

Non-violent Protest Movements

Ripples across the land: From *Nirbhaya* to *Occupy Baluwatar*¹

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Scientific studies on protest movements - peaceful confrontation involving collective action- constitute, a less traversed realm in the discipline of Political Science. Although described as 'response of relatively powerless people (Tilly: 2004), the political phenomena of protest movement present an alternate paradigm of change to the otherwise dominant model of coercion. Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, for instance, have refuted the prevailing view among the political scientists that violent methods are more effective than nonviolent strategies at achieving policy goals. (Stephan and Chenoweth, 2008).²

The non-violent activism of Mahatma Gandhi is indeed the most instructive instance in point. The unceasing popularity of Gandhian visions and the frequent surge of non-violent protest movements in different parts of the world continue to challenge the prevailing legitimacy of state based coercion. Gene Sharp (2009) has produced a remarkable array of conceptual and practical trajectories, which emphasize the pragmatic utility of non-violent tactics to cope with social injustice and human rights violation. Sharp reiterates Gandhi's belief in people's power, disobeying which, would deprive leaders of their power and legitimacy (Sharp, 1973).

Indubitably we need to locate the continuing influence of protest movements as distinct political phenomena to explore their varied regional and local nuances and connections, and what accounts for their success or failure.

It is in this context that I have tried to pinpoint that protests like the one New Delhi witnessed in the winter of 2012 (in the wake of the much infamous Delhi rape case) which not only exemplified the tradition of political agency hood of India but also left its imprint across borders. Notwithstanding sceptics who looked at the string of protest movements in the wake of the Nirbhaya case as an exceptional incident, my take is that this case has the norms making potentials as manifest in similar precedents, though not comparable in scale, and the pattern is likely to continue. The study coincides with the findings of Braithwaite, Alex *et al* (2015), that nonviolent campaigns in foreign countries increase the likelihood of the onset of new nonviolent campaigns at home.

I examine the formation, organizing strategies and internal deliberations and debates amongst the protesters, both in the case of Indian 'Nirbhaya' movement (NM) and a

less known yet similar protest movement in Nepal, known as 'Occupy Baluwatar'(OB). Whereas in the case of India, the movement resulted in unprecedented alterations in legislation concerning violence against women, in Nepal it left an indelible imprint or a landmark, though it could not bring about any transformative amendment in the law and political norms. It is instructive to explore the convergence and contrast between the two protest movements especially as the mass protest has been a popular tradition in both countries.

This study is divided in three distinct but interconnected segments. In the first segment, I discuss briefly the antecedents of protest movements in India, establishing the background of the 'tradition' of nonviolent protests in the country. In the second segment I discuss the protest movements pertaining to violence against women in India, highlighting issues of similarities and dissimilarities between earlier and later movements, culminating in NB. In the third segment I analyse the emulative potential of such movements across the borders, in this case namely Nepal. My effort is also to examine the regime characteristics of regional neighbour that shape mobilization and the impact creating potential that is linked to the issue of governance.

Lineage of Nonviolent Protest

Nonviolent Protest movements have been generic to the Indian subcontinent from the colonial period to the postcolonial democratic struggles. Drawing inspirations from the Civil disobedience movement, the disempowered dependent people of India, often resorted to non-parliamentary platforms to raise their unmet demands. These included: Non Co-operation, Satyagraha and fasting followed by *Bandhas* (closure), *Gheraos* (Encirclement), *Dharna* (sitdowns) *Padyatras* (walkathon) *Aamaran Anshan* (fast unto death) and even self immolation.

In Independent India, one of the most popular protest action was staged in the 1970s by Jayaprakash Narain who was a former freedom fighter, an activist and a politician. He dubbed the call as a call for Total revolution (*Sampoorna Kranti*). So massive was this protest that the then government evoked 'emergency' (suspension of civil and political rights of the citizens, provided under the Constitution of India) on grounds of internal unrest, for the first time in the history of otherwise democratic India.

Earlier, there have been protests on varied grounds. Any issue that a sizeable group of people felt was significant enough to draw the attention of the government, has been taken up and brought as a flash point of an agitationist movement. So there have been protests for creating new states (provinces),³ on issues of language (inclusion of certain languages in the 8th schedule), and environment protection (*Chipko*),⁴ development projects (*Narmada Bachao*)⁵ and against land acquisition for manufacturing purposes (Singur protests).⁶ One of the most overwhelming protest was led by Anna Hazare (2011) against corruption in public places of the country and a demand to put in place institutional machineries to check the same.

