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GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION OF MANUSCRIPTS

Original papers that fall within the scope of the Journal shall be submitted by e-mail. An Abstract of the article in about 150 words must accompany the papers. The length of research papers shall be between 5000 and 7000 words. However, short notes, perspectives and lengthy papers will be published if the contents could justify.

1. The paper may be composed in MS-Words format, Times New Roman font with heading in Font Size 14 and the remaining text in the font size 12 with 1.5 spacing.

2. Notes should be numbered consecutively, superscripted in the text and attached to the end of the article. References should be cited within the text in parenthesis. e.g. (Sen 2003: 150).

3. Spelling should follow the British pattern: e.g. 'colour', NOT 'color'.

4. Quotations should be placed in double quotation marks. Long quotes of above 4 (four) lines should be indented in single space.

5. Use italics for title of the books, newspaper, journals and magazines in text, end notes and bibliography.

6. In the text, number below 100 should be mentioned in words (e.g. twenty eight). Use "per cent", but in tables the symbol % should be typed.

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   1) Hoffmann, Steven (1990): *India and the China Crisis*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.

   2) Bhalla and Hazell (2003): "Rural Employment and Poverty: Strategies to Eliminate Rural Poverty within a Generation", *Economic and Political Weekly,* Vol.33, No.33, August 16, pp.3473-84.

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Indian Economic Global Spread and Normative Urges: Trade, Commerce and Culture

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Abstract

Conventionally, cultural globalization was first understood as a process of homogenization, as the global domination of Western mass culture became dominant at the expense of traditional diversity. However, a contrasting trend soon became evident in the rise of movements protesting against globalization and giving new momentum to the defence of local culture. Simultaneously, Western economic globalization gave rise to the notion that Western culture and economic values had taken a front seat in the entire globalization process. What is underestimated is the reality that Eastern, especially Indian economic globalization created a sense of universalization of particularism for the mutual benefit of various parties engaged in global trade, commerce, spreading language and norms throughout the known world. The current study narrates and explains, in an analytical way, the means of the spread of values through economic exchanges. My prime argument is that a string version of the economic globalization thesis requires a new view of the international economy - one that subsumes and subordinates national-level processes.

Introduction

The international economy is one in which the principal entities are national economies. Trade and commerce produce growing interconnection between these still national economies. Such an economic process involves an ever-increasing integration of more and more countries and economic actors into world market relationships. The form of interdependence between varied countries, small and large, remains not of a strategic kind but of exchanges of goods and values. Gradual adaptation and reconfiguration may produce new divergences and yet the results are mostly positive in most cases. In India's case, this is the message. Indian globalization had extended further and deeper than the visible globe. From ancient time, economic globalization, guided by positive cultural values, has greatly affected the outcome of commercial connections. During the Mauryan rule (4th-3rd century B.C.) Indian

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voyages on the Indian Ocean became part of a more general development in which sailors and merchants of various nationalities "began to knit together" the land borders of the "Southern Ocean", a Chinese term referring to all the waters from the South China Sea to the shore of East Africa. "Southernization" by Sino-Indian extensive commercial links with the outside world was analogous to 'westernization', and it is possible to argue that in Europe and its colonies, the process of "southernization" laid the foundation for "westernization" in subsequent centuries (Shaffer 1994). Trade between the Mediterranean and India had developed so well in the third century B.C. the Maurya King Bindusara (3rd century B.C.) could ask the Greek King Antiochus to send him "some sweet wine, dried figs, and a sophist". The riverine and trade-based urban civilization of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa had artisans, who used wooden boats to carry cloths made of cotton fibers (Ratnagar 2004). Some anthropologists argue that the presence of shell artifacts and beads in the Indus Valley testifies that India was one of Mesopotamia's biggest trade partners. Exports from India included not only luxuries, but also small monkeys from India because pets remained popular with rich Mesopotamians (Kenoyer 2008). Andre G. Frank and others argue that there had been a systematic continuity for about 5,000 years downplaying any idea of inherent European exceptionality in building an economically unified world as part of universal economy (Frank and Gills 1993).

Methodologically, economic anthropology, in Kuhn's terms, is still in the "pre-paradigm" stage (Kuhn 1977:47-48). Although India's "ethics and values" in domestic business has been vigorously evaluated, observing capitalism's moral lapses (Naoroji 1966; Jain 2001; Kanagasabapathi 2007; Swadeshi Academic Council 2003), there is hardly any full-length treatment of India's social and religious cultures that influenced international trade and commerce. Naoroji's treatment of British immoral trade restrictions on Indian goods, and export of Indian money to Britain has been well received among Indian scholars. Recently, Ritu Birla, in a brilliant exposition of the Marwari community's family law based amoral business code, has demonstrated the peril in using glorified capitalist framework in business (Birla 2009). The *Arthasastra* by Kautilya (fourth century B.C.), India's first political science text, has considered the state's participation in economic activities, activated by pragmatism rather than moral principles. No doubt, Kautilya has stipulated some rules for external trade, but recent scholarship views the text more as an ideal than reflecting actualities (Chakravarty 2001). However, the existing works depict global and political sphere of capital and market forces, but ignore aspects of globalization that historically comes into existence by creating socio-cultural relations leading to not only de-territorialization but also "glocalization" (compacting global and local dimensions in business and culture).

Rosenthal (2005) observes, "because of extensive proliferation of varied norms and values", modernists are not compelled by the bounds of tradition. The concept of "cultural amnesia" developed by Stephen Bertman (2000) refers to the crisis of memory out of selectively forgetting the past traditions. However, the multi-faceted

cultural values, viewed under the "Kroeber-Redfield Model", have both a "social structure" and a "cultural structure". Different levels of civilizations' cultural structures interact constantly with each other (Kroeber 1952; Redfield 1962). In contrast to Kroeber's cultural historical approach, Redfield begins with the socio-cultural aspect. In essence, Kroeber sees the task of cultural exchange as essentially a history of culture, with social structure and social organization subordinated. In this context, the central problem of today's economic interaction is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization. The homogenization argument has subsections in either an argument about Americanization or "commoditization". The normative dynamics of indigenization have recently come into vogue in some quarters in India. India's ancient global trade and exchange of goods stood for an intensification of human relations to create webs in people-to-people relations. The process in "general interdependence" calling for "internationalization" of business remained in line with India's national core norm to regard all people as "relatives". Utility achievement, argues Sen, may be "partial, inadequate and misleading" (Sen 1987:48). Admitting that the conceptual and methodological problems related to cultural influences in economic globalization are staggering, my qualitative analysis argues that India's evolving cultural systems throughout the ages led not only to increased scale and complexity, but also to an enhancement of the hierarchical aspects of economic power and prestige emanating from overseas trade contacts. However, the global economic transaction is a complex, overlapping order, which cannot be understood in terms of the neo-Marxist center-periphery models. Nor can we subscribe to simple models of push and pull, in terms of migration theory.

Whereas economic globalization in some countries has accelerated flows of labor, capital, and commodities, leaving some peoples uprooted and dispossessed (Hardin and Myers 1994), in India, electronic communication has created new "virtual communities" irrespective of physical distance, though not necessarily of language, creating dispersed long-distanced cultural groups having new wealth in new settings. A report estimates that the economic power of the overseas Indians now matches that of India itself (Lewis and Wigen 1997). Indians (or American Indians) in California subcontract their software businesses to India, providing a horizontal integration of business. Productive activities are becoming knowledge intensive rather than resource intensive. By using improved technology, India has risen to the top of the IT industry. Despite these positive economic results, a growing number of Indians argue that the powerlessness of the central government and many national institutions in the face of multinationals testifies to the omnipotence of economic globalization. Deconstructing the meaning of economic globalization in India, three prime conclusions are drawn. First, despite the fact that national economic cultures are constantly evolving, a sustained Indian worldview has influentially affected globalization that has outpaced globalization of politics and mindsets in India. Second, looking at the premodern period as a whole, we need to recognize the existence of different types of exchange and to consider

how they might have informed cultural encounters. Last, there is hardly any direct linkage found between economic globalization and increase of poverty, although India's national growth with development has well been verified.

An ancient explanation of why some people take up commerce and others do not is the differing resource endowments. Currently, in a materialist hopeful mode, many Indians cherish that economic globalization is about worldwide systematic interdependence, integration, mobilization, and redistribution of global resources that is likely to lead, at least in theory, to partial economic parity and equilibrium among the system members. As opposed to this purely mundane reason, in ancient India, ethics and moral values, along with material objectives, guided conduct in global trade and commerce. Many sacred texts testify that moral principles, including honest dealings, were taught, and basic norms were advocated in societies that functioned as self-regulating organizations. Passages from the *Vayu Purana* (fifth century B.C.) and *Ramayana* (third century B.C.) inform us that both spiritual and material urges the Indian merchants (Majumdar 1937). A basic premise of ancient Indian civilization was that the minimum interaction was the very anti-thesis of civilization. "Death of distance" was the cultural goal (Sharma, 2009). The Indian theme in global commerce can be depicted in these terms: every product is made up of only three things: first, raw materials (cotton, spices); second, the knowledge to build a finished commodity (boat building); and third, production urges as well as a country's unwritten traditions.

The third one makes up a difference. The buyers buy resources from the same sources but the key difference is the value system of each country. An archaeologist, Miller (2008), meticulously reconstructs a linkage between artificial materials and core cultural values of the Indus Valley people. If the Indus people could not find natural objects with attributes they liked, they simply created new materials using heat. From the abstract universe, they created the artificial stones of their micro beads for trade with Mesopotamia (Miller 2008:154-55). With their strength from "power" of the universe, the Indus builders constructed ships of the hypothetical sizes of the 60-gur (Mesopotamian unit for capacity or volume) vessels for open sea voyages during the "Bronze Age". This divine power was also good for acquiring superior community role (Polanyi 1956). Their spiritual values determined, to some extent, their trade goods for long-distance trade (Vosner 2008:230). There were several aspects in this unspecified value system. Recent findings dispute his thesis with varied success. Statistical data produced by Krishna and Mitra suggest that trade liberalization and domestic welfare economy have shown some improvement at least in selected sectors (Krishna and Mitra 1998). Political economist Panagariya concludes that there are high costs in high protection, emphasizing that even small tariffs lead to the withdrawal of products and high costs (Panagariya 2002). Data on educational attainment, infant mortality, monetary poverty, etc., are all aspects of living that demonstrate a large improvement during globalization in the last two decades. It is almost safe to argue that economic

globalization has led to "convergence", which means that large numbers of individuals are now competitive with the middle class, the 30th to 80th percentiles in income distribution (Bhalla 2002:11). Another researcher finds that by using the popular $1.00 a day poverty line, the percentage of poor people in the developing world has declined by 25 percentages between 1985 and 2000 from 37.4 to 13.1 percent (World Bank Report 2000). Likewise, Datt and Ravallion (2002) calculate that, between 1981 and 2001, the headcount measure of poverty fell by 45 percent (from 53 to 8 percent), largely because of globalization.

What is clear is that the combination of industrialization (2009-10), especially manufacturing as well as demands from the West, has led to industrial growth during three months in 2010 (16.8 percent); the projected national growth in India for the year 2010 is about 8 percent despite worldwide economic recession. All these suggest that there is "convergence" among the global trade, human capital formation, and the provision of social overhead capital. The onset of diminishing returns in the North and the flows of resources to India may assert themselves in producing some relief to the poor. If global growth continues at a rapid pace during the next half a century or less, it is possible that emerging market economies, including China and India, could attain levels exceeding those of Americans today. This implies that Malthusian notions of poverty are likely to become a distant memory as global income expands over time, and issues of inequality, rather than subsistence, will increasingly take the center stage in the poverty debate (Harrison 2007).

The functionalist perspective that tends to oversimplify the complex globalizations between exports and imports and multinational investments and domestic capital is not well defined (Stiglitz 2002). Analysts ignore the typical Indian bottleneck in the international flow of capital. Economic globalization does not automatically result in the creation of incompetent predatory state; dominance by local political elites wedded to parochial interests and alienated from the wider aspirations of Indian societies deserves to be scrutinized.

Globalization

India's cultural urges were visible from the early eras. Kautilya's *Arthasastra* (fourth century B.C.), India's first political science text, considers the state's participation in economic activities, including international trade. The text clearly distinguishes that commerce transacted in fortified cities, *nagaras,* from that transacted in designed centers for international exchange, *pattana (*Kangle1963:2.aO). V.K. Jain, in a chapter, finds that the opulent Jain traders in western India were regularly advised by their teachers and preachers to be truthful in business transaction (Jain 2001:344-69). In his work, *Satsthanakaprakarn*, Jineesvara Suri, dilates upon the code of conduct, which a merchant was expected to follow. He advises that a merchant should neither weigh less nor charge more.[1] Modern scholarship has paid much more attention to the sea route than to the overland routes, partly because of advantages to carry large volumes of trade. They have been interpreted as relics of a transit trade linking the easy sea route from Egypt to India with overland China and

beyond, since "the Kushana kingdom produced little that the luxury markets of the west desired" (Rodewald 1976:47-48). However, it does not follow, as is often assumed, that gold was being sent to India (Charlesworth 1970:137). Once it had been clear that bullion was what was wanted, bullion, probably, was sent (Rodewald 1976:51). In addition, what we see is that eastern people were both producers and consumers of luxury items. Business historians examine the histories of the business houses, in-house histories of different commercial companies, and accounts of commercial communities.

The recent study of Bengali scripts and seals provided new insights into the trade connections between Gupta-era Bengal and the early trade centers of South East Asian mainland. This evidence substantiates the existence of a luxury trade in horses, which were transported overland from India's northwest frontier down the Gangetic plain to Bengal, where they were shipped by boat to south China (Hall (n.d.):452:445 and Mukherjee 1989:1-5). A "global system", rather than an "inter-national" system, was visible from the early economic contacts between India and the vast outside world. Two variables – system-ness and stage-ness – could be observed (Therborn 2000:151-179). For various reasons, the Indus Valley's economy was expanding for long-distance trade (Shaffer and Lichtensten 1989:117-26). Even more interesting than the Harappan participation in the western trade in the third millennium was the sense of "inter-regional integration" that was a part of western and southern India during that time. The Harappans were part of an emerging and much larger world than they had known

before the rise of urbanization in the Greater Indus Valley and Baluchistan. This "cultural interaction sphere" was a unique configuration for its time, and its scope and significance has only recently become apparent (Reade 1996:189). An archaeologist, Miller (2008), meticulously reconstructs a linkage between artificial materials and core cultural values of the Indus Valley people. If the Indus people could not find natural objects with attributes they liked, they simply created new materials using heat. From the abstract universe, they created the artificial stones of their micro beads for trade with Mesopotamia (Miller 2008:145-57). Their spiritual values determined, to some extent, their trade goods for long-distance trade, concludes archaeologist Vosner (Vosner 2008:230). With their strength from "power" of the universe, the Indus builders constructed ships of the hypothetical sizes of the 60-gur (Mesopotamian unit for capacity or volume) vessels for open sea voyages during the "Bronze Age." This commercial contact was good for acquiring superior cohesive community life as well (Polanyi et.al 1966).

There is no convincing evidence for the presence of Mesopotamians in the Indus cities (Chakrabarti 1990). Dilip Chakravarti (1982) discusses the occurrence of "long barrel-cylinder" beads in the Indus Valley, Mesopotamia and Iran. These beads have similarities. The beads were in excess of 5cm, slender, occasionally with a slight thickening toward the center (Chakravarti 1982:265-70). Both demand and supply factors helped the process. Material records affirm that ships from *Meluhha* (Indus Valley) and *Magan* (Arabian Gulf) came to Mesopotamia during the reign of Sargon of

Akkad (2334-2279 B.C.). In the last half of the third millennium, the cultures of Middle Asia, the region between the Euphrates and the Indus and Central Asia and the Gulf, participated in a new, unprecedented form of international economic interaction (Possehl 1996:133). Mesopotamian and Iranian courts had themselves engaged in considerable trade with South Asia, and the Achaemenid court developed its own sense of the "Indian exotic." By Early Third Dynastic times, the agrarian Mesopotamian society became complex and contending hierarchical social orders, the "palace" and the "temple" became intense rivals. Politicized rivals, as both texts and archaeological records testify, demanded exotic materials as conspicuous displays of privilege and access. Some of these products were also used to maintain the elaborate Sumerian cult centers and their associated workshops. These products included copper, tin, bronze, silver, gold, lapis laxzuli, carnelian shell, ivory and various kinds of wood. By 2600 B.C., the Mesopotamian markets looked for them, but these things were not a part of the riverine landscape of the Tigris/Euphrates valley. The eastern trade became more useful for the people in the west (Reade (n.d.):188-89). The traders of the west moved from the protected waters of the Persian Gulf into the Arabian Sea, and then to the warm water of the Indian Ocean (Reade 1986:325-34). Persian sources testify that trade caravan routes extended from the Sasanian Persian Empire (224-651 A.D.) to Iraq and then to the province of Fars, eventually reaching India. Imperian Sasanian coins from Persia were discovered from Rupar in the Amble district in India (Daryaee 2003:4). Simultaneously, the great Mauryan Emperor

Asoka helped the process of spiritual globalization in the West. His efforts to propagate as a gift to all mankind the medicinal herbs and plants (amomum, nardum), which have been cited by Indian activists fighting against attempts of multinational agricultural and biotechnology corporations to patent native Indian trees and plants for private profit (Mehta 1998:25).

Economic globalization reached a new height linking Ethiopia, Rome and Greece, and the Selucid Empire with the Silk Road, linking central Asia, China and India. Polanyi argues that economic relations and transactions were "embedded" in an overreaching cultural and social framework, which set limits to market activity. Anthropologist also report that man's economic action is submerged in his social relationship (Polanyi 1957:46). A prime globalization urge came from the Hindu concept of perpetual motion that prepares the ground for economic expansion for an amicable contact with the outsiders. There was a cultural warning against isolationism in a parable about a deep-well frog, the proverbial - *kupamandaduka*- that persistently recurs in several old Sanskrit texts, such as *Ganapatha*, *Hitopadesa*, and *Bhattikavya*. The *kupamanduka* was a frog that lived its entire life within a well, knowing nothing else. The message is that cultural and economic history of India and the world would have been very limited had "we lived like well-frog" (Sen 2005:85-86).

India's scientific concepts about motion helped the economic globalization. In 1150 A.D., the distinguished astronomer Bhaskar described the idea of mechanical motion, an idea rooted in the Hindu belief in

the cyclical and self-renewing nature of things (Ganguly 1927:65-76). An American historian, Lynn White, argues that the concept of perpetual motion is a reflection of the Hindu belief in the cyclical and self-renewing nature of all things (White Jr. 1960:523). However, the scope of the concept is broader than that. In Bhasakara's computation, the idea of infinity is the core concept. He establishes mathematically what had been recognized in Indian theology a millennium earlier, that infinity, however divided, remains infinite (Basham 1971:498). The idea received wider attention, as in about 1200 A.D., Islam transmitted the Indian concept of perpetual motion to Europe, just as it was transmitting at the same moment Hindu numerals and positional reckoning (White Jr. 1960:523), thereby giving rise to globalization of knowledge-based deals.

Roman coin-finds throughout the Indian region, from Afghanistan to Ceylon - from the Gulf of Cambay to Bengal, in south of India, and in almost continuous series up the east coast of India – is important in showing the extent and continuity of Roman trade with India during the first five centuries A.D. There were Roman settlers in India. Large quantities of gold and silver coins struck by the Roman Emperors up to Emperor Nero (54 A.D to 68 A.D.), discovered in the interior of the Tamil country, testify to the presence of Roman settlers in the south (Sastri 1966). The existence of a Roman settlement is also known from the *Silappadikaram*, a Tamil literary work that describes vividly a quarter of the city of Puhur, or Kaveripattinam, which is at the mouth of the Kaveri River. These were the samples of collections of the scope of "world" traffic in several southern states in India (Seshadri 1966:244-45). European soldiers, known as *Yavanas* and *Mleccha*, clad in complete armor, acted as bodyguards of Tamil kings (Smith 1961:400-401). Roman soldiers were also enlisted to guard the gates of the fort of Madura (Pillay 1965:Chapter Eleven). Thus, out of international trade, there developed some minor military and diplomatic relations. The American historian Richard Brown argues that because there were plenty of Roman coins in India, there must have been Roman colonies in India, and because there were Roman colonies, there must have been either Roman ships or Roman shipbuilders to introduce the "*oculus*", a decorative feature attached in the triangular tail areas on vessels (Bowen Jr. 1957:262-91). It is almost certain that the seagoing qualities of the Romans were not as great as stipulated by Richard Brown. Nor did the Romans take *oculi* to India. In contrast, Carroli Quigley, another American historian, argues that that Roman ships did not carry goods to India in Roman ships (Quigley 1958:25-38).

From around 1500 B.C., a second network, centered on northwestern China, was established. Because the Buddhists made many of the trade connections in earlier times, historian D.D. Kosambi asks an important question. "To what extent did the monks and Buddhist monasteries participate directly in the long-distance trade, the commerce of the great caravans?" He adds that archaeological evidence points to the monastic possession of great wealth. The famous Nasik inscriptions (some dated between 150 B.C. and 150 A.D.), demonstrate that the monks and their *samgha* received *aksaya-nivi* (everlasting donations). However, the inscriptions as well as the

Sino-Buddhist evidence indicate that many wealthy merchants from the famous *Dhenukakata* settlement in the south of India had good connection with the monasteries. The settlement was at the mouth of the Krishna River. The settlement had Greek traders, who traded with Alexandria, not Persia, as other sources alleged (Kosambi 1955:50-52;59-60). References in *Sangam* literature indicate that the *paradva*r landowners gradually diversified and increased their participation in coastal trade and one section of them figures as rich traders (Nattar and Pillai 1965:16-17). Rich merchants and traders, including Buddhist merchants, began to participate in the means of production of goods, and thus, there emerged long-distance trade that created surplus value as well as exchange of spiritual values (Ray (n.d.):354).

Support System

Trade guilds helped overseas commerce. Yavanas (Greeks, Romans, Jews, and Arabs) set up colonies on both the littoral and inland. These colonies in India presuppose the existence not of adventurers and freelance traders and explorers, who could not sustain centuries of growing trade. These foreign settlers set up a network of business organizations to devote to production and distribution. Merchants formed *pauras* (assemblies in Sanskrit), *nagarams* (towns in Tamil) were assemblies of merchants in important trade centers, working in cooperation with the *ur* or *sabha* (larger assembly). Even the Brahmins took to commerce in a large *Vaisnava* center in modern district of South Arcot.[2] Merchants came from South Sri Lanka to join the community of traders. The Sanskrit term

Vanij means export trader. Some Sanskrit and Tamil expressions such as *cettu* and *taniccettu* refer to monopoly of trade in certain exports. Marco Polo calls the Brahmin guild as *Abraiaman*, who were regarded as the best merchants in the business. Marco Polo adds that these Brahmin members of the province of Lar as so guild members that they would never "take what belongs to another." The foreign traders could easily entrust their goods to Indian businesspersons, who sold goods from abroad in the most loyal and faithful manner. Trade commission was given to these Indian traders for handling commodities, out of good faith, not on demand.[3] Travelers and foreign visitors testified Indian traders' integrity and high character in the medieval period. Even settlements in foreign countries colonized by South Indian merchants were constituted *Manigrams* (association of merchants), for instance Taku-apa in Siam, where a tank and temple of Narana were constructed by Tamil merchants during rule of Pallava Nandi Varman 111 (Ayyar 1947:269-80). Historian Sastri argues that the South Indian merchants under the guidance and assemblies had more freedom and scope for initiative and a better capacity for voluntary organization than in China.

Wealth Accumulation

Marshall G.S. Hodgson (1963) and William H. McNeill (1963) introduced a notion that the world's various peoples began to interact with intensively only after 1492. Samuel P. Huntington reinforces the notion by writing that most of the human existence contacts between civilizations were "nonexistent." As against this, K.N. Chaudhuri, drawing on central-place

analysis, argues that industrial production such as textiles, metals, glass and ceramics had long ago began the process of economic interaction having profound effects on international commercial relations (Chaudhuri (1990):297-337; Bentley 1998:237-254).

The Christian Armenians, who settled in northern Indian cities, including Calcutta, used to make formal trade agreements, although contracts could be made on a handshake (Curtin 1984:197). Referring to the Jewish-India merchants of the Middle Ages, the Geniza-papers report that trade was of cosmopolitan character. The most observant Jewish traders from the Sudanese coast of the Red Sea port of Aidhab and other ports in the Middle East coming to Malabar ports freely formed partnerships with Hindus, Muslims and "Oriental Christians." The partnership reflected a "completely international and inter-confessional reality and outlook" (Goitein 1953:37).

There are ample references in the Vedic literature to trade in distant lands for profit (Griffin (n.d.):20). The merchants offered prayer and oblation to seek divine grace for success in trade.[4] Although shipwrecks were common, yet hopeful merchants ventured regularly on sea voyage in ships with hundred oars, for trading in distant lands. They knew the theory "money makes money."[5] A Tamil sage, Thiruvalluvar, in his book, written more than 2300 years ago, went to the extent of compelling people to earn wealth. The book underscored that India should have enormous wealth.[6] The importance of wealth in life has been repeated in ancient *niti* literature.

Bhartrhari's famous stanzas "yasyasti vittam sa narah kulinath", renders that wealth has the "mysterious power" of elevating a family in its social prestige, of bestowing scholarship, learning and virtue, because all manner of excellence can be secured with gold or money (Gokhale 1977:125-26). In the Buddhist literature, the term *attha* in the sense of worldly things is often associated with *hita* (benefit) and *sukha* (happiness) (Carpenter 1960:187;190;211). Capital formation and wealth creation, some of the basic objectives in economic globalization, remained Indian objectives.

Referring to the commerce in white cloths with a red or yellow border during the nineteenth century, Lord Valentia reported that "Hindu Banyans" made profit of from 50 to 100 percent. Gold and ivory exports brought significant profit. Two French travelers, Ferret and Galinier, reported that the Indian Banyans made "immense profits" from the Red Sea business in Africa gold, musk, ivory.[7] The Eurocentric conventional explanation of this west-to-east flow of "money" is that Europe was required to send treasure to Asia, including India, because the West had to settle its trade deficit with the East. On the long term, the structural change in the composition of the returns from Asia gave rise to an enormous expansion of the export of silver and gold to the East. J. C. van Leur and argues that with the coming of the Portuguese the Asia trade a new era began leading to the decline of the vigor of indigenous Asian commercial institutions (Leu 1955). Company exports of cloth increased sharply to meet new demand in Europe during the "India Craze" of the 1680s and 1690s.

Hemispheric Integration

The large quantities of gold and silver coins struck by the Roman emperors up to Emperor Nero (A.D. 54-68), found in the interior of the Tamil country, testify to the presence of Roman settlers in the south in a hospitable atmosphere (Sastri 1966). Considerable changes in production also occurred in various parts of India from about 400 B.C. through to around 500 A.D. There was the growth of urban crafts, flourishing internal trade and international trading networks, which stretched to Vietnam, Indonesia, and China in one direction and to the Roman Mediterranean in the other. In India, however, there was a decline of trade and urban life as the focus for the artisan crafts shifted to the villages, where they were integrated into a caste system led by the Brahmins (Harman 2004:1-36).

The rise of the merchant class having links with foreign trade in pre-Mughal period was closely associated with certain developments in technological and commodity production and the process of the modernization of parts of the early economy (Gokhale 1977:125-130). Particularly, the role of silver import to India generated a debate about wealth accumulation. The flow of silver toward Mughal chief Port of Surat and other ports during the Mughal rule remained an issue in the balance of payment issue. An English merchant in 1660 reported that Asian ships from several countries coming to Surat had increased from 15 to 80 ships over the previous decade (Moreland 1923:85). Asian merchants brought six million rupees each year in silver coin from Mocha, the equivalent of 76, 5421 Kgs of pure silver, and a far greater quantity than the combined imports of the Europeans (Moreland 1923:85). The Dutch Company's exports of cloth increased sharply to meet new demand in Europe during the "India Craze" of the 1680s and 1690s. In addition, despite the expansion of Company trade between India and Europe, silver continued to move through West Asian traditional trade, the caravan routes of Ottoman Egypt and Arabia and the sea-lanes of the Red Sea and Persian Gulf (Brennig 1983:481). The flow of silver into western India expanded the silver-based Mughal monetary system.

Useful and authentic Cairo Geniza Records, dated between 1080 and 1160, record the nature of early medieval trade between India and the Middle East. Abraham Ben Yiju, a Jewish trader from al-Mahdiya in Tunisia, had a bronze factory in southern India, where he produced bronze ware. Among other places, he lived in *Manjarur* (Mangalore). Customer in Aden ordered articles made at his factory. Ben Yiju sent merchandise from south India to merchants in Aden for consumption there and for export to Egypt and North Africa; different kinds of iron were in great demand in Aden and the Adenese traders paid in gold and silver.[8] In 1703-04, six ships arrived from Amsterdam carrying 5,749 Kgs of silver.[9] K.N. Chaudhuri supplies data for silver export from London to the East India Company factories in Bombay. Trade balance reinforced with the arrival of silver was in India's favor. Glamann's analysis on the Dutch-Asiatic trade shows clearly that there was a link between the European demand for Asiatic products and the rise in the export of silver and gold (Glamann 1958:62-69;263). Demand was increasingly for those products, such as cotton, silk, and coffee, which came

from areas where gold and silver was needed to keep trade flowing, namely Coromandel, Bengal and, for coffee, Mocha (Gaastra 1983:460). However, both India and China, silver wages were substantially lower compared to those in northwestern Europe.

Culture of Modernity: Globalization

Cultural orientation and value systems have influenced the policies of parties and groups in economic globalization in India. Nevertheless, the proper locus of politics and articulation of contemporary economic globalization remains puzzling.

First, the Indian variety of socialism, with its internal contradictions, is an alternative form of capitalist modernization, which argues that globalization itself internationalizes class exploitation as it produces a new economic fragmentation of the globe. As the earlier promise of welfare and equality recedes, in the communist dominated provinces, West Bengal and Kerala, the left parties bring globalization issues into limelight for political objectives. The powerful Communist Party of India (CPM) in West Bengal, welcoming foreign investments (for science city) in the state it rules, but vehemently opposes it nationally to discredit the central government for political reasons. Much against the Indian core value system in globalization, the "center-periphery" thesis holders view economic globalization in terms of the received knowledge derived from Karl Marx (1971). Oriented to Marx's theory of labor value, Professor Amiya Kumar Bagchi, a Cambridge trained distinguished economist, now Director of Development Studies in Calcutta, and a mentor of the "progressive youths of Bengal" has been a pioneer mover

in the debate about free trade and poverty (Bagchi 1996:2875). For the leftists, the idea of a bounded cultural community of nations seems suspect given recent shifts in the spatio-temporal contours of material world.

Second, for the religious revivalists, globalization is more than modernization, because it amounts to the civilizing mission to finish the work that formal colonialism was unable to achieve. Their ethnocentrisms, legitimately asserting against Euro-American hegemony or economic globalization are, in turn, "colonized" to the extent that they legitimize themselves in terms of an "alternative" development, which Gilbert Rist calls new "global faith". It is non-modern and non-scientific, and "non-historical" (Dirlik 2000). Equating Indian identity with Hindu identity, a logical but not a valid equation for a nation with large Muslim minorities and others, the Hindu Jana Sangh party opposed economic globalization on cultural grounds. It highlighted Hindu values projecting a cultural conflict between small-scale and large-scale industries, capital-intensive technology and village crafts, centralization and decentralization, and impure urban complexity and rural serenity (Saha and Carr 2001:91-120). The RSS party declared in early 1992 a renewed economic policy for *swadeshi,* arguing that globalization had been uneconomic and un-Indian. The party argued for a national capitalism without foreign investments and without large-scale import of foreign consumer goods. It produced a list of 326 products, by multinationals and possible alternative products made by Indian owned factories. The more pragmatic wing of the BJP that includes cosmopolitan moderates, want to

keep emotional connections with the European liberal forces. In Partha Chatterjee's words, the nationalists wish to copy the Western means in terms of technology and the institutions of state, but to resist Western cultural attributes (Chatterjee 1996:75). The BJP moderates, favoring Christian Democratic parties of Europe, favor globalization in a cautious way. For them the Christian democratic forces would be allies in the worldwide conflict between the Islamic forces and the democratic forces. However, the BJP supported a policy of economic liberalization, partly as an attempt to represent the interest of traders and industrialists (Hansen, 1996). The party sponsored an investment project, run by US-based ENRON in Maharashtra state in 1995, which eventually failed due to provincial mismanagement. However, the misrepresentation of ancient Hindu values has failed to prevent the increasing forces of secular globalization, because India had reached the controversial point of W.W. Rostow's "take-off", which has gripped Indian policy-makers, politicians and industrialists as well.

Third, a new pro-economic globalization stance soon became powerful due to adverse economic effects observed during the period of state socialism, which weakened market incentives while spawning a huge and inefficient public sector. Prime Minister Singh encouraged versatile democratic institutions, implicitly enforcing social contract, tempering market forces and maintaining some social order. Now he tries to bring India closer to the outside world without overtaxing the domestic industry. Even though he is ignored internationally, he

tries to calm the anti-global critics at home. His relatively new economic globalization is based on his basic belief that nations that are economically interlinked do not shoot each other. His globalization urge is accelerated by India's new technology-based industrial base, which has been labor intensive. The national government and state administrations at various levels have done a significant job in helping technology for expansion of global trade. In Bangalore city alone, there are three universities, fourteen engineering schools, and forty-seven specialty schools of higher learning. Western industrialists get "brain shopping" there while Indian engineers work for software companies, such as Siemens, General Electronics, Samsung, and Nokia. In 2005, about 12 billion dollars of goods were exported, though it amounted to a fraction of that of China.

Fourth, over the decades, opposition to narrow leftist and rightist vague strategies came from intellectuals, the upholders of Indian norms as well modernization impulse. During the 1920s, Rabindranath Tagore, Asia's first Nobel Laureate, stirred crowds in India, China, and Japan by calling spiritual and economic combination for co-prosperity. Both he and Sun yat-sen, China's anti-imperialist exile, greatly admired the idea in economic transaction, soon to be dismantled by imperial Japan. Another Nobel Laureate, Amartya Sen argues that in globalization, the forces of ideological separatism, which is strong in parts of modern India, militate against global history but also against India's "own heritage" (Sen 1987).

Indian Movies

In much of India's human history of social relations, econo-cultural relations have transcended existing political divides. The spread of Hindi movie culture implies a profound quantitative increase in intensification of social relations of that ideal type. The economic globalization, accelerated by Indian movies, has changed the quality of international exchanges. Hollywood movies have failed to smooth the normative differences between the Islamic world and the West, because they have become the processes of the production of cultural differences, bringing the "center" to the "periphery" as a way of "grand narrative" of "totalizing" late capitalism, Indian Hindi movies with their smooth and distinct entertainment mode, have brought relief to econo-cultural globalization. One advantage of Indian movies is that there are no priori assumptions about the messages produced by the comic movies. The enforced "difference" of cultural space, to use the words of Appadurai (1990), has become "part and parcel" of a global system of domination by Hollywood movie culture. As a noted intellectual and journalist Shashi Tharoor writes, in the *Times of India*, "Bollywood is Indian culture's secret weapon", producing five times as many films as Hollywood, taking India to the world, by bringing its brand of "glitzy entertainment" to Indians abroad as well as others including "Syrians and Senegalese". In some Syrian houses, huge portraits of Amitabh Bachan, India's Marlon Brando and President al-Assad are on display. The movie culture of India has bridged the gap between the East and the West in several ways. On the other hand, China has had an essentially insular historic experience. The China-India contrast in ways of dealing with foreign traders is a challenge to comparative analysis of the relations in commercial exchanges. China's defensive responses can now be contrasted with Indian openness. Today, when Chinese culture reemerges in arrogant pride in economic growth, it is likely to develop as an alternative civilization, although there was an open society under the Tang dynasty. In contrast, India is becoming a meeting place through economic globalization and culture. The appeal of Indian movies, including 1960 classic, *Mughal-e-azam*, comparable to *Gone with the Wind*, to Islamic populations and other countries in Eastern Europe has been enormous (Mahbubani 2008:169-70). As money earners, Indian movies have become solid sources of income; it is economic globalization on India's terms. In the same fashion, A. R. Rahman, 44, currently a sufist, the "Mozart of Madras", has succeeded in tying many forms of music together. He won two Oscars, a Golden Globe and the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) for giving *Slumdog* timely entertainment" (*India International* 2010). The "syncretic adaptive politics and culture" of hybridity, argues the postmodernist Homi Bhabha, "questions the imperialistic notion of purity" expressed culturally and economically as much as it "questions the nationalist notion of purity" (Bhabha 1989:64). Economic globalization, far from representing a coherent process of capitalist totalization, becomes an expected connection between different Indian socio-cultural activities. In the words of Michel Foucault, these exchanges become "moral subjects", not in the form of submission to an external rule (state control), but in the "mode of belonging" (Bayart 2007).

Some observations are due at this stage. First, ancient global interconnections in trade and culture remained thin and uneven, with most trade linkages centered on the large states and metropolitan cities. Second, the concept of Chinese type of fierce "scramble" has not appeared in modern India. Last, White, Jr., argues that, despite difficult communication, mankind in the "Old World at least has long lived" in a more unified realm of discourse than historians are ready to admit. The notion of "global unity", a cultural theme, had been present in the East for centuries (1960:526).

Millionaire its frenetic sound. "From the marketing perspective, it's a perfect fit", says a management expert, explaining that manufactures and economic managers want "proximity to Amitabh Bachan and a link to intelligencer" (*The Statesman* 2009, July 25). In February 2010, the film, *My name is Khan*, featured by super-star Shah Rukh Khan, grossed about two million dollars in America and Canada. The *Los Angeles Times* called it "a sweeping epic in the melodramatic Bollywood manner" and yet it emerges as a potent", factor in globalization.

