play a very important role in development of the society. Once society recognise the importance of women and give them equal status, and empower women and encourage women education, then ultimately it will lead to the development of the whole society. An active grassroots leadership is also emerging slowly among the women. If properly harnessed, this can be very effective and catalytic agent for transforming the social conditions of women as well as the community. Women in the rural area do not even know their rights and so

never know it was violated. They just think that they are made to be in this or that way and just accepted their condition. Awareness programme on gender equality and women rights and also girl's education is the need of the hour in the Zeme society residing in Assam. Many suggested that women education can only do away with the gender inequality.

(Data is collected through interview, review of literature, informal interaction and personal observation)

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# Digital Activism in India: A Study on Facebook

*Rachita Kauldhar*

## **Abstract**

*Ever since the internet has penetrated in our society, people have been using it in many ways. One of such use of the Internet, that has grown rapidly within the last decade, is the use of internet for mass mobilization or activism. A Digital Activism campaign is "an organised public effort, making collective claims on a target authority, in which civic initiators, or supporters use digital media to accomplish their cause". Internet can be used in a variety of ways to create activism, such as by e-mailing petitions perusing people to join the campaigns, making social groups, creating awareness about the issue or the cause on the internet, use of hashtags and other ways. This study analysis the various types of digital activism on current issues appearing on the Facebook. For this purpose content analysis is being adopted as a research methodology with an objective to analyse the occurrences, types and functions of digital activism in India. Also, the study identified the nature and functions of the posts and comments on digital activism issues on Facebook. The result reveals that 'Slacktivism' is the most popular form of digital activism on Facebook in India.*

**Keywords:** *Digital Activism, Facebook, Campaigns, Slacktivism, Hashtags.*

## **Introduction**

Activism' is the actions of a group of like-minded individuals coming together to change the status quo, advocating for a cause, whether local or global, and whether progressive or not (Cammaerts, 2007; Kahn and Kellner, 2004;

Lomicky and Hogg, 2010). Whether a long-term social movement or an outburst of action, successful mobilizations depend on the degree of a group's common interests and shared identity, its available resources, its political power, its opportunities and threats, and the level of governmental repression (Tilly, 1978).

In this Digital Era, access to and familiarity with technology have become an important resource for a successful movement (Rolfe, 2005). In India Against Corruption, what started as a massive protest organized via Facebook around the Lokpal bill issue has evolved into a more general pro-justice and anti-violence movement in the country. And since then, the trend has been set to create a Facebook page for any event that occurs or that is going to happen in the future. Activism and mobilization on Internet have become much of a fashion, with events lashed upon in the media.

The advent of social media has created more avenues for advocacy and activist groups, such as civil rights organizations, to disseminate messages that engage their allies online in encouraging them to effect social and political change, that could have a detrimental impact on the supporters of those organizations. These messages also can outline specific actions to undertake that ensure that the issues are addressed tactfully, thoughtfully, and thoroughly. Facebook and Twitter allow these organizations to communicate their messages directly to their publics across platforms in an uncontrolled environment.

Internet activism, is the use of electronic communication technologies such as social media, e-mail, and podcasts for various forms of activism to enable faster communication by citizen movements and the delivery of local information to a large audience. Internet technologies are used for cause-related fundraising, community building, lobbying, and organizing. A digital activism campaign is "an organized public effort, making collective claims on a target authority, in which civic initiators or supporters use digital media."

When Nisha Susan launched, in 2009, the Pink Chaddi campaign, the 'ICT for Revolution'-buzz finally seemed to have reached India also. Phenomenally successful in terms of the attention it generated for the issue it sought to address, the campaign sought to protest in a humorous fashion against attacks on women pub-goers in Karnataka by Hindu right-wing elements. In only a matter of weeks, the Facebook group associated with the campaign – 'The Consortium of Pub-going, Loose and Forward Women' – gathered tens of thousands of members. Ultimately killed off when Susan's Facebook account

was cracked by opponents, the campaign was perhaps the singular most successful account of digital activism in India so far, and an impressive one by all measures.

This research paper studies the diverse content on types, functions and thematic frames of posts and comments made on Facebook on various digital activism issues through content analysis technique of media research, to gauge the impact of the content on netzines. Internet activism has had the effect of causing increased collective action among people, as found by Postmes and Brunsting (2002), who discovered a tendency among internet users to rely on internalized group memberships and social identities in order to achieve social involvement online.