Towards Women's Agency hood

Public Protests have been generic to the women's movement across the world ranging from the suffragist movements to the burning of Swedish currency notes by the women protesting against unequal wages. In India too, Women remained in the forefront of the freedom struggle. They were the ones that took out *prabhatpheris* (morning rounds singing patriotic songs), picketing in front of liquor shops demanding closure of the sale of alcohol, and in the boycott movement of protesting the consumption of foreign made goods, as it was detrimental to the economy and industry of India.

In Independent India, various issues concerning women were discussed and laws were enacted about them, but it was rare that these matters came to occupy mass concern, least of all, form an agitation or a non violent protest. So, for instance, the very important debate on Hindu Code bill, ironically did not receive public support or agitation from women themselves. Whereas in the pre-independence era, issues related to women remained in the forefront of the discourse on 'modernity' for over a century, and women in social reform movement and in the nationalist movement were at the Centre of the 'reformation' and 'renaissance' of the country. Matters started changing in the decade of 1970s. Women's question was the focus then; gendered relations are now.

It was as late as the 1970s that the issue of gender violence began assuming a central concern of protestors. In late 1970s women activists organized around the problem of gender based violence. It was the Mathura rape case⁷ that mobilised activists and academics on the issue of sexual violence. Two more cases expanded the protest over custodial or police rape. Rameeza Bee Rape case in 1978 followed by public protest in the city of Hyderabad, and Maya Tyagi rape case (1980)⁸ debated in the *Loksabha* initiated by an opposition leader.⁹

These three cases led to a major protest campaign on the custodial rape. Though each of these cases was significant in its own right, it was the Mathura case that evoked public protests and became the flashpoint for campaigners of protesting violence against women. The verdict of the Supreme Court on Mathura rape case was protested by four Delhi University law professors: Upendra Baxi, Lotika Sarkar, Vasudha Dhagambar and Raghunath Kelkar, who wrote an open letter to the Chief Justice of India, criticizing the judgment and asking for fair justice for Mathura. This was accompanied by country wide protests on the case. In Mumbai, Anti Rape Campaign started in 1980 with the formation of Forum Against Rape (FAR), which later become Forum Against Oppression of Women (FAOW) in 1981 and took up the issues of rape, particularly police and custodial rape, dowry deaths and harassment of women. In the 1980s there were protests mainly in Delhi, followed by similar actions in smaller cities against what was then known as dowry deaths¹⁰. This invariably resulted in the enactment of one law or the other in favour of security

of women. Flavia Agnes, a strong women's rights protagonist, sums up the movements of the 1980s in following lines:

If oppression could be tackled by passing laws, then the decade of the 1980s would be adjudged a golden period for Indian women, when protective laws were offered on a platter. Almost every single campaign against violence on women resulted in new legislation. The successive enactments would seem to provide a positive picture of achievement. [But] the crime statistics reveal a different story....

The deterrent value of the enactment was apparently nil. Some of the enactments in effect remained only on paper. Why were the laws ineffective in tackling the problem? (Agnes 1997:521 cited in Sunder Rajan, 2003:32).

Yet in similar other instances in a disturbed area of Kashmir where allegedly mass rapes took place (Kunan and Pashpora) not much has been heard or seen¹¹, Similarly, no such movement could build up during the mass rapes that happened in the context of political agitations. For instance, the human rights organizations and the women's groups have provided detailed testimonies of mass rape of Dalit women during caste riots in Marathawad (1978), Ahmedabad (1983), Bhojpur (1985), Nagpur (1988) and communal riots in Delhi and Bombay (1984), Bhagalpur (1988) and Bhopal and Surat (1993) to the government. However, one of the most shocking protest took place in Manipur in 2004 where women paraded naked with placards stating 'Indian Army Rape us'¹².

Protests against violence on women were largely taken up by organizations such as *Asmita* in Hyderabad and *Vimochana* in Bangalore, *Pennurimailakkam* in Tamil Nadu, *Chingari NariSanghatan* and Ahmadabad Women's Action Group in Ahmadabad, Gujrat and *Stri Jagriti Samiti* in Bangalore and Bombay also actively work on the issue. Some women publications such as *Manushi* (1979) in Delhi, *Saheli* (1982) played important role in mobilizing around the issues of gender based violence.