Conclusion

In some coins, found near Bangalore, there are standing figures of Gaius and Lucius Caesar. The Indian archaeologist M. Seshadri observes that Augustus might have struck these varieties of Roman coins, especially for trade with South Asia. In the first century A.D., Coimbatore District produced beryls of a sea-green variety, which was greatly admired in Rome; Also, Indian gems were in demand in Rome. More importantly, the large number of hoards of Roman gold and silver coins

mostly of the period of Augustus and Tiberius certainly indicates the prosperity and economic stability of India (Seshadri 1966:244-45). This was terminal trade, dealing with commodities produced in India, as opposed to the transit trade (Chinese silk), which reached the Indian markets from China and other countries of Asia (Wheeler 1955:173).

The foundational pillars of Immanuel Wallerstein's "modern world-trade" existed in India in medieval period. There was an impressive array of features related to globalization. India had commercialized agriculture and expanding handicraft production, accumulated substantial growth in monetization and urbanism. Based on human labor, farming and manufacturing flourished. *For David Held and his coauthors, economic globalization appears as the result of processes that have been evolving, though not necessarily continuously, for a long period (*Held et. Al. 1999). *In this view, globalization is neither an open, nor a predetermined process that substantially transforms, but not eradicate such institutions as states, religious institutions, and families.* In pepper cuisine, the Romans developed a "taste of India" (Parker 2002:89). Essential difference between contemporary economic globalization and India's early globalization may not be wide because in Indian globalization, there had been capital formation, wealth accumulation, and convenient and free exchanges of goods and commodities covering a wider area. Pacifist Indians were aware of the need of accumulation of wealth through international trade. The Hindi word *gatha forca pital* was derived from the Vedic *grathin* meaning

capitalist. From the Pali literature, we know that in the fifth century B.C., trading communities, engaged in international mostly overland commerce, included monks, pilgrims, pedlars, horse traders, acrobats, actors, students and tourists (Chandra 2007). Pre-colonial Indian economic network featured many intertwined threads linking business operation and related social connections that could be understood and judged from the standpoint of a "world economy." Moreover, cultural globalization is bound up with globalization's economic dimensions. Thus, the long history of Indian globalization is better conceived in a plural rather than unitary phenomenon. This sharply contrasts with some pre-capitalist world economies designed by China, Persia and Rome, creating world empires that introduced a uniform political system, which dominated the various inter-related societies within their boundaries and with enough agricultural surpluses to maintain artisans and administrative stratum. On the other hand, India's "world-economy" was different with no political unity and with the redistribution of the surplus via the market.

Because the anthropology of economic globalization is still in the "pre-paradigm" stage (Kuhn 1997:48-49), Polanyi claims that empirical markets do not necessarily behave in accordance with the market of economic theory (Polanyi et al 1957: 268;250-56). Nevertheless, as Niels Steensgaard legitimately claims that the small-scale peddlers' international trade in the medieval period in South Asia was not "primitive", considering the complexities in business transaction. He adds that the European joint-stock companies in the early seventeenth century did not transform the Asian trade structure; they were not superior to the peddlers and the redistributive enterprises (Carracks 1972:21-22). Indian scholars have taken a comprehensive perspective in India's global trade and travel over land-routes and sea-lanes, arguing that the Indian pre-colonial economic globalization made the Indian Ocean as the central space (Chakravarti 2007:4-5). A.G. Hopkins's "periodization" schem, posits that "archaic globalization" was broadly associated with the sixteenth century mainly with the commencement of European trade. Many Indian scholars argue that Indian business people traded in high-value luxury goods such as spices, gems, and cloves long before the early medieval period (Hopkins 2001). This early economic globalization was "multi-polar", to use the phrases of C.A. Bayly, which involved "push and push" factors; the international exchanges of goods involved the active participation of the traders of "Gujarat, Bengal, coastal China and Japan" (Bayly 2004). In the end, the moot question is how to treat the antiglobalists' wish to achieve "justice" with Amartya Sen's "capabilities variables", and identify the cultural limits of national identity. Often, analysts ignore the sources issues from which differing normative and ethical positions emerge.

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Perils of "Security": Identity and Nation-Building in South Asia with Special Reference to India and Pakistan

P M Joshy

Abstract

This paper problematises the notion of 'Security' in the context of the process of nation-building in India and Pakistan. Nation-building is basically an 'exclusionary' process which distances the 'Self' from the 'Other' both within and outside the cartographic setting of the "nation-State." Here 'Security' is the running force which masks violence in the name of 'protection.' The stereotypical images about the 'Other' justify violence against it and on a majoritarian line the process of nation-building has been progressing in South Asia. In this progression the victims are the minority communities and the violence against them is facilitated and rationalised in the name of "securing the nation."

Introduction

In his inaugural address at the seminar on "India's role in South Asia: Challenges and Opportunities for the 21st Century" (27th Sept 2010) at Pondicherry University, the Chief of the Indian Army Staff Major General V. K. Singh focused upon various security issues confronting South Asia. He spoke about: "military leverage to the betterment of the region, rather than for showing our flag." The intention may be appreciable. But it is not concomitant with the experiences of the region as distinct nation-States. 'Military' is a major source of energy for the very existence of the states of South Asia with independent "nation-States." In the process of nation-building the 'Military' is equated with 'Security' and the 'images' about it are very significant for distancing the 'Self' from the 'Other.' In this context the 'Military' represents "showing flag" rather than being an agency which has the capability to foster cooperation and friendship among nation-States. The experiences of India and Pakistan are the best examples in the region. In the first part of the study we will focus on the complex relations between the notion of 'security' and the construction of identity and subsequently map the ethnic plurality of South Asia. The final part of the article

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contextualises 'security' within the framework of the nation-building process in the states of India and Pakistan.

Identity and Security

Security is a core concept in the theory and praxis of inter/national politics. Realists generally viewed that the international system is 'anarchic' and the states are the 'rational' 'self-centered actors' (Morgenthau 1950). Realism in International Relations (IR) therefore focused on a state-centric, power-oriented, and militaristic discourse of security and it reads narrowly into the role of history, ideology and culture as manifested in the concepts of State, national interest, and nationalism and how it shapes state power and international relations (Chowdhry & Sheila Nair 2003). Neither does it pay attention to the ways in which anarchy/insecurity may be constructed or how the roles of ideology, culture, history, or state practices themselves may produce anarchy in IR (Das 2002:76-89). The weak structuralist and totalising position of realism was theoretically challenged at different levels (Wendt 1987; Tickner 1988 and Walker 1989).

The postmodern, critical constructivist and feminist scholars questioned the orthodoxy of realism in IR (Der Derrian & Shapiro 1989; Weldes 1999 and Doty 1996). The critical constructivists problematising the conventional assumption that international relations is in a state of perpetual anarchy, view security as what David Campbell calls "representations of danger" (Campbell 1998:1-13) instead. The question of 'representation' is one aspect that was totally discarded by the traditional IR theorists. The politics of identity is an

important contribution of constructivism to IR (Hopf 1998 and Katzenstein 1996). Katzenstein viewed that 'culture, norms and identity also matter in national security.' For the critical constructivists, objects of security and insecurity are not ontologically separate things. Rather, they are mutually constituted in a variety of ways that may privilege a certain conception of identity over others. Operating within a framework of meanings, assumptions, and distinctive social identities, the representation of the 'Other,' their identities and what constitutes insecurity 'imaginaries' are left open to the dynamics of interpretation, whereby relations of identity may also be produced, enforced, and reified in a conflictual manner (Muppidi 1999: 124). Further, construction of identities influencing security dynamics may not simply be confined to rigid interstate dynamics, but may also be mediated by "complex network of social relations, cultural traditions, and political structures..." involving state security elites themselves (Niva 1999:152). Thus, critical constructivists assume that all social (in)securities are culturally produced (Weldes 1999:1). It is the "cultural process through which insecurities of states and communities… are produced, reproduced, and transformed" (Weldes 1999:2).

Thus, in the new literature of international relations (Campbell 1998; Krause and Williams 1997; Lipschutz 1995 and Weldes et al 1999), security is conceptualised as a productive discourse that brings forth insecurities to be operated upon. This contests the dominant conceptual paradigm of security that sees insecurities as essential variables, while focusing attention on the acquisition of security by given

entities. It underlines the processes through which something or someone (the 'Other') is discursively formed as a source of insecurity against which the 'Self' needs to be secured (Anand 2005:203-215). Thus, discourses of insecurity are about 'representations of danger' (Campbell 1998; Dillon 1996). Insecurities are inevitably 'social constructions' rather than givens—threats do not just exist out there, but have to be produced. All insecurities are thus culturally shaped in the sense that they are produced in and out of ''the context within which people give meanings to their actions and experiences and make sense of their lives'' (Weldes 1999:1). Insecurities and the objects that suffer from insecurities are mutually constituted. That is, in contrast to the received view, which treats objects of security and insecurity themselves as pre-given and natural and as separate things, we treat them as mutually constituted cultural and social constructions and thus products of processes of identity construction of Self–Other. The argument that security is about representation of danger and social construction of the 'Self' and the 'Other' does not imply that there are no 'real' effects. What it means is that there is nothing inherent in any act or being or object that makes it a source of insecurity and danger (Anand 2005:203-215).

Security is inextricably interlinked with identity politics. How we define ourselves depends on how we represent others. This representation is thus integrally linked with how we 'secure' ourselves against the 'Other.' Representations of the 'Other' as a source of danger to the security of the 'Self' in conventional understandings of security are accompanied by the

dehumanisation and stereotyping of the 'Other.' The 'Other' gets reduced to being a danger and hence an object that is fit for surveillance, control, policing and possibly extermination. This logic of the discourse of security dictates that the security of the 'Self' facilitates and even demands the use of policing and violence against the 'Other' (Foucault 1979; 1988 and Anand 2005). Central to the concept of postcolonial insecurity is what Sankaran Krishna calls postcolonial "anxiety", defined as an ideological drive of postcolonial state leaders to achieve successfully the "modern enterprise of nation-building"(Krishna 1999: xvii-xix). According to him the process of nation-building makes the 'Others' not only in its 'cartographical limits' but also beyond it (Krishna 1994). Interestingly, central to the metaphor of creating a nation as something "ever in the making but never quite reached", is the idea of nationalism (Das 2002). The unfinished project of nation-building in South Asia generates so many 'Others' both within and outside the statist territorial boundaries. The dominant discourses of International Relations are not sufficient enough to address these complex issues in South Asia (Chatterjee 2008:177-208).

Ethnic Mapping of South Asia

South Asia is a region of rich complexities and the configuration of these intricacies and diversities most often precipitates political polarisations and mobilisations which quite often lead to violent conflicts among different communities of the region that cut across state borders. Generally speaking, these conflicts are a modern phenomenon and are intertwined with the logic of nation-building

and interest articulation within a competitive capitalist system (Joshy & Mohanan 2010). South Asia encompasses eight states-India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Maldives and Afghanistan. The region consists of a number of religions that originated in the Indian subcontinent like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism as well as those religions that arrived here like Islam, Christianity and Judaism. This religious diversity has had a clear cut influence on the social fabric of South Asia. India has a multi-religious composition in which 80.46 percent of the total population is Hindu, 13.46 per cent are Muslims, 2.34 per cent are Christians, 1.875 per cent are Sikhs, 0.41 percent are Jains and the remaining 0.65 per cent belong to other faiths. Pakistani society too confronts linguistic, ethnic, cultural diversities within the dominant Islamic religion. The Punjabis (60 per cent), Sindhis (12 per cent), Pukhtuns (14 per cent) and Baluchis (4 per cent) are the four ethnic groups in Pakistan. Mohajirs, the Indian migrants in Pakistan, comprise 8 per cent of the total population. Hindus and Christians are tiny minorities in Pakistan. It has been noted that 61 ethnic groups exist in the small state of Nepal. However, religion plays a major role in South Asia not only as belief systems of the people but also as agents of convergence within the state. Islam is the official religion of Pakistan and the Maldives, Hinduism was the official religion of Nepal and Mahayana Buddhism is the official religion in Bhutan. Both India and Sri Lanka follow secularism as their state policies (Momin 2009:21-38). In this scenario, the majority-minority relations are controversial topics for research. The process of nation-building in the recalcitrant clay of

pluralist realities caused large scale exclusions and most often the minorities have been the victims of this progression. Indeed, scarce resources and competing claims in the society always perpetuate conflicts and tension.

The nation-building process in multi-cultural societies like those in South Asia has been progressing on a majoritarian line. The homogeneity of the nation is imaged according to the cultural values of the majority community and it is on this premise that national identity has been moulded. As far as Afghanistan is concerned, after the Cold War it experienced the Talibanisation of the state and society. But Taliban did not succeed in its efforts to integrate the whole nation under the Islamic ideology professed and practiced by it. In its dealings with the smaller ethnic identities, Taliban pursued a policy which had a strong Pushtoon bias. Sri Lanka consists of 74 per cent Sinhalese, mainly concentrated in the south, west, and central parts of the country; and Hindus and Muslims besides Christians comprise almost 26 per cent of the total population. The Tamils comprise 12.6 per cent and they have settled in the northern and the eastern parts of the island nation (Kukreja 2008:237). The British colonialists politically integrated the island and during this regime a new Sinhala entrepreneurial class gained ascendance. Later on, the colonial power was transferred to this class combine (Kloos 2009:186-87). In the post-colonial era due to large scale marginalisation, Tamils asserted for equal rights. They were discriminated against through governmental policies especially in the five major areas of land, language, education, employment, and power sharing.

These eventually turned into violent conflicts (Kukreja 2008:237). Quite differently, the state of Bangladesh is a counter symbol of pure religious nationalism propagated by the elites of Pakistan. In 1971, territorial-ethno-linguistic and cultural nationalism gave birth to Bangladesh (Sheth 1989:383 and Mishra 2000). Muslims comprise 86 per cent of the total population, Hindus 13 per cent, and tribals 1 percent. The tribal population also enjoys linguistic-cultural-religious variations (Momin 2009:34). Two thirds of the tribal population are located in the Chittagong Hill tracts. This border area is conflict prone because these tribal sections have been revolting against the state's attempts of 'Bangladeshisation' (Phadnis 1986:18-20). These voices were regarded as anti-national and a security threat to the nation.

Nepal is a country of hybrid ethnic and linguistic groups. Urmila Phadnis broadly classifies the population of Nepal into three categories- Tibeto-Burman, Indo-Aryan and Austro-Asiatic (Phadnis 2001:72-73). However, the economic resources are concentrated in the hands of a tiny section in the Terai area. The slow pace of societal change and non-competitive nature of the Nepali economy have been the principal causes of inter-ethnic conflicts in Nepal (Phadnis 1986:14-16). The Bhutanese society emerged as a result of co-mingling of various ethnic groups which are identifiable across the region (Phadnis 2001:71). Bhutan's population comprises of three major ethnic groups-Bhutiya (50 per cent), Nepalese Grung (35 per cent), Sharchops (15 per cent) (Momin 2009:34). The Bhutanese polity is a coalition of different elite sections of various communities legitimized by those

communities (Phadnis 1986:16). The State of Bhutan has had an image of sacrosanctity till the 1980s. Because of its ethnic complexities and feudal structure it has generated its own form of ethnic conflicts (Sinha 2008:282-308). Bhutan witnessed ethnic tensions during the 1990s, in the aftermath of the new citizenship act, which marginalized many members of the minority Nepali community located in the southern part of country by making them stateless (Momin 2009:36). The people of Maldives are mainly migrants from Sri Lanka, Arabia and Africa-which renders a multi-ethnic texture to that state. Around the 12th century, people of this nation were massively converted into Islam, even though ethnic diversity has prevailed in the state. The Divehi language essentially derived from Elu (an old form of Sinhala) has provided a greater degree of cultural homogeneity to the state despite its regional and dialectical differences in the north and in the south. Phadnis (1986:17 and 2001:75) views that both the Islamic religion and the Divehi language provide a strong national identity and cultural distinctiveness to the state. However, the homogenising imperative of the modern nation-state is employing the process of coercion as well as consensus. Often minorities are labeled as 'anti-national.' The Mohajirs in Pakistan, the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka, the Nepalese in Bhutan and the Chackmas in Bangladesh are best examples of this. As a strategy to legitimise their regime, the ruling classes of these states have been using the 'anti-India' card. Because of the blurred ethnic boundaries between India and her neighbours, the internal developments in these countries have ramifications in India. The next section of the study delves much

deeper into the process of nation-building in the two important states of South Asia - India and Pakistan.

'Security' and Nation-Building: Experiences of India and Pakistan

The idea of 'nation' is modern and it is identical with 'homogeneity.' The homogeneity is coterminous with security and Western discourses on society and polity are biased on this particular aspect. The emergence of nationalism in the West is linked to various developments and it is viewed as a corollary of 17th century British rebellion against Monarchy (Khon 1967), the 18th century struggles against Iberian colonialism (Anderson 1991), the French revolution of 1789 (Alter 1989) etc. As Hobsbawn said: "the basic characteristic of the modern nation and everything connected in it is its modernity" (Hobsbawn 1990:4 and Smith 2005). In fact, the modern nation-state is an embodiment of a particular production relation and the gradual transition from the 'absolute statism' to the modern State (Anderson 1986 and Anderson 1979) demarcates the emergence of nationalism in the West. Here nationalism is pertained to protect the interests of the dominant class, who sought internal coherence for the smooth functioning of the modern capitalist system. In fact, the values of western modernity rest on the premise that human nature is rational and rational superiority over passions prompted them to take no risks in their social life (Locke 1960). In this respect, the *raison de etre* of modern nation-State is the notion of security and the State becomes an overarching authority as concerned with the security of people (Dillon 1996). Here, the enlightenment project itself

could be seen as a 'security project' and it lays emphasis upon the rational equality of all human beings beyond their cultural divisions. The homogenising imperative is embedded in Western modernity.

The West is claimed as the 'security community,' an outcome of their homogeneous disposition. The homogenised, secular western model of nation-state becomes the symbol of development and security. Here homogeneity is equated with 'security' and plurality is termed as 'insecurity' and 'weakness.' However, it is viewed that 'the homogeneity and stability of the western democracies has a history of violence and it is either by coercive assimilation, forced migration or genocide that the modern nations have come out' (Mann 1999:22). Contrary to the West, nationalism in the East has emerged as a response to discriminative colonial practices. The colonialists had legitimised their regime in the colonies with their rationalist discourses. The inception of nationalist sentiments first came out in the writings of the newly emerging intelligentsia who questioned the very rationale of Orientalist criticisms that viewed the civilisations of the East as 'primitive, dark and superstitious.' In fact, nationalism emerged in the East as a response to Western modernity. Partha Chatterjee notes:

'Eastern' nationalism… has appeared among 'peoples recently drawn into a civilisation hitherto alien to them, and whose ancestral cultures are not adapted to success and excellence by these cosmopolitan and increasingly dominant standards.' They too have measured the backwardness of their nations in terms of

certain global standards set by the advanced nations of Western Europe. But what is distinct here is that there is also a fundamental awareness that those standards have come from an alien culture, and that the inherited culture of the nation did not provide the necessary adaptive leverage to enable it to reach those standards of progress. The 'Eastern' type of nationalism, consequently, has been accompanied by an effort to 're-equip' the nation culturally, to transform it (Chatterjee 1996:2).

However, the native attempts were statured around a central theme that focused on how to catch up with the Western world without losing their cultural distinctiveness. Chatterjee viewed it as contradictory: "'It is both imitative and hostile to the models that it imitates…'It is imitative in that it accepts the value of the standards set by the alien culture", and in the same coin it "rejects the alien intruder", "rejects the ancestral ways as the obstacles to progress" and "yet also cherished as marks of identity"(ibid). However, the intercourse of the East with Western modernity produced multifaceted responses. One response is as Richard G. Fox viewed it, the "hyper enchantment" of identities - which contradicts with modernity's basic values and at the same time functions within its frame (Fox 2005:235-49). The Hindu Right (Sangh Parivar) in India is an example, that it whole heartedly accepted Western modernity in its institutional level and at the same time contradicted with its basic values. When we trace the genealogy of the Hindutva, it goes back to the late 19th century, especially in the writings of Dayananda Saraswathi, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, V D Savarkar and Golwalkar (Sharma 2003 and Kuruvachira 2006). On the one hand they celebrated a glorious Indian past and criticised the perverted present and at the same time envisaged the importance of western modernity for the progress of Indian society.

The extreme version of Hindu assertion, the Hindutva, has embraced the western science and technology and viewed it as an essential pre-requisite for attaining the Hindurashtra. They are so fascinated by the West, especially its technological /military superiority and their existence as 'homogeneous' nations. The Hindu Right argues that the pluralist existence of the Hindu society is its weakness; therefore they "homogenise" and "militarise" the nation towards the 'Hindurashtra' (Savarkar 1984 and Golwalkar 2000). According to the Hindu Right, the idea of Hindurashtra is the reinvention of the glorious Hindu/Indian past, and the only way to re-invoke the tradition and purify the present Indian society. In this process, Hindutva justifies ethnic cleansing. The Hindu Right forces in India has been crystallising the Hindu 'Self' by positing the Muslims, Christians and the Communists as the 'Other,' and legitimising the violence against the 'Other' by manipulating historical facts. The Hindu Right has territorialised the nation and in various ways Muslim/Pakistan is represented as the 'Other' of Hindu/India. In a similar manner the ruling classes in Pakistan had been using the 'anti-India' card for regime legitimacy. In this gamut of relations, 'security' is the legitimising force which distances the 'Self' from the 'non-Self.'

In the preface of his book Adeel Khan says: "Nationalism is a way of dealing

with a world where 'everything melts in the thin air': It is a form of self-love in which individuals celebrate their group identity, and like all forms of self-love gets its strength more from its hatred of others than its love for its self." He continues, "Nationalism is probably the only form of self-love that gets its life-blood from an institution, the modern state" (Khan 2005). The modern nation-State is the embodiment of nationalism which is characterised by its homogeneous existence. According to Shiv Visvanathan the notion of nation "smacks of togetherness, fixities, boundaries" (Visvanathan 2003:2295). As far as South Asia is concerned nationalism is "border-crossings, a reciprocity of opposites" (ibid).The policies of the colonial masters integrated the nations economically and the nature of mobilisations against colonialism by native political elite determined the cartographical setting of South Asia. The 'cutting and shaping' has progressed on a majoritarian line and in the postcolonial period to a greater extent the painful history of the past has been manipulated for distancing the 'Other' from the 'Self.' In the postcolonial period, the old political practices got transformed into more sophisticated mobilisations and maneuverings (Joshy & Mohanan 2010). However, the nation-building process in a multicultural society like South Asia has been progressing on a majoritarian line and most often the victims are the minority communities. The notion of security is the running force and by creating 'Others' both within and outside the territorial parameters of the nation, the postcolonial state has been perpetuating an 'insecurity syndrome,' which dehumanise the Other by generating a chain of images through various mediums which

include the national rituals commemorating various epochs in the history of the 'nation,' cricket matches (Nandy 1985 and Krishna 1993) and other regional engagements. War is also a tool which provides a vast canvas for caricaturing the 'Other' and strengthening the 'Self.' In a logical progression of insiders/outsiders, purity/pollution, civilised/uncivilized, the ruling class has been sustaining an enemy image about the 'Other.' The 'Other' is represented as a 'security threat' to the defined order and the violence against it is legitimised on the grounds of securing the 'Self.' Sajal Nag (2001:4758) notes:

The project of all nation states is nation-building by which it is constantly shedding portions of its own people from its purview and thereby creating its own outsiders. The nation-states spearheaded this process because it emanated from logical requirements of an industrial system. This state formation requires homogeneity; it also requires loyalty. Therefore dissent was a disqualification for its citizenship.

The seeds of ambivalence and violence are inherited in the notion of nation. It steps from the idea of 'static' citizenship, 'problematic nature of identity,' 'positivism between territory and people,' 'fixity of boundaries,' and the 'genocidal nature of the exclusionary process' (Visvanathan 2003: 2296). However, the idea of nation remains central to most attempts to define legitimate political communities (Harris 1990). Since independence, the states of South Asia have been facing two overlapping problems, namely, 1) the internal constraints over developing and sustaining a nationalist image and 2) legitimately positing the

nation-state in the web of a modern world system. The colonialists ruled these societies with their rationalist discourses and questioned the legitimacy of these societies to become nation-states because of their multi-ethnic composition. Here the notion of the nation is posited against a pluralist reality. In this backdrop the States of South Asia emerged with an emphasis on the possibility of an imposition of a rational socio-political order above multiple ethnic realities. However, the contradiction between the attempts to homogenise and the resistance directed against it in favour of heterogeneity, determine the future course of South Asian politics.

In India, the contradictory policies of colonialists in their dealings with natives had given considerable inputs to the emergence of the nationalist movement. There were three 'master narratives' in Indian nationalism. One was a secular nationalism propagated by the Indian National Congress; the other was religious nationalism-mainly in two streams: Hindu nationalism and Muslim nationalism. The third one was caste based assertions of the deprived sections (Varshney 2002:55-59). All these streams evolved in their opposition to colonialism. Coincidently, religious nationalism progressed in parallel with the dominant version of nationalism propagated by the Indian National Congress. The Hindu nationalist assertion, especially large scale mobilisations in the 19th century like the 'cow protection movement' by the Arya Samaj and the Urdu-Hindi controversy, generated 'insecurity complex' among the Muslim elite (Nag 1999). Some eloquent sections among Indian Muslims demanded a

safeguard against the possible 'tyranny of the denominational majority' (Ahamad 1997). The Muslim identity mobilisations culminated into the partition of India and the birth of a new nation-state, Pakistan. Sajal Nag says: "Two centuries of divide and rule politics of the colonial state and five decades of communal mobilisation logically culminated in the partition of British India" (Nag 1999:4755). The partition caused massive bloodshed on both sides. Large scale displacements, refugee flows, pain, miseries, all generated deep rooted psychic assault against the people of both countries. From 1947 onwards, the leadership of both India and Pakistan has been very much eager to harp on the cause of division. The problem of Kashmir has sustained itself as a 'symbolic site' as well as a 'burning site' of that great tragedy, partition. From this point the process of nation-building started in these countries in diametrically opposite ways, generating new forms of security issues. A. K. Pasha notes: "Midnights children-Pakistan and India-remain locked in an unending spiral of mistrust, conflict and war. In their political imagination, in mutual relations, in constructing national identity, for these intimate enemies security is not simply restricted to the state; it remains a durable feature of the practices of civil society" (Pasha 1996:286). The question of Kashmir is the core determinant of relations between India and Pakistan and the elites of both these countries have been manipulating this issue for regime legitimacy. The whole gamut of intellectual fashioning by governmental machineries sought to perpetuate stereotypical images about the 'Other.' Coincidently, the civil society has been reproducing these statist projects.

In India, the nationalist struggle enabled the Congress to create an ideological hegemony in society. In the post-colonial period new connotations like 'national development,' 'national interest' and 'national security' had totalised the security thinking in India. In contrast with Gandhi's visions on state and development, Nehru promulgated a new, modern, developmental nationalism (Chatterjee 1996) which had a 'silencing effect' on the society (Mohanan and Joshy 2010:1-8). He envisaged a modern developed India with heavy industrialisation and big dams which were labeled as 'temples of development.' Rightly speaking, he had simplified persisting social realities in India with an argument that 'heavy industrialisation would replace the caste and religious identities with class based identities.' However, this developmental nationalism was preoccupied with the process of nation-building, which envisaged a national identity above pluralist realities. However, the new developmental culture excluded a vast chunk of the population; eventually they were evacuated from their homeland. The dissenting voices were labeled as 'anti-national' and dealt with severely. In short, the narcissist practices of nation-building distanced the 'Other' both within and outside the territorial boundaries of the nation. Let us discuss the nation-building process in Pakistan.

Ideological engineering is an essential aspect of legitimate existence of a nation-state, which seeks 'individuality,' and 'separateness.' As far as Pakistan is concerned this has been a daunting task. It has been facing quite a number of problems which varies from the 'problem of differentiating Pak culture from Indian,' 'the ambiguity regarding the role of religion in State affairs,' 'legitimacy of Muslim nationalism' etc… Indeed, Pakistan is not a product of a popular struggle, but Muslim nationalism erected from the 'fear of the Hindu majority' and subsequently, this fear psychosis has been used by the ruling class for uniting the nation and sustaining regime legitimacy. In fact, the Pak movement was a movement of Muslims rather than Islam (Amin 2009)[1], and its national leader, Jinnah was ambiguous on the nature of the political system and what role Islam has to play in the system. The imposition of Urdu as national language is another issue which caused a clash between the cultural reality of the State and the Statist ideology (Khan 2005:68-77). The creation of Pakistan was legitimised on the premise that the linguistic and ethnic divisions could be surpassed by the dominant Islamic identity. This nationalistic perspective took an intolerant attitude towards hybridism and diversity. However, even though Pakistan remains Islamic, Punjabi ethnic identity is the core determining factor in the affairs of the State. 80 percent of the army and 55 percent of the federal bureaucracy is from Punjab. Punjabi domination in state affairs is being legitimised by equating Punjab's interest with that of Pakistan's. The assertion of other ethnic groups is considered as 'anti-national', implying that they are pro-Indians (Samad 2009:208-214). Pakistan has had four spells of direct and indirect military rule and several failed coups and each was justified on the grounds of national security (Cohen 2004:7) meaning threat from India. Indeed, the Pakistani national Self is moulded by positing India as it's 'Other.' Pakistani ruling elite has been using the 'anti-India card' for regime legitimacy for quite long. In fact,

there is tension hanging over the constraints of nation-building, regime legitimacy and the growing urge for democracy.

After Jinnah, Pakistani politics has been facing deeper systemic crisis displaying a bewildering array of shifting allegiance and alliances. In its sixty years of existence, Pakistan has been administered by martial law regimes for nearly 30 years. At other times, the army has more directly pulled the strings of puppet democratic dispensations. The great influence of the military always keeps the Pakistani state as 'praetorian.' The State upholds a 'political economy of defense' over a 'political economy of development' (Talbot 2003:1-3 and Kukreja 2003:58). The dominant influence of the Punjabi ethnic community over the military and the bureaucracy is a major determinant of the political horoscope of Pakistan. This trajectory emanated mainly out of the loss of East Pakistan (the pre-independent state of Bangladesh) which changed the balance of the political power in Pakistan. East Pakistan comprised of more moderate Islamists and with its secession Punjabis became the dominant ethnic community in Pakistan (Cohen 2004:9). Veena Kukreja notes: "Pakistan's traumatic and uncertain political history exemplifies a struggle between the forces of authoritarianism and constitutionalism, or a conflict between state and civil society" (Kukreja 2003:XII). In this scenario, Pakistani elite has been positing India as its 'Other' and justifying a militaristic State. Najam Sethi, a critic of the Pakistani State observes:

The Pakistani State has come to be fashioned largely in response to perceived and propagated, real and imagined threats to its national security from India. The mentality and outlook of the Pakistani State is therefore that of a historically besieged state. That is why conception of national security, defined in conventional military terms, dominates the Pakistani State's thinking on many issues. Indeed, that is why state outlook dominates government policies. That is why Pakistan's foreign policy runs its domestic policy rather than the other way round. That is why Pakistan's economy is hostage to Pakistan's Cold War conceptions of 'national security' rather than being an integral part of it. That is why Pakistan is more a state-nation rather than a nation-state (Sethi 1999:7).

The State-led nation-building process in the states of India and Pakistan has entered into a crucial period where nuclear weapons have become the symbol of national honour and security. The decline of the 'Congress system' and the ascendancy of the Hindu Right forces in India in the late 80s have changed the security situation in South Asia. The Hindu Right forces, broadly the Sangh Parivar, strictly follow the 'Hindutva' agenda; and portray the Muslim/Pakistan as the 'Other' of the Hindu 'Self.' Through various mobilisations like the Babri Masjid-Ramajanmabhoomi issue, Common Civil Code, Shah Bano controversy, Mandal issues- the Sangh combine has 'securitised' the society along the line of insiders/outsiders, purity/pollution, civilised/uncivilsed. The nuclear explosions became the testing ground of showing "national loyalty" and those who opposed the Bomb were regarded as 'anti-national' or 'pro-Pakistani.' On a hyper-realist ground, the political leaders of the Hindu Right legitimised the explosions

(see Singh 1998:41-52).The Sangh Parivar generated a chaonistic nationalism and military jingoism through the Hindu Right organisations working in civil society. In this scenario, it is evident that the State produces 'insecurity complex' at various levels and through the realm of civil society this has been reproduced in umpteen number of ways (Joshy and Seethi 2010:163-73).

In response to the nuclear misadventure of India, Pakistan exploded five nuclear devises. In a post-Chagai statement, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said: "Our hand was forced by the present Indian leadership's reckless actions" (Ram 1998). However, Pakistani nuclear tests strengthened the hands of the Hindu Right. The ruling elites of both India and Pakistan benefited from this hasty action. Ian Talbot says, 'fifty years of nation-building based on animosity to the neighbouring 'Other' State culminated in Pakistan's 'settling the account,' by conducting five nuclear explosions at a test site in Baluchistan. Henceforth, Pakistan and India were to face each other across the Wagah border armed with the Hindu and Muslim bombs' (Talbot 2003:366).

Concluding Observations

From this discussion it is evident that the notion of 'Security' plays a pivotal role in the process of nation-building. The experiences of India and Pakistan are best examples of how the nation-building process has been progressing in South Asia. In this progression, the minorities are excluded and imaged as the 'security threat' to the nation. The dominant discourses of International Relations are not sufficient enough to understand the 'political complexities' of South Asia. A Constructivist approach to the region would add much flavour to the understanding of the intricacies and complexities of relations in South Asia. "Security" is the running force for the legitimate sustenance of the states of the region and it is inextricably interlinked with identity politics. The successive Congress governments in India maintained a 'national identity' by inculcating the 'images' from the Indian nationalist struggle and also the new connotations like 'national development,' 'national security,' 'national interest' were also employed for the 'integrity' of the "nation." However, dissenting voices were regarded as anti-national and dealt with severely. Indeed, the Congress, especially under the leadership of Nehru tried to transcend the rigid cultural compartments with secular credentials. On the contrary, the Hindu Right forces in India ascended by inculcating a series of issues and the common denominating factor is the critical notion of "Security." They questioned the secularism of the Congress and promulgated aggressive cultural nationalist sentiments through various mobilisations across India. The Hindutva politics of representation legitimises anti-Muslim/anti-Pakistan stance in the name of 'securing' the Hindu body politic at various levels. 'The Muslim' is seen as a 'threat' to national, state and international security. Likewise, the ruling class in Pakistan has been sustaining a stereotypical image about "Hindu/India", the 'historical threat to the nation.'

Notes

1) Amin viewed that the militants of 'political Islam' are not interested in discussing religious dogmas. The 'Political Islam' have an unwholly aliance

with imperialism. It aligns itself with 'dependent capitalism' and 'dominant imperialism.' It supports the 'sacred charecter of property' and 'legitimizes inequality.'The British succeeded in dividing India through its policies and it 'persuaded the Muslim leaders to create their own state, trapped from its birth in political Islam.' It is evident that political Islam could not move out from the borders of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, the two epic centers of political Islam, without the strong support of the United States.

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Cultural Identities and Regional Cooperation in South Asia: *'Consciousness & Construction'* (An Indian Perspective)

Syed Mohd Amir

Abstract

The nurturing and consolidation of democratic institutions and processes in South Asia will essentially be done by domestic actors. In the ultimate analysis, the responsibility for initiating and implementing the multitude of structural, economic, social and political reforms necessary to institutionalize democracy must be taken by South Asians themselves. External players can only play a supportive role and their capacities to bring about fundamental change are necessarily limited. The coming to power of elected governments in a number of South Asian countries in 2008 is the beginning, not the end, of the process of consolidating and sustaining fragile democracies in the region.

I

Partition/Independence- 15 August 1947- was the moment of the establishment of the two new nation states of India and Pakistan. But it was also- and here the date becomes less clear-cut- the moment of the congealing of new 'identities', relations, histories, or of their being thrown into question once again. *The irony of history is that the last battle of our war of independence in 1947 was not fought by the foreign rulers, but between the two major religious communities living in the subcontinent, In the river of blood which flowed during the twilight days of the British Empire in India, not a drop of foreign masters' blood could be discerned [sic]; it was purely South Asian. The British left with all their prestige and goodwill and their colonial legacy intact* (Rao 1996:11).

An elemental force had burst its confines (*on the stroke of midnight on August 14, 1947*) and swept like a flood across the land. Would it also wash away the cobwebs, the inertia and deadness of centuries? Would it create overnight a brave new country in which everything would be perfect? Anything seemed possible. Next

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morning, on August 15, 1947, the sun rose in the eastern sky to reveal the same squalor, the staggering poverty and hunger, the deep inequalities as the day before. Myriad of flowers, yellow and orange marigolds and pink rose petals, lay scattered on the ground, stale, scentless, trampled. The municipal sweepers came and swept away the street, and the blossoms mingled in the dust (Nair 1961:xx). Winston Churchill *said that India wasn't a nation, just an 'abstraction.'* John Kenneth Galbraith*, more affectionately and more memorably, described it as 'functioning anarchy'. Both of them, in my view, under-estimated the strength of the 'India-idea'. It may be the most innovative national philosophy to have emerged in the post-colonial period. It deserves to be celebrated- because it is an idea that has enemies, within India as well as outside her frontiers, and to celebrate it is to defend it against its foes (*Rushdie 1997).

Few years ago the Human Development Centre, in Islamabad described South Asia as the *'poorest, the most illiterate, the most malnourished, the least gender-sensitive- indeed, the most deprived region in the world'.* Is the case still the same?[1]

At fifty or rather sixty, the crisis of the sovereign Republic of India cannot be purely biological. No mid-life crisis this, for sixty years in the life of a nation, is an occasion to worry about the cellular stability of nationhood. And India this morning shows no signs of 'the state withering away'. Rather, the Republic is seemingly confident, not irredeemably subordinated to tradition, and it is not looking back with nostalgia. The popular will still continues to drive *national destiny*. No singular man's paranoia or

fantasy has succeeded in repudiating that will. *Democracy*, with all its chaos and anarchy, has not only successfully survived. It has thrived beyond the limits of an average Indian's expectation (The '*Indian Express'* 2000).