### **The internet's impact on social movements**

Several scholars have in recent years applied social movement theory to studies of Internet-based grassroots campaigning. Bevington and Dixon (2005) ask whether social movement theory is relevant for the actors being studied and conclude: “we see a promising, emerging movement-relevant approach, one based on direct, dynamic engagement with the concerns and questions of movements themselves” (p. 203).

According to a 2009 survey by DigiActive, social network sites (SNS) are the most common entrance to online activism, despite the fact that SNS were not created with activism in mind (Brodock et al., 2009). Considering that much still must be learned about how the internet is impacting mobilization (Rolfe, 2005; Wojcieszak, 2009), this study is important for exploring what SNS, particularly Facebook, mean for social movements (Clever, 1998; Diani, 2000).

Scholars tend to view the internet's role in social movements as two-fold: the internet can facilitate traditional offline activism, enhancing a movement's existing repertoire by adding email campaigns, online petitions and even virtual sit-ins to activists' existing toolbox (Castells, 2001; Juris, 2005), or it actually can create new forms of activism and resistance (Cardoso and Pereira Neto, 2004; Rolfe, 2005; Van Laer and Van Aelst, 2009). When it comes to supporting traditional techniques of social movements, whether protests or signature drives, the internet, unlike any other medium, allows for fast, easy and cheap transnational action not limited by time, space or distance (Castells, 2001; Juris, 2005; Ribeiro, 1998).

Van de Donk et al. (2004) argued that the internet will complement, not replace, existing social movement tactics. In fact, it is the widely-lauded simplicity of online activism that scholars have suggested could undercut a movement's value, creating a half-hearted, meaningless activism, or 'slacktivism' (Morozov, 2009a; Van de Donk et al., 2004).

### **Categories of Activism**

Of the various types of activism, that happens over the internet, five popularly occurring activism are identified as- Hashtag Activism, Hacktivism, Slacktivism, Clicktivism, and Video Activism. All others were categorized into the section of Others.

- **Hashtag Activism:** Hashtag activism is the use of hashtags for activist purposes. Its use has been associated with the 2014 Chibok kidnapping, with hopes that it would help keep the story in the news and raise international attention.
- **Slacktivism:** A form of activism where the activism does not simply happen on the Internet, but also in the real world.
- **Clicktivism:** According to techopedia, clicktivism is a controversial form of digital activism. Opponents believe that clicktivism reduces activism to a mere mouse-click, yielding numbers with little or no real engagement or commitment to the cause.
- **Hacktivism:** In Digital activism, hacktivism is the subversive use of computers and computer networks to promote a political agenda.
- **Video activism:** Video activism is the use of videos, live streaming and other techniques for activism purposes. It is often employed by grassroots activists and to spread information

### **Specific Objectives of the study**

- To analyze the occurrences and functions of types of Digital Activism in India.
- To study the nature and functions of posts and comments on digital activism.

### **Methodology**

The researcher has adopted Content Analysis as a technique to analyse the

content artefacts for this study to understand and study various social issues used for internet activism. Content Analysis is described as the scientific study of content of communication.

Sampling process: A sample design is a definite plan for obtaining a sample from a given population (Kothari, 1988). Sample constitutes a certain portion of the population or universe.

For the research purpose, the researcher has chosen the activism issues for the time period of one year i.e. from February 2016 to February 2017. All the activism issues that were strolling on Facebook were observed, and were then classified into several categories. The researcher has chosen five major categories, which has contributed a lot to activism over Facebook. These categories are Gender Issues, Political Issues, Social Issues, Caste/ Class Issues and Others. For analysis purpose, the researcher took two recent activism cases for each issue, which makes a total of ten activism cases. These issues are identified as Bangalore molestation, Gurmehar Kaur, Rohit Vemula and Tina Dabi issue, Jaylalita, Modi/ Kejriwal issue, Jihad and Ramjas issue, Demonetization and Swatchh Bharat Abhiyan. These cases are selected on the basis of the Lottery method.

The Lottery Method is one of the methods of Simple Random Sampling method of Probability sampling. The main benefit of the simple random sample is that each member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen. Here, each member or item of the population at hand is assigned a unique number. The numbers are then thoroughly mixed, like if you put them in a bowl or jar and shook it. Then, without looking, the researcher selects n numbers.

For each of the activism case, the researcher selected two Facebook pages, on the basis of popularity i.e. the two pages which have the maximum number of likes. These pages have been analysed separately using a Code book. To know the 'type of content' provided in these pages, the researcher began to analyse the ten beginning posts of each page, in all 200 posts on these issues are analysed. These posts have been analysed on a variety of criteria such as likes, comments, shares, nature, function etc.