Notwithstanding the public outrage, incidences of violence against women have been on the rise, or at least their reporting has been so. As per the figures released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the total number of rape cases reported in India has gone up to 33,707 in 2013 from 24,923 in 2012. The National Crime Records Bureau of India suggests a reported rape rate of 2 per 100,000 people. The number of reported rape cases doubled in Delhi in 2013 compared to the previous year. On an average, four rape cases were reported in Delhi every day in 2013.¹³

Nirbhaya

Yet the protest movement that took place in New Delhi and in several smaller cities of the country in the wake of the infamous gang rape of a 23-year-old paramedic student in December 2012, overtook all by a storm.¹⁴ The unprecedented protest over what came to be known as the Nirbhaya attracted young and not so young people within and across the country. The educated were very much at the core of the agitation but the not so educated were equally agitated. The women were the main agency of the movement but men also owned it. But above all, the cross-national impact that the movement made, demonstrated its remarkable capacity of stimulating similar movements across the border.

Described as a game changer, in terms of its intensity, immensity, spontaneity and popularity, the Nirbhaya movement was unprecedented. It brought the government to acknowledge and take note of it, as has not been the case earlier. The Prime Minister of the country took note of it and assured the people of strong and immediate action. The event also got international acknowledgement when Secretary of State Hilary Clinton said she was proud of student protest that followed Delhi gang rape (*India News*, January 30, 2013). The 23 year old student was posthumously presented with the International women of courage award by the United States (India News; NDTV). In the past too, the Bhanwari Devi¹⁵ case received tremendous circulation when she presented at the Beijing Conference. On the domestic front though it took time before legislation to protect women at work place took more than ten years before it was enacted.

Spontaneity: There were *no specific organisations* that took the lead. Unlike earlier movements where established voluntary organisations initiated the demonstrations, in this case the campaigners mostly connected with each other more or less spontaneously. At least in the initial week the activists were students from Delhi University colleges, Jawaharlal Nehru University, young professionals, parents and even grand parents. Only on day seven there was any visibility of people holding placards that were attributed to some students union or in one case a donor funded initiative. Yet the people who galvanised the protest were also the ones who had participated in the anti-corruption (Anna) movement just a couple of years ago. The networks were already in place. The task was only to revive and expand them.

Issues of Identity: '(T)he girl, the aspirations (a small town girl coming to Delhi to fulfill her dreams) the movie (or entertainment, so far constrained,) all of these things became points of identification with the victim. Discussion around the caste identity of the woman have taken place and it has been defined as protests related to upper caste Hindu women ...despite feminist interventions that call attention to the intersections of caste, class and gender, the bodies of lower class, non hindu, rural women are excluded from protest movements.... demand for legal reform is premised on a normative subject- the Hindu, middleclass women' (Shandilya, 2015).

This interpretation does not hold good when juxtaposed with the history of protests that prevailed across India in the context of violence against women. The three cases mentioned above, namely Mathura, Rameeza Bee, Bhanwari Devi did not belong to the upper caste or only Hindu women. Mathura was a tribal girl, and Bhanwari Devi a Dalit and Rameeza bee a Muslim. Contrary to the assertion that a protest was evoked due to the protesters identifying with the person who was wronged, it is likely that in this case (VAW) there has been a solidarity as was not evident in any other wrong doing.

However, there is no denying the fact that so many VAW cases go unprotected just prove a point that people have their lives to live, and being on the roads can not deliver them their daily bread. None the less, the violence that gets reported routinely is often condemned in blogs, newspapers and journal articles.

Governance: A close look at the events that snow balled into this masive protest reveal a remarkable similarity on this count, between previous such agitations. The initial apathy of the government was in many ways not new, none the less it sparked the sensitivities of 'active citizens'¹⁶. Yet the 'The entire public debate arising out of the recent Delhi gang rape incident ... cantered round the issues of "enacting a strong law" and "prescribing harsher sentence" says Vibhuti Patel (2014). 'It failed to highlight the flawed process of the criminal justice system when it comes to lodging complaints by victims of sexual violence. Similarly, other related and very basic issues of patriarchy, caste and domesticity of violence also did not form the core of the agitation'. The fact that the woman was raped by these six men in a moving bus that had tinted glasses (illegal in Delhi) in the capital city of the country outraged the people who demanded safer roads and more secure spaces to move around. The focus of this protest was the state machinery. The activists also took note of behavioural inadequacies of males, an aspect to which the slut walk¹⁷ that was staged a year ago in Delhi, with very little success.