Why have the experiences of India and Pakistan been so different since their independence? Various explanations already exist. Although Ayesha Jalal's emphasis on the structural and ideational features of colonialism in the postcolonial era is valid, her attempt to obfuscate the dichotomy between democracy in India and military governments in Pakistan and Bangladesh does not carry conviction. Similarly, her attempt to discover the common strand of authoritarianism in the political experiences of India and Pakistan reveals her insensitivity to the important achievements of Indian democracy (Jalal 1998:249-50). Ayesha Jalal describes India as a "*formal democracy*" resting on the well-worn "authoritarian stumps" of the colonial state and accuses the Indian Government of being too centralized, while attributing success of its "*formal democracy*" to the original strength of the Congress and the political skills of its leaders. I tend to disagree with this point of view to a certain extent. In my opinion the fact that the Indian Government kept the Colonial setup's unitary system intact was quite necessary because there was a need for a strong federal unit to keep all the periphery states and ethnic minorities from breaking away, which was quite likely especially when the sub continent had just gone through partition (Jalal 1997:135-36). *The subaltern historians* argue that *Indian democracy* was not the outcome of a national popular revolution but a passive one carried out by

the Gandhian-led Congress that enabled the bourgeoisie to institute its hegemony over the subaltern groups, but without a formal confrontation with them. Most other writers ascribe Indian democracy to a developed political culture, viable institutions, dedicated elites, unique organizational skills on the part of the Indians, a tradition of compromise and accommodation, the success of the Congress in having institutionalized itself in states and society and the British role, in having bequeathed tutelary democracy to India. Conversely the break down of democracy in Pakistan is attributed to a back ward political culture, unseasoned corrupt leaders, ethnic and group frictions, weak institutions debilitated by further stresses arising from the exigencies of nation building in a new state, the incompatibility of Islam and democracy and the contradictions between the Islamic notions of the community and recently in the instituted idea of electoral politics (Farzana 1989:67).

In order to save mankind we have to learn to live together in concord in spite of traditional differences of religion, civilization, nationality, class and race. In order to live together in concord successfully, we have to know each other's past, since human life, like the rest of the phenomenal universe, can be observed by human minds only as it presents itself to them on the move through time… For our urgent common purpose of self-preservation, it will not be enough to explore our common underlying human nature. The psychologist's work needs to be supplemented by the archaeologist, the historian, the anthropologist and the sociologist. We must learn to recognize, and as far as possible, to understand, the different cultural configurations in which our common

human nature has expressed itself in the different religions, civilizations, and nationalities into which human culture has come to be articulated in the course of history… We shall, however, have to do more than just understand each other's cultural heritage, and more even than appreciate them. We shall have to value them and love them as being parts of mankind's common treasure and therefore being ours too, as truly as the heirlooms that we ourselves shall be contributing to the common stock (Toynbee 2005:56; Mushirul and Asim 2005:ix). The British historian *Arnold Toynbee* penned these words of wisdom. I believed they deserve serious reflection in the present scenario.

II

As far as the '*Identitie*s' are concerned, they are made of images, be they of the 'self, the 'other', or the 'world' in which the self must relate to the other. Often enough, these images exaggerate, filter, distort and falsify reality; the self constructs itself by imagining inner harmony, unity and even homogeneity much greater than that actually exists; the other looms large as a figure monolithic and often menacing, drawn in shades contrasting one's own, and the world appears more black and white, and more rough- edged, than it actually is (Chopra, Frank and Schroder 1999:251). An identity is a feeling of belonging, belonging to the same collectivity whether family, village, regional (*in the infra-national sense*), national or supranational. These collectivities fit one inside the others; the same is true of identities. Consciousness, on the other hand, is something else. This notion is political and designates the general feeling that a

collectivity has of the necessity of having a political project. A group can have a strong identity without having a common 'political' consciousness. This is what happened, though different nations made different choices. Consciousness here presupposes a moment or moments of awareness of a necessity; 'Gradually, by a series of successive awarenesses, the people thus become a nation'. Similarly, we propose the following hypothesis; Asian Consciousness, different from Asian Identity, is a series of awareness of the political necessity of building Asia, i.e. passing from the 'idea' to the act. It is not enough to feel Asian, to be Asian in order to feel the necessity to make *Asia Strong Cooperative* in broad perspective. The conditions for the establishment and maintenance of cultural

identity or ethnicity are closely tied to the way in which personal identity is constituted. If '*Cultural Identity*' is the generic concept, referring to the attribution of set of qualities to a given population, we can say that cultural identity that is experienced as carried by the individual, in the blood, so to say, is what is commonly known as ethnicity. It is not practiced but inherent, not achieved but ascribed. In the strongest sense this is expressed in the concept of race, or biological descent, learned by each and every individual and distinctive precisely at the level of individual behavior. The latter is the most general Western notion of ethnicity. The weakest form of such attribution is referred to in terms of 'lifestyle', or way of life, which may or may not have a basis in tradition.

Cultural Identity

Race	Western (Modern) Ethnicity	Traditional Ethnicity	Life style
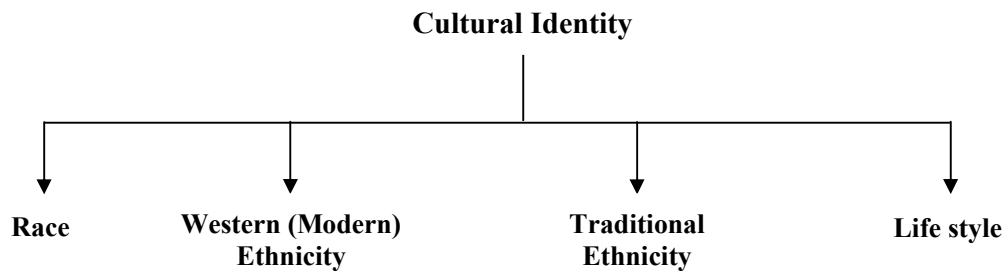
Traditional ethnicity is a very different kind of cultural identity. It is based on membership defined by the practice of certain activities including those related to descent. Ethnic affiliation can be easily changed or complemented by geographic mobility of by change in reference. Where a member of a group changes residence he is adopted or adopts the local ancestors and gods and becomes a practicing member of

the new community. Cultural identity is something that individuals have and that is the basis of a certain kind of social identity, but such identity is never the content of the social institutions of society (Friedman 1994:27-30).

Culture is understood here as a matrix of meanings that plays a constitutive part in generating and preserving a collective

identity. Everything a collective constructs in order to generate and preserve the collective identity and is then established by actors in a communicative situation as its context can be assigned to the realm of culture.[2] Culture is always intertwined with meaning, as Max Weber already pointed out: "From the human standpoint, culture is a finite segment of the meaningless infinity of occurrences in the world that has been imbued with sense and meaning." By restricting the concept of culture to the realm of identity and meaning, our understanding of culture can be described as a middle-range conception. It is thus distinct from sociological concepts of culture (*culture as a set of standards, values and norms and their symbolizations*) and from broader ethnological concepts of culture (*culture as the epitome of human life-styles*). The advantage of a concept of culture pegged to identity lies in its practicability: It focuses on precisely that section of reality that is of interest in the current discourse, namely identities. Political conflict as communication is always embedded in a structural context which forms the framework for communication and standardizes it, as it makes certain themes and the use of certain media at certain times by certain actors more probable than conceivable alternatives. First and foremost, it is the socio-cultural (sub-) context that is important for a focus on cultural conflicts. We can distinguish here between the social (*political, economic, and demographic structures*) and the cultural context (i.e., culture).As communication, any political conflict refers to its context. Cultural conflicts stand out for a particularity: Cultural conflicts do not simply refer to the cultural context; in cultural conflicts the cultural context itself becomes the object of conflict. The especially contentious nature of cultural conflicts stems from the fact that they do not primarily hinge on a clearly definable, interest-based (*and thus essentially negotiable*) objects. Rather, the actors perceive or assert a fundamental difference with regard to the framework in which the communication takes place. There is thus not only a contrast in interests, but Actor A discerns or thinks that Actor B's thoughts, feelings and actions are shaped by a fundamentally different (culturally and identity-related) context. In conventional, non-cultural conflicts, confrontational communication addresses a conflict issue that is expressed in explicit demands as a clearly delineated interest based conflict item. Cultural conflicts, by contrast, revolve around identity, not interests. The conflict issue is determined not by what the actors want or say they want, but by what they are or believe they are. Even if non-cultural conflict items almost always play an additional role, communication in a cultural conflict centers on one or several not explicitly formulated identity-related themes (*conflict fields*). One most objective and excellent example of a multidisciplinary study of Muslim communities, with special reference to South Asia, is *Islam, Communities and the Nation:* Muslim Identities in South Asia and beyond (Hasan 1998).

III

Regional Cooperation however, has to succeed in the region, if South Asia wants to integrate itself into a globalized world. As one scholar sums up aptly: *Cooperation is no longer an option but a necessity thrust upon the countries of South Asia as a result of the global changes* (Rizvi 1993).

According to Raimo Vayryen, the term '**Region**' can be defined as: '…spatial concept which is defined by a combination of geographical proximity, density of interactions, shared institutional frameworks, and common cultural identities … Regions are not so much measurable building blocs of the international order as spatially defined cultural, economic, and political constructions whose nature and functions are transformed over time…' (Vayrynen 1997).

Accepting this definition, the region of South Asia can be characterized as one with the longest history and as coherent political, economic and even administrative unity (Kosla 1999:9). All the countries belonging to this region and erstwhile parts of the Indian subcontinent are geographically compact (Chaube 1993:1). South Asia also constitutes a coherent environmental region with a conjoint ecological cycle and a common river, ocean and mountain system (Das 1998:2). The region indeed enjoys an extremely rich common historical tradition and legacy as well as cultural and socio-economic commonalities. According to one scholar, the best way to characterize the region is by accepting it as a 'security complex', which he defines following *Barry Buzan and G. Rizivi* as: '….a subsystem of the international community of states that for reasons of geography, history and culture are intimately related to each other' (Vernon 1997:5).[3] The interactions of domestic and international state systems, according to them, are best brought out by this reference (Vernon 1997:4).

Thus, greater regional cooperation has assumed greater relevance and significance for the countries in South Asia in the post- Cold War period. The progress towards that goal has,, however, been halting and often faltering. India, given her greater geo- strategic presence in the region must, initiate the policy of constructive regional engagement at a greater pace. Given the changing nature of global politics as well as economics, it has also become quite imperative for other South Asian countries to get involved in the process and initiate reciprocal policy initiatives. The decade of the 2000s has witnessed some signs of such positive development. The process, however, requires further momentum through as well as multilateral initiatives. In the words of one scholar : "In the era of economic liberalization and all its entails, cooperation between small groups- whether between states at the regional and sub- regional levels or between communities at the local or the grassroots level- could be one of the major measures to safeguard the interests of the peoples of Asia against global market forces. Apart from strengthening the bargaining power that united action inevitably brings, such cooperation, if directed, could lead to, among other things, rational and sustainable use of natural and infrastructure resources, easing of tension and strife levels, economic benefits, empowerment that can mitigate to a large extent social and gender imbalances (Chowdhury 1998:1).

India has exerted some degree of influence on democracy in developing countries because its pre-independence leadership had a strong commitment to democratic values. During the Cold War, India did not have 'much value' for democracy as an organizing principle of international affairs as India found itself ranged against the Western democracies on

key issues. It attached 'more weight to the anti-Western criterion than the internal democratic credentials of its Eastern and Third World friends' (Raja Mohan 1999). The Indian Government has not 'hesitated either to support democratic movements or occasionally use military force beyond its borders [e.g. East Pakistan] to defend what it considered to be universal values' (Raja Mohan 2007:113). In recent years, it has emphasized the relevance of a pluralistic, liberal, multicultural and multilingual India as '*a model of democratic practice*' to the world.

India has been able to achieve economic development and poverty reduction while remaining a liberal, secular, multi-religious democracy, thereby offering an alternative to the Chinese model of 'development-without-democracy'. India can use its influence to support democracy more actively in other countries. However, it has not developed a policy of democracy promotion in its foreign policy. It has only been willing to promote democracy 'passively or as part of a larger group' and has been reluctant to assume a leadership role (Dormandy 2007:125). India does not believe in either the 'export' of ideology or the 'imposition' of democracy or democratic values on any country. Being a firm believer in sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs, India does not advocate either 'diplomatic activism' or 'any form of political interventionism' to strengthen democracy in the world.

As we know that India is one of the ten founding members of the Community of Democracies, launched in 1999 as 'an international coalition of the democratic

countries to foster cooperation for the protection and consolidation of democracy' (*Indian Ministry of External Affairs 2002*). India went along cautiously with the US initiative but was 'not prepared to invest significant political or diplomatic energies into it' (Dormandy 2007:113). In a significant departure from its traditional focus on North-South issues, India for the first time supported the notion of promoting democracy at the UN when it supported the United Nations Democracy Fund in September 2005. India is the second largest contributor to the Fund after the USA. In its quest for energy sources in Africa and Latin America, India, unlike China, does not pursue this policy to the detriment of democracy or human rights (Dormandy 2007:125), although commitment to such norms may at some point conflict with national interests of energy security.

For India, democracy building also signifies that the structures of global governance, including the G-8, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations Security Council, be made more representative and legitimate. To most stakeholders in India, Europe is clearly overrepresented but is in no hurry to reduce its overrepresentation.

India shares its rich experience, institutional capabilities and training infrastructure with nations that share its values and beliefs and which request its assistance and expertise in the areas of electoral management and administration, electoral law and electoral reform. The Election Commission of India has also provided experts and observers for elections in other countries in cooperation with the

United Nations and the Commonwealth secretariat (*Election Commission of India 2008*). For example, in 2004, the Election Commission of India signed an MoU to assist the UN Electoral Assistance Division and offered help to fledgling democracies with personnel and expertise to build and administer institutions that can function as election observers.

India, for example, is one of the top donors to Afghanistan, providing development aid of over USD1 billion. This includes democracy assistance, inter alia, for the construction of the new Afghan Parliament building, training of parliamentary officials, support for the elections to the Constitutional *Loya Jirga*, and so on (*Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 2002*). India provides the developing world with 'a model of a democracy' which zealously protects its 'Democratic' processes through its own means'.

IV

South Asia has emerged as a regional entity in the international political system with the creation of SAARC but it failed to strengthen regional cohesiveness. Regional cooperation in South Asia cannot be said to have evolved into a complete bloc in terms of 'regionalism and economic integration' due mainly to the prevalence of conflict over the desire of peace and stability. Given the historical legacy and contemporary reality of endemic conflicts and mistrust in the region, the fact that the formal cooperation process in the region has survived recurrent setbacks is a testimony of the resilience of the organization. The antagonistic nature of relations with large set outstanding issues, low levels of intra-

SAARC trade and joint economic ventures, inadequate information and infrastructure facilities; independent and largely uncoordinated economic policies pursued by each country in the subcontinent and increasing '*militarization*' and '*religionisation*' of the region are all indicators of lack of 'region-ness' and herald a bleak future for any type of sustainable economic integration.

Notwithstanding all these, whatever the impetus, any new approach to strengthen relations should be administered by common economic goals and objectives in order to harness existing resources in the region for the mutual benefits of one billion people of the region. Lessons from other parts of the world (*such as neighboring Southeast Asia and the European Union)* prove the fact that regional organizations have thrived mainly on cooperation in trade and economic relations. The emergence of several trading blocks and economic groupings all over the world clearly indicates that economic survival and prosperity of any nation in this increasingly competitive post-Cold War era crucially depend on their ability to successfully integrate with other economies. It must also be remembered that without any integrated economy none of the South Asian countries can ever hope to become significant global players. The realization of durable peace and the future of economic integration through SAARC lie on the ability and interest of South Asian leaders to resolve domestic as well as long-standing differences. But how soon and to what extent they are going to achieve success remains unclear, which will be judged through action rather than pure rhetoric of politicians promoting regional cooperation. Any

realistic assessment of the prospects for the growth of economic integration depends on as how individual country address existing contentious issues and their commitment in promoting regional cooperation given the extensive heterogeneity of state formation an economic dynamics in South Asia. Complementarities in economic structure are necessary but not sufficient conditions for the development of economic relations among countries. The South Asian experience has demonstrated that political factors can cause long-lasting breakdown of establishment of economic links. Moreover, if peace is to be achieved through integration or vice-versa a new paradigm of forward looking process needs to be employed by the South Asian nations wherein they can discuss contentious issues such as Kashmir; border problems; distribution of natural resources with freely and fairly.

Despite religious and cultural heterogeneity there is no problem at the public level in South Asia –whether one comes from India or Pakistan, Hindu or Muslim they can hug each other without any problem. The centre of the problem lies with 'politics' of the nation states and its agencies. Therefore it can be argued that unless these problems are not ironed out even the supposed economic integration in South Asia will not bring peace and the process itself will remain at crossroads. The dilemma with South Asian states is that they aren't ready for full scaled economic integration for the fear of either being swamped up into Indian economy due to its hegemonic behavior or losing their sovereignty to some extent. They are also literally not ready to solve long standing political conflicts due mainly to their desire to maintain supremacy one over

another. At this outset, the concept that full-scale economic integration will lead to peace and hence 'peace dividend' thereof is far from reality at least in the present setting is the case of South Asia (Singh 1993:56-62).

In fact, India, with 72% of the territorial area in South Asia, 77% of its population and nearly 78% of the region's natural resources (Vermon 1997:19), apart from having the largest industrial base, economy and the fourth largest Territorial Army in the world, simply dominates the region. South Asia in fact, is argued, to be one of the world's most complex regions with multi-ethnic societies, characterized by striking internal divisions along linguistic, regional, communal and sectarian lines, but externally linked to one another across national boundaries. Yet, multiculturalism or pluralism as a guiding principle of governance is hardly adopted into the popular political culture of the region with India being a probable exception to a large extent. Furthering regional cooperation, however, would require as a prerequisite substantial improvement in regional relations through resolution of political and strategic differences. Increasing articulation of such sentiments at the official, as well as, academic level in India's neighboring countries would indicate that there is a requirement of Indian initiatives in improving bilateral relation. It has been argued that integration can be reaped only if states of the region are able to reconcile their political differences on the table (Vermon 1997:19; Anoop 2000:123).

Within South Asia, it has also become necessary for regional policy makers to give due recognition to pluralism, as the

dominant feature of the region. According to one analyst, "… The attempt to construct nation-states on the basis of exclusionary narratives of the past and univocal visions for the future has reached an impasse…." (Shankaran 1999:XVII). He further continues to assert that there is a, "need to conceive of South Asia as a space marked by highly decentralized nation-states…. and a pluralist sense of national identity" (Shankaran 1999: XVIII). Greater acceptance of such regional reality by South Asian policy makers could go a long way in resolving vexed issues and also reduce regional tensions in order to create a better political and strategic atmosphere in the region for developing the regional 'constructive cooperative' agenda.

It is a matter of great concern that South Asia is in the grip of multifaceted crises extenuated by the poor quality of governance and its inability to grapple with the challenges of population explosion, poverty, deprivation, social exclusion, rapid urbanization, and environmental degradation caused by the forces of development. The symptoms of this multifaceted crisis are seen in the rise of political and social violence, militarization of society, pervasive political graft and corruption, youth alienation and indeed, the undoing of democracy itself with the peaceful overthrow of an elected government by the military establishment for mal-governance. With a population of 1.3 billion or around 22% of the world population, the challenge to governance in South Asia is immense. The task ahead is made more complex by the regional diversity borne out of its multi-racial., multi-religious, multi-linguistic and multi-cultural composition. Furthermore, around 550 million or about 45% of the world's poor people are to be found in South Asia and have yet to fully enjoy the fruits of democracy and development. The poor are either out of the mainstream of development as chronically marginalized people or face hardships on account of anti-poor policies, priorities and institutions. The lack of democratic participation and its relation to poverty in South Asia can be seen in terms of ineffective political parties, local governments, national parliaments, civil society and civil service. In addition, the lack of dynamic and visionary political, bureaucratic and business leadership also serve to retard the extent of democratic participation in South Asia, strengthening the involvement of provincial councils in energy. The prevailing conditions of political and economic insecurity and the need to address them in a collective manner are compelling reasons to forge a strong South Asian community capable of facing locally and regionally.

V

The nations of South Asia are more alike than they look different. Cultures and languages spill across national borders, most of which were created in the colonial era. The turbulent past 60 years of South Asia have cost the region dearly. The prospects of a region, which could have been a leading geo-political entity in a multi-polar world, were dampened. Therefore, it is high time that new solutions and right directions are sought, especially with regard to the youth of the region. It is they who can effectively make an impact with their contributions, thus leading to the formation of a peaceful democratic South Asia.

So far as the positive meaning of 'Peaceful-Co-existence' is concerned, namely reaching ethical levels of dialogue and agreement on the foundations of living together and conciliation and recognizing pluralism, has all been taught by every religion. *"Peaceful-Coexistence is a kind of cooperation and mutual recognition concerning cultural and human interests and exchange of experience, which help mankind to develop the world and spread those values that are universally recognized as good. All of this is a kind of opening the gates of universal brotherhood*. It does not mean propagation of the views of the other, or the acceptance of its legitimacy in a religious way but rather the acceptance of coexistence in a secular way for the purpose of opening up dialogue on both religious and secular matters". He categorically supports Cultural Co-existence with Non-Muslims in the essay (Salman 2009).[4] *Th*e *Holy Bible* says, "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God" (St. Matthew, *The Bible* 5:9).

India is an interesting example of how a third world country without having the credentials, which the successful democracies of the first world possess, managed to institutionalize a viable form of democracy. In the last decade much criticism has been targeted at India for being centralized and that its much touted "democratic federalism" has been corrupted to a great extent. The recent policy of the nationalist and ethnically based parties "*to manipulate*" communal divisions among linguistic minorities is not appreciated at all either but the fact that democracy depends upon more then just the practices of political parties is over looked. I have argued in this

article that the success of the Indian democratic system is a result of the whole institutional framework around the political sphere which has evolved over the years and how ethnically diverse forces have shaped that process. India's democracy now has an institutional framework which is quite expansive in its approach and its multi-tiered--national parliament and government, state (province) parliaments and governments, each with its panoply of institutions, down to the municipal and village-council levels are perfectly suitable for such a vast and diverse country. In this regard, Sumantra Bose says that "The conflicts in Indian society and politics are legion, but the system has a capacity to diffuse (*and eventually, defuse*) most conflicts by multiplying the arenas of contestation to lower levels of government, which simultaneously act as arenas of brokerage." This means that by producing power brokers at all levels which tend to reduce the transaction costs of conflict resolution the Indian political system has evolved a framework both at the provincial and local government levels in which there is greater scope for resolving social tensions without any serious damage to the democratic system in the sub- continent (Bose 2010).

In conclusion, one can only argue that there is no universally accepted definition of democracy and countries who have been practicing democracy for more than two hundred years continue to debate various interpretations of key democratic precepts. Recognizing that the practice of democracy around the world is culturally and contextually embedded, it is important to highlight several essential features that help

distinguish democratic societies from those that are not. At its foundation, democratic society is one where the people are able to exercise civic and political rights and elect government officials to represent their interests in local and national/international political structures. A democratic system of government can take many forms and is fundamentally based on the principles of participation, representation, rule of law, protection of citizens' freedoms and liberties, limitations on the government's power in the private and public spheres, free and fair elections and an independent and transparent judiciary system.

Isabella Jean and Jessica Berns write that in multi-ethnic and diverse societies, democracy offers strong prospects for managing social and political conflicts. During the last decade, there has been a new and important emphasis in scholarly and policy realms on conflict- and coexistence sensitive approaches to democracy-building and promotion of good governance. There is growing agreement that multi-stakeholder dialogue and consensus-building is essential in such efforts as constitutional- and electoral-system design, security sector reform, transitional justice initiatives, natural resource management, and national dialogues on minority and language laws. These efforts, when pursued in a participatory and inclusive manner, are as important as the content of the political treaties and normative documents that result from them. In societies that have endured long-lasting divisions, as well as in consolidated democracies, the sustainability of conflict-prevention efforts and intercommoned coexistence relies on democratic practice informed by principles

of inclusion, participation, and respect independent judiciary system, equality legislation, and the recognition of both collective rights of minorities for diversity. Democracy enables greater societal reconciliation to take place via many routes, including increased civic engagement, rule of law, an and the individual rights of citizens. Although democracy-building in war-torn societies is often correlated with peace and reconciliation processes, neither non-violent management of societal conflicts norintercommunal coexistence can be achieved by simply 'launching' democracy (Jean and Berns 2007).

It is idealistic to assume that democracy-building is in itself a conflict-free process and that democracy as an end goal is effortlessly realized, or provides the panacea to a post-conflict society. Many contemporary societies, but particularly those emerging from war, struggle with how to manage deep-rooted societal divisions. Such democratic "essentials" as elections, constitutional and security-sector reforms, and political-party formation can intensify and exacerbate identity-based divisions. Democracy can facilitate the development of multiple and complementary political identities, and yet it can also polarize them when it comes to political inclinations at the ballot box. Moreover, the political agendas and mandates of the leaders driving these processes have a tremendous impact on their conflict-inducing potential.

Let me briefly also speak about Afghanistan. We are supportive of the US efforts to fight terrorism in Afghanistan and to bring stability there. We have a direct interest in Afghanistan, not because

we see it as a theatre of rivalry with Pakistan but because of the growing fusion of terrorist groups that operate from Afghanistan and Pakistan and their activities in India. Indeed, developments in Afghanistan over the past few years have demonstrated in ample measure that peace, security and prosperity in today's world is indivisible, and that therefore, the international community in Afghanistan must stay the course. Indian assistance to Afghanistan amounting to over US$ 1.3 billion has helped build vital civil infrastructure, develop human resources and capacity in the areas of education, health, agriculture, rural development, etc. Our development partnership, which has received wide appreciation from the Afghan people, has been guided primarily by the needs of the Afghan government and people. We stand by this commitment despite the grave threat under which our personnel and people are working in Afghanistan to transform the lives of ordinary Afghan people. Sixty years into India's life as a vibrant democracy, what is the transformation we see in India's global role? *M.K. Rasgotra* put it succinctly the "transformation of India into one of the world's leading economies, , a responsible nuclear weapon power with demonstrated scientific and technological competence, and a stable democracy is a truly phenomenal achievement of our time". What were the well-springs of India's foreign policy as we began life as an independent nation?[5]

Today, with sustained high economic growth rates over the past decade, India is in a better position to offer a significant stake to our neighbors in our own prosperity and growth. We have made unilateral gestures and extended economic concessions such as the facility of duty free access to Indian market for imports from Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka. We have put forward proposals multilaterally within the framework of the SAARC where we have assumed asymmetric responsibilities.

Furthermore, the 'underlying theory' of Western democratic consolidation seems to be that economic growth will help consolidate democracy while greater democracy will provide the institutional underpinnings of sustained growth. However, India feels that there is 'no correlation, much less causation, between democracy and development' since many democracies perform well in developmental terms as do non-democratic societies. Democracy should not be viewed as "a means to an end, namely development, but as an end in itself' because it empowers people and unleashes individual creativity.

A key challenge, according to some South Asian analysts, is that modern democracy and democratic institutions have been transplanted to South Asia and have not evolved through the political, economic and cultural processes that combined to give birth to democracy in developed countries – which over time were able to create an active civil society, and the value systems and the rules of the game that discipline the contest for power. South Asia has 'taken over the institutions and the systems without the processes, the value systems and the culture in which they had evolved'. The Western liberal democratic paradigm has been inadequate in dealing with the complexity of

the multitude of religio-cultural and ethnic identities and immense linguistic and cultural diversity in the region.

The nurturing and consolidation of democratic institutions and processes in South Asia will essentially be done by domestic actors. In the ultimate analysis, the responsibility for initiating and implementing the multitude of structural, economic, social and political reforms necessary to institutionalize democracy must be taken by South Asians themselves. External players can only play a supportive role and their capacities to bring about fundamental change are necessarily limited. The coming to power of elected governments in a number of South Asian countries in 2008 is the beginning, not the end, of the process of consolidating and sustaining fragile democracies in the region.

Notes

1. Quoted, in *The Economic Times* (US), (*Editorial*), 22 May 1999.

2. Richard, A Shweder & Byron God (ed.), 'Clifford Geertz by his Colleagues, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2005, Chap. IX, pp.63-75. "Identity" is the result of a self-referential attribution of meaning, i.e., the, self-image "that arises from the combination of the coherence of the defining features ("identity" in the narrower sense) and difference as demarcation vis-à-vis others" ("alterity").

3. Chaube, S.K, 'Understanding South Asia: A Super structural Analysis' in Ramakant (ed.), South Asia: Some Reflections, South Asian Studies Centre, University of Rajasthan, Aalekh, Jaipur, 1993, p.1.

4. Al-Odah, Salman: "*Cultural-Co-existence*", an article published in '*Al-Wasat*' (Bahraini Daily), on 14 August 2009. He categorically supports Cultural Co-existence with Non-Muslims in the essay.

5. Quoted in 'Rao on India's Global Role', at *'Annual Harish Chandra Mahindra Memorial Lecture'*, South Asian Initiative, at Harvard, USA, 2010, from the article, Rasgotra, M. K," *Foreign Policy: New India's Global Role"*, Sept. 13, 2010.

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Pakistan, Democracy and The Myth of Sisyphus

L Premashekhara

Abstract

Pakistan has been moving back and forth on democratic path and it has been the fate of its people to roll the democratic boulder uphill and helplessly watch it rolling back just like the mythical Sisyphus and, to repeat this at least thrice so far in their six decade long history as independent nation. The reasons for this Sisyphean futility are rooted in the way Pakistan was created and subsequently managed. The Homeland for Indian Muslims was not for the masses, their voices were not to be heard, their aspirations were not to be recognized and respected, and to sum it all, there was no place for democracy in Pakistan. This explains Pakistan's Sisyphean futility as far as democracy is concerned.

Perhaps no other Asian event has attracted more curiosity and concern, comments and laments, debates and discussions, researches and analyses than the partition of India in 1947. The volume of arguments justifying the need of Indian Muslims to have their own homeland is indeed overwhelming and intimidating. They all talk of brute Hindu majority out to gobble up the minorities once the colonial masters left the country. All these arguments, however, are mere facades to the *two* hidden reasons behind the emergence of Pakistan on 14-15 August 1947. They are - first, British design to have a politically friendly, strategically reliable and militarily *weak*[1] independent political set up in the northwest of India to check Russian/Soviet advance towards the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean beyond; second, desires of a few selfish aristocratic Indian Muslims gathered under the bandwagon of Muslim League to have a sovereign political set up for themselves in predominantly Muslim areas in the northwest and northeast of the subcontinent for securing political power and perpetuate their socio-economic status which they thought, would not be guaranteed in Congress-ruled, `Hindu-dominated' independent India. Thus, Pakistan was conceived and created to safeguard the interests of, on one hand, a colonial power which calculated that its strategic interests in the altered international political scenario could be best served by Asianizing the future Asian wars and sponsoring them as and when required and,

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on the other, a small set of elite who dreamt of carving out a political space for themselves in order to perpetuate their socio-economic status with political power, the new country was to exist and serve these two purposes only. This boils down to one bitter truth: Pakistan was not meant for the people of the land. Since the *Homeland for Indian Muslims* was not for the masses, their voices were not to be heard, their aspirations were not to be recognized and respected, and to sum it all, there was no place for democracy in Pakistan. This explains Pakistan's Sisyphean futility as far as democracy is concerned.

It is not the objective of this paper to present the evolution of politics in Pakistan in a chronological order emphasising on individuals and events. Rather, the questions of why Pakistani politics is the way it is; what are the historical roots of authoritarianism, Islamization and, heavy dependence on external patron or patrons, that have become the ostensible faces of Pakistan are addressed here. Accordingly, this paper has been divided into three sections. The elements that were responsible for the creation of Pakistan and their intentions in the division of India in 1947 are looked into in the first section. The sources of Pakistani politics especially the legacy left behind by its founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah are analysed in the subsequent section. The third section is the logical continuation of the first two and an attempt is made there to link the historical experience of Pakistan to the `undemocratic' nature prevalent in its politics.

Creation of Pakistan

It is not the aim of this paper to probe the creation of Pakistan, a vast,

complex and inconclusive subject.[2] It is rather an impossible and needless task too. However, a `peep' into this subject in a rather unorthodox way and highlighting the aspects of the same that are necessary to prepare the reader to follow the arguments put forth in the subsequent pages is very much required.

Internal Elements behind Pakistan's Creation

In the words of Mushirul Hasan:

India's independence in August 1947 was the culmination of a prolonged and sustained movement. The birth of neighbouring Pakistan, on the other hand, would seem to be an aberration, a historical accident caused by a configuration of forces at a particular historical juncture. Even at the most euphoric stage, the campaign for a `Muslim' nation was hardly embedded in the `historical logic' of the two nation theory.

(Hasan 2001:1)

In other words, Pakistan, unlike India, earned its freedom not through mass based freedom movement based on the concept of nationalism and common historical identity, values like liberty and representative democracy and, not even through rejection of alien rule. Instead, the leaders of Muslim League relied upon the British colonial masters for a share in the political power which they were unsure of gaining on their own and for which they willingly cooperated with the latter. They pledged loyalty to the Crown and in return demanded job quotas and separate electorate for Muslims in what was described as policy

of positive discrimination. The very fact that the Muslim League was founded in 1906 after a meeting between the then viceroy, Lord Minto and the Simla Deputation organized by the Muslim elites of northern India who felt that their interests were under threat from British educational policies, bureaucratic reforms and powerful `Hindu revivalist campaigns'[3] (Ibid 4); and colonial policies thereafter were tilted towards the Muslims through legislations like the Minto-Marley Reforms reveal beyond any doubt the collaboration between the Muslim elite and the British colonial rulers.

The League's base was very narrow with only the Muslim elite as its members and decision makers. The common Muslim masses were conveniently kept out of it.[4] The consequence of this faulty approach was a rude shock to the League when, in the elections of 1937, it failed to secure popular mandate even in Muslim majority provinces like the Punjab and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). Things changed, albeit slowly, and with the pro-separatist activities of the League and its leaders especially Mohammad Iqbal and Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the attractive picture of the Muslim homeland the former painted, and the support the latter received from the British rulers in the 1930s, the dream of a separate state for Muslims appeared realizable. This `dream' tempted more and more Muslims into the fold of the League and its support base gradually widened. Still, a vast majority of Muslims, both elite and otherwise, consciously stayed away from it. There were two viewpoints among the Muslims of India during the 1930s and 1940s regarding their future. First, Indian "Muslims must have a territory of their own, a homeland, where

they could make the obligatory experiment of living according to the shari`ah", and second, "Muslims must live and work with non-Muslims for the realization of common ideals of citizenship and culture" (Mujeeb 2001:403).[5] They, however, could not choose between these two diametrically opposite viewpoints decisively and, that *failure* was, in the final count, responsible for the mighty Indian Muslim community splitting into two nationalities on 14-15 August 1947 and into three on 16 December 1971.

To a dispassionate observer Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of a Pakistan was a man with both religious and secular credentials which made many wonder whether these credentials were dubious[6] and, if they really were, did they cover his hidden agenda of serving, along with his own, British interests. His calculated arguments, passionate appeals and colourful oratory as the occasion demanded compounded the persistent suspicion about his real intentions and that is the reason why his role in Indian's freedom struggle is still a hotly debated subject.[7]

Jinnah started his political career in the 1910s with secular mindset and was rightly identified as an "Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity. When in 1925, to a question, the Raja of Mahmudabad answered that he was a Muslim first and then an Indian, Jinnah corrected him: "My boy, no, you are an Indian first and then a Muslim" (Mahmudabad 2010:420-21). He once again exhibited the same secular mindset when he successfully created Pakistan almost single-handedly and delivered his first presidential address to the Constituent Assembly of the new nation on 11 August 1947. He declared:

If you change your past and work together with a spirit that everyone of you, no matter what is his colour, caste or creed, is first, second, and last a citizen of this State with equal rights, privileges and obligations, there will be no end to the progress you will make… We should begin to work in that spirit and in course of time all these angularities of the majority and minority communities, the Hindu community and the Muslim community, because even as regards Muslims you have Pathans, Punjabis, Shias, Sunnis, and so on, and among the Hindus you have Brahmins, Vaishnavas, Khatris, also Bengalees, Madrasis, and so on, will vanish… You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other places of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the State.

(Khan 1987:159; Ali 2008:43-44)

What happened during the intervening period is a subject of endless inquiry and debate. The fact, however, remains that he perennially, till the last year of his life, switched between the two diametrically opposite standpoints of secular outlook and commitment towards United India on the one hand, raise the bogey of Hindu communalism and imperialism and, demand the creation of a homeland for Indian Muslims on the other, with remarkable ease and eloquence.

External Elements behind Pakistan's Creation

On the other hand, the British imperialists didn't have the dilemma Jinnah faced with regard to India's future. They had made a calculated determination to create a dependent state in the northwest of India during the turn of the twentieth century following Russian moves across the Pamirs. The British had clearly realized the extent of danger from the northwest and took adequate measures to minimize the same. They did something no Indian ruler had done earlier. They demarcated the Indo-Afghan boundary and formalized the same with a written treaty in 1893. Though the British failed to extend India's north-western frontier up to the Hindukush Line, the line that ran along Kabul, Ghazni, and Kandahar, the scientific boundary line for the defence of northern India, they succeeded in delineating the India-Afghanistan border (the Durand Line) that firmly placed in their control the Khyber Pass that, for millennia, had been the gateway to the Indus plains from the northwest. The Durand Line followed the eastern limits of the "Hindukush-Khyber Corridor" (Premashekhara 2008:22).