Further, ten beginning comments on each post have also been analysed making it 2000 comments, so that the researcher can gauge out the impact of each post, and through it, the impact of the activism on the people. The comments on each post came directly from the people, from various different

parts of the country.

**Coding:** In social science, coding is an analytical process in which data, in both quantitative form or qualitative is categorized to facilitate analysis. The SPSS software is used for coding purpose and the data is analysed on the basis of descriptive statistics (percentage basis).

**Unit of Analysis:** The unit of analysis is the major entity that is being analyzed in a study. It is the 'what' or 'who' that is being studied. In social science research, typical units of analysis include groups, social organizations and social artifacts. For this research, unit of analysis is categorized as internet activism issues, types of activism, functions of activism, nature of posts, etc.

**Variables of analysis:** A variable is any entity that can take on different values. Anything that can vary can be considered a variable. Variables aren't always 'quantitative' or numerical. It can be qualitative as well. For the purpose of this research, variables of analysis are identified for example for unit types of activism, variables are categorised as Hashtag activism, Hacktivism, Slacktivism, Clicktivism, Video activism and others

### Data Analysis

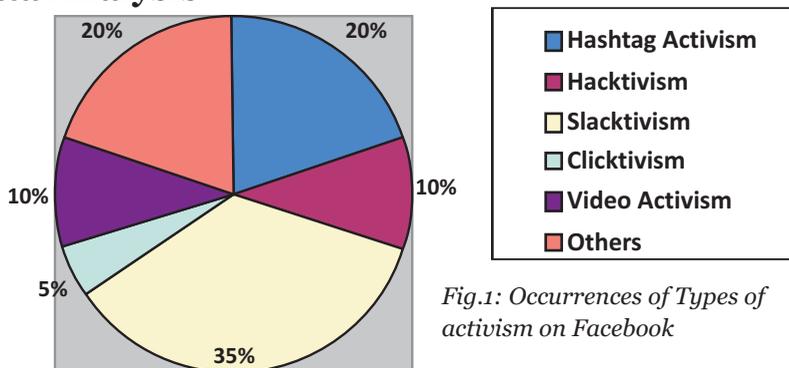


Fig.1: Occurrences of Types of activism on Facebook

Figure 1 depicts the occurrences of types of activism over Facebook in India. Slacktivism accounts for nearly 35 percent of the total, followed by Hashtag Activism and other types of activism i.e. 20 percent each. The other forms include Hacktivism and Video activism accounts for 10 percent respectively in each category. However, least occurred form of activism measured is clicktivism (5%). This indicates that most popularly used digital activism form in India is Slacktivism and least popular is Clicktivism.

**Table.1: Digital Activism Issues and its Functions**

DIGITAL ACTIVISM ISSUES	FUNCTIONS OF ACTIVISM		
	Awareness/ Advocacy	Organisation/ Mobilization	Action/ Reaction
GENDER ISSUES	93.3%	6.7%	0%
CASTE/CLASS ISSUES	17.6%	82.4%	0%
POLITICAL ISSUES	40.4%	59.6%	0%
SOCIAL ISSUES	0%	34.5%	65.5%
OTHER ISSUES	100%	0%	0%

Table 1, measures the types of activism and its functions. The three functions of Activism are classified (Sandor Vegh) as Awareness/ Advocacy, Organization/ Mobilization and Action/ Reaction. Among all, the most common function of a majority of the activism issues, is Awareness or Advocacy. A little more than half (55%) of the issues analyzed create awareness or advocacy among netzines. Although, the other 30 percent of the activism issues have the function of organization or mobilization of the people towards the cause. Only 15% of the total activism issues are raised for performing any action or as a reaction of something.

Various digital activism issues have various functions as shown in table 1. The major function of the gender issues is awareness with more than 93 percent incidences. The caste and class issues main function are organization/mobilization (82.4%) through digital activism. Political issues have main functions as awareness (40%) and Organization (60%). For social issues action/reaction becomes one the important function of digital activism. It is interesting to note that, other issues have focused entirely on awareness and advocacy on digital platform. This indicates that digital activism plays a major role in awareness and advocacy of various issues in India.