Tools of Social Media: The campaign was largely organised around the social media.¹⁸ Facebook accounts were opened, twitter messages were framed and films were shown and the media followed the social media not vice versa. The *Times of India* captured the social media keenness in reporting the case of 19-year-old Sambhavi Saxena arrested during a protest in Delhi. On her journey to and at the police station, Sambhavi tweeted to India and the world to highlight her plight. Her tweets - "Illegally being held here at Parliament St Police Station Delhi w/15 other women. Terrified, pls. RT" led to more than 1,700 people retweeting her SOS. According to Favstar, the social media analytics site, her tweets reached over 200,000 people. All this resulted in the galvanizing of civil society where lawyers and activists arrived at the police station to offer help and advice. Others condemned the police action through social media. Twitter hashtags like #DelhiGangRape #StopThisShame #DelhiProtests #Amanat #Nirbhaya #Damini served as anchors to inform, educate and galvanize mass support. So where as a Mathura took seven years (it happened

in 1972 and the protest climaxed in 1979), Nirbhaya protest took just hours. The instant communication and reporting came in handy for the protest to swell the way it did. There were also innumerable online submissions for comprehensive amendments of the laws under the CrPC.¹⁹ Even when the movement was over, the Social media stopped a popular music concert that was to be staged as a part of a New Year celebration. The online campaigns lead to the cancellation of the popular concert.

Not only the social media but also the *print media* remained glued to it for several days when it occupied front news for several days.

The Scale: The scale at which this movement was able to galvanise people was phenomenal. The slut walk, mentioned earlier, that took place in Delhi just about one year ago had hardly 200 participants. The protests against bride burning too were not that overwhelming. But the Nirbhaya protest was unique in as much as the scale at which it got spread was unprecedented. Similar protests also took place in cities like Hyderabad, Bangalore, Kolkatta and even smaller cities like Varanasi and Jaipur. Solidarity in the form of marches was also staged in Singapore and as far away as in Paris.

Violence against women and the security of women became a major *issue in the general elections* of 2014, and the shadow of Nirbhaya loomed significantly large on the campaigns. Though the movement was neither led nor supported by any political party, it was definitely made into a capital from where opposition parties gained electoral dividends. Ironically, the groups that had gathered to protest against the inaction of the government had one common perception: deep scepticism towards governance efficiency, yet a hope in making it better. There for it is not surprising that the impact it made was on the electoral results.

Occupy Baluwatar (OB):

In the case of Occupy Baluwatar (OB) there was a distinct inspiration that the protesters drew from the Nirbhaya protest, in the spirit of—“if they (Indians) could do it, why not us.” The success or otherwise of the Indian movement was not the criterion. Therefore one may not agree with Braithwale et.al. when they say that emulation of peaceful protests occurs across borders only when there is evident success of similar movements abroad. Yet as one of the protesters remarked that New Delhi could bring about so many legal reforms in the wake of the Nirbhaya protest, whereas in Nepal nothing much could be changed. In this case we decipher that there has been a sense of relief to the protesters. As one protestor mentioned that the sheer action of staging nonviolent protests was accorded a value and brought a ‘sense of remorse’, and also a purpose of some form of catharsis. The empowerment of the ‘powerless people’ as Charles Tilly mentioned in 2004.

Taking inspiration from the massive movement taking place in India, some young students and professionals took to the streets in Kathmandu, protesting against the rape of Sita Rai (name changed), a young migrant worker. In November 2012, Sita Rai, had been detained by the immigration department at the airport when it was detected that the passport she was using to work and travel in the middle east, actually belonged to one Bimala KC of Baglung.²⁰ Officials had then offered her a deal: Pay up and avoid being thrown behind bars. After they had taken the Rs 2,18,000 she had with her, a police constable had volunteered to drop her off, but when they got to the bus park, he told her the bus was gone, and then took her to a guest house in the Old Bus Park. It was here that he raped her. The woman was robbed of her other belongings and set off later to her home town where after many days she confessed to her sister about the rape and robbery. Meanwhile the constable, Parsu Ram Basnet, had been calling her, sending wailed threats of imprisonment if she divulged anything. It was her sister who told her parents. By the time she came to Kathmandu to file a case against her aggressors at the Home Ministry, it was already more than a month since the incident had occurred.²¹

On 18th December 2012, there was a small report by Roshan Sedhai, who first broke the news. *Naya Patrika* followed this the very next day. So far, most other media houses hadn't stepped forward. 'Not long after, however, newswires were abuzz with the story of the Delhi student who was raped by a group of men on a bus, and that story had spread on social media, although the TIA (Tribhuvan International Airport) incident was still relatively ignored'.²²

Sharing harassments at the TIA some concerned women and men took the cause of protesting against this episode with two goals in mind. One was securing immediate justice to the victim and the other was brining about policy changes. Pranika Koyu, Stuti Basnyat, Bidushi Dhungel, Gyanu Adhikari, Dewan Rai mooted the idea of a coordinated protest, which was pushed through emails.