It was the activities of the Imperial Russian Army that prompted the British to go for delineating Indo-Afghan border and to strengthen their positions there. The defence of the Punjab plains assumed importance in 1888 when the Imperial Russian army under the leadership of Captain Grombechevsky reached Hunza in northern Kashmir. The British apprehension and their threat perception vis-à-vis Imperial Russia were demonstrated by Durand, the experienced frontier expert, when he said, "the game had begun" (Woodman 1969: 72). The Russians were, if allowed, capable of threatening the security of the densely populated Punjab which was not only the wheat bowl of the crown colony but also the largest supplier of

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men to the imperial army. The British administration overcame this menace by formally delineating Afghanistan's border first with India in 1893 and with Russia in the Pamirs two years later. The two European powers who were involved in the "Great Game" in the northwest of India made significant moves towards 'peace' by signing a treaty on 11 March 1995. Accordingly, a narrow corridor called "Wakhan" was created between the Russian controlled Tazhik territories and the princely state of Jammu & Kashmir of the British Indian Empire, and the same was placed under the control of Kabul. Further, with the Anglo–Russian Convention of 1907, London succeeded in getting Moscow accept Afghanistan as a buffer between Russia and India and never to cross it. Not fully convinced of Russian sincerity, the British rulers took from the State of Jammu & Kashmir the Gilgit region[8] that shared common boundary with the Wakhan Corridor, and placed an army unit there in order to monitor the movement of the Russian army across the Corridor and deter any possible Russian adventure. Still not convinced of the security of their Indian empire and control over Indian Ocean they calculated to create an independent state in the northwest of India which would accept British military presence on its soil and serve as their base against the Russians.[9] Since the land where the proposed new state was to come up consisted of a Muslim majority, it became quite imperative for the British colonial masters to tilt towards the Muslim community in India. Indian constitutional developments of the 1920s and 1930s, the Minto-Morley reforms and the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms and the Government of

India Act of 1935 which all ensured the Muslim League a share in the power were based on this approach. Jinnah turned this British policy to his own advantage:

The fact that Pakistan separated from India on the issue of religious politics reveals one of the effects of British rule that nationalism has not yet been able to submerge. Encouragement of political organization within the framework of religion had, after the First World War, become the principal British device for splitting the onslaught of a united nationalism. British official and semiofficial literature persisted in referring to a supposed Hindu Congress long after All-India Congress had made it a major policy to stress the union in nationalism of people of different religious faiths. Mohammed Ali Jinnah developed the momentum of his political career by turning this British policy to his own advantage.

(Lattimore 1949:184)

In this regard, the divergent attitudes of Congress and Muslim League towards the British during the Second World War proved to be decisive:

During the war when the hub of the British Empire was fighting for its existence, the Congress Party of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru demanded immediate independence so that a free India could determine whether it should participate in the war effort. The British were angered by the request and refused. The Congress contemptuously broke off relations with the British and boycotted

its institutions. The colonial power was even less pleased when after the fall of Singapore to the Japanese in February 1942, Gandhi proposed and launched "Quit India" movement in August. An offer from the British cabinet pledging independence at the end of the war was rejected with a biting phrase-"a blank cheque from a failing bank," retorted Gandhi who was convinced the British would lose in Asia... In polar contrast, the Muslim League had always remained on the British side. It was firmly supportive of war efforts. The British responded in kind. Pakistan, was in effect, a big thank-you present to the Muslim League. Had the Congress Party adopted similar strategy the result might well have been different.

(Ali 2008:32-33)

Thus, it was a British policy to create Pakistan for its strategic needs and Jinnah and the Muslim League used this for their end. The British strategic experts were quite content with their half a century old scheme in the subcontinent neared its logical end when the creation of Pakistan became certain by the middle of 1947. A top secret report prepared by the chiefs of staff on 7 July 1947 reveals:

The area of Pakistan [West Pakistan or the northwest of India] is strategically the most important in the continent of India and the majority of our strategic requirements could be met... by an agreement with Pakistan alone. We do not thereafter consider that failure to obtain the agreement with India [Hindustan] would cause us to modify any of our requirements...

(Sarila 2009:28)

Sources and Aims of Politics in Pakistan

Since Pakistan was created by a few elites, one man to be precise; and a foreign power, it drew strength from these elements only, and its purpose was to serve their interests only. The only change that occurred after the creation of the Muslim state was that, internally local elite replaced the Indian Muslim elite who had brought the state into being and externally, US and, to a lesser extent China, replaced Britain. In other words, the scenes and casts changed periodically, but the stage and story remained the same. Ideas and methods to create a new, vibrant, modern state with domestic democratic political system and independent foreign policy did not emerge and, policies and approaches of initial leadership especially Jinnah himself were largely responsible for this. It has become a joke in streets as well as in academic circles especially in South Asia that Pakistan is ruled by three `A's- Allah, the Army and America; and if they are taken as symbols of Islamization, authoritarianism and, external patron respectively, their origin can be traced to the policies and attitudes of one man - Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan.

Jinnah's Legacy

Jinnah was not democratic. For all his ideals repeatedly stated eloquently in colourful and mesmerising language, he never behaved democratically as head of the state. From the moment of Pakistan's birth, he assumed, without any seeming inhibition, all key levers of power and decision making in the new state with three most important positions in his hand. He was not only the governor general, but also president of the

Muslim League and chairman of the Constituent Assembly. Being the founder of Pakistan he had such a massive authority in his hand, few dared to challenge him and, the process of Jinnah assuming authoritarian power in Pakistan was very swift and in a sense, continuation of his pre-Partition attitude and approach towards Muslim League of which he was the undisputed leader. Leading a separatist movement is one thing but, leading an independent state is quite another. The problems of multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Pakistan which comprised of two distinct geographical units which had nothing in common except religion and separated from each other by twelve hundred mile-long *hostile* Hindu territory were many fold, multi-layered and the task of nation-building demanded accommodation and democratic approach. Jinnah on the other hand, chose to address these challenges through authoritarian approach with his misplaced judgment that the internal problems rooted in the demands of different regional and ethnic groups for political and economic power could be extinguished through diverting the attention of the people towards external threats, real or assumed. In this regard, he demanded unopposed and complete loyalty from every section of the politico-administrative set up and citizens of all shades in order to enable him to effectively counter and protect the Muslim homeland of which he was the founder and saviour. This way, in the name of defending the country Jinnah set out to create a system of centralized or authoritarian powers in his own hands and his "framework was presidential or imperial" (Jalal 85:50); and this is what exactly every successive ruler of Pakistan –military or civilian- did.

Jinnah did not favour a political system based on the principles of constitutional checks and balances as a basis of political development. An "unusual" resolution passed by the Pakistani cabinet of Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan on 30 December 1947 testifies to this. It states: "no question of policy or principle would be decided, except at a meeting presided over by the Quaid-e-Azam. In the event of any difference of opinion between him and the Cabinet, the decision of the Quaid would be final and binding" (Lambah 2003:154). This gave absolute power to Governor General Jinnah. He, however, was not there to exercise this power for long as he succumbed to tuberculosis and cancer on 11 September 1948 barely thirteen months after the creation of Pakistan; and this power was transferred to his successors who kept it intact. When the Constituent Assembly attempted to change the provision that had given the governor general powers above the prime minister and the cabinet, it was dissolved by the then governor general, Ghulam Mohammad. The constitutions of 1956 and 1962 kept the provision intact. The 1973 Constitution, the brainchild of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, did omit that and made the president a figurehead, but, barely four hours after its proclamation Bhutto issued an ordinance that placed president's powers above the prime minister's. Zia-ul-Haq brought it back into the constitution in 1985 with the notorious Eight Amendment and the first victim was Mohammad Khan Junejo in 1988. Since then it has been used by every president to dismiss every cabinet till 1996 with Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif earning the dubious distinction of getting dismissed twice each. Thus, the policy of

placing head of state above head of government, a `tradition' set by Jinnah in the very first year of Pakistan's existence, still haunts that country.

Jinnah argued, along with Liaquat Ali Khan, that Pakistan could not afford the luxury of an opposition in politics (Rajan and Ganguly 1981:113-16). In a fitting corollary, Ayub Khan, the general who staged Pakistan's first military coup in October 1958, seized power and didn't let it go out of his hand for full eleven years maintained: "The Western type of parliamentary democracy could not be imposed on the people of Pakistan" (Khan 1967:208).

Bureaucrats turned politicians Ghulam Mohammad and Iskander Mirza[10] repeatedly and blatantly abused their powers as governor general and president in early 1950s. From Ayub Khan to Parvez Musharraf, all the military rulers who assumed positions like president or chief marshal law administrator took authoritarianism to newer heights and abuse of power during their regimes was total and blatant. This tendency was not limited to military rulers alone. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the civilian leader Pakistan saw after thirteen years of military rule following the breakup of the country in 1971 was equally autocratic. He demanded complete loyalty from his party and the nation. He used Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) as a tool to achieve his personal ambitions. Those who disagreed with him were removed from party position, and many were imprisoned too on one other charge (Ziring 1998: 380). Bhutto, much to the discomfiture and dismay of the Army generals, created a paramilitary outfit called Federal Security Force (FSF) which

was widely seen as his personal army. He used it against his political opponents, many of whom were harassed and some even murdered (Ibid:381; Talbot 1999:219). His daughter Benazir Bhutto demonstrated scant regard for democratic values by bequeathing the party headship to her son Bilawal Bhutto Zardari through a will treating the PPP as her personal fiefdom,

In the same manner the ascendency of Islam in Pakistani life can also be traced to Jinnah. His attitude to Islam was dubious and questionable. When he was campaigning for Pakistan, he used religion to garner support for his scheme. He used Islam as bait to attract Muslim provincial leaders, tribal chieftains and individuals who mattered. He wrote to Amin ul Hasanat, the Pir Sahib of Manki Shariff in NWFP in 1946 that Pakistan would be an Islamic State and Islamic laws ordained by Shariat would be followed. His real intentions were, however, contrary. Iskander Mirza states:

Before we left Delhi, I said to the Quaid-e-Azam one day, "Sir, we are all agreed to go to Pakistan; but what kind of polity are you going to have? Are you going to have an Islamic State?" "Nonsense," he replied, "I am going to have a modern State."

(Khan 1987: 158)

His contradictory attitude towards place of Islam in Pakistan continued even after the Homeland for Indian Muslims came into being. As mentioned earlier, in his first address to the Pakistan Constituent Assembly on 11 August 1947, he called upon the people of Pakistan to work together forgetting to what caste, community or creed they belonged. He changed his approach

rather soon. The touch of secularism in his speeches in 1947 gave way to recognition of the utility of Islam in Pakistani politics as a cementing factor against internal divisions (Rajan and Ganguly 1982:113). Addressing the agitating crowd in Dhaka on 21 March 1948 he said:

Have you forgotten the lesson that was taught to us thirteen hundred years ago? Who were the original inhabitants of Bengal-not those who are now living. So what is the use of saying "we are Bengalis, Sindhis, or Pathans, or Punjabis". No, we are Muslims. Islam has taught us this, and I think you will agree with me that whatever else you may be and whatever you are, you are a Muslim. If I may point out, you are all outsiders here.

(Jinnah 1963: 84)

Thus, again he set a trend. Most of his successors did exactly what he did and relied on Islam when challenged by problems that required political and constitutional solutions. The spectre he unleashed grew into a Frankenstein monster very soon with Jamaat-e-Islami spearheading Islamic revivalism in Pakistan. Jamaat's leader Maulana Maududi, in fact, had opposed the creation of Pakistan as "un-Islamic" on the ground that ascribing different nationalities to Muslims of the world was against Islamic values as the religion Holy Prophet preached considered all Muslims as citizens of one nation. He, however, chose to migrate to Pakistan on its creation and began opposing Jinnah's initial secular talk. To him and his followers, it was a sin to talk of secularism and equality of all religions in a country created in the name of Islam and for

Muslims. So, when they began their determined campaign to purify Pakistan of all its un-Islamic influence, the first victim was, ironically, the creator of Pakistan himself. In this way, the Orwellian double-speak with regard to secularism and Islam Jinnah had adopted to create Pakistan made him irrelevant in the state he created before he was consumed by consumption and cancer barely one year after it came into being. His tactics worked in pre-1947 India but, failed miserably in Pakistan. The Pakistan Constituent Assembly attempted to define both the state and the idea of Pakistan in the Objective Resolution it adopted in 1949. According to this Resolution Pakistan "was to be a federal, democratic, and Islamic entity, but there was no mention whatsoever of a secular Muslim life, a secularized Islam, or even the term `secular'" (Cohen 2006:57). It is this Resolution that had guided Pakistan all these years, not the speech Jinnah delivered in the Constituent Assembly on 11 August 1947.

The activities of Maulana Maududi and his followers created worst anti-Ahmadiya riots in the Punjab in 1953 that brought the Army into action in Lahore. Pakistan officially became an Islamic Republic with the promulgation of its first constitution in 1956 and there was relative calm for more than two decades as the country grappled with more serious problems like provincialism that threatened its very survival. Islamization came back in a big way in what was left of Pakistan in the 1970s. Ironically it was the civilian prime minister, Z. A. Bhutto who in 1974 implemented three of the long-standing demands of the Islamists; banned alcohol, converted Friday in the place of Sunday as

official holiday and, declared the Ahmadiyas as non Muslims. He, like Jinnah, was a non-practicing Muslim[11] and turned to Islamists for support when the combined opposition challenged his authority following his victory in the rigged elections of March 1977. Bhutto's approach was elevated to the level of a state policy by Zia-ul-Haq who usurped power from him in a coup in July 1977. By promulgating the Hudood Ordinance which made several Islamic practices mandatory and imposed severe restriction on women and their status in society, allowing religious schools or Madrasas to come up in thousands all over the county, he hastened the process of Islamization in Pakistan and earned the distinction as "Soldier of Islam." He defended his actions vehemently saying: "Pakistan which was created in the name of Islam will continue to survive only if it sticks to Islam. That is why I consider the introduction of [an] Islamic system as an essential prerequisite for the country" (Talbot 2000:196). He also declared that preservation of the ideology of Pakistan and the Islamic character of the country was "as important as the security of the country's geographical boundaries" (Talbot 2000:201).

As far as the third "A" i.e. America is concerned, the process of taking Pakistan closer to US also began by Jinnah himself and he did it even before Pakistan came to existence as an independent state. Although, Britain initiated the process of creating Pakistan for its strategic needs in Asia, its power and position in global politics weakened, a process hastened by the Second World War, before its "Pakistan Scheme" reached its logical end. This made Jinnah search for alternative, a dependable foreign patron with money who could assume the mantle of patronage of the Muslim nation as its emergence became imminent by early 1947. An assessment the US State Department made with inputs and reports from New Delhi based American mission to US Secretary of State on 2 May 1947 reveals Jinnah's mind:

On 1 May Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Leader of the Muslim League, received two American visitors at his Bombay residence. They were Raymond A. Hare, Head of the Division of South Asian Affairs, Department of State, and Thomas E. Weil, Second Secretary of the US Embassy in India. Jinnah asserted that under no circumstances would he accept the concept of an Indian Union since the Muslim League was determined to establish Pakistan. He sought to impress on his visitors that the emergence of an independent, sovereign Pakistan would be in consonance with American interests. Pakistan would be a Muslim country, Muslim countries would stand together against Russian aggression. In that endeavour they would look to the United States for assistance, he added. Jinnah coupled the danger of 'Russian aggression' with another menace that Muslim nations might confront. That was 'Hindu imperialism'. The establishment of Pakistan was essential to prevent the expansion of Hindu imperialism into the Middle East, he emphasised.

(Foreign Relations 1972:154–5)

It is clearly evident that Jinnah had analysed the prevailing international scenario in 1947, grasped US need to possess dependable allies in its campaign against

Soviet expansionism in the Balkans and the Middle East, and planned to turn it into Pakistan's advantage. Once Pakistan was created, however, his attention changed, rather expanded, to include his desire for personal material benefit as well. Paul H. Alling, first US ambassador to Pakistan reveals, in his report to the then Secretary of State John Marshall on 22 March 1948, a rather unusual portrait of Jinnah. According to Alling, he was invited for a picnic with Jinnah and his sister Fatima. Assuming that important matters of state might be discussed, Alling prepared himself as best he could. Discussion went otherwise. Jinnah and his sister probed the possibility of selling their house "Flagstap" to the US mission. In the words of Alling:

Both he and his sister... inquired whether we were interested in their house "Flagstap" which he had told me a few days previously was available for purchase. I explained that our negotiations for the purchase of an Ambassador's house... had progressed so far... that it had proved impossible to withdraw.

He then asked if "Flagstap" would not be suitable for the use of other personnel of the Embassy. In reply I said that we had, of course explored that possibility but that our building expert felt he could not justify the purchase of such an extensive property for any of the subordinate personnel. I added that actually we were interested only in purchasing a few small houses or flats whereupon he said he would send us details of one or two such properties. I could sense, however, that Mr. Jinnah

and his sister were disappointed that we had been unable to purchase "Flagstap."

                                    (Ali 2008:41-42)

    Sadly, it was not a good beginning and `Flagstapping,'[12] meaning turning 'American connection' for personal benefit, became rampant among politicians and senior army personnel when after the end of the brief Jinnah – Liaquat era[13] a transfer of power occurred within Pakistan from the "Indian Muslims" to the "pro-US, pro-military" bureaucrats and the first among them was Ghulam Mohammed who headed the country as its third governor general during 1951-55 (Burki 1986:48). In fact, Ghulam Mohammed and, Iskander Mirza who succeeded the former as the country's fourth head of state, had been in contact with the US government since Pakistan came into being and, actively seeking for developing a Pakistan-US alignment against India and the Soviet Union. It was Ghulam Mohammed's concept that massive dependence on the US was necessary to meet the "administrative expenses" of Pakistan, especially in the "field of defence" (Venkataramani 1982:16). Iskander Mirza was regarded as reliable and co-operative by US officials (Ibid:144). Ghulam Mohammad-Iskander Mirza duo's attempts were successful when Washington made a decision to develop strategic ties with Pakistan to 'contain' India in September 1949, a month before the Indian premier Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to the US capital. With this, the US had replaced Britain as Pakistan's main foreign patron.

Elite Interests

    Following their success in achieving Pakistan without a politicized mass base,

struggle and sacrifice, and instead, with active support from the ruling foreign power, Pakistani rulers continued to rely upon foreign powers and domestic elite for support while formulating their domestic and foreign policies. Jinnah was stranger in West Pakistan, nor did his party have any strong base there before 1947. This led him to simply confirm provincial landlords, feudal chiefs in power as representatives of his party there. The result was that Muslim League, the party that spearheaded the Pakistan movement in India with considerable mass support, failed to acquire a mass base in West Pakistan and what remains as Pakistan today, and consequently the ruling elite in Pakistan never possessed a reliable political party capable of controlling the masses. Jinnah was surrounded by "swarm of young men" that were in the habit of talking of a "new spirit" without ever being able to explain what it meant (Ali, 2008: 35). Thus the Muslim League soon became a "church of corrupt and quarrelsome caciques" who discredited it permanently. (Ibid:43). The Muslim League's support base was limited to only the elite who bothered more about their well being rather than the state. The League's condition during those days, in the words of Chaudhri Mohammad Ali, Pakistan's fourth prime minister was:

The pillars of society, the landlords, the well-to-do lawyers, the rich business-men, and the titled gentry were its main support. With some exceptions, they were not men noted for their total commitment to any cause. Their willingness to sacrifice their personal interests or comfort for the sake of the nation was often in doubt.

(Ali 1967:371)

The League failed to provide effective political leadership to Pakistan. The new nation's first generation of politicians was inexperienced and unable to face the daunting challenges of the new nation. About them, Ata Rabbani, Jinnah's aid d' camp writes:

...our senior politicians had little experience of the running of a government for they had spent most of their lives criticising governments in power. Now saddled with the responsibility they took the easy way out. Instead of applying themselves to the task and working hard to learn the ropes they relied on the adivice of senior bureaucrats.

(Rabbani 1996: 142)

Because of the inability of the politicians, the power, as explained by Rabbani, inexorably slipped into the hands of Pakistan's small cadre of highly educated civil servants, the only people capable of delivering any semblance of governance during the initial chaotic years. Jinnah, being scornful towards the politicians, too recognized the central place of the bureaucracy in the administrative, political, and economic life of Pakistan, a policy continued by his successors. Pakistan was thus from the very beginning "firmly dominated by its civilian bureaucracy and the army, both of which had faithfully served the British" and they exercised "political paramountcy" in Pakistan (Ali 2008:43). The CSP (Civil Service of Pakistan) comprised a closed oligarchy of five hundred functionaries commanding the state (Ibid.). Both Ghulam Mohammad and Iskamder Mirza were co-opted directly from its ranks.

Thus, the Pakistani elites, both the politicians and bureaucrats, inherited and adopted the British colonial model of administration with a strong authoritative executive. This filled the power vacuum, created by the withdrawal of British colonial power, at the top but failed to address the issues concerning the masses-political, economic and social change that would bring empowerment of the masses, in other words, democracy.

The Army

Pakistan has been under military rule for more than half of its existence so far. Authoritarianism which the military rule symbolises can be traced to the attitudes and approaches of the initial leadership. Jinnah's authoritarian and autocratic approaches were continued by his successors with the possible exception of his immediate successor Khwaja Nazimuddin, a Bengali with a soft nature. He was, in fact, a puppet in the hands of Ghulam Mohammad who relegated him to the position of prime minister and assumed the governor-generalship himself in October 1951.

Ghulam Mohammad and his successor Iskander Mirza demonstrated least tolerance for opposition and brazenly abused their powers as governor general and president. In 1953, Ghulam Mohammad set an unfortunate precedent when he dismissed Khwaja Nazimuddin's government citing its failure to resolve the difficulties facing the country and installed Mohammad Ali Bogra. When Bogra tried to limit the governor general's powers Ghulam Mohammad dismissed him too. Ministries came and went. There were seven prime ministers in as many years during 1951-58 i.e. regimes of Ghulam Mohammad and Iskander Mirza.

Both had scant regard for the parliament and were "shocked by what they regarded as the corruption, selfishness, opportunism and disloyalty of the politicians in public office" (Wilber 1964:126). They were also 'in close touch with commanders of the armed forces, and when they faced tests of strength with the politicians, believed that the army would intervene on their side to assure public order and stability" (Ibid.). Thus, they manipulated the token parliamentarism to such an extent that they not only discredited it but also discredited the very concept of civilian rule itself and set the stage for military takeover which did happen in 1958.

Because of all these, army became increasingly involved in political decisions and it delivered where civilian administration failed. It was frequently called upon to fulfil functions like maintaining law and order which normally was the responsibility of police. When Lahore witnessed anti-Ahmadiya riots in 1953, General Azam Khan restored order swiftly and the army soon became the only organization in the country capable of maintaining law and order. Moreover, General Azam Khan's "Cleaner Lahore Campaign" too became highly popular among the people of the metropolis, the cultural capital of Pakistan. By asking the army to manage a political crisis the civilian regimes undermined their own authority. Thus, the Ghulam Mohammed-Iskander Mirza duo paved the way for General Ayub Khan's military coup in 1958 which surprised few. Thereafter it did not take long for the army to grow into the biggest and most organized political player in Pakistan.

All these factors - authoritarianism, dragging religion to solve social political and

economic problems, placing power in the hands of the elite, allowing army to occupy centre stage in country's politics and, playing client to external powers created a condition in Pakistan that was not conducive for the growth of democracy. In other words, the political culture that evolved in Pakistan has been anti-democratic.

Political Culture in Pakistan

The consequence of the attitudes and approaches adopted by the initial leaders and bureaucrats towards politics in Pakistan, dealt with in the previous pages, was two-fold: one, haunting structural dilemma in organizing internal power relationships and, second, failure to find a stable and legitimate basis for political and constitutional arrangements in a nascent nation which was struggling to have an identity not only of its own but also markedly, if not totally, different from that of India.[14] In the process, the "Indian Muslims" who created Pakistan were marginalized gradually and replaced by local or "Pakistani" elite. With this, the secular tendencies the founders of Pakistan adopted during their formative years in the pluralistic society of `Hindu' India and brought to Pakistan in 1947 were the first casualty. In their place came the feudal values like the patron-client relationship based on centuries-old religious and social practices with which the local elites were *comfortable* in a predominantly agrarian Muslim society and, they became the driving forces of Pakistan's domestic politics in the years to come. They were freely adopted not only to organize power relationships at both provincial and central levels but also to advance the economic well-being of the dominant elite groups (Callard 1959:27-36).

After this, it did not take long for personal aggrandizement and autocratic rule to become the hallmarks of Pakistani politics and they brought about infighting among members of Pakistani elites irrespective of their credentials - military or otherwise. These constant struggles for power with its accompanied features of backstabbing, deceit, and intrigue never allowed a particular political ideology or practice to become the guiding principle. Nor did it allow any political personality or personalities to become trend setters and show a particular path to the future generation of leadership to follow. Leaders were scorned at and consigned to the dustbin of history the moment they left office. They didn't become icons and national heroes and help develop a Pakistani nationalism or identity. Consequently, the post-1947 generation in Pakistan groped in the dark searching for its national identity and finally found past Muslim glories and reactionary religious traditions as reservoirs of stimulants for Pakistan's nationalist conceptions, and successive generations in Pakistan have been doing exactly that.[15]

Having failed to produce its own national heroes, Pakistan, tragically, looks at foreign military heroes like Mohammad Ghazni, Mohammad Ghori and Ahmad Shah Abdali as its own heroes, and Pakistani missile directed at India are named after these warriors. The historical fact is that these Afghan warriors of yester centuries did not differentiate between what are now India and Pakistan when they raided the lands south of the Khyber. This speaks volumes about the flight path nation-building has taken in Pakistan.

There are other negative trends that emerged in Pakistan and hindered the process of democratization and helped strengthen authoritarianism further. Anti-majority or rejection of majority voice is one such and it was so deeply ingrained in the psyche of the Muslim League and supporters of Pakistan movement that they could not shed it off even after achieving Pakistan, and this tendency continued unabated much to the detriment of the state and its people. It was displayed in an extremely unabashed manner when the issue of choosing an official language for Pakistan came up in early 1950s. Despite the fact that majority of Pakistanis, about sixty percent of the total population, lived in East Pakistan and spoke Bengali, a forceful attempt was made to impose Urdu on them. Bengalis, unlike any other linguistic group of West Pakistan, resolutely refused to permit any downgrading of their language. That was the beginning of East – West divide. The minority West which controlled military, bureaucracy and political leadership treated the majority East as a colony and resorted to its economic exploitation. Thus, the majority was prevented from playing a role in the national life of the new state and determining its future. The result was, Pakistan's future became bleak and it split into two in violent upheaval in 1971.

Even electoral verdicts and majority parties' right to government formation were seldom respected in Pakistan. The popular verdict accorded in favour of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League in the first ever general elections conducted in December 1970 was not respected by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the military ruler General Yahya Khan. Instead, they resorted to military

means to violently crush Bengalis' legitimate right to form the government at the centre. Six years later, Bhutto found himself at the receiving end when the opposition parties and the Army refused to accept his PPP's victory in the general elections of 1977. A decade later, his daughter Benazir Bhutto and her political adversary Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan Muslim League suffered the same fate repeatedly when the governments they established with popular mandates were initially respected but dismissed after a while by the presidents again and again. This political farce continued for a whole decade till General Parvez Musharraf staged a coup and seized power in October 1999. The present post-Musharraf era too continues to be dominated by the Army albeit it wields power indirectly. In this way, the Army has continuously refused to play apolitical role. Thus, anti-majority theme has become a central feature of Pakistan's political culture since its inception and it has been dominating Pakistani elite thinking ever since.

Another notable negative aspect of Pakistani political culture has been the undemocratic mode of transfer of power and it has been dominated by intrigue. In the words of Indian diplomat S. K. Singh: "State power in Pakistan has all along been attended by Machiavellian intrigue and violence, resembling curiously all that had followed in Arabia after the death of the Prophet, when violence attended all but one of the Caliphs who succeeded the Prophet. (Singh 2003: 14). Almost all governments of Pakistan -both civilian and military- have been sent out of power unceremoniously either by dismissal or toppling by military generals.[16] Liaquat Ali Khan, the first prime minister was assassinated in 1951 while

addressing a rally, a murder which has not been solved. The speculation is that he died at the order of Ghulam Mohammed (Venkataramai 1982:190-82). The man who shot Liaquat Ali Khan was himself shot dead by a police officer, and the plane carrying the forensic samples from Rawalpindi to Karachi blew up in mid air and with that crucial evidences were lost. The case of Zia is similar. Although he died in a plane crash it is widely speculated that it was an act of sabotage. A crate of mangoes loaded into the plane at the last moment is suspected to have contained explosives. Z. A. Bhutto's end came through execution on controversial grounds. About two decades later Nawaz Sharif faced similar fate but escaped gallows by Saudi intervention.

Proper treatment of leaders after they demit their offices is an important value civilization has taught Mankind and it reflects the culture a nation has evolved over centuries of historical experience. To quote diplomat S. K. Singh again:

While assessing the resilience and durability of new sovereign states, historians and political scientists often make a review of the way their peoples have accorded respect or otherwise to the heroes and founders of such new states and nations; those who had wielded the supreme or sovereign state power during the early days of their existence. An analytical review of the story of the early decades of a new state indicates a great deal about the character, idealism and ideology of its people. Studies of post-1776 USA, or post-1917 Soviet Union, or of the leaderships of post-colonial Indonesia,

India, Nigeria and Ghana have provided an assessment of the future of these nations, especially the principles and philosophy that motivated the founding fathers, the intrinsic national character and grit of those who followed these early leaders and the ethical values and human attitudes of the societies that emerged as nation states.

(Singh 2003:9)

Even in this count Pakistan fairs poorly. Treatment of leaders who lost power and position in Pakistan has not been worth emulating. The first thing Ayub Khan did following the coup he enacted in 1958 was to put deposed president, Iskander Mirza into a waiting plane and sending him to London with a one way ticket. Shortly after this, former prime minister, H. S. Suhrawardy fled to Beirut where he was murdered under mysterious circumstances. It is alleged that the act of murder was carried by Ayub Khan's intelligence personnel on his order. About half a century later, former Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto was assassinated while addressing an election rally in Rawalpindi and it has not been convincingly solved yet.

Ethnicity-based provincialism is another negative feature of Pakistani politics. It raised its ugly head rather early, during Jinnah's life-time itself. He recognized from the beginning and "knew better than anyone else that the greatest threat to Pakistan's survival would be internal not external' (Jalal 1985:50). He advised his countrymen against this on 21 March 1948 during his first and last visit to Dhaka:

You belong to a nation now; you have now carved out a territory, vast

territory, it is all yours. It does not belong to a Punjabi, or a Sindhi, or a Pathan, or a Bengali; it is yours. You have your central government where several units are represented. Therefore, if you want to build yourself into a nation, for God's sake, give up this provincialism.

(Jinnah 1963:84)

His appeal was in vain. Divisive tendencies gained firmer ground in East Pakistan as, along with the language issue, by the mid-1950s, the Punjab and feudally dominated Pakistani civil and military elites began depriving the Bengalis of their economic and political rights. The result was the 1971 war and dismemberment of Pakistan. Later, other ethnic minorities in the remnant of Pakistan began to highlight the domination by Punjabis in the national affairs and the five sub-nationalities of Punjabis, Sindis, Baluchis, Pathans and Mohajirs (Muslims migrated from India during Partition) are at constant odds since then. The ethnic and regional sub-nationalist forces with competitive interests and images of the future are constantly threatening the survival of Pakistan.[17]

As far as army occupying the centre-stage in Pakistani politics is concerned, it is true that the army delivered where civilian administration failed and many Pakistanis prefer army rule for civilian leaders who, right from Ghulam Mohammad to present Asif Ali Zardari, are known for brazen corruption. Popular opposition to military rule is least and, in other words, general public have been indifferent towards civilian regimes toppled by the army. They did not express any visible opposition even to

Bhutto's execution by the Zia regime. But the problem of the army is that it is too big for Pakistan's political needs and too small to manage hostile neighbours. This sense of insecurity the army possesses makes it vulnerable to any extra-regional power's overtures to expand its own strategic interests in the region. This explains the ease with which the US and China have been successful in maintaining continued military influence in the South Asian region. The process, on the other hand, has led to Pakistan Army overly dependent on these two countries for military capability and political ideas, and in turn willingly working as their client. The feudal value of client-patron relationship which is ingrained in Pakistani thinking is thus extended to Pakistan's foreign policy as well. It is an established practice that a feudal lord treats one below him as client and demands complete loyalty on one hand, accepts the one above him as patron on the other and extends similar loyalty. Pakistan Army behaves as feudal lord within the country and acts like a client in foreign relations where it is the client and, the US and China are the patrons. This client-patron approach had its own toll on Pakistan's foreign policy decision-making and it "was never to be a question of objectively evaluating Pakistan's real needs. As in the case of its British predecessor, U. S. interests were paramount." (Ali 2008:32). This needs some elaboration as it has tremendous bearing on what ails Pakistan today.

Washington enlisted Islamabad as an important cog in its global strategy against the Soviet Union. The Ayub Khan Regime allowed the US to establish a top-secret base at Badaber near Peshawar in 1959 from

where, in May 1960, the U-2 spy plane took off, flew over the Soviet territories till the Russians chose to down it.

It was Pakistan's geography, as in the case of Anglo-Russian rivalry decades ago, that guided US policy towards Pakistan. The utility of Pakistan's location came to the fore in a big way in 1979 when Soviet troops entered neighbouring Afghanistan. The US covert involvement in Afghanistan, in fact, began five months after the Iranian revolution of February 1979. Establishment of anti-American Islamic regime in Tehran played a major role in hardening American stand on Afghanistan where communist infightings had considerably weakened Moscow's influence much to the concern of Kremlin. Washington initiated its secret aid to anti-communist and anti-Soviet elements in Afghanistan in July 1979 five months before the actual entry of Soviet troops into that country. (Mamdani 2004:123-24). The Carter and Reagan Administrations supported the Afghan Mujhahideens openly and massively throughout the eight years of Soviet military presence there. Interestingly, contrary to its support to secular Iraq against fundamentalist Iran, here in Afghanistan, Washington chose to support Islamic resistance movement against the Soviet Union for the simple reason that these Mujhahideens were regarded as an effective barrier to prevent Moscow's attempted expansion towards the Indian Ocean in order to fulfil Russia's age old dream of acquiring a warm water port.

It is a historical fact that Imperial Russia indeed tried to move, first, towards Mediterranean Sea at the cost of the Ottoman Empire and later, when failed because of strong British and French support to Turkey, towards Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea during the second half of the 19th Century. They were, however, effectively prevented by the British through a series of moves that involved less force and more diplomacy (Premashekhara 2008:22). Moscow's recent attempt to advance towards the eastern Mediterranean through Dardanelles in 1946-47 failed miserably as Truman Administration reacted forcefully.[18] Against these historical experiences and present geopolitical and geo-strategic realities, it was unlikely for Moscow to attempt again given the massive US presence in the Indian Ocean region. The odds against Soviet Union in 1979 were far greater than what they were in the 19th Century and late 1940s.

Fiercely nationalist and anti-communist Khomeini's Iran was not going to allow Moscow's expansion towards the Persian Gulf. The only other route left for Soviet Union was towards the Arabian Sea via Baluchistan province of Pakistan which was an impassable path given US clout in that South Asian country and American military strength present in the Indian Ocean region. The ailing Soviet economy was not capable of overcoming US resistance should Kremlin attempted to cross the Durand Line. In fact, Kremlin threatened to attack Pakistan only when the US attempted to extend anti-Soviet Islamic guerrilla war from Afghanistan into the Soviet Central Asian Republics of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (ibid:129). It was an act of self-defence. Notwithstanding these facts, Washington adopted Pakistan as its frontline ally in the Afghan war and committed nearly $ 7 billion in military and economic aid to Islamabad between 1981 and 1988 (Weaver 2002:59).[19]

Consequently, Afghanistan became Soviet Union's Vietnam as predicted by Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter Adminstration's national security adviser (Woodward 1987:78-79). Moscow suffered setbacks and withdrew its forces from that country after more than eight years of war.

Whenever Afghanistan became geo-strategically important for the West, Pakistan, or the territory where it is located in, invariably assumed tremendous importance. When Czarist Russian forces marched into Central Asia in late 19th Century, Britain, the then supreme military power in the region took all means to prevent Russian dominance in and around the Pamirs. The British Indian army marched into the tribal areas of what later came to be known as "North West Frontier Province" (NWFP) and annexed the same to the Indian Empire. Competing with the Russians in what was described as the "Great Game," the British even attempted in vain to establish control over southern Afghanistan, and when failed, followed the path of diplomacy and convinced the rulers of Kabul to maintain neutrality between Russia and Britain (Woodman 1969:47-107). Further, London initiated series of negotiations with the Russians which finally culminated in the signing of the "Anglo-Russian Convention" in 1907 thereby getting Moscow's commitment to a buffer Afghanistan (Premashekhara 2008:22).

Afghanistan assumed significance once again to the West now represented by the US when the Soviet influence in that country, political and economic initially and shortly afterwards military, increased following the communist Spring Revolution

of April 1978. As it happened eight to nine decades ago, the southern frontiers of Afghanistan assumed great geo-strategic importance and the US moved into Pakistan which possessed NWFP following the political developments in the Indian Subcontinent in 1947. This happened after a brief period of chillness in the US – Pakistan relations.