**Table.2: Depicts the Nature of the Posts on Digital Activism on Facebook**

<b>NATURE OF POSTS</b>	<b>PERCENT (%)</b>
<b>DEROGATORY</b>	1.5 %
<b>OFFENSIVE</b>	4.0 %
<b>ACCUSING</b>	14.0 %
<b>THREATENING</b>	6.5%
<b>CALM/ PLACID</b>	10.0%
<b>ANGRY</b>	15.0%
<b>FRIENDLY</b>	7.5%
<b>ILLUSTRATION</b>	18.0%
<b>APPEALING</b>	9.5%
<b>SARCASTIC</b>	9.0%
<b>OTHERS</b>	5.0%

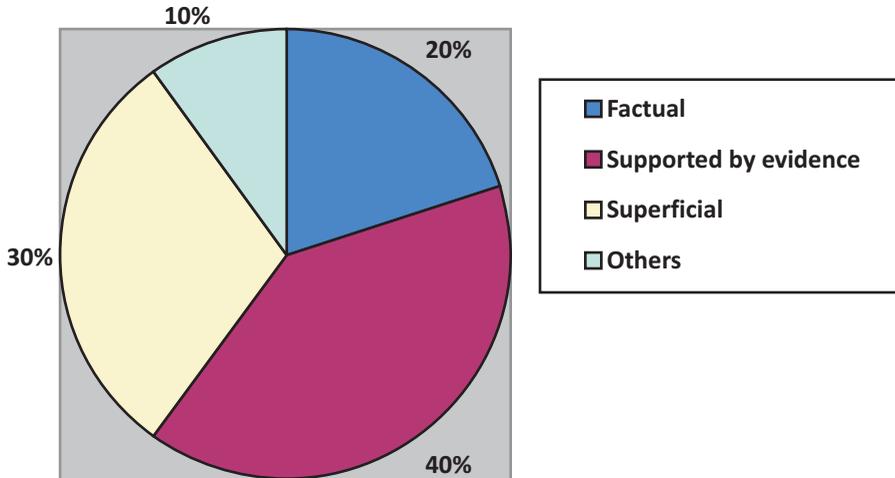
Table 2 depicts the nature of the posts of various digital activism issues on Facebook. The highly recognized nature of the post is illustrations (18%). This is followed by angry and accusing posts i.e. 15 percent and 14 percent respectively. Although, some of the posts, nearly 10 percent are either calm or appealing in nature. However, it becomes imperative to highlight that derogatory (1.5%), threatening (6.5%) and offensive (4%) nature is the least accounted nature of posts on the various digital activism issues on Facebook. This indicates that digital activism is not growing because of offensive or derogatory posts in India, but users are attracted to illustrations

**Table.3: Functions of the Post on Digital Activism on Facebook**

<b>FUNCTIONS OF POST</b>	<b>PERCENT (%)</b>
<b>CALL FOR ACTION</b>	12.0%
<b>CONVEY INFORMATION</b>	22.0%
<b>STATE AN OPINION</b>	20.0%
<b>REFERENCE PAST/ FUTURE PARTICIPATION IN A PROTEST</b>	7.5%

<b>SEEK INFORMATION</b>	3.5%
<b>SUPPORT MOVEMENT</b>	8.0%
<b>GENERAL ENCOURAGEMENT</b>	13.0%
<b>OTHERS</b>	14.0%

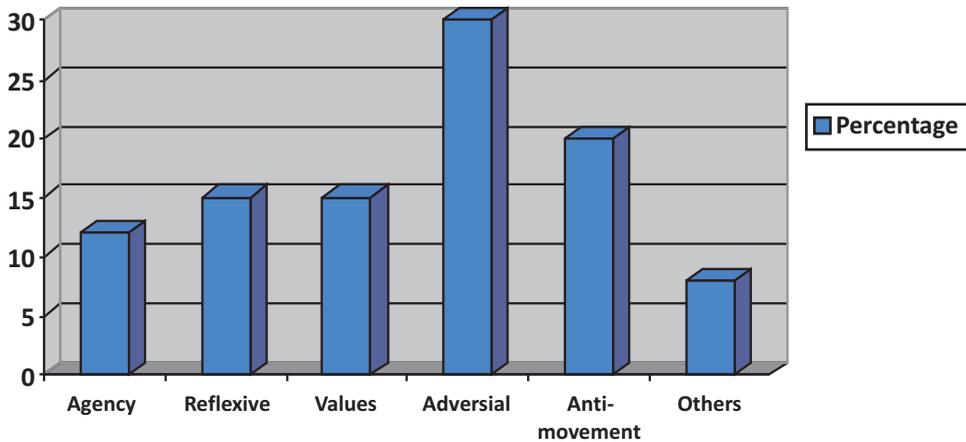
Table 3 measures the functions of the post, may differ from post to post within a page. These functions are classified as Call for action, Convey information, State an opinion, Reference past/future protest, Seek information, Support movement, General encouragement and Others. It is also not necessary that the functions of the post, are the same as the functions of the activism page. A little less than half of the posts are performing the function of conveying information (22%) and stating an opinion (20%). This is followed by other functions of the general encouragement (14%) and calling for an action (12%). However, it is surprising to note that these posts marginally seek information on the various digital activism issues and the focus is more on conveying the information and stating the opinions.