Following the thaw in the superpowers relations in the 1970s, Pakistan's strategic importance to the US reduced considerably. Moreover, disturbed by the military takeover in Islamabad in July 1977 and the subsequent execution of former Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Washington had distanced itself from Pakistan, its erstwhile Cold War ally in Asia. But the entry of Soviet forces into Afghanistan instantly brought back the strategic importance Pakistan had lost a few years earlier. NWFP became the scene of hectic activities with Pakistan and the US using that territory as training field and transit route for Afghan guerrillas fighting the Soviet forces. As it has been already mentioned, Pakistan became a "Frontline State" in US strategy against the Soviets in Asia and received huge economic and military aid from Washington. Interestingly, the major component of military hardware to Pakistan was the sophisticated F-16 fighter planes which had no use either for the Afghan guerrillas or for the Pakistani army in its 'anticipated' fight with the Russians in the rugged mountains of NWFP. The Pakistani army never faced such an eventuality as the Soviets never had any serious plan of crossing the Durand Line. It's now well established that Islamabad used its sudden elevation to the position of a strategic

partner in US game plan to enhance its fire power against India with Washington's active encouragement. Thus it was the developments in Afghanistan that helped Pakistan to get closer to the US again and achieve its own hidden agenda of not only gaining military parity with India but also to undermine India's stability by encouraging dissidence which Islamabad did in Punjab for a substantial part of the decade of 1980s.

The US turned cold towards Pakistan once again when the war in Afghanistan ended in 1988. Shortly afterwards, Pakistan's strategic importance to the US dwindled greatly with the formal end of Cold War. The US literally abandoned Pakistan and moved swiftly to establish greater economic ties with India which offered great opportunities to the US following the economic liberalisation drive initiated in 1991-92. US military aid to Pakistan ended and the economic aid dipped to the low. Joint exercises involving Indian and American forces that were unheard of during Cold War era became regular in the 1990s. The Clinton Administration was categorical in expressing its disapproval of Pakistan's Kargil misadventure in May-June 1999 and successfully exerted pressure on Islamabad to withdraw its forces and honour the sanctity of Line of Actual (LOC) thereby supporting Indian position on the crisis. Washington further distanced itself from Islamabad when General Parvez Mushsrraf seized power by overthrowing the democratically elected Nawaz Shariff government in October 1999. At this moment of Pakistan's reduced importance, Afghanistan came to its rescue again as it did during 1979-80. The 9/11 events and the alleged presence of its perpetrators in Afghanistan turned Washington's attention towards that country once again. US Air Force was in action in Afghanistan within a month and Washington, to fight its war in that mountainous country, once again chose Pakistan as an ally. In all these cases it has been geography that has favoured Pakistan.[20]

Washington was forced to opt for Pakistan as an ally and Islamabad was, ironically, forced to fight Taliban which it had propped up all these years. There was reversal in Washington's Pakistan policy which prompted reversal in Islamabad's Taliban policy. Of late, Washington has not been satisfied with Pakistan's efforts to dismantle Taliban's support bases in NWFP. Taliban, basically a Pushtu speaking ethnic Pathan band, finds friends and allies in the NWFP which is also a predominantly Pathan territory. Media is periodically abuzz with news about the presence of the remnants of Taliban and Al Qaeda in the rugged mountains of the tribal areas of this Pakistani province where Islamabad's authority is being challenged again and again over the last nine years. Bickerings over these issues is straining the relations between the two allies. US missiles and drones periodically target Taliban bases within Pakistani territory. One such attack sometimes in July 2008 either injured or killed Ayman al-Zawahiri, Al Qaeda's second highest leader and believed to be the mastermind of 9/11 attacks (*New Indian Express* 3 August 2008). Moreover, there are veiled threats from Washington that its ground forces would enter Pakistan if situation warranted. Pakistan finds itself in an extremely discomfort position and this is what the Pakistani leaders have achieved by accepting the US as patron for what mattered to

Washington most was not democratic Pakistan but a client Pakistan. In the words of Stephen Philip Cohen:

The American agenda was clear: a pro-Western Pakistan, a stable Pakistan, a prosperous Pakistan, and a democratic Pakistan were all desirable, but in that order. When democracy threatened to remove a leadership that was less than pro-American, the U.S. Embassy conveyed this priority to Pakistanis and for decades got a hearing-over the years the embassy, and most ambassadors, have been major participants in the Pakistani political process, even when they did not seek such influence.

(Cohen 2006:56-57)

Conclusion

Six long decades have elapsed since the dream of *Homeland for Indian Muslims* was realised; that dream has now turned into a nightmare. Pundits contemplate branding Pakistan as a failed state. Pakistan has become *sick man of South Asia.*

Pakistan's politics does not draw strength from masses, so there is no democracy there. Politicians, generals and, civil servants who have participated in Pakistan's political affairs -domestic as well as external- have been motivated by personal ambitions and sheer selfish goals. They came and went, gaining power through fortunate circumstances, intrigue and, losing it because of weakness in their character and power base. They all ignored their historical responsibility of reforming Pakistan's political system along democratic lines on long-term strategy. The perennial bad governance has provided a fertile ground for the growth of

religious extremism and Pakistani Talibanis are gaining ground in urban Pakistan as well as rural areas. There are indications that, for the first time in Pakistan's history, there has emerged a movement involving the masses. This process, apart from raising disturbing speculations about the future of the country, makes one wonder whether this is the path the masses are taking to turn the table against those who denied them a say in the nation's affairs all these years.

The present 'democratic' regime of Zardari-Gilani combine is gasping for breath, under constant danger of being either toppled by the army or ravaged by religious extremist surge. Not many will shed tears if it really comes down as many feel a strong military ruler will restore order in disorderly Pakistan. The army, on its part, is battling the religious extremists in the hills and gorges of the NWFP. In such a delicate domestic situation, the US, which distorted Islamabad's foreign and military policies and impeded Pakistan's internal political development by supporting power elite and military regimes with no mass base, is now threatening to send its troops into Pakistani territory. Pakistan finds itself in an extremely discomfort position.

What went wrong? Israr Ahmad, a tourist guide in Lahore, undoubtedly a man from the masses, might possibly guide us to find answers:

He [Musharraff] is good for the country, but not for democracy. He has fundamentalism under control. The world does not realise how complex Pakistani politics is. Indira Gandhi did a very good thing with the non-aligned movement, which is why Indian foreign policy is

sound. India knew that there would be problems in Afghanistan because of the Taliban so it did not openly support it. Our fault is that not only did we align with the western bloc and become its puppet, but we also supported the Taliban regime, we were with them. We are simpletons. America that has all the sophisticated equipments in the world, could not find WMDs, and it wants us to go and look for Osama among 150 million people. Why should we look for him? He is not our problem. We were not involved in 9/11. Who knows, he must have shaved his beard and must be doing some farming in Kabul.

(Versey 2008:272)

Notes

1. It has been British policy in Europe and elsewhere to support weak powers against strong ones in order to establish balance of power. At the same time in Pakistan's case, London preferred it to be militarily weak so that it would not hesitate to accept British dependency. Such a `dependency' was very much needed by London to carry on its "Great Game" against the Russians in Central Asia and prevent them from reaching the Arabian Sea.

2. Some excellent works that deal with subject in divergent ways and together provide a wider and balanced picture of the Partition are: Kaura, U., (1977): *Muslims and Indian Nationalism: The Emergence of the Demand for India's Partition, 1928-1940*, South Asia Books, New Delhi; Wolpert, Stanley (1984): *Jinnah of Pakistan*, Oxford University Press, New York; Jalal, Ayesha (1985): *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the demand for Pakistan*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; Sarila, Narendra Singh (2009): *The Shadow of the Great Game: The Untold Story of India's Partition*, HarperCollins Publishers India, New Delhi; Godbole, Madhav (2006): *The Holocaust of Indian Partition: An Inquest*, Rupa & Co., New Delhi.

3. Arya Samaj and Hindu Mahasabha.

4. This was the case even after the League succeeded in creating Pakistan. The new nation's first Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, himself a member of the landed gentry of the United Province made open statements that Muslims of Delhi and UP should stay where they were, implying that there was no place in Pakistan for middle and lower middle class Muslims. See: Ali, Tariq (2008), The Duel: Pakistan on the Flight Path of American Power, Simon and Schuster, London, p.30.

5. This was the topic of a frank discussion between Mohammad Iqbal, the author of the "two nation theory" and Mohammad Mujeeb, former vice chancellor of Jamia Milia Islamia University, New Delhi in 1935. While Iqbal stuck to the former viewpoint, Prof. Mujeeb, on the other hand, recognized the latter, the principle, according to Prof. Mujeeb, Jamia Milia was established with. See: Mujeeb, Mohammad (2001), "The Partition of India in Retrospect" in Hasan, Mushirul (2001): *India's Partition: Process, Strategy and Mobilizaion*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

6. While Jinnah was hailed by the Muslim League as *Qaid a Azam*, Moududi of the Jamaat-e-Islam-i-Hind ridiculed him as *Kafir e Azam*.

7. Ayesha Jalal presents a brilliant argument that he was not for partition and his demand for Pakistan was just a bargaining chip he intended to use in his campaign to secure the interests of Indian Muslims. See: Jalal, Ayesha (1985): *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the demand for Pakistan*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

8. It was called "Gilgit Agency" during the British period and as "Northern Territories" under Pakistani rule and was under the direct rule of Islamabad till recently. However, these regions have been rechristened as "Gilgit – Baltistan" and political processes to create a legislative body with members elected by the people of the region are underway these days. Interestingly, this region was and is not a part of Azad Kashmir or Pakistan Occupied Kashmir or POK as it's known in India.

9. This is diligently analyzed in Sarila, Narendra Singh (2009): *The Shadow of the Great Game: The Untold Story of India's Partition*, Harper Collins Publishers, New Delhi.

10. Ghulam Mohammed (1893–1956) was in official service of the British Indian Empire from 1923 to 1947; Finance Minister of Pakistan from 1947 to 1951; and Governor-General of Pakistan from 1951 to 1955. Iskander Mirza (1899–1969) joined the Indian Army in 1921 and was selected for political service in 1926; was Defence Secretary of Pakistan in 1947; Minister for Home Affairs in 1954; Governor-General in 1955 and President of Pakistan from 1956 to 1958.

11. Like Jinnah he too indulged in un-Islamic practices of drinking etc. When ridiculed by the opposition about implementing Islamic rules while being un-Islamic in personal life, he quipped: "I drink wine, not anyone's blood."

12. I have borrowed this word from London base Pakistani journalist Tariq Ali. Ali, Tariq (2008), The Duel: Pakistan on the Flight Path of American Power, Simon & Schuster, London, p.42.

13. Jinnah died of cancer and tuberculosis in September 1948 and Liaqat Ali Khan was assassinated in October 1951.

14. In the words of novelist Salman Rushdie, who traces his heritage back to both India and Pakistan, "to build Pakistan it was necessary to cover up Indian history, to deny that Indian centuries lay just beneath the surface." See: Rushdie, Salman (1983): Shame, Jonathan Cape, London, p. 87.

15. For an excellent analysis of Pakistan's search for an identity through fabricated history, see "Chapter 6" titled "History and Local Absence" in Ayres, Alyssa, (2009): Speaking like a State: Language and Nationalism in Pakistan, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, pp. 105-137.

16. Liaqat Ali Khan, the first prime minister was assassinated. Feroz Khan Noon, Z. A. Bhutto and Nawaz Shariff were toppled in military coups. All other prime ministers were dismissed by heads of state, governor general or president. Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Shariff have the dubious distinction of being dismissed twice.

17. For details on the various aspects of linguistic and regional nationalism in Pakistan, see: Ayres, Alyssa, (2009): Speaking like a State: Language and Nationalism in Pakistan, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi.

18. After succeeding in communizing and establishing firm politico-military control over Eastern European countries of Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria in the spring and summer of 1945, and inching towards the eastern Mediterranean Sea, Moscow encouraged communist insurgencies in Greece and Turkey which were the final barrier between itself and the Sea. Establishment of communist regimes in Athens and Ankara would have given free access to Moscow to the Mediterranean through Bosporus and Dardanelles. Sensing the danger US interests would face in eastern Mediterranean which was key to Washington's link to West Asia, should those waterways fell into Moscow's hand, President Harry S. Truman of the United States initiated firm moves to nullify Soviet efforts with what has been described as "Truman Doctrine." He declared on 11 March 1947: "I believe that it shall be the policy of the United States to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by external pressure." Massive military and economic assistance to the beleaguered regimes of Greece and Turkey were initiated and consequently the comm.-unist insurgents crushed. In fact, this was the beginning of US policy of "containment" which eventually culminated in the creation of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) two years later.

19. Within days of Soviet entry into Afghanistan, President Carter announced a $3.2 billion military aid to Pakistan.

20. In fact, when the US 'identified' its enemy and there were rumours of American air strikes at suspected bases of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, India voluntarily came forward to offer its air base at Avantipur near Srinagar for use by US Air Force. Washington didn't take this offer and instead turned to Pakistan. Though this action of Washington was viewed as continuation of its traditional pro-Pakistan policy and resented, in India, anyone with the minimum knowledge of geography would easily understand the rationale behind the American choice. If Afghanistan bound US bombers take off from any Indian air base, they are, invariably, forced to cross Pakistani air space. In such a situation avoiding Pakistan in any war against Afghanistan would be impossible and Pakistan obviously becomes indispensable for any extra-regional power that targets Afghanistan from the south. At

the same time, in any war against Afghanistan, Pakistan's long border with that country would serve as a suitable launching base and transit zone. Pakistan can be kept out of the war only at the cost of losing all these advantages. Thus Washington was forced to opt for Pakistan as an ally and Islamabad was, ironically, forced to fight Taliban which it had propped up all these years. There was reversal in Washington's Pakistan policy which prompted reversal in Islamabad's Taliban policy.

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Democratic Experience in South Asia: Case Study of Nepal

Mukesh Kumar Srivastava & Arundhati Sharma

Abstract

Nepal has been struggling to consolidate a democratic process for more than half a century yet it has not been able to formulate a working constitution. To understand the transition process towards democracy in Nepal, it is imperative to look into the two democratic movements (Jana Andolan I *&* II*). The paper seeks to highlight the circumstances and factors that led to the democratic surge in 1990. It further attempts to underline as to what caused the failure of democracy in Nepal in the past? Taking account of the current political climate it seeks to find as to where Nepal's party politics is heading? How is consensus possible under the internecine party politics to achieve the desired national goals? What are the future prospects for democratic consolidation?*

The wave of democracy has revisited South Asian region in the last few years with Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives undergoing the experience of democratisation. While both Pakistan and Nepal has had the intermittent experience of democratic governance, Bhutan and Maldives are experimenting the establishment of democracy for the first time. On one hand, Pakistan has had some success in installing democracy this time with a, more or less, stable functioning elective government, though challenges to the development of credible democratic institutions persist.

On the other hand, Nepal continues to grapple with political instability in the transitional phase to democracy. Since the restoration of multiparty system, which was the progeny of the first peoples movement (*Jana Andolan* I), Nepal has experimented with almost all forms of democratic governance - one-party dominated to coalition government. However, the multiparty system degenerated in a decade into authoritarian monarchy, corruption and instability. As a consequence, the *Jana Andolan* II emerged to challenge the existing abysmal situation and usher in democracy. Though many celebrated the dawn of democracy,

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the failure to meet the deadline to formulate the Constitution and the political rigmarole seems to have evaporated much of the hope. Nepal confronts the challenge to hold on to its promise of democracy. In this context, the paper attempts to assess the two democratic movements and why movements in the past have failed to sustain democracy. It seeks to find as to where the Nepal's party politics heading? How is consensus possible under the internecine party politics to achieve the desired national goals? What are the future prospects for democratic consolidation?

The Peoples' Democratic Movement in Nepal

In order to establish democracy, Nepal has witnessed two democratic movements. The First Peoples Movement popularly called the *Jana Andolan* I, of 1990 was a milestone in the history of the democratic movement in Nepal. It culminated to the restoration of democracy by overthrowing the 30 years of 'party-less Panchayat system' by compelling the monarchy to accept constitutional reform. However, recurrent political instability soon made its inroads leading to authoritarian monarchical government. This paved the way for the second democratic movement, *Jana Andolan* II, in 2006.

Jana Andolan (Peoples' Movement) I: From Absolute Monarchy to Multiparty Democracy

Jana Andolan I was the first potent expression of democratic sentiments emanating from the accumulated grievances under the "Party-less Panchayat System" of over a decade. The banning of political parties and leaders and usurpation of supreme executive power and extensive discretionary and emergency powers by King Mahendra left no

space for democracy to thrive. Despite such efforts, the individual party leaders in their own capacity continued their struggle demanding reforms in the Panchayat System, lifting ban on political parties and restoration of democracy in the Kingdom. Underground political activities were started by some of the communist parties and groups by strengthening their bases, grooming of party cadres and opening of the party offices outside the country (Upreti 2007:35).

The first serious movement against the policies of the Panchayat government broke out in 1973-1974, represented by youths and peasants. In 1976, Nepali Congress Leaders, B.P. Koirala and Ganesh Man Singh gave impetus to the democratic forces to launch a nationwide movement against the Panchayat System. The student agitation in 1979 played a catalyst role. The students organized a massive demonstration on 6 April 1979 in Kathmandu, (Snellinger 2005:24) protesting against the educational reform and the assassination of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Pakistan. The merciless repression of the demonstration by the police sparked off unrest in other parts of the country which responded by staging strikes and protests. The demand became political and the masses joined the students in their struggle for democratic reforms. The movement swelled in numbers and magnitude culminating into a major demonstration in Kathmandu on 23 May. The crowd reached the royal palace, setting fire to several government buildings on the way (Snellinger 2005:12; Kumar 1980). The movement took a wider turn with political forces joining it articulating the demand for establishment of a multi-party system replacing Panchayat System.

Realizing the gravity of the situation, King Birendra announced a national referendum in the country. He said that the people should be given the choice of either to introduce the multi-party democracy or a reformed Panchayat System. Referendum took place in May 1980, but the victory of King Birendra in the referendum, through 54.7 vs 45.2 percent votes fissured the democratic forces to arrive at any common platform (Reaper & Hoftun 1992:12-13; Upreti 2007:36). Consequently, the parties failed to bring back multiparty democracy in the country.

The bridging of the persisting mutual distrust and non-cooperation among the parties, particularly differences between the Nepali Congress and Communist Parties, in late 1980s and early 1990s led to the resurrection of the movement for democracy in the country (Upreti 2007:37). In April 1990, the Panchayat System was dismantled in the wake of peoples' movement for democracy and human rights by the NC and a ULF[1] consisting of seven communist parties.

Besides the development at the domestic level, significant regional developments also acted as a catalyst for the movement. At the regional front, the economic hardships faced by the Nepali People due to the expiry of trade and transit treaty with India in 1989 (Koirala 1990:136) and the political change in Bangladesh and Pakistan towards a democratic order encouraged the democratic forces of Nepal.

At the international front, the process of Globalisation, Liberalization and Democratization since the beginning of the eighties favoured the democratic forces in Nepal. According to Hachhethu,

Gorbachev's commitment to the spirit of 'glasnost' and 'perestroika'[2] and also the US global concern for human rights and democracy encouraged the opposition in Nepal to struggle for multi-party democracy. (Hachhethu1990:192) The concept of Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika led to a rethinking of traditional, ideological moorings and political reassessment among the leftist party in Nepal. They decided to bypass, if not drop altogether, the ideological opposition to an alliance with NC (Chaddha 2000:121-122). All these factors worked together to flare up the democratic sentiment.

As a result, on 18 February 1990, the first formidable democratic movement was launched by the NC and the ULF. Huge crowds came on the streets protesting against the autocratic rule. People in large numbers, professionals such as teachers, university students, lawyers, writers, poets, medics, paramedics associations, and industrial workers staged strikes in different parts of the country in support of democracy (Thapliyal 2008:78) demanding multiparty system and an interim government (Hachhethu 1994:2).

Nepal since the Establishment of Multiparty Democracy

The major driver of the peoples' movement was the national convention of the Nepali Congress on 18 January 1990 for establishment of democracy against the Panchayat System (Hachhethu 1994:52). The pro-democracy movement forced King Birendra to lift the ban on political parties and dissolved the 30 years of Party-less Panchayat System introduced by the King. An interim government comprising various parties and King's representatives was

formed with the cabinet under the multi-party system headed by Krishna Prasad Bhattarai as the Prime Minister. On 19 November 1990, King Birendra declared the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal. The new constitution framed by representatives of the NC and ULF as well as by the King's nominees to the Constitution Recommendation Commission attempted to translate the spirit of peoples' movement into a legal document which would become the supreme law of the country (Hachhethu 2007:133). By this Constitution, the sovereign power of the state was transferred from the palace to the people for the first time. The constitution also ensured popular sovereignty, constitutional monarchy, multi-party parliamentary system, and fundamental rights of the citizens were made unamendable (Hachhethu 2007:133-4). The Constitution declared the King as the symbol of Nepalese nationality and the unity of the Nepali people and represented different multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious groups. The King had no executive and other powers except mentioned at 'his discretion' without 'advice and recommen-dation' and the consent of the council of ministers and some constitutional bodies. Theoretically, the King had no other role except making palace rules for royal family members and palace bureaucracy. But the King was not satisfied with his limited role and was looking for an opportunity to be an active King after 1990 (Adhikari 2008:66-67).

However, political instability on account of intra and inter-party divisions in political parties, lack of consensus[3] within and between political parties and opportunism led to recurrent changes in governments. Eight different governments were formed in a span of five years during November 1994 - May 1999. In this context, Michael Hutt observes, "*between 1995-1999, half dozen different coalitions came to power, involving some very unlikely bedfellows, and the popular perception quickly spread and that the political parties were interested only in clinging to power, and that their leaders were taking every opportunity to feather their nests before they were ousted by the next incongruous coalition*" (Hutt 2004:4; Kumar 2000).

The Maoists Insurgency

Amidst the political rigmarole, the Maoist wing of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN-M) launched a revolutionary insurgency against Nepal's democratically elected government in 1996 (Joshi 2008: 765). The movement termed as "Peoples' War" (*Janayudhha)* was led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal, alias Prachanda and Baburam Bhattarai. The Maoist insurgency began with attacks on police posts in Rolpa, Rukum, Jajarkot, Gorkha and Sindhuli districts (Sharma 2004:38). Politically, it sought to establish a secular state or, more accurately, a communist state (Maharjan 2000; Thapa & Sijapati). The 40-point agenda submitted by Maoists to Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba had three key demands - people-centered governance, a self-reliant economy, and nationhood. Politically, it called for an end to the special privileges of the King and the royal family. They wanted to end the social and political inequalities, ethnic/caste disparities, and discrimination against minorities and disadvantaged groups. Economically, insurgent demands included a nationalization of private property and a redistribution of land through revolutionary land reforms (Thapa 2009:209). In February

1996, when the Congress-led government had failed to respond to a list of 40-point demands submitted by the UPF (United Peoples Front), Maoists launched the Peoples' War (Hutt 2004:5).

A large number of people were killed in the unprecedented armed conflict between the Maoists and the government security forces. They argued that they were fighting for the cause of the downtrodden and to pull the country out of internal and external subjugation (Muhammad 2006:15). The Maoists not only tried to disturb the activities of the elected government from the very first day of the formulation of the government but also joined hands with the monarchy to make the 'democratic forces' weak and defamed (King joined hands with the Maoists since monarchy also wanted to make parliamentary political parties illegitimate in the eyes of people). When monarchists and the Maoists found enough weaknesses of the mainstream political parties then they came together and started lobbying against the mainstream political parties. While doing so, the target of monarchists and the Maoists were not only the then parliamentary political parties but also leaders and the system of the multiparty democracy (Adhikari et al 2010:44-45). The Maoists declared a parallel government of their own at the district level and in those areas where they had already formed a stronghold. Nepal Police was mobilized to contain the rebellion. The Maoist escalated their violent activities like extortion campaigns, killings and abductions. Maoists' targets were the local feudals, the corrupt, informants, police, banks and occasionally party workers of major political parties (Political Development in Nepal: 2000 n.d.).

Thus, due to the Maoists' 'Peoples' War' and the failure of political parties to resolve the insurgency, Nepal had suffered economically, socially, culturally and politically.

Royal Palace Massacre and the Political Flux

The Royal Family massacre of June 2001 turned the political dynamics of Nepal. King Birendra and many members of the royal family were shot and killed by Crown Prince Dipendra. With the death of prince Dipendra , Prince Gyanendra, the younger brother of King Birendra, was then crowned the new King of Nepal on 4 June 2001 (Whelpton 2005:212-213). With a new incumbent to the throne, the political development in Nepal took a new direction. Following his assumption of power, he alienated the political parties committed to a constitutional monarchy, pushing them closer to the anti-monarchist Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) (Thapa & Sharma 2009:208).

Amid growing political flux, Girija Prasad Koirala resigned on 19 July 2001, and the Nepali Congress MPs elected Sher Bahadur Deuba as his successor (Hutt 2004:9-10). This was because of the controversy of the attempt of deploying the Royal Army against the Maoists. Deuba's attempts to revive dialogue with Maoists broke down with the adamancy of the latter on the issue of Constituent Assembly. With the collapse of the first session of peace talks between the government and the Maoists in November 2001, violence escalated. Consequently, the government declared a National State of Emergency on 26 November 2001, as the Maoist attacked an army barrack in Dang, Western Nepal, and the King declared the Maoists as terrorists

and deployed the Royal Nepalese Army against them for the first time (Hutt 2004:11). As a response, the rebels intensified their campaign, and the government responded with equal intensity, killing hundreds of Maoists, the largest toll since the insurgency began in 1996.

In May 2002, Deuba agreed to a second extension of the emergency and King Gyanendra immediately dissolved the House of Representatives on his advice and fresh elections were called amid political confrontation over extending the state of emergency. In July 2002, the local bodies were dissolved and replaced by officials. The mid-term election did not materialize however, and on 4 October 2002, King Gyanendra sacked Sher Bahadur Deuba government, (Pokharel 2003:74) alleging him of being 'incompetent' to hold the election within the given deadline and took over executive power, sovereignty and nominated Lokendra Bahadur Chand as the new Prime Minister (Timeline: Nepal 2010; Nepal: Historical Chronology n.d.; Nepal's political development: Chronology of political events n.d.). The King emerged as the real executive of the state by misusing and misinterpreting Article 127 of the constitution.[4]

On 29 January 2003, a dialogue was held with the Maoists and a ceasefire was announced. On May 2003, Lokendra Bahadur Chand resigned after months of protests led by political parties demanding restoration of parliament and appointment of 'peoples' representatives'. Later the King nominated Surya Bahadur Thapa as Prime Minister. In August 2003, the Maoist rebels withdrew from peace talks with the government and ended a bilateral cease-fire that was signed in January 2003 (Nepal: Historical Chronology n.d.; Nepal's Political Development: Political Development in Nepal n.d.). In 2004, Surya Bahadur Thapa resigned as Prime Minister after weeks of protests by opposition groups. Later on, the King appointed Sher Bahadur Deuba as Prime Minister who was sacked in 2002 for alleged incompetence to hold election on the announced date (Timeline of Constitutional Development in Nepal n.d.). In August 2004, the Maoists blocked Kathmandu for a week, depriving it of supplies of food and fuel.

The Royal Takeover and the Incipient stage of *Jana Andolan* II

Taking advantage of the political conundrum the King on 1 February 2005 dismissed the parliament and Deuba from the position of prime minister and assumed executive power, and declared state of emergency (Hutt 2006:364). He dissolved his own nominated government and took the post of Chairman of the Council of Ministers and held full discretion in appointing or displacing the members of his formed cabinet. In this context Hachhethu maintained that King Gyanendra was not satisfied with the position of the King in the Constitution of 1990. His whole efforts were concentrated to discredit the democratic forces and to regain the executive power of the institution of monarchy. He had tried his best to justify his acts of taking over power by citing the failure of multi-party governments both in countering the insurgency and tackling the Maoists (Hachhethu 2007:1830). The February 2005 proclamation is all about accusations against political parties and their leadership.[5]

Following this, the King imposed strong press censorship (Hutt 2006:120). Such severe situation was responsible for the movement for restoration of democracy. All the political parties came together against the authoritarian monarchy and they formed an alliance called the Seven Parties Alliance (SPA). The seven parties were Nepali Congress, Nepali Congress Democratic, CPN-UML, Janamorcha Nepal, Sadbhavana Party, Nepal Workers and Peasants Party and Bammorcha Nepal). And finally they decided to begin the nation-wide protest against "the King's autocratic regime". SPA got much support from the civil society such as the media, lawyers, journalists, intellectuals, students, etc.

There were discussions between the SPA and the Maoists for a joint but peaceful movement for democracy. In the meantime, the Maoists also internally discussed whether it would support the King to sideline the political parties or to support the pro-democracy movement started by the SPA. Initially, a majority members of the Maoist party along with its chairperson Puspa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda) were inclined to alienate the political parties and share the power under the King's regime. That is why, the Maoists party decided to take action against Baburam Bhattarai and his allies who were for the alliance with political parties (Singh 2004; Pyakurel 2007) to defeat the King. But in April 2005, the Maoists revisited their earlier decision and decided to go with the SPA. In September 2005, the Maoist rebels declared unilateral cease-fire, which ended in January 2006. The Maoists and SPA came together and signed a 12-point agreement in November 2005 to fight against the Monarchy (Timeline of Constitutional

Development in Nepal n.d.). This set the stage for the *Jana Andolan* II in 2005.

Jana Andolan (Peoples' Movement) II: Revisit of Democracy

Jana Andolan II marked not only the beginning of a journey towards a new Nepali democratic state but also a radical departure from the long years of monarchy. Besides, CPN (Maoist), an insurgent group, becomes a legitimate political force in the transitional arrangements to democracy. In addition, *Jana Andolan* II is considered more vibrant than *Jana Andolan* I because in *Jana Andolan* II people from every walk of life participated in the movement. It is said that the movement was 'historical' in terms of peoples' participation as about 3-4 million Nepalese came out daily and took part in the street protest (Hachhethu et al 2008:1). Most of the actors of civil society played a crucial role in this democratic movement.

The abrogation of the constitutional monarchy led to the 12-point Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 22 November 2005. The Agreement stated that "autocratic monarchy" was the main obstacle to achieve peace, progress, and prosperity in Nepal (Hutt 2006:122). As per the 12-point MoU, the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) called for a protest movement and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) supported it. This led to a countrywide uprising that started in April 2006. This is popularly called the *Jana Andolan* II. All political forces including civil society (lawyers, doctors, academicians, media, trade unions, student unions etc.) actively galvanized the people. This resulted in massive and spontaneous demonstrations and rallies held across Nepal against King Gyanendra's autocratic rule (Nepal n.d.).

Due to intense public pressure the King reinstated the dismissed House of Representatives on 24 April 2006 and G.P. Koirala became the Prime Minister. On 18 May 2006 the parliament declared Nepal a secular country.

Secularization of the state was one of the key demands of the CPN (M) during their Peoples' War: the 18th of their "40 points demand" asserting that Nepal should be made a secular nation (Upadhyay 2006). This demand was never abandoned in the different rounds of talks they had with the government during the insurgency. As a result, when they finally came to power, the Maoists' priority was to put an end to the Hindu monarchy of Nepal, and the interim government proclaimed Nepal to be a secular state. On May 2006, the parliament declared that Nepal was no longer a Hindu Kingdom but a secular country, greatly reducing the powers of the King, and took away his control over the army (Cailmail 2008:17). In its very first meeting, the House removed the institution of Monarchy and nationalized the King's property in August 2007 (Upadhyay 2008:82). This became the cornerstone of the election of the Constituent Assembly on 10 April 2008 (Nepali & Pyakurel 2009). The NC, the oldest and most influential centrist party, changed its stand from neutrality to demand for a secular state (Hachhethu 2007:1830).

The rise of ethnic groups and nationalities in the past, particularly during the 1990 referendum, was used for the survival of the then Panchayat regime. But the Monarchy's clout among the ethnic groups lessened during the post-1990 *Jana Andolan* period by the installation of

parliamentary political parties and the Maoists. Among the competing forces, which sought to carve its own position in the post-1990 ethnic upsurge, the CPN (M) became more successful both in mobilizing the ethnic capital and in giving a political framework for ethnic demands-autonomy and federalism (Hachhethu 2007:1830). But after Nepal was declared a secular country, the organizations representing indigenous ethnic groups, mainly groups representing Buddhist and a small section of the Christian minority welcomed it. But the Hindu community and organizations expressed outrage. According to BBC news, thousands of people in Southern Nepal protested against a parliamentary decision to declare Nepal as a secular, rather than a Hindu Kingdom. The Hindu protestors in the southern town of Birgunj had declared a general strike in their area. Eyewitnesses in Birgunj stated that the town had been closed down by an alliance of local Hindu groups, with some 6,000 marching in protest (Haviland 2006). However, the declaration of Nepal as secular and a republic nation was a key step towards the restructuring of the state.

The Constituent Assembly of Nepal and Constitution-Making

As a result of the election held on 10 April 2008, the Nepalese Constituent Assembly, a unicameral body of 601 members, was formed and entrusted to draft the constitution (Sengupta 2008). The Maoists emerged as the single largest party in the Constituent Assembly elections. CPN (M) got 210 seats, Nepali Congress-110, UML-103 etc. (EC declares PR results; Maoists bag 100 seats, NC 73 and UML 70)

On 28 May 2008 the newly elected Constituent Assembly declared Nepal a federal democratic republic, abolishing the more than 200 years old monarchy. On 15 August 2008, the Maoist chief, Pushpa Kamal Dahal known as "Prachanda" was elected as the first Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. He was sworn in on 18 August 2008.

After the Maoist led coalition government was formed, renewed inter and intra party differences as regards the form of government and army integration hindered the smooth functioning of government. However, the rift on the issue of the complete integration and rehabilitation of former Maoist combatants with the Nepalese army, failed the Maoist Prime Minister "Prachanda" on 4 May 2009 to resign after the President called the army chief, dismissed earlier by Prachanda, to resume office. PM Dahal said, "*To resolve this difficult situation and to create a positive environment to save democracy, nationalism, and peace process, I announce my resignation*" (Marasini 2009). Following the resignation, another coalition government under the leadership of CPN-UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal was formed. On 1 September 2009, the constitutional committee which was given the task of preparing the final constitution draft from the submission of 11 thematic committees met for the first time since the new government was formed. On 23 October 2009, the Maoists gave the government until 1 November to meet their demands for a parliamentary debate on civilian supremacy and the role of president Ram Baran Yadav in reinstating former army chief Rookmangud Katawal after Dahal's Maoist-led government sacked him (Nepal: Historical Chronology n.d.).

The political rigmarole reached its crescendo with the resignation of Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal on 30 June 2010 after being in power for 13 months. The resignation came in wake of the political impasse and intense pressure from the opposition Maoists to make way for a "consensus" national government. The resignation has not enabled an end to the longstanding political deadlock and Nepal has not been able to form a national government till date.

Challenges Ahead

There are many issues that are major hurdles to the establishment of democracy. Until these issues are resolved Nepal will not be able to translate the vision and build a road map to democratic destination.

Party Politics: Democratic Deficit

Intra and inter-party politics have been a major determinant of political stability in any country. In Nepal, the continuous political dissension and wrangling has destabilised democracy. Considering the current political stalemate it can be said that the consensus underlying the twelve-point agreement and Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was based more on a temporary convergence of interests than on a deeply shared vision for reshaping Nepal (Nepal's faltering Peace Process 2006). The party positions on different issues have drifted further apart in more recent days. The stability of the government and timely preparation of new constitution requires consensus among political parties on the major issues of state restructuring.

Problem of Army Integration

The impasse over the integration of the army is another issue that has remained unresolved. Although Article 146 of Interim Constitution stipulates the rehabilitation and integration of former Peoples' Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers verified by the UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) into the Nepali Army (NA), this has been a major issue of political contention (Housden 2009: 4).

Problem of Federal Structure

Another key tension within the constitution writing process is the debate over federalism. Given that the Interim Constitution has committed Nepal to a federalist structure, the issue in hand is not whether Nepal will be federal, but the grounds on which federalism would be based.

Delay in Constitution-Making

After the post constitution assembly election which brought the Maoists to power, a deadline for formulating a constitution was agreed on by the political parties. However, the government failed to draft the constitution on the stipulated date of 28 May 2010 on account of the differences. The deadline for constitution-making has been postponed for one more year. The delayed writing of the constitution has adversely affected the government's capability to ensure stability.

Conclusion

Nepal's fledgling democracy is at a critical juncture at this point of time. In order to solve the multifaceted problems in Nepal there is a need for a strong and forward looking political leadership. The political parties need to rise above political opportunism and be neutral. In addition, there should be consensus within and among the political parties on issues relating to the democratic governance in the country. The most important challenge that is confronting Nepal till date is to form a consensus-based national government by mitigating the political differences of the parties. Until and unless a stable government is formed, other problems can not be resolved and with these unresolved issues, Nepal would not be in a position to draft and institute a Constitution and move the country ahead. Thus, one may be compelled to conclude that even though Nepal has embarked on a journey towards its long cherished democracy, the lack of commitment on the part of political parties has hindered to institutionalize the accomplishments of the past and promises for the future.

Notes

1. Initially, the United Left Front (ULF) consisting the nine communist groups [Nepal Communist Party (Amatya) 4th Convention, Nepal Communist Party (Verma), Nepal Communist Party (Manandhar), Nepal Workers' and Peasant Organization (Rohit) etc] which came down to seven.

2. It refers to the "Open Door Policy" adopted by Gorbachev USSR to ensure freedom and restructuring of the Soviet political and economic system.

3. Communist Party of Nepal, Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML)' minority government (November 1994-September 1995), NC led Center-Right coalition government with RPP and Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP) (September 1995-March 1997), RPP led Right-Left government with UML and NSP (March 1997-October 1997), RPP led Right-Center government with NC and NSP (October 1997-April 1998), NC' minority government (April-August 1998), NC led Center-

Left government with Communist Party of Nepal, Marxist-Leninist (ML),a new splinter party out of the UML, and NSP (August- December 1998), NC' minority government (December 1998) and NC led Center-Left government with UML and NSP (December 1998-May 1999).

4. Article 127 of the *Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal*, 1990-power to remove difficulties: "If any difficulty arises in connection with implementation of this Constitution, His majesty may issue necessary Orders to remove such difficulty and such Orders shall be laid before parliament.

5. Text of *His Majesty King Gyanendra's Royal Proclamation*, on 1 February 2005.

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Political Parties of Bangladesh: Ideology, Structure and Role in Parliamentary Democracy

Abu Salah Md. Yousuf

Abstract

Political parties are an indispensable institution of parliamentary democracy. Bangladesh, a nation was born in 1971, with a desire to get democratic system of governance in the country. Though the country started to run with a parliamentary form of government, its journey towards democracy was never smooth. The one party system and latter a long period of military rule prevented the apt growing of the democratic institutions of Bangladesh. However, the desire of the people renovates democracy in the country. But, the role of political parties is still in question in reference of practicing democratic norms. In this respect, the objective of the paper is to understand the evolving process of the dominant political parties in the country, their ideology, framework and role for furthering parliamentary democracy in Bangladesh. The paper also evaluates the lacunas of the political parties to ensure the proper functioning of parliamentary democracy in the country.

Introduction

Political parties are the first and foremost institution for any democratic system of government. In the Westminster model of governance, political parties are an indispensable part of democratic system. It is widely accepted "that political parties created democracy and that modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties" (Katz 2006:34). Bangladesh was born in 1971 after nine months of fight against the military rule of Pakistan. One of the core visions of the freedom struggle of Bangladesh was to establish a democratic system of governance in the country. After independence, Bangladesh chose a parliamentary form of government. But, the party which fought twenty four years for establishing democracy during Pakistani military rule over Bangladesh Awami league (AL) failed to continue with a democratic system in the country. The party established "a one party authoritarian rule" by banning all other political parties in 1974 (Ahmed 2003). The decline of popular support and the emergence of political instability led the party to take such a decision, which was a

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total reverse of its ideology and struggle (Ahmed 2003). The normal ways of transfer of power were blocked and non-democratic forces got the opportunity to intervene in the political process of the country. The military coup of 1975 killed the most popular leader of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and established a continuous *de facto* military rule in the country till 1990. Though military rulers organised many elections during 1975 to 1991, all such attempts were eyewash and a desire to strengthen military control in the political process of the country guided them. In 1990, after a tough popular upsurge, the military left power and civilian government returned to the country.

The fall of the military regime in 1990 opened the "third wave of democracy" (Huntington 1991) in Bangladesh. The election in 1991 was held under a new system of government known as non-party care taker government. The Chief Justice of Bangladesh took an oath as the President of Bangladesh and organised free and fair election in the country. The political parties agreed on such a system to avoid influence of the military in the elections. However, after the elections, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) came to power as the largest party to country. But the functioning of parliamentary democracy came under question during the 1991 to 1996 tenure of BNP. The opposition parties raised the voice against a politicisation of political institutions of the country. Confusion rose amongst the opposition parties that free and fair elections were not possible under the ruling party. The opposition demanded the establishment of a caretaker government in the country. BNP denied it and held a one party election in February 1996. The

elections did not get any legitimacy; the BNP was compelled to amend the constitution and establish the caretaker government system permanently.[1] Since then, caretaker governments organised elections in Bangladesh in 1996 and 2001. But the system was again challenged in 2006. The opposition parties under the leadership of AL raised the voice that the BNP, prepared government mechanisms for "election engineering" and AL denied to participate in the elections under the caretaker government. They alleged that the person, who was going to be sworn in as chief of the caretaker government, had partisan political identity tilted towards the BNP. A political upsurge grappled the whole country. At the end, a *de facto* military coup established an interim government. The interim government ruled the country for two years with the backing of one military. One of the prime objectives of the interim government was to ensure the reform of the political parties in the country. But the government itself was criticised for its partisan and non-democratic policies. Confusions emerged that the military might take over power. The chief of the military declared for an "own brand of democracy" in Bangladesh. However, all the confusions ended on the 28th of December 2008 when the ninth parliamentary elections were organized in the country. The AL came to power with absolute majority in the parliament.

But the institutionalisation of democracy in Bangladesh is still progressing very slowly. The country gradually turned into an "illiberal democracy" (Zakaria 1997). Without hotly contested parliamentary elections, other features of parliamentary democracy are missing. The parliament

never functioned properly. The opposition most of the times did not participate in the parliament. The governments were also least interested in the proper functioning of the parliament. Rounaq Jahan correctly described it that "power was concentrated in the hands of the chief executive, the prime minister" (Jahan 2008). The vertical accountability of the parliamentary system like the electoral system worked better than the horizontal accountability (Jahan 2008). However, political parties are mainly alleged for the malfunctioning of democracy in Bangladesh. The dynastic leadership of Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia, the lacuna of democratic practice within the party organisation, the severe deference of national identity and national heroes, the emergence of muscle and money power in parties and unscrupulous corruption by political leaders are preventing the flourishing of parliamentary democracy in Bangladesh. In this context, the main objective of the paper is to study the insight political agendas of the political parties of Bangladesh, their functioning and role in the parliamentary process in the country.

Political Parties of Bangladesh

The political landscape of Bangladesh is crowded by many political parties. The Election Commission of Bangladesh registered 32 political parties during the last parliamentary elections of Bangladesh in 2008. The election commission made it compulsory for political parties to register by defining some prerequisites to participate in the election process. However, the long lists of political parties are not necessary to understand the political scenario of Bangladesh. Because,

the country is mostly dominated by two major parties, the AL and the BNP and two more parties remain relevant in the political system for the cause of their alliance with the AL and the BNP. One is the former military ruler, General Ershad's party, the Bangladesh Jatiya Party (JP) and another is Bangladesh Jammat-e-Islami (JI) thereafter of has a political tilt towards BNP. In 2008 election, AL came to power with grand alliance of the fourteen political parties. Apart from the JP all other alliance partners used the election symbol of AL. The smaller partners of AL mostly left oriented, have very limited role in the politics of Bangladesh. But, during the election the smaller partners become relevant for mobilising the voting field. On the other hand, the BNP lead a four party alliance including JI. Apart from the JI two political parties used the symbols of the BNP during the elections. For mobilising religious emotions, the partners of the BNP were relevant to the political game. In this regard, the present paper will focus on the four dominant political parties of Bangladesh with respect to the continuities and changes of their political ideologies.

a. Bangladesh Awami League (AL)

Following the formation of Pakistan in 1947, political polarisation started based on region, class, community and culture in Pakistan. Muslim League (ML), the party that led the independence movement of Pakistan failed to articulate the will of the different sections of the country. Pakistan was born with two geographical parts, West Pakistan and East Pakistan. Apart from religious similarity both parts of Pakistan were different in culture, habit and beliefs.

Furthermore, the understanding and practicing of religious values was also different. However, the first controversy arose between West Pakistan and East Pakistan with the issue of the State Language. Only 3% people of Pakistan were speaking in Urdu in 1947. But, Pakistani Leadership declared Urdu as the State Language of Pakistan by identifying Urdu as an Islamic language. It was a total shock for the people of East Bengal.[2] The mother tongue of the East Bengali people was Bangla. Hence, it was impossible for them to receive a totally unknown language as a state language. Furthermore, the Bengali intelligentsia easily understood that the move was to make the Bengalis permanently subservient to the West Pakistan. Bengalis brought the issue before the political leadership of Pakistan. But, Pakistani leaders instead of political solution started to use muscle power. Pakistani military attacked peaceful processions of Bengali students in 1948.

The negligence of the ML leaders towards the students uprising undermined the legitimacy of the party in East Bengal. Muslim League became an elite oriented party. The interests of the common people were not in their consideration. Rather, a conservative leadership engulfed the party with a desire to grasp the power. In this context, the progressive workers and mid level leaders of the party felt an urgency to formulate a party that could address the issues of the middle class and masses. They convened a two-day conference 23 June 1949 and formed a party – East Pakistan Awami Muslim league (EPAML). The party came as a new platform for Bengali people. It gained mass support to strengthen their

position in the political circle. Though, the word 'Muslim' still remained in the party, but the party was more concerned towards the betterment of people, instead of religious slogans. The formation of the EPAML was a successful attempt to organise an activist group for Bengali Nationalism as a political platform (Molla 2004).

However, the West Pakistani power elites' continuous political and economic negligence to the Bengali people made EPAML the main voice of the people of East Pakistan. Particularly, on 21 February 1952, Pakistani military killed Bengali students for suppressing the language identity of Bengal; it was a shock to the people of East Pakistan. The EPAML extended their organisational capability to challenge the Pakistani power elites. In this respect, the election of 1954 came as an opportunity for the party. The party organised an alliance, named Unite Front (UF)[3], to compete with the ML. The election was a great victory for the EPAML. UF bagged 223 seats among the 309 Muslim seats, where EPAML alone won 143 seats. The UF formed the government in the centre and in the West Pakistan province. The UF government was aware of addressing the issues discriminating against the Bengali people. But in 1958, the President of Pakistan dismissed the UF government and later Pakistan came under the control of military rule.

In the third council meeting of the EPAML held in Dhaka from 21-23 October 1955, the word 'Muslim' came to be dropped out from the name of the party to make it sound secular. The party adopted welfare-oriented economy as their ideology. It became a front organisation among students,

labourers, peasants, youth and women. In 1957, the party faced a split over the issue of foreign policy. Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy and Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, two main leaders, had a difference of opinion for quite some time, the former favoured strong links with the West, particularly with America, while the latter was in favour of a Non-Aligned foreign policy. The rift eventually led to the formation of a new political party named National Awami Party (NAP) headed by Maulana Bhasani. But the main force of the party remained with the Awami League (AL) and Sheikh Mujib emerged as a charismatic leader in the party. In 1966, Sheikh Mujib declared Six Points demanding the clear autonomy of East Pakistan and started a movement for holding popular elections in the country. A long struggle for the Al under the leadership of Sheikh Mujib compelled the Pakistani military Junta to declare an election in 1970. The election result was a signal towards the split of Pakistan. AL emerged as the majority party of Pakistan. But the party became dominant in East Pakistan and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) under the leadership of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto emerged as the dominant leader in West Pakistan. Sheikh Mujib demanded a handover of power to him as a leader of the majority party. But Pakistani military and power elites denied and attacked Bengali people. That led the Bengalis towards an independence war in 1971. Bangladesh emerged as an independent country under the leadership of AL.

The ideology of the party also transformed in many ways. Though the party emerged as a voice for the Bengali people, the split of 1957 gave the party a tilt towards the West under the leadership of Suhrawardy. But, during the Six Point movement the party again transformed as a mix of pro-west and pro-socialist ideology. However, the independence war of Bangladesh was supported by India and the former Soviet Union. Hence, the pro-Soviet socialist portion of the party became dominant in the decision making of the party and pro-West groups became marginalised after independence of Bangladesh. The shaping of a newly independent country came as a challenge for the AL. The popular slogans of AL for democracy and development got a chance for implementation. The political leadership of the AL choose parliamentary democracy for the country. Sheikh Mujib received the charge as prime minister and multi-party democracy was introduced in the constitution of Bangladesh in 1972.

But parliamentary democracy did not get to stay for long in Bangladesh. In 1974 AL was facing challenges from the leftist organisations to remain in power. In addition, Sheikh Mujib was failing to address the emerging challenges of a newly independent country. In 1974 the country was engulfed by starvation and instability. Political oppositions were using extremist elements to destabilise the country. The pro-Soviet tilt of international level made the country isolated from the West and development and progress in the country got stagnated. However, the fall of law and order compelled Sheikh Mujib to amend the 1974 constitution. He organised a political party known as Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BAKSAL) and banned all other political parties in the country. He took charge as president. All power was transferred to the president including judicial

powers. Leaving aside four state controlled newspaper all other newspapers came to be banned. The parliament became less important. The democratic institutions merged into one party. The desire for democracy of the people got stalled. Peaceful transfer of power was locked by one party system.

Diagram 1: Organisational Structure of AL

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                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │      President       │
                        └─────────────────────┘
        ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
        │ Working Committee │  │   Presidium  │  │ Advisory Council │
        └──────────────────┘  └──────────────┘  └──────────────────┘
  ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────┐
  │ National Council │   │ National Committee│  │ Municipal Committee  │
  └──────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘   └──────────────────────┘
                                                   ┌──────────────────┐
                                                   │  Ward Committee  │
  ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐     └──────────────────┘
  │  Town Committee  │   │ District Committee│
  └──────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘
  ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐
  │  Ward Committee  │   │  Thana Committee │
  └──────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘
                         ┌──────────────────┐
                         │  Union Committee │
                         └──────────────────┘
                         ┌──────────────────┐
                         │  Ward Committee  │
                         └──────────────────┘
                         ┌──────────────────┐
                         │ Village Committee│
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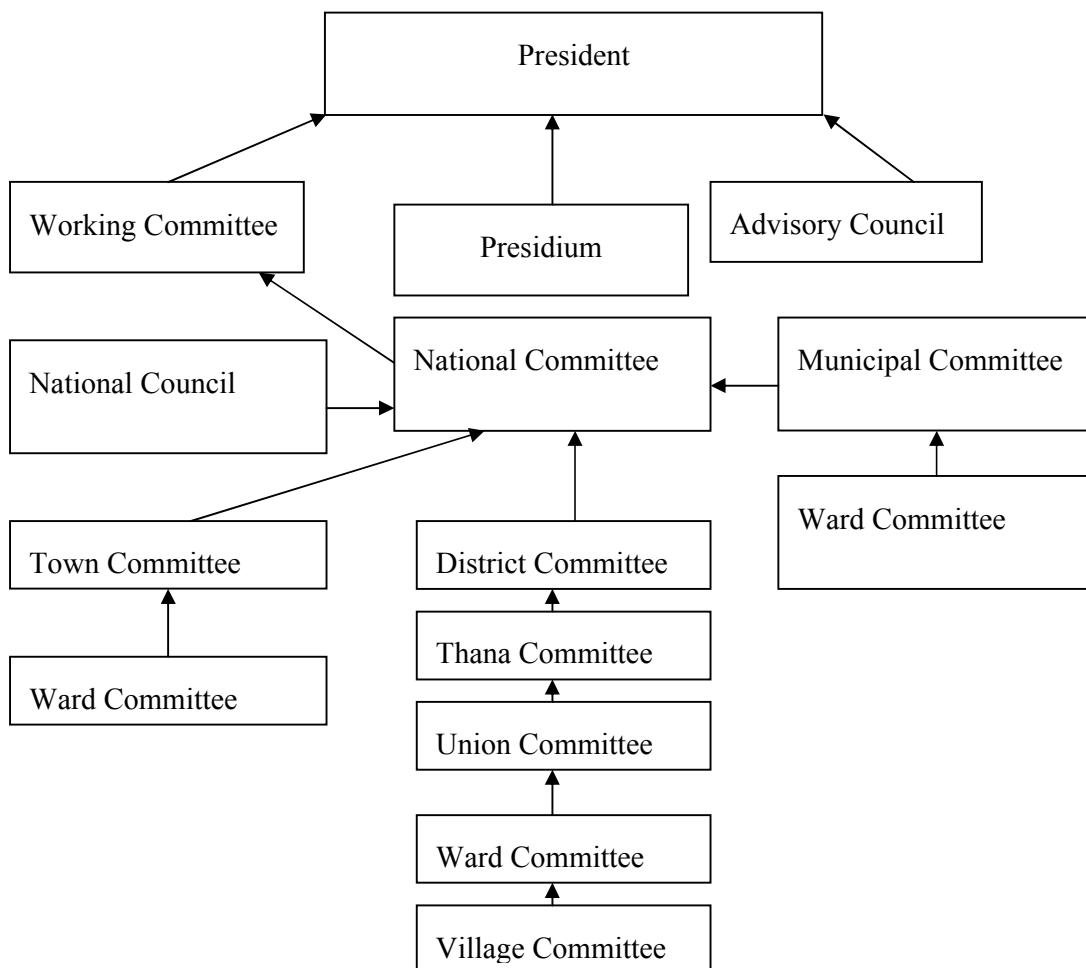
A brutal military coup in 1975 killed Sheikh Mujib. The glorious history of AL was diminished by its one party rule. Military came into power and General Zia took control of the state General Zia emerged from the military to become a political leader in the country. He legalised multi-party democracy. AL again returned in the political process of the country. It participated in the 1979 election and bagged 25 seats in the parliament. The election was under the control of the military. Hence, it was a challenge for AL to emerge as a major party. In addition, the power of the country had remained in the hands of the forces having historical antagonism with AL. General Zia was killed in 1981. His party BNP was ruling the country. But again in 1982, by a bloodless coup, General Ershad acquired power. The democratic process again got derailed by the military and AL faced a political vacuum due to the military. However, AL participated in the general election of Bangladesh in 1986 and emerged as one of the influential opposition parties in the parliament. But later the conflict between military and political forces led the country to an upsurge against the military. In 1990, General Ershad left power and after a free and fair election in 1991, AL emerged as the largest opposition party. The parliamentary system again came to be included in the constitution of the country by the 12th amendment. In 1996, AL won the election and formed the government till 2001. In the 2008 national elections the AL again got a chance to rule the country. However, the history of AL is linked with the political

history of Bangladesh. The party led the people of the country throughout political transformations. The party was formed in 1949 to establish democracy and secularism. Hence, the party still considers herself to be the real protector of democracy in the country. The party has a mass base all over Bangladesh. The central committee of the party looks after the total policy making of the party. The constitution of the party gives an organisational structure for the party throughout the country.

The history of the AL is synonymous with the history of Bangladesh. Since independence the AL has historical contribution. The major achievements of the party are remarkable at all levels of political history of Bangladesh.

AL is still considered as the largest party of Bangladesh. Since 1991, when parliamentary elections were re-introduced, the party has always proved to be the single largest party in the country. The party's local base is strong and it represents all sections of the society. The party's main slogan is still linked with the poor and their economic development. However, in 2008 elections the party's slogan for "Digital Bangladesh" got huge popularity and bagged two-thirds majority of seats in the parliament.

b. Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is one of the largest political parties in Bangladesh. The party was organised on 1 September 1978 by the incumbent military ruler General Ziaur Rahman.

Table 1: Achievements of Bangladesh Awami League

Time Period	Remarkable Achievements
1949 to 52	The foundation of Al as the first opposition party of Pakistan and the party was supporting the students movements against the decision of government to impose Urdu as a language of Pakistan
1954	AL formed UF Alliance and won the election in the framework of alliance with UF and formed the government in the state and centre
1955	AL removed the 'Muslim', from Awami Muslim League to Awami League to prove the party as secular one
1958 to 1969	AL emerged as the vanguard of Autonomy for East Pakistan and in 1966 the party declared 6 point movement, which led the history towards independence of Bangladesh
1970	AL emerged as the single majority party in the Pakistan National Assembly with 167 seats out of a total of 313.
1971	When West Pakistani military rulers were denying to handover power to the AL, the party started movement against the decision and latter led the independence war of Bangladesh for 9 months
1972	The party formed the government and introduced parliamentary system in Bangladesh
1974	The party changed the constitution and introduced one party system in the country
1986	The party participated election under military rule
1990	The party was one of the leading contributor to remove the military regime from Bangladesh
1991	The party emerged as the opposition in the parliament of Bangladesh and demanded to include caretaker government as a part of the constitution of Bangladesh
1996-2000	The party formed the government. The main success of the party is considered the Chittagong Hill Tracts Treaty with Chakma people and the Water Sharing Treaty with India. However, the party was criticised for the cause of violation of law and order in the country.
2001 to 2006	The party lost the election and as opposition party the party was very critical about the corruption and fundamentalist forces. The party struggled to prevent an election which was perceived as pre-planned to return the incumbent party, BNP, in power again
2007 to 2008	The caretaker government was trying to split the party and to change the leadership of the party. Bu they failed.
2008 to present	The party again formed the government

The military coup of 1975 led the country towards the military rule. However, the failure of the AL to ensure political stability, democratic system and the introduction of one party system gave legitimacy to the military rule in the country. General Zia emerged not only as a military ruler, but also as a political leader. Furthermore, his position in power helped him to organise a political party. On the other hand, a political vacuum gave him the opportunity to prove himself as a political leader. In addition, his contribution during the independence war of Bangladesh legitimised him to be a leader in the military as well as in political circles.

On the other hand, during the AL regime, political opposition was submerged and corruption and political nepotism of the party created a field where General Zia proved himself the right person to motivate the minds of people. Though General Zia came as a military ruler he attempted to prove himself as a champion of democracy. He introduced multi-party democracy in the country and restructured political institutions. He cancelled the ban on the publication of newspapers and gave the permission for creating political parties in the country. However, his new policy created an opportunity for those who were against the independence war of Bangladesh. The policies of Zia created an opportunity for him to establish himself on the national level as well as in the international arena. He got the support of the countries who were against the independence war of Bangladesh.

BNP emerged as a party of 'open armed policy' (Asiatic Society of Bangladesh 2003). BNP invited political leaders and workers holding political views right, left and centre, mainly with a view to making it a broad based nationalist party. More than 45 percent of its leaders and workers were not only new entrants, but also young (*Banglapedia* 2003). When General Zia was forming BNP as a political party, the nation was not only divided on the basis of ideology, earmarked as right, centre and left, but also on the basis of pro-liberation and anti-liberation forces. As a result, the social forces of the country like teachers, students, intellectuals, professionals, cultural community and academia felt to come into the BNP for establishing a greater national consensus. The party identified its main objectives as: economic development, democratic advancement, national unity on the basis of Bangladeshi nationalism and generation of a spirit of self-reliance in the people. The party declared a 19-point programme and amended the constitution for four fundamental principles of state policy: absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah, nationalism, democracy, and socialism meaning economic and social justice. However, many of the new comers of the party were not tilted towards a reframed ideology of national identity and fundamental principles of BNP, but they accepted it as a process of reconciliation and national development. On the other hand, the religious groups exploited it as an opportunity for their rehabilitation in politics.

After the formation of the party it was easier for General Zia to popularise the party by using the state machinery. Hence, the party emerged as a rival to the AL politically as well as ideologically. The assassination of Zia in 1981 by a brutal military coup ended the regime of Zia and power was captured by another military

person General Hussain Muhammad Ershad. Within this time BNP was established as an influential and popular political party in the country. Hence, General Ershad in his nine year long military rule failed to dismantle BNP. The fear of splitting the BNP was prevented by its leaders by inviting General Zia's wife Khaleda Zia as party chief. Since Khaleda Zia remains the leader of the party and enjoyed the longest period as prime minister in the county till present.

Though BNP was born as a military party, but Khaleda Zia turned the party into a champion of democracy. The party did not participate in any election under the military regime. Particularly, in 1986 when the party did not participate in an election organised by General Ershad, its leader Khaleda Zia stood as an icon of democracy. Later, the party organised the democratic forces of the country including the AL for movement against the military regime. Hence, the military regime ended in 1990 and in the elections of 1991, the party emerged as the majority party in the parliament and formed the government till 1996. In the national election of 1996, the party became the largest opposition party in the parliament, but failed to play any substantive role in the parliament. In 2001 the party again returned to power with two third seats in the parliament. But in 2006 when the party was leaving power to the Caretaker Government, a political controversy arose vigorously in the country. It was alleged by the opposition that the to-be the chief of Caretaker Government had a political tilt towards the BNP before joining as Justice in the High Court of Bangladesh. The opposition doubted free and fair elections in the country. Hence, a political movement led the country

towards chaos and conflict. In such a situation, the military intervened in politics and a new government was formed by a civilian leadership with the backing of the military on 11 January 2007. The Caretaker started an agenda of political reform in the country and arrested the top leaders of the party.

However, at the end of 2008, the military backed government organised national elections and BNP bagged only 30 seats in the parliament. It became a political disaster for BNP and the party is now fighting for survival within the political conundrum of the country. The party is highly criticised for the autocratic and dynastic leadership of General Zia's family, but the family still enjoys unchallenged legitimacy within the party. The party wants to prove herself as a liberal and democratic force in the country. But its tilt towards pro-Islamic forces is still questioned by secular forces of the country. On the other hand, in the political conundrum of the country it is difficult for the party to make itself totally isolated from pro-Islamic forces. In this respect, it will remain as a challenge for the party to make a balance between Islamic and modern forces of the country.

The party has been criticized not for arranging national councils for a long time. However, in 2009, the party organised its fifth national council. However, all power remains in the hand of the chairperson. Hence, the practice of democracy is very limited within the party. As it is mentioned above, the party still is a platform for rightists, leftists and secularists. The party still is very concerned about national identity and integrity.

Diagram 2: Organisational Structure of BNP

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                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │    Chair Person     │◄──────────┐
                        └─────────────────────┘           │
                                   ▲                       │
                        ┌─────────────────────┐   ┌────────────────────────┐
                        │ Standing Committee  │   │ Chairperson's Advisors │
                        └─────────────────────┘   └────────────────────────┘
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  ┌──────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐
  │ National Council │──►│ National Committee  │◄──────────┐
  └──────────────────┘   └─────────────────────┘           │
                                   ▲                        │
                        ┌─────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────┐
                        │ District Committee  │   │ Municipal Committee  │
                        └─────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────┘
                          ▲            ▲                     ▲
  ┌──────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐
  │ Town Committee   │   │  Thana Committee    │   │ Municipal Ward Committee │
  └──────────────────┘   └─────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────┘
           ▲                        ▲
  ┌──────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐
  │ Ward Committee   │   │  Union Committee    │
  └──────────────────┘   └─────────────────────┘
                                   ▲
                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │  Ward Committee     │
                        └─────────────────────┘
                                   ▲
                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │  Village Committee  │
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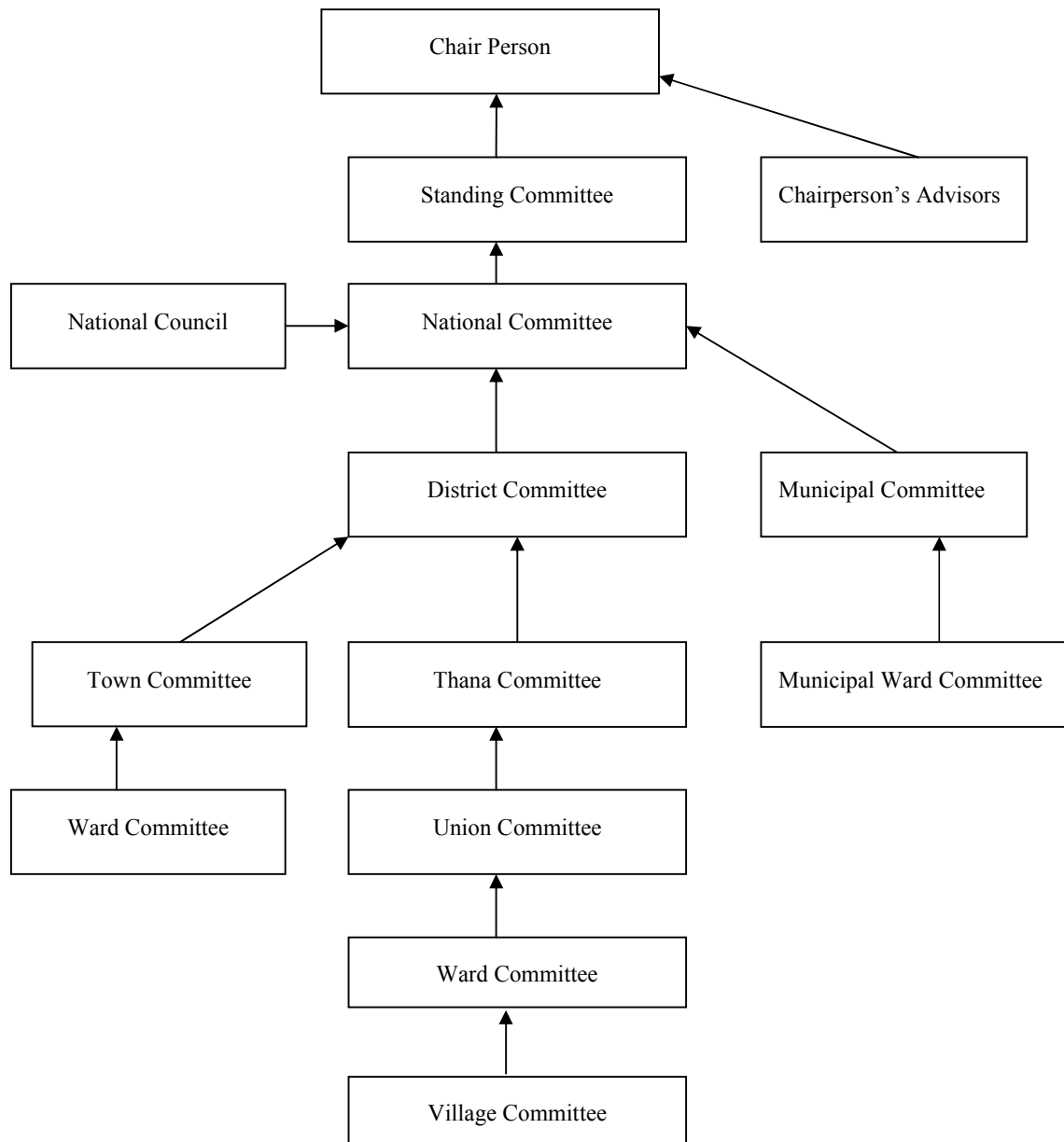
Table 2: Achievements of BNP

Time period	Achievements
1978	The organisation of the party
1979	Organisation of multi-party election in the country
1986 to 1990	Leading the democratic movement in the country
1991 to 1996	The formation of the government
1996	Arrangement of one party system and compelled to leave the power by people movement, after the election the party emerged as largest opposition party in the country
2001-2006	Second term of the formation of government
2007 to 2008	A political debacle for the cause of pressure from the military to divide the party
2008	The party got only 30 seats in the parliamentary election
2009	Many years latter the party organised its national council, but no major change in the leadership.

c. Jatiya Party

Jatiya Party was formed by the General Hussain Muhammad Ershad on 1 January 1986. The party still remains as one man party under the leadership of Ershad. After the assassination of General Ziaur Rahman, the political leadership of BNP became weak to continue the democratic rule in the country. Hence, on 24th March 1982, General Ershad made a bloodless coup in the country and emerged as the Chief Marshal law Administrator. He influenced the political circles of the country to ensure his strength and position in the political arena. In fact, he was serious to contain any democratic movement in the country. But the internal political uprising as well as international pressure made it difficult for

him to create a permanent political stagnant situation in Bangladesh. Like other military rulers of the time he also felt a necessity to legitimise his regime by organizing a political party and by arranging eyewash elections. In this respect, in 1983 he declared the 19 Point Program and assembled political figures from AL and BNP to organise a party. The new comers got an opportunity within the military regime of the country and finalised the party procedures.

The formation of the party did not give any thing new in comparison to the AL and the BNP. It was a duplicate copy of the BNP. The party also took national identity as 'Bangladeshi nationalism'. The party was eager to mobilise religious emotions of the people and accepted plough as party symbol

to make the party popular to the farmers of the country. General Ershad was always eager and conscious to forge a good relation with the West, particularly the USA to ensure international support for its regime. In 1986 General Ershad declared the parliamentary election. Among the major political parties BNP did not participate in the election. The result of the election was manipulated by the military personnel and the election did not get any legitimacy at the national and international levels. At the end, a political upheaval compelled General Ershad to leave the power in 1990. A Caretaker government was formed under the leadership of Chief Justice of Bangladesh and a free and fair election was held in 1991.

During elections Ershad was in jail. But the result of the election was a bit satisfactory for him as the party bagged 35 seats of the 300 parliamentary seats of Bangladesh. Hence, the party emerged as the third largest political party in the country. Though the party is known as national party, the party is mostly influential in the northern part of the country. It is the area where Ershad was born. But the party is losing its popularity in the region also. In the elections of 1996 and 2001 the party failed to secure its position in the region as was expected. In 2008 elections with the alliance with AL the party regained its position in the region.

The party has very less ideological support in the political circle of Bangladesh. The will and decisions of Ershad are still the

agenda of the party. However, like all other parties, it has also an organisational structure and committee system. The splits in the party made it weak. The failure of ideological strength is making the party irrelevant. But the popularity of Ershad still remains in the party's organisational structure. As part of the alliance of the AL, the party has also a minister in the present cabinet.

However, in recent times the party fails to form most of the local committees for lack of its support. The party is still criticized for alleged corruption and human rights violating during the military regime of Ershad. The civil society and media are very critical about the party. It incorporated Islam as the state religion in the constitution of the country, when it was in power. Hence, the pro-secular and progressive forces feel uneasy with the party. But the political calculation gave it an opportunity to form the alliance with AL during the election of 2008. In this respect, the party feels herself more secure since it's leaving of power in 1990.

The party has no unique ideological identity in the country and it has less influence all over country. Rather, it became a regionally influential party. However, the party leader Ershad is trying to secure his position by expressing his unconditional support to the AL. Though the party emerged as a military party, now it is always vocal about democracy and progress of the country.

Diagram 3: Organisational Structure of Jatiya Party

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                        ┌─────────────────┐
                        │    President    │
                        └─────────────────┘
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                        ┌─────────────────┐
                        │    Presidium    │
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                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │ National Committee  │
                        └─────────────────────┘
                          ↑              ↖
               ┌────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
               │ District Committee │      │ Municipal Committee │
               └────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘
                  ↗         ↑                          ↑
    ┌────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐
    │ Town Committee │  │ Thana Committee  │   │  Ward Committee  │
    └────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘
            ↑                    ↑
    ┌────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
    │ Ward Committee │  │ Union Committee  │
    └────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘
                                 ↑
                        ┌──────────────────┐
                        │  Ward Committee  │
                        └──────────────────┘
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                        ┌──────────────────┐
                        │ Village Committee│
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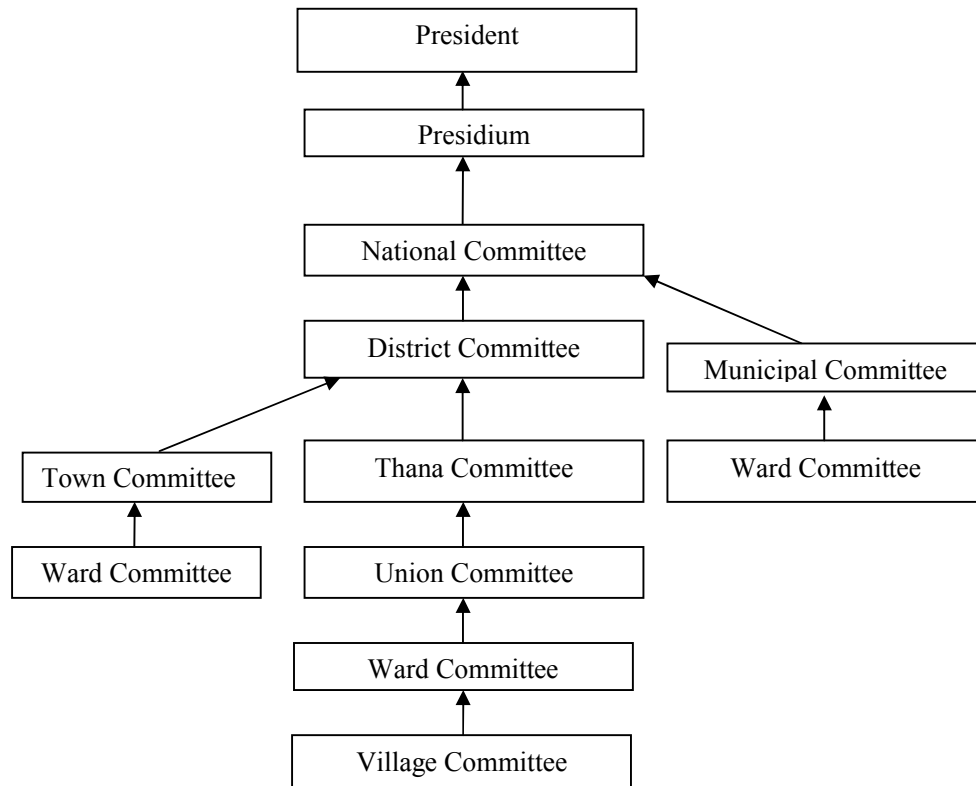
Table 3: Achievements of the Jatiya Party

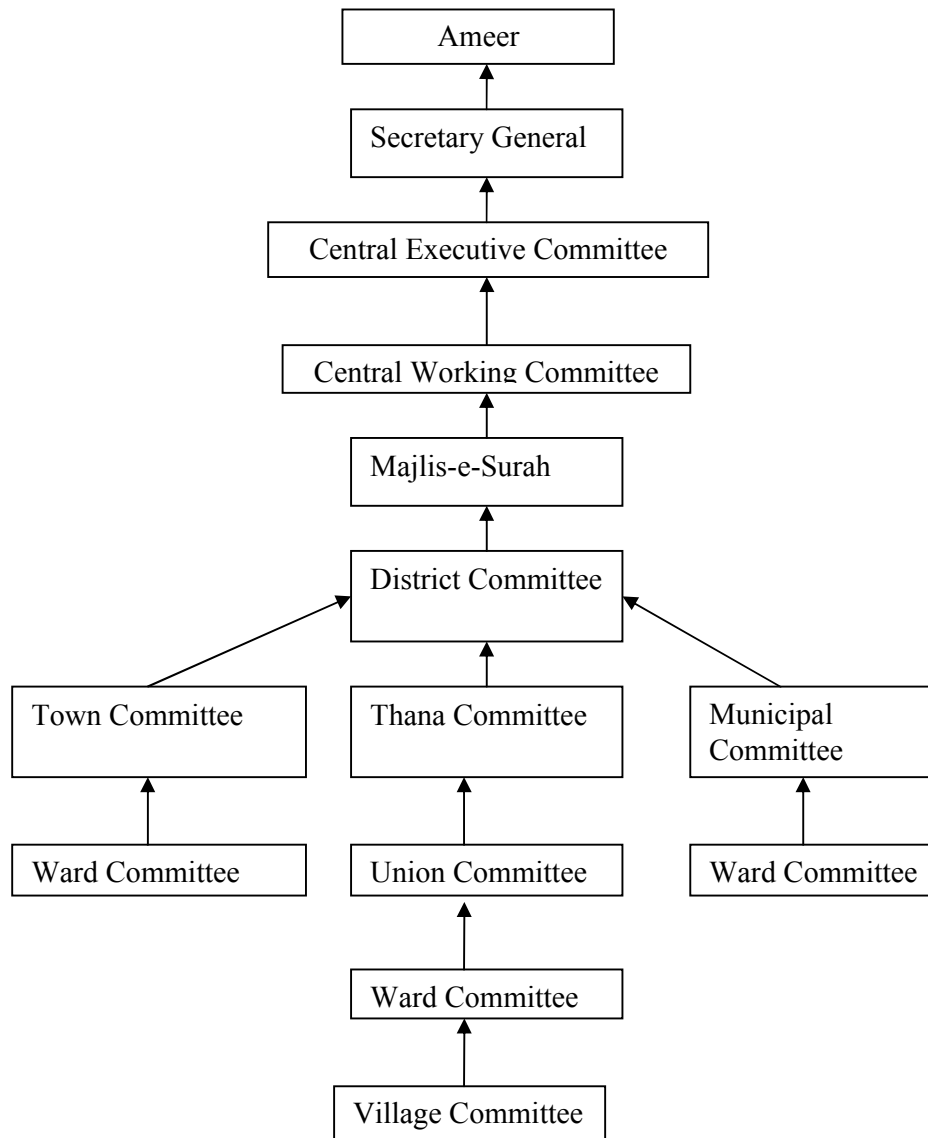| Time Period	Achievements
1986	The formation of the Party, the amendment in the constitution and receiving Islam as the state religion of Bangladesh
1990	A political upsurge compelled the party to leave the power
1991	The party emerged as a regional party
2008	The party became a partner with the grand alliance of AL and became a partner in the government

d. Bangladesh Jammat-e-Islami

Among the many Islamic political parties in Bangladesh, Jammat-e-Islami is the most influential in the country. Though the party has less support base, it is ideologically spread all over the country and it has a strong dedicated and indoctrinated support base in the middle class religious oriented people of the country. However, the party also succeeded to accommodate a number of western educated people in the party including academia, journalists and bureaucrats. The popular support of the party is very less, but the supporters of the party are dedicated to their ideology and less interested about materialistic benefits. But the top brass of the party is alleged for exploiting religious emotions of the people to ensure their power and position in the country.