**Fig.2: The credibility of information provided in the Post on Digital Activism**

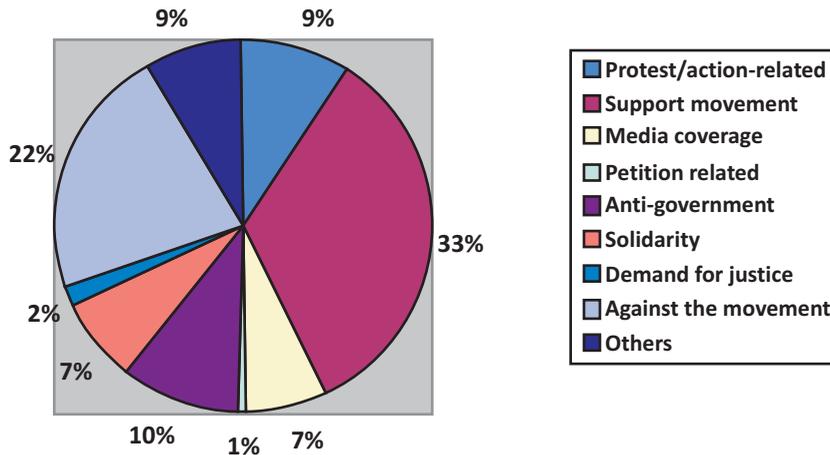
Figure 2 measure the credibility of information provided in the post on digital activism on Facebook. To analyze the credibility of the information provided in the post the categories are characterized as Factual, Supported by evidence,

Superficial, and Others. Of all, 40 percent of the information in the posts are supported by evidence such as videos, images, links etc., and around 20 percent of the information is factual based on statistical facts. A little more than one-fourth (30%) of the information provided in the post is superficial, with no evidence or justification of the information. Hence, impacting the reliability of the post on activism.



**Fig.3 Thematic frames in the comments**

Figure 3 shows the thematic frames in the comments of digital activism. The various thematic frames in the comments are identified as Agency (Action-related), Reflexive (media coverage, thoughtful), Values (Ideals, like justice), Adversarial (heroes versus villains), Anti- movement and Others. These frames help in determining the types of comments on the posts, and thus help in analyzing the impact of activism on the netzines in general, and the society at large. A little more than one-fourth (30%) of the issues have adversarial frames in the comments, and nearly 20 percent of the thematic frames are anti-movement. It is significant to highlight that the half of the thematic frames are adversarial or anti-movement in the entire comments. Although, values and reflexive frames are identified in 15 percent comments in each category. However, only 12 percent comment have action relation thematic frame.



**Fig.4 Depicts the Type of comments on Digital Activism Posts**

Figure 4 depicts the percentage of the type of comments on digital activism posts on Facebook. The type of comments is classified as Protest/ action related, Support movement/ general encouragement, Media coverage/ article-blog links, Petition-related, Anti-president/government, Solidarity, Demand for justice, Against the movement, and Others. One-third (33.3%) of the comments supports the movements and almost 22 percent of the comments on the digital activism posts are against the movements. Although, anti-government and protest/action-related types are identified in 10 percent comments in each category respectively. It becomes imperative to note that the type of comment, demand of justice (2%) and petition related (0.6%) comments are negligibly present.

### Conclusion

This research determines that how, in this techno-savvy world, people, especially the young activists, take help of social media platforms such as Facebook, to exfoliate their cause. It firmly establishes, that the impact of the activism on people is tremendous and they participate in the digital activism on various issues. Analysing Facebook content provides insight in to how users benefit from its interactive elements. Many users' comments include links to videos, photos and texts. This study explored that posts or comments has different roles, thematic frames and functions acting on upon these issues of

digital activism. The type of digital activism also plays an important function in analysing the impact and growth of these social movements in the Indian society through Facebook, for example slacktivism is the most popular form of digital activism in India. This helps in generating debate and create a sense of community and collective identity. Further, extensive research in this arena will definitely convey a better understanding of the content and its impact on the netzines.

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