The party was established in 1941 in the undivided India by an Islamic thinker Maulana Maududi in Lahore of Pakistan. The motto of the party is to establish 'Islamic Sharia' in the constitution of the country. Hence, the party is known as a religious fundamentalist organisation to the secular forces of the country. The party believes: "Islam is the only code of life revealed by Allah, The Lord of the Universe. This code of life encompasses the whole gamut of human life. It does not only prescribe beliefs but also the norms of behaviour. Its guidance covers all spheres of human activities, both spiritual and material."[4] In this context, the party wants to establish Islamic religion and Sharia Law in the country. The leaders of the party identify themselves as a democratic force; they want to deny the allegation of extremism and fundamentalism against themselves. They believe that 'Islam is the

Complete Code of Life'. Hence, Islam can solve all the problems of humanity in the areas of social, political and economic. The party is ideologically tilted towards Egyptian Islamic clerics like Hasan-al-Banna and Sayed Kutub, those are known for the spread of Islamic revivalism in the Middle East. The party has strong links with the banned political parties of the Middle East, but at the same time it gets huge financial help from the Saudi Kingship.

One of the major allegations against the party is that the party acted against the independence war of Bangladesh. In the name of 'Integrity of Pakistan', the party supported the military crackdown in Bangladesh by the Pakistani military. During the nine months independence war of Bangladesh, its leaders collaborated with the Pakistani military and it is alleged that the party leaders oppressed and killed the freedom fighters of the country. Hence, after independence it faced a strong trial from the people and with the ban of religious parties, the party was also banned. After the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the party again started organising. In the period of General Zia, when he withdrew the restriction over Islamic parties, Jammat again got the chance of revival. The assassination of General Zia did not influence them in any way and General Ershad did not contain them. Hence, the party got an opportunity to mingle with the leading political parties of the country and represented herself influential in the political conundrum of the country. The pro-liberation forces were also less critical about their uprising. Rather, they were eager to exploit partnership with Jammat to gain power. In this respect,

Digram 4: Party Structure of Jamaat-e-Islami

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                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │       Ameer         │
                        └─────────────────────┘
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                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │  Secretary General  │
                        └─────────────────────┘
                                  ↑
                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                    │ Central Executive Committee │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘
                                  ↑
                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                    │  Central Working Committee  │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘
                                  ↑
                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │    Majlis-e-Surah   │
                        └─────────────────────┘
                                  ↑
                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │  District Committee │
                        └─────────────────────┘
                   ↗              ↑              ↖
         ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
         │     Town     │  │     Thana    │  │   Municipal  │
         │  Committee   │  │  Committee   │  │  Committee   │
         └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘
                ↑                 ↑                 ↑
         ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
         │     Ward     │  │    Union     │  │     Ward     │
         │  Committee   │  │  Committee   │  │  Committee   │
         └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘
                                  ↑
                          ┌──────────────┐
                          │     Ward     │
                          │  Committee   │
                          └──────────────┘
                                  ↑
                          ┌──────────────┐
                          │   Village    │
                          │  Committee   │
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Jammat got the opportunity to emerge as a party politically and established many financial institutions those are directly controlled by the party people. The financial solvencies also made the party more relevant in the country. In 1991, the BNP formed the government with the support of the party. But later from 1991 to 1996, Jammat became an important partner of the AL to struggle against the BNP.

In 2001 the alliance with BNP opened the opportunity for Jammat to share the cabinet ministry in the country. However, it came as a shock for the pro-liberation forces of the country. The emergence of the party challenged the existence of some of the leftist organisations and AL also understood that the emergence of the party is a challenge for them politically and ideologically. Hence, the issue of war crimes came on table and at present the top leaders of the party are facing trials for their war crimes in the country in 1971 undertaken with the collaboration of the military of Pakistan. But the opposition BNP thinks that it is a move of the AL to submerge the political opponents in the country.

Jammat has a very good organisational structure in the country. The party is alleged as supporting terrorist organisations in the country. It has extensive Islamic books those can influence fresh and young minds easily. The middle class students in the universities are influenced by the books of Jammat and join the students wing of Jammat-e-Islami. Jammat –e-Islami is a cadre based political party. The cadre hierarchy of the party are based in four layers:

Diagram 5: Jammat-e-Islami - Cadre Hierarchy
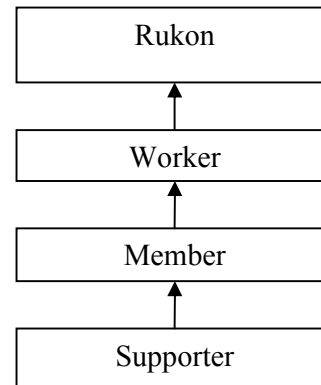
The party maintains its hierarchy in a very rigorous way. Majlis-e-Surah is the main decision making body of the party. Every local committee has its own Majlis-e-Surah. But, the decision making process of the party lacks democratic practice. Every unit of the party has an Ameer and he is the real decision maker of the unit. However, the party elects its Ameer every three years by election. The party leaders are said to have fundamentalism and extremism in the country. The top brass of the party is still controlled by the leaders those were against the independence war of Bangladesh.

The future of the party depends on the present crackdown against the party. If the party leaders get trail, it will be difficult for them to emerge again in the political scenario of Bangladesh.

Table 4: Brief History of the Party

Time Period	Remarkable Developments
1941	The party was established by Maulana Maududi
1971	The party directly participated against the independence war of Bangladesh
1972	The party was constitutionally banned by the government
1979	The party reorganised
1986	participated in the election and bagged 10 seats
1991	participated in the election and gained 18 seats
1996	again lost its influence in the national election of Bangladesh
2001	Formed alliance with BNP and shared the governemnt with BNP
2008	The party lost its influence in politics and facing trial for their alleged war crimes during the independence war of Bangladesh

Role in Parliamentary Democracy

In a parliamentary democracy, the political parties are the main contributor to the system. Political parties' participation in the parliament and constructive opinions and criticisms make parliamentary democracy effective. However, the internal political dynamics of political parties in terms of democratic practice and freedom of expression also influence the political process of a country. Political parties are the most important institution for mapping the democratic credentials of a country. Since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, the country has been facing huge obstacles in the process of institutionalisation of democracy. A will for parliamentary form of government still remains the prime agenda of the people of Bangladesh. But the formation of political parties and their role in the political conundrum is always criticised by the civil society and democratic forces of the country. Though all the parties have taken to implement parliamentary democracy as their political agenda, most of the parties are criticised for the deficit of democratic practice within and outside of the party. The present section will examine certain elements of the working machinery to understand the role of political parties in the parliamentary democracy of Bangladesh:

a. Democratic practice within the party

The leading political parties of Bangladesh fail to prove their credential in the democratic practice within party organisation. Most of the parties follow the dynastic policy of leadership selection. After the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, his daughter Sheikh Hasina emerged

as the party leader. Since her swearing in as the president of the party, she remains the chief of the party. The constitution of the party describes that the 'national council' of the party would decide the president of the party, but in practice Sheikh Hasina remained the unchallenged leader of the party. It needs to be clarified here that the party supporters and workers view Hasina as their legitimate leader. If any one raises fingers at her credibility as the party leader he has to face the expulsion form the party. On other hand, Khaleda Zia, the wife of former President Ziaur Rahman remains as party chief since she had taken the charge of the party after the assassination of Ziaur Rahman. General Ershad is his party chief since the organisation of the party. The Jammat-e-Islami holds the election for electing party chief after every three years. But there is no change in the party leadership for a long time. Hence, the lack of practicing democracy within the party hampers the proper blossoming of parliamentary democracy in the country. The party units are mostly declared by the upper body of the party. Furthermore, there are very limited examples that the decisions of the party are taken in a democratic manner, rather the decision always comes from the top leadership of the party. The opinions of the lower layers of the party get very less attention in every decision making process.

b. Political Culture

The political culture of the country itself lacks democratic norms. Political workers are not habituated to act in a democratic manner. Party workers always want to get the support of the top leadership, instead of taking support from the field level party workers. Hence, loyalty to the party leadership is considered as the main source of power. The central authority of the party decides every thing and the lower rung of the party have to follow the directions of the upper stairs (Gomes 2008). However, the political culture of every society is influenced by the social culture of that society. The traditional society of Bangladesh is based on hierarchy in terms of wealth, social position, educational background, seniority, and gender. Party politics are also influenced by such social phenomena (Moniruzzaman 2009). The grassroots political activists and leaders have relationships with the district level or central level leaders of the parties, and such relationships are based upon some exchange of influence, power and resources. Hence, a political culture has developed in Bangladesh based on money and muscle. Politics means sharing of resources and party means the ganging up to grasp the resources in any way. At least, political culture of the last twenty years proved that the gaining of power means using the state power to ensure the control of resources of the country. The party culture is based on a top-to-down structure and the lower rungs of the party have to be loyal if they want to benefit from the state mechanism. Such political culture has created an over politicization of all kinds of institutions of the country including the military, bureaucracy, academic institutions, police, media and civil society also. Without electoral democracy, the practice of democracy is submerged by party stalwarts and at the end democratic regimes become crueler and violation of human rights reaches in the level of authoritarianism. The political parties and its stalwarts are the beneficiaries

of the system. But it makes the state weaker as the other state institutions are depending on these political stalwarts. It's not the qualified citizens who take decisions, its muscle men who select the leadership of the vital institutions of the country. In such a system, promotion of parliamentary democracy is facing stern challenges. Elected parliamentarians do not consider themselves loyal to the voters. The loyalty remains rather, in the hands of money and muscle.

c. *Participation in the Parliamentary Proceedings*

In a parliamentary democracy parliament is the main house for all kinds of dialogue and debate. The parliamentary committees scrutinize the bills coming to the parliament. But, in the last twenty years of parliamentary experience of Bangladesh, it failed to bring any qualitative change in this respect. The ruling party of the country never bothers about the parliament. Most of the times the parliamentary sessions face the quorum crisis. The debate over real issues is always avoided by parliamentarians. Rather, they are more interested in criticizing and irritating their political opponents. The speaker of the parliament of Bangladesh expressed many times his dissatisfaction about the 'language' of the parliamentarians. All the decisions are taken by parties' top leaderships and the members of the party always only shout 'yes', in every issue taken by the government. Since 1991, the opposition parties never were eager to go to the parliament. Rather, they feel that the movements on the road are very effective for them to make the political condition difficult in the country. The opposition believes that political instability may bring out the

antagonism of the people towards the government and that will ensure their return to power. Instead of parliamentary debates the members of parliament want to ensure their visibility on the streets. They believe that it is sacrifice made for the party and the next time when the party comes to power this dedication would open for him more opportunities within the party. Recently, a trend has developed that the opposition party members write their resignation letters from the parliament and the top leader of the party preserves it. It is a document of loyalty to the top most leader of the party. Hence, the members of the parliament are not able to play any role in the parliament without the consent of the party leadership. That hampers the effective working of the parliament and it is against the spirit of parliamentary democracy.

d. *Transparency and Accountability*

Transparency and accountability are prerequisites for any form of democracy. In the parliamentary form of government, transparency and accountability are the first and foremost demands from political parties. Without transparency political parties cannot act in a democratic manner and fail to prove themselves as reliable to the people. The parties have to be accountable to the people and the party leadership has to be accountable to its workers. However, the political parties of Bangladesh always lack transparency. The funds and their expenditures are always kept secret. Hence, black money remains the main source for party activities. And the person, who can bring in money is considered as the most powerful leader in the party by the party stalwarts. However, there are allegations that

the political posts of the party are allocated based on the donations to the funds of the party. In recent years, the Election Commission of the country is trying to ensure transparency in the right funds of the party. But still the progress in this respect is very less. The lack of transparency and accountability in the party affects parliamentary democracy in many ways. The leaders emerge in such a way that any transparency in their activities is assumed to be a threat to their position. Hence, parliamentary proceedings and activities fail to reach in a transparent system and that hampers the proper flourishing of parliamentary democracy in the country.

e. *Patron-Client Relationship*

In a democratic system the voters and the workers of the party are considered patrons. They decide who will lead the party and the country. Especially, the decisions go up from the lower tiers. But in the party structure of Bangladesh, the workers and the voters are the clients. They can barely influence the policy making levels. The workers of the party have to work for the man who is selected by the upper body. The workers and voters have very less to say against party decisions. If any one becomes aggrieved in any party decision, he is not able to express his opinion in the party forum or any where else. He can only cast a secret vote against the party during the election. It does not in any way hamper the position of the party. Furthermore, engagement with a party is considered as workers ideological bondage. Hence, if he wants to change the party, it is considered as betrayal to the party. However, if the top level leaders change parties, it is considered their political

strength and the other parties are eager to receive them to lead the debacle of the opponent party. But if the low level workers change their parties, they have to face the anger of the party and other parties will not be interested in recruiting them. Hence, the affiliation with a party creates a compulsion for the workers to remain with the party. Leaving the party may create problems in his life. The mid level party workers are mostly engaged with many illegal activities. Hence, it is impossible for them to leave the party. If they leave the party, they have to face many legal challenges. In this respect, the workers of the party have a kind of compulsion to remain with one party, like it or not.

In this respect, the political parties of Bangladesh represent a very limited value of democracy. Overtly, the parties always pronounce the necessity of democracy and all the parties are engaged in the war of tongues to prove themselves as the upholders of democracy in the country. But in practice, dynastic leadership, the use of money and muscle in politics, marginalisation of honest leadership, over politicisation of national institutions, and the top leaderships' control all tiers of the party prohibit the proper blooming of democracy in the country. The lacuna of democratic practice within the party prevents them to introduce democracy in the parliament. Hence, parliamentary democracy is dominated by a Prime Ministerial Dictatorship.

Conclusion

Political parties are the heart of parliamentary democracy. The practice of democratic norms and values within the party can make the parties capable of working in a democratic manner in the

country. In other words, the success of parliamentary democracy depends on the practice of democracy within political parties. Dialogue and debate in the party makes the party leadership more capable to work in the parliament. Transparency in party activities leads them to ensure the transparency in governance mechanism. In this respect, political parties of Bangladesh fail to prove themselves as upholders of democracy in the country. The dynastic leadership, the undemocratic process of selecting leadership and the use of money and muscle in politics are preventing the promotion of parliamentary democracy in the country. A hierarchical political culture of the country creates opportunity for established forces to control the party. Hence, qualified and honest leadership is facing unequivocal challenges to participate in the political scenario of the country. The process is hampering the proper blooming of democracy in the country and it is leading the country towards the use of money and muscle. Parliamentary democracy has become 'Prime Ministerial Dictatorship.' The political institutions of the country have failed to get any effective progress. At the end, the institutionalisation of democracy is facing challenges and democracy is getting a new identity of "illiberal democracy".

Notes

1. Article 58 B, C, D, and E of the constitution of Bangladesh describes about the formation and function of the caretaker government.

2. East Pakistan was known as East Bengal.

3. The alliance or front composed mainly of four parties of East Bengal, namely Awami League, Krishak Sramik Party, Nizam-e-Islam and Ganatantri Dal.

4. The Constitution of the Party.

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The Challenges of Democracy in Maldives

Jacob Ashik Bonofer

Abstract

One of the biggest challenges for South Asia is the sustenance of democracy in its fullest sense. During the Second World War period, there have been many instances where South Asian countries have drifted from democracy to autocracy and back. There have also been examples of how autocrats and dictators have ruled the nations under the guise of democracy. The best example for this kind of governance is Maldives. Since its independence in 1965, the island nation has drifted from democracy to autocracy and visa versa. The longest ruler of Maldives in the post independence period, President Gayoom ruled the nation for three decades. He used elections as a tool to justify his leadership in which he was the only candidate to be allowed to contest for the post. However this situation has changed since 2008, where Maldives struggled towards democratic path. This paper talks of the challenges since Maldives adopted democracy.

International Scenario

"Everyone who wanted to speak did so. It was democracy in its purest form. There may have been a hierarchy of importance among the speakers, but everyone was heard, chief and subject, warrior and medicine man, shopkeeper and farmer, landowner and labourer."

Nelson Mandela in his autobiography

Democracy is a dream for those who do not have it, but for the ones who live in a democratic country sustaining it is a major challenge. This comes to evidence with countries that follow other forms of government and have appeared to become democratic since the end of the Second World War. However, reversals into authoritarian regimes by nearly twenty newly formed countries[1] have brought to light the vulnerabilities of democracy.

The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2008 outlines that the "third wave of democracy",[2] which began in 1974 saw a sea change after the collapse of the Soviet Union in late eighties, whereby the erstwhile states which formed part of Soviet Union and few other non-democratic countries geared up towards becoming democracies. Soon nearly half the world's populations came to live in some form of democracy. However, this trend has slowly

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stagnated over the last few years, where very few nations succeeded in becoming democracies. Inversely there has been increasing number of vulnerable democratic countries becoming autocratic (Thomas 2007:12). This setback was warned as early as 1990's by analysts like Fareed Zakaria who feared that

'democratically elected regimes, often ones that have been reelected or reaffirmed through referenda, are routinely ignoring constitutional limits on their power and depriving their citizens of basic rights and freedoms. From Peru to the Palestinian Authority, from Sierra Leone to Slovakia, from Pakistan to the Philippines, we see the rise of a disturbing phenomenon in international life - illiberal democracy… Naturally there is a spectrum of illiberal democracy, ranging from modest offenders like Argentina to near-tyrannies like Kazakstan and Belarus, with countries like Romania and Bangladesh in between' (Fareed 1997).

The Freedom House report on "Freedom in the World – Electoral Democracies" shows that in 2000 nearly 62% of the nations were elected democracies. This figure reached almost 64% in 2005 – 2006, but since 2007 this figure has been falling and in 2009 it fell back to 60%. This if converted into actual figures would show that nearly 5 countries have drifted away from elected democracy.[3] According to the report there are 116 elected democracies. It is unlikely that this downward trend would stop unless the promoters of democracy join to take adequate measures. The status of democracy

report the freedom status of various countries also shows alarming signs. Only 89 countries are considered as free countries, 58 countries are considered as partially free countries, and 47 countries are under tyrannical rule. The only convincing sign of this report is that there is partial growth in a number of free countries.

Since the end of Cold War the US and the western block have explicitly started promoting democracy through various bilateral and multilateral democratic promotion / assistance programmes. Asserted by President Clinton in his 1994 State of Union address that, 'the promotion of democracy and human rights' as the third pillar of his foreign policy agenda (Azpuru 2008:151). This momentum was sustained by President George W. Bush in parallel to the war on terrorism. This dual strategy of Bush has been vehemently criticised by scholars on democracy as *"President Bush spoke eloquently on democracy, but the administration in fact pursued a realist policy in the war on terror, maintaining close relationship with authoritarian governments and proving willing to violate human rights."*

President George W. Bush's strategy in promoting democracy in the Middle East, especially in Iraq backfired and raised doubts on the means followed by the United States and other western blocks. Unless a strong state institution is formulated preceding the introduction of democracy, it is likely that the democratic initiative remain a failure. This is best explained by Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder as *"it is dangerous to push states to democratize before the necessary preconditions are in place and the prudent democracy-promotion efforts should*

pay special attention to fostering those preconditions" (Kucharczyk 2009).

The Obama administration has distanced itself from all the policies of the earlier Bush regime. While this stand would give a major boost to repairing the American image internationally, the new regime has not moved towards concrete plans of promoting democracy. Critiques have pointed out that the current regime has over emphasised on the human rights aspects and little has been done on strengthening democratic institutions and bases. This is clearly visible from Obama's approach towards the Middle East, where democracy promotion has not been his regional priority. However, the budget for Governing, Justly and Democratically (GJ&D) for the year 2011 has seen a sharp increase to $3.3 billion. This is a 25 percent increase since last year's budget which was 2.81 billion.[4] While many countries throughout the world received small increases in the new budget request, the vast majority of the proposed funding increase is directed towards two countries: Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"I do have an unyielding belief that all people yearn for certain things: the ability to speak your mind and have a say in how you are governed; confidence in the rule of law and the equal administration of justice; government that is transparent and doesn't steal from the people; the freedom to live as you choose. These are not just American ideas; they are human rights. And that is why we will support them everywhere."

President Barak Obama at
Cairo University, Egypt

Not far behind are the European nations who are actively participating in promoting democracies around the world. Like the US's idea on League of Democracy, EU's common initiative has also remained a non-starter. Individual nations and groups like Visegrad four - Czech Republic, Poland, Slovak Republic and Hungary have been widely participating in funding projects to a budget of Euro 5.8 million in 2008 (Kucharczyk 2009) for promotion of democracy in different parts of the world. While examples and methods used for promotion of democracy are many without the host country playing a vital role in accepting this form of governance, promotion of democracy will never succeed.

In most cases the host countries hardly see any reasons for change. This is more visible in Muslim countries and ones that have a communist lineage. However there are examples that have proved otherwise, Maldives is one such example, where a nation that is completely Islamic has become democratic with the help and pressure from external actors mainly from West and Asian neighbours. This paper deals with the aspects that led to a change in the system of governance in Maldives and the contours that are likely to hold this system in the future.

While talking about Islam and Democracy, one immediately remembers countries in the Middle East and Africa that continue to be authoritarian regimes under the influence of the army and very little do they remember about Indonesia and Turkey which have become democratic. While talking of democracy it is natural that one thinks that Islam and democracy do not go

hand in hand. This concept is true by an extremist's view. Anwar Ibrahim, former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia differentiates between extremist and moderate ideology as,

"There is an ongoing debate over these issues in the Muslim world. The extremist view, by conflating the exercise of state power with the sovereignty of God, confers on tyranny the mantle of legitimacy. On the other hand, the secular elite espouse a vision that purports to eliminate the role of religion within the public sphere. The current assertions about Islam's hostility to democracy hold no more water than did the discredited Asian-values thesis." (Ibrahim 2006:7).

Unlike the extremists view where there is disconnect between Islam and Democracy and which has been popular since 9/11, emerging Muslim Democrats in most parts of the world view political life with a pragmatic eye. They reject or at least discount the classic Islamist claim that Islam commands the pursuit of a *Shari'a* state and that their main goal tends to be mundane in crafting viable electoral platforms and stable governing coalition to serve individual and collective interests (Vali 2005:13). Hence it is not a surprise that Muslim countries under authoritarian regimes are more likely to become democratic in the years to come. Maldives is the best example of this change. However, exceptions could never be ruled out.

Maldives in the new age of Democracy

The political change that has occurred in our country over the past few years has been seismic. In a society where fundamental freedoms were suppressed, we managed to galvanize the people into political activism. In a country where political pluralism was officially banned, we managed to form and then register political parties. In a state where all authority was vested in the President, we managed to amend the constitution to enshrine the separation of powers. In 2008, the Maldives held the first free and fair presidential election in the country's history. I am pleased to report that, 18 months on; the transition to democracy has been smooth, secure and stable.

President Nasheed's speech
at the opening ceremony of the Sixteenth
SAARC Summit[5]

Since the change in leadership in 2008, Maldives has witnessed both turbulent and happy days that are quite common in any democracy. The Maldivian administration under the leadership of President Nasheed, despite all odds in governance and the transition, has retained democratic values and has not resorted back to the dictatorial form of government. The democratic experiment in Maldives has not been easy. The coral island nation being a completely Muslim country has especially faced numerous challenges from both domestic and external influences. However the experience in the last few years has laid the path for the nation to move towards equality and freedom.

Having started with a positive note however, one cannot assert that all is well in the island nation. With democracy taking a centre stage, the nation has become a victim

to severe political infighting, breakdown of the administrative machinery, growth of fundamentalism, growing intolerance towards other religions and culture, challenges to economic growth, environmental issues, indolence on part of the administrators and undue external influences. If democracy, which according to the standard definition is a rule by the people, of the people and for the people is a path towards welfare state why should the afore said issues play a major role in curbing the journey towards a welfare state. Who should be blamed if democracy fails in a new democratic state? Will the external actors support the continuation of democracy or make the young nation a victim of democratic shortfall? Will President Nasheed's policies on climate change provide him with political mileage? Can religion play a role in the downfall of a government? This paper studies democracy in Maldives in a historical context. It studies the role played by religion, society, economy, environment in sustaining democracy in the island nation. Role played by international actors also receives a special mention in this paper. Due to dearth of printed material on the Maldives some of the arguments are based on authentic online sources.

Historical Change or Another Political Mile Stone

The archipelago of Maldives consist of 1192 islands of which roughly 200 islands are inhabited with an estimated population of 392,000[6] and 80 islands with tourist resorts. The capital Male is the hot seat of Maldives' power and is also the most populated Island. The Maldivians are a mixed stock possibly many of them are of Aryan origin and they speak a language akin to old Sinhalese called Dhivehi[7] (Suryanarayan 1993:108). Being a completely Sunni Muslim country with a liberal following, Islam is the only state religion and practising of other religions are strictly private affairs within the homes.

The earliest settlers in the island were probably migrants from southern India and Sri Lanka nearly 1500 years ago. The latest archaeological findings suggest that the islands were inhabited as early as 1500 B.C. About 947 A.D., recorded contact with other countries began with the first Arab traveller visiting the Maldives; and Islamic influence became prominent around 1153 with Persian and Arab traders settling on the island. Thereafter, trade was carried out on pearls, spices, coconuts, dried fish and cowry shells.

Portuguese were the first Europeans to colonise Maldives in 1558, but their conquest lasted only for 15 years and were driven away by Sultan Ghazee Muhammad Thurufanou in 1573. Although governed as an independent Islamic sultanate since the time of Persian influence, the Maldives also remained as a British protectorate from 1887 until 25 July 1965. During the period the British did not control the internal matters of Maldives, though they did control the external affairs (Zaki and Parakh 2002:33). In 1953, there was a brief attempt to form a republican form of government but its failure led to the imposition of the sultanate. Following independence from Britain in 1965, the sultanate continued to operate for another three years. On 11 November 1968, it was abolished and a Republic was established under President Ibrahim Nasir.[8]

President Nasir's rule continued until 1978 with him being re-elected in 1973

for the second term. However, crisis in the Maldivian economy due to the decline in exports led to a bloodless coup and Nasir fled to Singapore with millions of dollars from the State Treasury. Following this turn of events, an academic turned diplomat Maumoon Abdul Gayoom became the President with a popular mandate of making Maldives a democratic country. He in his frequent announcements claimed that he would usher in democratic reforms. However, large hopes were not fulfilled and the discontent that began momentarily, culminated in defeat of Gayoom in 2008 and usher in democracy.

President Gayoom and the Democratic Reform Process

President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, who was the Head of the State since 1978 until 2008, was considered a moderate Muslim. Educated in Al Azhar University, Cairo, where he took the Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Islamic Studies, Gayoom was sensitive to the revivalist and modernist tendencies in Islamic countries (Suryanarayan 2008). President Gayooms persistence in power since 1978 has mandated him with absolute authority. He was the Head of State, Head of the Government, Commander in-Chief of the Armed Forces and of the Police and one highest religious authority. The constitution also allowed him to appoint 8 members to the 50 member People's Majlis (Parliament in Maldives).

That President Gayoom is all too powerful can be understood from the following comment by an observer who said that it is like an "Englishman would say the President of the Republic of the Maldives is Her Majesty the Queen, the Prime Minister, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Chief Constable, the Leader of Her Majesty's opposition, the Chief Justice of England and Wales, the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Lord Chancellor, the Head of Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York all rolled into one."[9]

President Gayoom remained in power from 1978 until 2008[10]. With the introduction of democratic reforms in Maldives, change was inevitable and President Gayoom was defeated by the incumbent President Mohammed Nasheed in the 2008 elections.

Promises on reforms that were due since 1978 finally saw some hope on June 9, 2004 with the President announcing democratic reforms. This reform process witnessed an upshot of violence and unrest in Male that started with a custodial death of Evan Naseem on 20th Sept 2003. Evan Naseem, was arrested for possessing drugs. During an internal scuffle in the prison, the police forcefully took Evan for interrogation. Meanwhile, during the interrogation Evan passed away. This news brought about riots within the prison leading to the death of 3 more inmates due to the shootout by the police. The news spread throughout the archipelago fuelling the struggle for democratic reforms.

Following these developments, anti-Gayoom factions in Maldives organized 'Black Friday Protest' on August 12-13, 2004 to commemorate the death of Evan in September 2003. This protest saw the biggest ever gathering in the history of Maldives and

it also witnessed most of the anti-Gayoom protesters being detained and the declaration of a State of Emergency in Male and surrounding islands. Due to the unrest President Gayoom came under tremendous domestic and international pressure forcing him to accept democratic reforms, which had been in the cards since 1979.

The reform process saw some major developments, they include: first, President Gayoom's announcement of reforms on June 9th 2004; second, allowing political parties to register on June 5, 2005; third, announcement of Roadmap of Reforms on March 27, 2006; fourth, ratification of the new Constitution on August 7, 2008; finally, the Presidential Elections on October 8 and 28, 2008. In addition election to the Majlis (Parliament) of the Maldives was also held on May 9, 2009, as per the requirements of the 2009 Constitution.

Maldivian Constitution

Theunder the rule of Sultan Muhammad Shamsuddeen III. This was done under the aegis of the British who was the ruling force then. In 1968 the first Republican Constitution was proclaimed when Ibrahim Nasir became president. It was subsequently amended four times in 1970, 1972, 1975, and 1998. The new constitution as promised by President Gayoom in his road map to democratic reforms was ratified on August 7, 2008 after a long delay, because of the tussle between President Gayoom and the Special Majlis on various issues. However ratification of the new constitution, also the first democratic constitution, led for the implementation of the full democratic process in Maldives.

Maldives since the Election of 2008

The Presidential election of 2008 was a milestone in the history of Maldives, where a dictator faced the first opposition since he assumed power in 1978. This becomes even more significant as President Gayoom himself contested the elections along with the other opposition parties in the two sets of electoral process. While former President Gayoom gained around 40% in the first round, the rest of the opposition parties jointly gained the remaining votes, with Mohammed Nasheed of the Maldivian Democratic Party leading the opposition force. However, in the runoff, Gayoom's support marginally increased by 45.79% and Nasheed went on to gain a 54.21% majority to become the first democratically elected President of Maldives.

This political change in Maldives is not only special for the change in leadership, but also for the fact that a dictator for thirty years was allowed to stay back in the country with full dignity as a former President and the leader of opposition, something which is usually found in a mature democratic country. This system was significant, because such gestures are rare in any Islamic country. In the Joint Press Conference held on 10th November 2008, Nasheed said "*Revenge, anger - we cannot develop with such an attitude, with a heavy heart we cannot do this. I'm appealing to the public, for the sake of future generations, leave these things aside*".

The initial reaction of President Gayoom was also warm. Unlike Gayoom, who forced his predecessor President Ibrahim Nasir and his family to flee from the nation by slapping innumerable charges

against him, President Nasheed treated the former President and leader of opposition with respect and privileges. However, this honeymoon was short-lived. On July 12th 2009, the Presidential commission formally summoned Gayoom to its office to probe into alleged embezzlement and corruption of state funds and resources. There are many opinions behind this move. One could be the enormity of the embezzlement of the state funds and two, it could also be due to pressure from President Nasheed's colleagues who were not happy with the way Gayoom having obtained all the privileges for a "former president" was yet going about criticising the government repeatedly on all issues in the party meetings. Many of them who are pressing for action were the ones who would have suffered most during Gayoom's time.[11]

This scenario has changed since the beginning of this year. On January 25, 2010, Gayoom in a televised news conference, made a surprising announcement that he would not be contesting the Presidential elections in 2013 and for the party leadership of DRP anymore. According to the DRPs rules, once Gayoom does not contest the party leadership polls, he automatically eliminates himself from contesting in the ensuing Presidential polls. With this decision the 72 year old former President of Maldives who ruled for 30 years retired from politics.

While the MDP won the Presidential elections, the parliamentary elections in May 2009, also saw a swing in the votes with the former President, Gayooms Party DRP leading marginally followed by MDP. The Commonwealth team monitoring the elections in its report said that the manner in which this election was conducted demonstrates that the Maldives is slowly and steadily consolidating democracy in the country. This election was the first multiparty parliamentary election in Maldives.

Immediate Challenges and Responses by the New Government

It's been two years since President Nasheed was democratically elected as the President of Maldives. In these two years the new government has had many ups and downs in the political life of Maldives. He inherited a government that was economically bankrupt and politically nascent which was prone to infighting within the government. Despite all these, President Nasheed has been able to govern the nation.

President Nasheed's initial challenge was forming and sustaining his government. The MDP having won the elections with the support of other minor parties, were forced to share their portfolios, but some also left the government immediately after assuming power. Dr. Hassan Saeed and Gasim Ibrahim who were responsible for getting Nasheed elected left the government soon after. This political instability is still a major concern.

In the first multiparty parliamentary (Majlis) elections held on May 9, 2009, the DRP won a majority in the Parliament elections with 28 seats and MDP won 26 seats. This changed the political scenario in Maldives. The opposition along with other smaller parties gaining majority in the Majlis, the ruling MDP faced enormous problems in governance. According to the Constitution of Maldives appointments of every Minister including Cabinet Ministers

and other constitutional posts will have to be approved by the Majlis. This requirement led to a rough weather between the MDP led government and the DRP led Majlis. Out of 77 members in the parliament, 43 of them were in the opposition and almost every bill forwarded by the executive was mauled and changed out of shape with the majority the opposition had in the Majlis. Unable to pass any bill and also lack of cooperation in the Majlis, the Cabinet resigned en masse on June 29, 2010. Following this event, the President took over all the positions and immediately attested two of the popular members of the Majlis JP Yameen and Gasim Ibrahim for influencing parliamentary decisions by bribery.[12]

However this situation was averted on July 7, when the President reappointed the cabinet. This decision was the result of the mediation by the US between the President and the opposition parties. Although the initial crisis was averted, it continued even during the month of August when the Majlis was tasked with approving the appointment of the Attorney General and the bills relating to the judiciary, which was a constitutional requirement,[13] and the Majlis did not do so even after the stipulated duration. This led to the resignation of the Attorney General and closure of the Supreme Court. However, this situation was also averted by August 11, 2010 when the Majlis and the President endorsed the appointments.

While vital constitutional issues have been solved as of now, its ones guess when the next issue would crop up. The current political situation in Maldives shows a clear lack of understanding of democratic norms. Despite all these shortfalls, President Nasheed has lived up to democratic principles. Unlike most new democratic countries that have lived long under the dictatorial form of government and a lack of cooperation leads to reversion to authoritarian government, President Nasheed has not done so. Will this be the case always?

Economy

President Mohameed Nasheed's ascension to power was met with global economic crisis, and Maldives being a nation that is dependent on tourism was facing the worst ever economic crisis. Not only tourism but also fish export which is an important source of income had a drastic decline. The study conducted by the visiting IMF delegation reported that the GDP is likely to fall by 4.5%.

The Maldives does not have many natural resources except her beauty and the riches of the sea. In fact, 99% of its territory consists of water. Hence it is not surprising that tourism and fishing are the major industries of the country. Tourism, accounts for 28% of GDP and more than 60% of foreign exchange receipts. Over 90% of government tax revenue comes from import duties and tourism-related taxes. Fishing is the second leading sector. Agriculture and manufacturing continue to play a lesser role in the economy, constrained by the limited availability of cultivable land and the shortage of domestic labour. Most staple foods must be imported (Narayan 2007:87). Although agriculture cannot be considered as an important source of income it would be interesting to know that it also contributes to an extent the economy. Breakdown of the

various sectors in percentage terms for Maldives' economy is given below.

Table 1: Breakdown of the Various Sectors

Sectors	% of Total Economy
Tourism	28
Transport and Communications	20
Government	18
Manufacturing	7
Real Estate	7
Fishing	3
Construction	6
Agriculture	2
Other	10

Source: Background Note: Maldives, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, US Department of State, February 2009.[14]

Maldives is also one of the least developed among developing countries and it continues to receive substantial amounts of official development assistance (ODA) from developed countries. In 1989, the Maldivian government started to reform and liberalise its economy by lifting import quotas and liberalising regulations to attract more foreign investment.

Since the time President Gayoom came to power, Maldives has recorded impressive rates of economic growth and significant accomplishments in access to health care, education and other social amenities. The GDP growth averaged 7.5 percent over the past two decades, raising per capita income to about US$ 2,800, the highest in the region and moving the Maldives well into middle income status.[15] Two issues had a major impact on the economy of Maldives. First; the Tsunami of December 26, 2004 divested most of the low lying islands of the tourism industry. Second, while Maldives was on the path to recovery after the Tsunami, the global economic crisis of 2008 further affected its tourism industry and led the country to huge budget deficit.

The incumbent President Nasheed's Government inherited a budget deficit of Rf. 1.4 billion (US$ 109.00) from the previous government and desperate efforts were taken to control the expenditure. However the unrealistic pay rise of 16 to 60 percent has taken a good toll of the Maldivian economy. Except of the government sector, the GDP contribution of other sectors have been lower than previous years. There has also been a significant fall in foreign reserves as well. However, the austerity measures taken by the government and the support of external actors like the World Bank, IMF,EU and friendly countries like India, China and US have slowly made the economy jump back. According to the World Bank report

"The rebound in tourism is driving a growth recovery. The global crisis led to a sharp decline in tourist arrivals in early 2009, which contributed to a 3.0 percent contraction in the economy in 2009. Based on the tourism rebound that started in the second half of 2009, real GDP growth is expected to be 4 percent or more this year."[16]

Lack of growth in the fisheries sector has still not recovered. The sector that used to contribute over 6 % of the GDP is

currently contributing only 3%. While reasons like rising fuel costs, changing ocean currents, etc, are quoted for the poor performance of this sector, continuous decline in this sector will have a lasting impact on the nation's economy. The incumbent government in addition to its concentration on the environment and tourism should also help in the growth of this sector.

Religion and Fundamentalism

Although being virtually an all Muslim country belonging to the Sufi school of Sunnis, Maldives has always remained a moderate Muslim country when compared with the other Muslims countries. Only Sunni Muslims are allowed to become citizens. However, practice of other religion and religious functions in public is strictly forbidden. The only non-Islamic festival that is allowed to be practiced is the Poya observance of the Sri Lankan Buddhists, but only within the Sri Lankan High Commission in Male.[17]

Religion also plays a primary role in asserting political and legal identity. This could be well explained by describing the distinctive features of the national symbols of Maldives, namely the national flag and the emblem. The national flag itself incorporates the basic tenets of the Islamic faith, indicating that Islam is a part and parcel of Maldives, in the flag, red symbolises sacrifice, green prosperity and the crescent the Islamic faith. Similarly, the national emblem is symbolised in the coconut palm indicating the livelihood of the island nation, the crescent, star and the two national flags symbolising the Islamic faith of the state and its authority and the inscription in Dhivehi

reads, "Al Dhawlathul Mahaldheebiyya" meaning the state of Maldives.[18]

The moderate image of Maldives could be well attributed to the tradition, which has been free historically and continued to be so even after embracing Islam in the 12th century. Ibn Batuta in his account on the free society of Maldives mentions of the women not wearing full veils unlike other communities. He further goes to say that despite his orders as the Kazi, on women to follow the same dressing norms as women in other Islamic communities, he miserably failed in his attempt. Urmila Phadnis describing the religious freedom enjoyed by women in Maldives says that *"in terms of freedom of movement and association, they had historically experienced a relatively more lax social ethos than women in traditional Hindu and Muslim societies, with short periods of rigid curbs, depending on individual Sultans and Kazis. The purdah was never wholly accepted even though veils were used at some time or other."*(Phadnis 1985:14). Although wearing of full veil, with no flesh showing is not permitted under the country's moderate Islamic traditions, women fully covered in black are now occasionally seen on the streets these days.

President Gayoom since the time he came to power has always maintained that Maldives should be a moderate Islamic Country. This policy of Gayoom is one of the reasons for Maldives not being a hot bed of Islamic extremism. The personal trait of the former Gayoom played an enormous role in retaining the country in moderate form, A Friend of President Gayoom in a Biography elucidates:

"We were quite mixed up as a country, not sure to go the way of the West, with a Western culture, or to opt for a moderate path. The president, being a Muslim scholar, wanted a moderate and modern Islamic society."

So long as President Gayoom was in power he remained as the highest religious authority in Maldives. He issued religious tenets and controlled the sermons preached by the Imams in the Mosques. It should be said to the credit of President Gayoom, that despite enormous influence of the Arab – Gulf region he retained Maldives as a moderate Muslim State. However this situation is slowly changing given the subtle growth of Wahhabi fundamentalist movement over the past few years. Currently it is stronger than ever before and has been accusing the government of not being 'Islamic' enough.

Fears of the growth of extremism were best described by Dr. Chandrasekharan, Director, South Asian Analysis Group, as[19]

"Then, of course, to go back to the growing Islamic fundamentalism. I have seen Male since 1989 and in my three visits there, the Male I saw in 1989, in 1991 and now is completely different. I see more of the trappings of the fundamentalism. Almost 50 per cent of the women seem to be wearing the Muga, as they call the burqa in the local language, a certain amount of conservatism creeping in.[20]

Two major incidents exposed the vulnerability of Maldives of being used as a hub of extremist activities, first, on September 29th 2007, a bomb blast rocked the recreation park injuring eight Chinese

and two Japanese. Two British tourists were also injured. Second, following the bomb blast, the standoff between the Maldivian Security Forces and the masked men at the Himandhoo Island of the Alif Alif Atoll on October 6th 2007 was a clear sign of the presence of Wahhabi elements in Maldives and their role in the bomb blast in Male.

There is also an increasing danger from Maldivians who go to other Islamic countries for their education. Reports of connections between Maldivians and fundamentalists group were available as early as 2002, when 28-year-old Ibrahim Fauzee, a Maldivian national, was arrested in Karachi and was taken to Guantanamo Bay by the US security forces for his connections with the Al Qaeda.[31] The recent incident includes the announcement of the Maldivian Defence Ministry about the arrest of nine armed Maldivians in the northern district of Pakistan on April 2, 2009. There were also reports of the arrest of three Maldivians in the first week of March. It is not yet clear whether these Maldivians were on their way to join the Taliban or were planning an attack. One of those arrested is said be an accused in the Sultan Park explosion case but was said to have been released earlier for want of evidence.[22]

The incumbent President Nasheed has more challenges than the former President due to his western affinities. Gayoom and other Islamic groups during the campaign for Presidential elections have accused Anni of having connections with Christian groups and also seeking to allow the spread of Christianity in the Maldives. The opposition is also trying to nail President Nasheed of drinking Sula Sirash, red wine

during his visit to India. There is hardly any thought given to the spread of extremism. Also the role of Adhaalath party, which has strong connections with Saudi Arabia and suspected to be provided with Saudi funds, is a big concern. Adding to the fears is the appointment of a representative of the Adhaalath party as the Minister for Religious Affairs. However the appointment of the MDP, Sheikh Mohamed Farook as the Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs could play a role in checking the misuse of Ministry of Religious Affairs by the Adhaalath party.[23]

Opening opportunities for impromptu religious sermons by the new government would not help Maldives; rather there is a high chance of misusing this option for spread of extremism. President Gayoom during his tenure kept sermons by the imams under his control so as to avoid its misuse. But will the expansion of religious expression endanger Maldives would only be known with the change of time.

Role of External Actors and the Way Forward

The significance of Maldives and its external relations are based on three aspects geography, religion and colonial legacy. Although all these three aspects are different from each other, however for Maldives it is closely interrelated and any historical account on Maldives would see an overlap of these aspects. The Foreign Policy of Maldives was best spelt out by the incumbent Foreign Minister Ahmed Shaheed in 1997. He divides Maldives foreign policy objectives as economic interests, promoting national and environmental security, and regional and international solidarity.

Having spelt out the important aspects in the previous paragraph, the following sections would deal with the methods followed by Maldives in achieving its foreign policy goals. Although Maldives obtained its freedom from British in 1965, its independent foreign policy came into existence only after the British vacated the Gan Islands in 1976. Being the closest neighbours, Sri Lanka and India were the first to have diplomatic and closer relations with Maldives. This position continues even at this juncture.

Close geographical proximity with Diego Garcia makes Maldivian security and independence extremely important for India and other regional actors. The USA did make an attempt to take over the Gan islands following UK's withdrawal from the Maldives in 1968, and requested the use of some of the islands' resorts for recreation purposes for its soldiers posted in Diego Garcia but this was turned down in view of India's pressure to the contrary. There is more of speculation, not as much a rumour that Maldives and China had gone in for an agreement in 1999 on the Marao Island, which is the largest island in the whole of Maldives. China had promised to build a deep sea port in Marao but nothing has crystallized as yet. Considering the change in Government in Maldives and its closer relations with India, these projects would not see the light of the day in the near future.

As regards India - Maldives relations, apart from the traditional historical links, formal relations can be traced to the declaration of independence in November 1965, when India was the third country to recognise Maldives. The first state level visit

was in 1974 when Prime Minister Mr Ahmed Zaki of Maldives made an official visit to India. After which there have been frequent visits by the leaders of both countries either way. Most of these visits are important to Maldives because with each and every visit Maldives has benefited economically.[24]

Bilateral trade is weighed deeply in favour of India, who is the third largest exporter to Maldives. India and Maldives trade relations currently stand at 19.3 million dollars. A Trade Agreement was signed in 1981 for export of essential commodities. Indian exports to Maldives include agriculture and poultry produce, sugar, fruits, vegetables, spices, rice, wheat flour, textiles, drugs and medicines, a variety of engineering and industrial products, sand and aggregate, cement for building etc. Indian imports from Maldives are basically cowries' shells and red corals. The other areas of Indian Investments include joint ventures in tourism and industrial sectors. There are five island resorts managed by Indian companies. Taj is the main operator in this sector. The Indian community is the second largest expatriate community numbering nearly 20,000, consisting of doctors, nurses, technicians, teachers, labourers.

India – Maldives Defence Cooperation is a major area of operation next to economic relations. Op Cactus and Op Rainbow are the two major operations India has had in Maldives. Op Cactus was in November 1988, when President Gayoom was threatened by a coup staged by Sri Lankan Tamil mercenaries, of the PLOTE of Sri Lankan. They had gone at the behest of a few local Maldivian businessmen and the timely presence of the Indian armed forces

within 24 hours was instrumental in stalling the coup and flushing out the mercenaries. Earlier in 1980 there was a failed coup attempt orchestrated by the British. Op Rainbow was for tsunami relief, a purely humanitarian venture. India gave two fast attack crafts to Maldives in April, 2006 during the visit of the Indian defence minister to Maldives. These are the Trinkat Class Fast Attack Craft and INS Tillanchang a 260-ton Fast-Attack craft.

Maldives' relations with India as witnessed during earlier regimes continue to be cordial and favourable. President Nasheed made his maiden international trip to India after coming to power. His trip also witnessed India promising a $100 million loans to improve the tourism industry in Maldives.[25] Since then there have been frequent visits by officials and President Nasheed himself to New Delhi. On trying to understand the possibility of furthering Indian support and involvement in Maldives, one realizes that the requirements of Maldives are quite high and India despite all its options and advantages would need to do more.

Conclusion

Terrorism, extremism, nepotism, infighting, etc, are critical characteristics of democracy in South Asia. Nevertheless, one cannot just conclude that democracy is a wrong form of government for a region that is relatively new to democracy. Despite all these characteristics, nations like India; those have experienced democracy for over half a century has had enormous influence on newly democratic countries. The democratic experiment in Maldives is one such example. Although the survival of democracy is always a challenge in newly democratised

countries, the very notion of freedom sustains the momentum. South Asia is a typical example of how despite various odds, democracy still continues to be a popular form of government. Maldives had been a hot bed of terrorism, extremism, nepotism, etc. But, in the last two years, since its first democratically elected government, it has moved a long way towards becoming a democratic country in the fullest sense.

The last two years of the first elected government of Maldives have not been easy. For a nation that has hardly witnessed any democratic overtures, it is likely that there would be many challenges. However, the incumbent President and the government have reacted with great maturity and responsibilities by trying to address the issues in a democratic way and not reverting back to the dictatorial form of government. President Nasheed in an interview with the Asian Tribune clearly explained his position as follows:

"I don't want to take the form of government back to dictatorship however much it would be easy for me to run. We know that the best form for governance is democracy, and it would deliver development. Despite challenges, I don't think we are on the brink of unravelling the constitution, and going back to where we were earlier."

In the last two years, President Nasheed has faced critical challenges that almost paralysed government functioning. First when the cabinet resigned en masse as a protest against the opposition's role in the Majlis' in trying to stall government activities. Second, the delay in accepting the Judiciary bill by the Majlis that led to the

resignation of the Attorney General and the closure of the Supreme Court. These two major incidences almost led to the failure of the democratic setup. However, with the support of external actors, the parties that were involved were able to resolve their differences. Whether the issue has come to an end, one is not sure. But the fact remains that if Maldives has to proceed with economic growth it is important that the political actors and the external actors are sincerely committed to democracy in Maldives.

In this situation, the roles of democratic countries like India play a crucial role. Being the oldest democratic country in this region, India should ensure that Maldives does not fall back to autocracy due to political reasons. What is more, it is important for India to have a democratic and a secure Maldives. Any challenge to both these aspects would bring about major security concerns, as the influence of Jihadi's are quite high. India needs to take keen interest in the growth of Maldives.

Notes

1. The Economist Intelligence Unit's Index of Democracy 2008, The Economist, available at *http://a330.g.akamai.net/7/330/25828/2008102118 5552/graphics.eiu.com/PDF/Democracy%20Ind ex%202008.pdf.*

2. *ibid*

3. *http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fiw10/FIW _2010_Tables_and_Graphs.pdf.*

4. Freedom house 2010 US Budget Analysis available at *http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/FY201 0BudgetAnalysis.pdf* as on 5, October 2010.

5. Speech available at *http://www.presidencymaldi ves.gov.mv/4/?ref=1,6,5143* as on Oct. 12, 2010.

6.   CIA World Fact Book, available at *https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mv.html* as on Oct. 10, 2010

7.   Dhivehi is a mix of Sanskrit, Pali, Sinhala, Tamil and now some Arabic as well.

8.   *http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/arsh/Country_Profiles/Maldives/Chapter_1.pdf* available as on October 10, 2010

9.   Chandrasekharan, S, MALDIVES: Registration of MDP: Much remains to be done *http://southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers15%5Cpaper1472.html* available as on October 10, 2010-10-18

10. President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom was re-elected in 1983, 1988, 1993, 1998, and 2003 elections.

11. Chandrasekharan, S, MALDIVES: Gayoom Summoned by Presidential Commission on Corruption available at *http://southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers34%5Cpaper3328.html* as on October 10. 2010.

12. Chandrasekharan, S, MALDIVES: Cabinet Resigns and is Reappointed: High Drama?, available at *http://southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers40%5Cpaper3914.html*

13. According to the transition norms set by the new constitution of Maldives, all appointments had to be ratified by the Majlis before August 8, 2010.

14. Maldives, Background Notes, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, July 20, 2010

15. Maldives Mobile Banking Project, PROJECT INFORMATION DOCUMENT, The World Bank

16. Maldives Economic Update, The World Bank, April 2010.

17. Presentation by Ashik Bonofer on Indo Maldivian Relations in the Emerging Era on 9th June 2007 at the Observer Research Foundation, Chennai Chapter, Chennai, India.

18. *ibid*

19. Chandrasekharan, S expressed his fears during an interaction at the Chennai Chapter of the Observer Research Foundation.

20. Adding to this issue Dr. Chandrasaker writes that "The Deputy Secretary General of the MDP only said that I was not necessary to wear the burqa and she was forced to resign from the party post and has been asked to explain. She has been given an ultimatum: either she apologizes or she resigns from the official party post of being a Deputy Secretary General of the party. She chose to resign from the party. There are visits of the preachers coming and the question is, the problem is how to stop it with the modern methods of the Internet, the e mail and such things, this is an issue that has problems which most of the time is preoccupying. I must appreciate President Gayoom for being able to keep the Islamic extremism at bay, particularly the Wahabbi type. It is hundred percent Sunni Islamic country and this is another issue because practically they cannot maintain a hundred percent Sunni Islam character because with the increase in globalisation, there is bound to be inter-religious liaisons and inter-cultural connections, in form of marriages and so on there needs to be some provisions for peaceful cohabitation of other religions."

21. Aditi Phadnis, Aditi Phadnis: A Maldivian symphony, *Business Standard*, December 27, 2008, Available at *http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/aditi-phadnismaldivian-symphony/01/09/344445/* as on October 7, 2010

22. Chandrasekharan, S, MALDIVES: Arrest of Armed Maldivians in South Waziristan available at *http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/papers32/paper3137.html* as on October 1O, 2010

23. *ibid*

24. To name the most important visits by the Indian leaders, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi made an official visit to the Maldives in January 1975, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in February 1986, Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh in June 1990, Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar in November 1990 to attend the 5th SAARC Summit, Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao in April 1995 for the formal joint opening of Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital (IGMH), Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral May 1997 to attend the 9th SAARC Summit, and Prime Minister Atal

Bihari Vajpayee Maldives in September 2002. In fact the Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement was signed during Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit in February 1986, based on which there were other major projects, Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital (1994). Maldives Institute of Technical Education (1996), Population and Development Consolidation Programme, Human Resource Development Programme. What is of note is that none of these projects are large scale ventures, crucial as they might be, the biggest of these is the 200 bed Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital. However, it is also important to note that most of the Maldivians come down to Trivandrum and Chennai for their medical treatment.

25. Available at *http://www.jansamachar.net/display .php3?id=&num=18298&lang=English* as on October 15, 2010.

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Review Article

The Changing Agenda of South Asian Studies

Swati Bhattacharya

There has been a steady increase in the number of centers, departments and schools around the world focusing on South Asia and wanting to study the various other aspects that this South Asianness entails. Innumerable readings, elucidation and theorization regarding the same have been put forth, which stack up South Asian studies' shelves in libraries. This has been supplemented by an ocean of literature on the same being churned out by indigenous academic institutions. Therefore, the endeavor in the following few pages shall be to provide a short analysis of the agenda of South Asian studies in the light of three fairly recent works on South Asia, namely, *Democracy, Development and Discontent in South Asia*, *Local Democracy in South Asia* as well as *Liberal Perspectives for South Asia*. Through these publications, an attempt would be made to try and understand what has as yet constituted South Asian studies, the changes or continuities therein and the reasons for the same.

I

South Asia has emerged as a region characterized by multiple flash points. These flashpoints emerge due to a number of reasons. Many have identified the reason in the South Asian context to be the proxy war played out primarily between India and Pakistan (McMahon, 1994) as a sequel to the Cold War. This they have pointed out, has led to a state of perpetual tension and fear amongst the people of the subcontinent and this fear has exacerbated with both countries coming to possess nuclear power. The loss of life due to cross-border terrorism has also been immense. This infighting has attracted international attention wherein each of these nations vies for the support of other powerful nations (Puri 2001).

There have been other scholars who have singled out the India-first attitude as a reason for instability and tension in the subcontinent. They feel that the Indian desire to emerge as the South Asian leader has made it stand in the way of its smaller South Asian neighbors developing relations with international powers (D.N 1988). Thus, South Asia may be said to be housing a lot of discontent and two additional reasons for the same-democracy and development, are seen to have been laid out in Veena Kukreja and Mahendra Prasad Singh's edited volume titled '*Democracy, Development and Discontent in South Asia*'. Though not a first of its kind, the book, handles the issue under consideration with pioneering

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coherence. The logic of democracy and development in the South Asian subcontinent has been ironically, two-way. This comes out well through this volume which aptly shows that South Asia feels the tremors from not only a lack of democracy and development but also due to an introduction of development and democracy in a number of cases.

Through its various chapters, the contributors to the book bring individual South Asian nations under the spotlight and bring forth the simultaneous working of contradictory forces, under whose pressure the subcontinent perpetually reels. Chapter two and chapter six shed light on Pakistan wherein the difficulties of cultivating democracy in Pakistan and the disturbances in the nation due to lack of democracy have been discussed. Saleem Qureshi through chapter two tries to situate the politics of Pakistan within its larger historical, sociological and cultural context and emphasizes on the need of having civil society institutions and a conducive political culture so as to help democracy flourish in Pakistan. Lawrence Ziring in his chapter talks of the 'unrecorded majority' of Pakistan's population, especially the Wazirs of South Waziristan and why it is so important to take into account their dissatisfaction with the regime as part of Pakistan's integration efforts. As Qureshi mentionably concludes, 'Ultimately, it is up to the Pakistanis themselves to decide whether, in a zoological analogy of the zebra being a white animal with black stripes or a black animal with white stripes, Pakistan is a democracy with military disruptions or a militocracy with democratic interludes'.

Likewise, through chapters three, seven and eight, the authors have tried to bring out similarities showcased by other South Asian nations of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal. In chapter three, Kukreja discusses the similarity that Bangladesh bears with Pakistan in terms of its political life shuffling between democracy and authoritarianism as well as its cultural life in terms of growing Islamic fundamentalism. In the seventh chapter, Kukreja along with Mahendra Prasad Singh, maintain that Sri Lanka, by delaying or not providing federal solutions to the grievances of the separatists, is precipitating further crisis. Such an undemocratic attitude as that held by successive majority Sinhala regimes in the face of a multiethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual reality, has acted as the first and foremost gateway to the crisis.

Nepal too has floundered on the rocks of a monarchy hesitant to devolve power and the forces lying in opposition to it that are determined to take it, even if by force. Nalini Kant Jha through his work urges the state to identify the grievances of the excluded and work towards resolving them so that the reins of political life may be taken over from the Maoists. The undemocratic policies towards the minority in Bhutan have also led this kingdom situated in the lap of the Himalayas into deep crisis. That this has resulted in substantially complicating relations between India, Nepal and Bhutan which should be brought back to normal by our policy makers, is the subject of Awadhesh Coomar Sinha's chapter on Bhutan.

Niraj Kumar, Mohammad Nuruzzaman and Rajan Harshe all through their respective work deal with different

aspects of development in the subcontinent. Kumar deals with the Indian developmental state and says that it has remained rather unexplored given the fascination of scholars and theorists with the East Asian developmental states. He says that India has done well in both of its developmental state phases-the Nehruvian developmental model as well as the later Neo-liberal developmental model. He may also be supported in these arguments by S. Mahendra Dev (2000), who has through his work striven to show that indeed neo-liberal reforms have made a positive difference to the individual economies of South Asian nations along with visible success at the macro South Asian level, but he is posed against a rapidly growing literature regarding the unfavorable impact that liberalization had and continues to have at the macro level and at the level of individual South Asian economies.

The upheaval caused by development comes out well through Nuruzzaman's chapter wherein he talks of the popular resistance to pro-market reforms in Bangladesh. He tries to place these protests that were triggered during the eighties and continued into the following decade and understand them in totality. The last bit in understanding this two-way dynamic of development is put together by Rajan Harshe in his chapter on Indo-Pak conflicts over Kashmir where he stresses on the need to take care of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in developmental terms and rely on developmental projects so as to facilitate cooperation amongst the two conflicting nations.

However, though the work speaks of the India-centric factor in South Asian studies, it itself appears to have placed India slightly towards the centre. The volume not only opens with a chapter on India, the thematic arrangement is suggestive of a movement from the good-a recognition of India's democratic nationalism, to not-so-good-the dark undemocratic side of other South Asian nations. Similarly, Kumar seems to uphold India's strategy of reconciling both-development and democracy as a model despite its tragedies, and this calls for further analysis. Being the largest democracy is a matter of pride but as far as development is concerned, we still have a long stride to take towards it. This 'reconciliation' even if not invisible is definitely premature. On the whole however, it would be appropriate to call it a fine work as it is reflective of the diligence with which the volume has been put together. It also showcases a balance. Each chapter is an output of vigorous and recent research which informs the reader of contemporary issues and this makes the book highly relevant and pertinent.

II

Democratization, as mentioned afore is one of the most pronounced factors responsible for much social as well as political torpor and change throughout the subcontinent. Democratization has occurred through both-the state as well as non-state agencies, also known as civil society organizations or non-governmental organizations. These organizations work outside the purview of the state and often make up for its inadequacies. Along with this they often work as democratic watchdogs. It is within this space that new identities are carved out that further lead to the stirring up of new, often-violent social movements.

The state contributes to democratization through the process of decentralization and devolution of power to the lowest of governing units, by recognizing hitherto unrecognized social groups, by recognizing these newly emergent social groups' political demands and so on. An equally large amount of literature is being spun around each of the two-the CSOs as well as the state. One such work on the latter is an edited volume by David Gellner and Krishna Hachhethu, *Local Democracy in South Asia*, that deals extensively with democratization at the micro level in Nepal in particular and its South Asian neighbors in general.

As the editors of the book themselves put, "We aim to be innovative in two different ways…..we look more widely at democracy as a process and democracy as a value" and secondly "the book…brings together chapters on all the larger countries of South Asia, while yet having a principal focus on Nepal". That is to say that the book does not just focus on the presence or absence of institutions of governance, rather it focuses on the presence or absence of democratic values that may guide everyday lives and practices. And secondly, it has been attempted to tide over the earlier mentioned India-centeredness of South Asian studies by bringing out a volume dedicated largely to politics in Nepal, maintaining simultaneously, a comparative South Asian framework.

The first few chapters being exclusively on Nepal bring out the intricacies of the nation's politics through studies conducted on its various aspects. The opening chapter discusses the prevailing

sorry state of local democratic affairs. Dhruba Kumar articulates well the prevalent fiasco and puts forth the factors responsible for the same, with party infighting and divisiveness, gradual transformation in the meaning of and expectation from a leader and cadre-based party politics appearing first on the list. This view is corroborated by Krishna Hachhethu in his chapter through a case study of political parties in the Dhanusha district of Nepal. Through the chapter on distributional coalitions, Pfaff-Czarnecka sheds light on the sociology and operationalisation of these influential and undemocratic informal networks that have consistently changed people's perception of the state, its political process and the role of parties. They have developed a negative attitude towards the entire process which they view just as a means to capture power and privileges and it is the local government bodies that are suffering on account of these factors.

Gellner and Karki through their chapter also bring out supportive evidence to the aforesaid. Their research on the ethnic organizations in Nepal, showcases the kind of changes that have permeated the perception of people towards democratic practices like voting or holding elections and the resultant innovations they have made to democratic procedures (like arriving at consensual decisions instead of voting mentioned herein). Gradually is the idea seeping that democracy invigorates organizations and that such elected leaders have a stronger mandate.

Dahal in his chapter upholds this very democratic feature elaborating how the Madhesis were able to not only protect

themselves and their interests but also promote them due to the introduction of democratic political practices in the Nepal Tarai region after 1990. Ogura's paper significantly brings out the necessity of Maoists to maintain an effective democratic machinery, while controlling it behind the scenes through the party. This becomes especially important, maintains Baral, when they (Maoists) are capitalizing on people's dissatisfaction with inappropriate leaders and leadership of the past and their lack of vision.

Upreti in his chapter looks at the dispute settlement aspect of Nepalese politics at the local level. Analyzing traditional methods of dispute resolution vis-à-vis the modern methods, he arrives at an understanding that in the face of extreme pressure from modern democratic forces, the survival of only the more democratic traditional modes of dispute resolution is assured. He further observes that a combination of the best features of both modes of dispute resolution-traditional and modern is most effective. Hence it would be better to recognize the positive features of the traditional mode and incorporate them into the modern or reconfigure the former with positive elements from the latter. Carrying this thought forward is Shakya who deems local elected bodies and civil society institutions as partners and feels that they need to complement each other so that the role of social mobilization and service-delivery may be optimally performed.

The six remaining chapters on other South Asian countries provide the comparative framework. Local government bodies in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

and India have been analyzed. Lewis and Hossain's work on rural Bangladesh reveals that 'the net' that has been talked of in earlier accounts on rural Bangladesh has not remained as rigid any more and there is now much more room for the poor to maneuver. Efforts at decentralization have been successful and the informal network that existed till a few years back-akin to client-patron relationships elsewhere-have now given way to a number of strong civil society organizations and movements, that have despite their many problems contributed to positive change.

The situation in Pakistan is not that optimistic as it emerges from Mohmand's work. In Pakistan, the state has conveniently brushed under the carpet substantive political decentralization programs under the façade of opening up doors to NGOs that work within an apolitical context where power structures and inequality remain untouched. In addition to this, the state has conveniently withdrawn from performing its mandated role and shifted the burden of service-delivery solely onto these NGOs.

Siri Hettige's work focuses on the situation prevailing in Sri Lanka and finds that Sri Lanka and Pakistan sail almost on the same ship. Through the case study of Ambagamuwa, the paper brings forth painful realities of Sri Lankan politics. The bid to concentrate power at the centre, the operation of patron-client relationships, the bypassing of local government bodies and leaders along with a denial of autonomy as well as treating local bodies as a means to achieve the end of making it to national level politics are some of the striking grievances that need to be addressed in order to

empower local government bodies and consequently the marginalized majority at the local level.

The situation in India seems somewhat better. However, Strulik, Jodhka as well as deSouza rein in this optimism in the light of ground realities. While deSouza speaks of the half-traversed road towards decentralization, given that the seriousness and commitment to it is absent beyond the first tier, the state enters into conditional partnerships with the civil society and that the developmental question has not gained much ground, Jodhka brings out the brutal reality of democratic village bodies oppressing constituent Dalit population. Strulik through the case of Vandana Devi says that reservations in Panchayati Raj have definitely been a decisive step towards decentralization, however, the success of decentralization would involve not only looking at mere snapshots of women's success in Panchayat policy making but also the ways in which power structures around them-at home and outside, have undergone changes.

The work arrives as a refreshing change in the domain of South Asian studies. Firstly it does tide over the India-centeredness by doing justice to the claim of retaining focus on Nepal and reaching out to some other South Asian countries as part of developing a comparative framework. Every chapter has been carved out with immense detail and they have together gone into making a fine compendium. Some interesting revelations also find their way to the reader. However, the answer to whether people in Nepal are discontented with democracy in itself or are just disillusioned with it because

it failed to deliver the promised development, remains at best murky and ambiguous. On the whole it is an established asset for anyone interested in South Asia.

III

The normative road to democratization in South Asia has been taken to be passing through liberalism. Accordingly, the process of democratization in South Asia would be rendered complete when along with political democratization, economic democratization too gains ground. More specifically, establishment of a liberal democracy is to be accompanied by the establishment of a liberalized economy. In the light of this, a mentionable work has come forth, again in the form of an edited volume of essays put together by Rajiva Wijesinha, titled, '*Liberal Perspectives for South Asia*'. Compiled in memory of Chanaka Amaratunga, the founder and leader of the Liberal Party in Sri Lanka in association with The Friedrich Naumann Stiftung fur die Freiheit (FNF), the book puts forth a vision of liberal politics and economy in South Asia.

A simple and comprehensive book, it tries to put forth an understanding of the liberal idea. Amaratunga put liberalism 'as an ideology of individuality, tolerance, enlightenment and radicalism' that has 'firmly placed it upon the progressive side of the political divide'. Through the various chapters that follow, the book tries to further elucidate the concept of liberalism - specifically liberal democracy and economy, that is, the liberal way of life and ground it in the historical context of South Asia. Taking upon himself the latter task, Nirgunan

Tiruchelvam, in one such chapter maintains that liberalism was largely a colonial inheritance, however, it was only because of the historical existence of the liberal, tolerant tradition in South Asia that South Asians were able to internalize these liberal principles. Mentioning the Kalama Sutras of Buddha, he cites them as one of the earliest examples of indigenous South Asian liberal tradition.

On a similar note, Barun Mitra through his chapter on grassroots capitalism in India speaks of the wonderful ability that the people at the bottom of the economic ladder show by identifying the unmet demands of society and then trying to cater to them. Giving a number of examples from different walks of Indian life, he elucidates how a sizable number of Indians have entrepreneurs inside them but due to the rigidities that they meet in the form of fixed economic laws and rules, they are unable to set that entrepreneur spirit free. He also quotes examples of how such rigidities have time and again cost the country in the form of scams and illegal transactions and maintains that the way to meet these problems would be to free the country from bureaucratic shackles.

Parth Shah in his chapter on liberalizing education also speaks on similar lines when he argues for an end to red tape in the educational sector in India so as to allow for competition within the sector that would further enhance education qualitatively and quantitatively. Citing the example of Kerala, which stands at the forefront of education within the Indian union, he analyses the education system in the state to infer that the government in Kerala by applying innovative

liberal approaches to education has helped its population to acquire affordable, quality education and almost hundred percent literacy.

Anees Jillani in his essay, takes on directly at the political system of Pakistan and analyses the causes for its systemic failure. Maintaining that lack of democratic values and institutions have led to the neglect of the average Pakistani, he hopes for democratic forces, that have had some impact on Pakistani politics as of now and are concerned about democratic values, to play a more significant role. However, he also recognizes that this would be difficult as it would almost mean that the country undergo a revolution. Mentionable is also the chapter put forth by Rajiva Wijesinha wherein he touches upon the hurdles to democracy in each of the South Asian nations and elaborates upon them. The moot objective behind undertaking this task is to learn lessons from the past so as to ensure the smooth consolidation of democracy in future in the subcontinent.

Talking of almost all South Asian nations, who have as yet had undemocratic interludes or non-democratic traditions, for example, Maldives and Bhutan, he says that it would be better for these nations to return to democracy if they are to be protected. He holds up the Indian model of nation building and says that at the dawn of independence, it was the idea of a united India that seemed most unviable. However, with the passage of time, it has become clear that it was the establishment of democracy with checks and balances built into the system that helped unite the country despite its diversity. Notwithstanding the flaws of the Indian

system of governance, he urges South Asian nations to adopt the democratic system of governance and expresses hope that the strides taken towards the restoration of democracy in each of these nations would reach their destination.

Though simple, the arguments put out through the chapters of the book run deep. Though most of the book is dedicated to simplifying the fundamentals of liberalism, a task carried out largely by Chanaka Amaratunga, there are some noteworthy observations also that are made through this book. In fact, it would be difficult denying the argumentative strength of the works of Mitra and Shah; the hues of the former's arguments make him appear to have been heavily influenced by Mill. However, at closer reading one may desire to differ from what is said. On the whole, the work has an optimistic aura to it and compels us to share the democratic vision of South Asia charted out in it.

IV

We can now identify the gradually changing agenda of South Asian studies in the light of these three fairly recent and commended publications. The mass of literature on South Asian studies has developed roughly chronologically along three distinct threads. For a long time work on South Asia viewed it as a perpetually disturbed region under constant threat of eruption due to a multiplicity of factors and focused on understanding the reasons underlying this disturbance. It comprised of work analyzing the factors responsible for discontent and disturbance, the nature of the discontent and also the role and nature of

individual nations within the subcontinent vis-à-vis these disturbances.

This first thread has slowly made way for such literature that deals with devising and constructing solutions within the context of a disturbed South Asia. These solutions are directed not only towards addressing the grievances that are propelling disturbances in the region but also towards answering the developmental question. Another solution calls for reviving the SAARC as an instrument of regional cooperation. Herein too, there has been a movement beyond what existed. The locus of attention of earlier studies was the necessity of bringing about a political reconciliation between India and Pakistan so as to initiate regional cooperation. However, recent studies have showed that Indo-Pak relations are not necessarily a hurdle to regional cooperation. In fact, the idea that economic necessities such as monetary or fiscal cooperation (Maskay 2004), or strategic compulsions can help step beyond these hostilities has gained ground and the anticipation that the liberal democratic agenda of modernization shall propel this region beyond political, economic, social underdevelopment and religious fundamentalism towards greater cooperation, remains.

There has thus, developed another relatively recent thread in South Asian studies in which a gamut of literature has developed around the liberal perspective. The liberal perspective/way has been taken as possessing the potential of providing answers to questions related to cooperation, development and democratization to a great extent. This thread is constitutive of work on

development, democratization, civil society, civil society organizations and so on, in the subcontinent.

Though gradual, the change in the academic agenda of South Asian studies is promising. The developing threads are not only reflective of the dynamism that South Asian studies entails but also undoubtedly showcases the sensitivity of South Asian scholars to changing ground realities. In addition to this, a changing academic agenda also shows the important place that this region holds for geo-strategy and political-economy scholars and policy makers.

However, what remains significant is the fact that developing threads or trends within South Asian studies have never completely replaced each other. Each of them continues to grow with something new being added to them every time, though the proportion may vary. This may be because the phenomena that these threads have developed around largely coexist in the subcontinent. Thus, the changing agenda of South Asian studies has largely entailed an expanding agenda and it is within this context that a few other facets need to be taken care of. There are innumerable accounts that mention the India-centeredness of South Asian studies. Some have called it the 'Big-Brotherly' attitude of India whereas some have excoriated India as sub-imperialist (D.N, 1988). Nonetheless, this panic seems misplaced if verified in the light of comparative studies of other regional organizations. South Asia and India are deeply entwined and doing away with one would mean disaster for the other. Even Gellner's comparative framework of South Asia speaks more on India.

Thus, like in Europe, where two historically warring nations of France and Germany took the initiative of creating the EU, consolidating and expanding it, in South Asia too, India and Pakistan need to take the lead in using SAARC to create a zone of cooperation and gradually get over their political disagreement with the help of economic or social collaboration. The EU now stands as a beacon of regional cooperation based on equality, democratic participation of member nations, consultation and so on. Given the colonial past of the subcontinent, this becomes all the more essential for South Asians. Centers of knowledge are able to view and produce beyond the confines of what already is and put thought into further enriching South Asian studies. However, it is for indigenous policy makers to bring it into use as a guide to politics and practical policy making in the subcontinent.

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