On 28th December, the campaigners reached the prime minister's residence in Baluwatar to hand over a demand letter, but were chased away by security. Gyanu Adhikari, who was working for the Kathmandu Post at the time, stood his ground to make evocative speeches. This was the start of a 107 days' protest known as Occupy Baluwatar (OB)²³. Occupy Baluwatar has been described as a movement that was led and organized by ordinary citizens from diverse backgrounds. They had solidarity with a number of different organizations and associations working together to fight violence against women. Their main goal was to ensure that impunity is put to an end.

Gathering Popularity: The movement had initially focused on one case, that of Sita Rai. Later on others who were also sufferers of impunity joined and were included in the demands: Chhori Maya Maharjan, Bindu Thakur, Shiwa Hasmi and Saraswati Subedi. Maharjan had been missing for over two years, while Thakur and

Hasmi were both burnt alive for allegedly having affairs, and Subedi was reported to have committed suicide, but was widely believed to have been murdered.

So each day after the 28th December protesters stood in front of the official residence of the Nepalese prime minister from 9 -11 am showing placards, shouting slogans, inventing new techniques of attracting attention of the authorities and the people at large. Their demands being two fold: Justice to the victims and Policy change.

The Strategy: The movement gained impetus with the strategy that these young people adopted. Some of the activists who steered the movement were correspondents with leading news papers of Kathmandu and started writing about the injustice in the national dailies. This drew the attention of likeminded people and they came forward to support the movement. Here too the social media was made good use of. Twitter handle #Occupy Baluwatar came up instantly. So did the facebook page.

News then trickled down to other victims and they came forward with the injustice meted out to their kin. The cases of Maharjan, Thakur, Hasmi and Subedi were brought to the fore highlighting the culture of Impunity prevailing in Nepal *vis a vis* violence against women. It, underscored the need to bring to books the violators of these women.

To keep the movement going (as the interim government had not taken any note of this unfolding), the key organisers encouraged the artists amongst them to make new posters and to use them at the site. Caricature drawing and attracting still younger people to the protest site in solidarity with the protesters was yet another technique.

On day 65 they dressed up as superman activists, a satire on the indifference of the government machinery towards their call. "We will go on like this for 90 days of creative protests. If the government continues to be apathetic, we will devise new strategies," said PranikaKoyu, one of the main organisers²⁴.

But the most significant initiative in the entire strategy was of 'going alone'. As a post conflict society Nepal had received a good deal of International aid for Peace and reconstruction. There was a significant amount of disenchantment due to this money being charged of misappropriation. Though the donors, that were already present in Nepal, made instant offers to the organisers for financial support, the organisers flatly declined²⁵ and did not accept any contribution from any donor. The movement sustained itself financially by individual contributions. Though there were never more than a hundred people on the roads during the campaign, but to be able to sustain it for 108 days was a big breakthrough. More so in a country that had just experienced a decade long violent conflict, staging a non-violent campaign in defence of disempowered women was no mean achievement.

The bodies of these young protesters, who were not always women, or young, became the site of protest against violence, discrimination based on gender, expropriation in the name of discriminatory state laws, and also corruption in governance. The incident revealed the brutal face of the state power overpowering a helpless individual said one of the activists.

Impact: The then Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai formed a high-level committee led by the secretary at the Prime Minister's Office, Raju Man Singh Malla. It was also reported that Mr Malla mentioned that they are too busy and they do not have time for GBV (gender based violence). The committee however made no headway.

Despite the steadfast efforts put into the campaign, the impact of the movement was not as visible as it was in India, where the central and state governments initiated law reforms, set up fast-track courts and also made provision of life imprisonment in rape cases said Dewan Rai, a writer and an activist himself²⁶.

Voluntariness of the Movement: In a unique decision, activists staging protests against the inaction of the state in the Sita Rai case, repeatedly rejected any offer of support that came their way from various international organizations including the UNMIN officials still in Kathmandu. Popularly known as the 'Occupy Baluwatar' movement, this protest lasted 107 days in the capital Kathmandu, wherein young people of Nepal staged their resentment against the government's inaction not only on the rape and robbery of Sita Rai, but also of other similar cases of violence against women and related impunity. Their position was taken to protect the movement from being discredited, as was their impression of the fate of other organizations that were supported by such bodies. As the leader Bidushi Dhungel, a former journalist from Kathmandu Post and daughter of a University Professor, stated:

It proved to donors we don't need millions we just need a core of dedicated people. Our accounts too were transparent. This was in sharp contrast with the NGO work that is being done by so many politically active women here. If you scratch the surface each of these NGOs are linked to some political party or the other, and with the aid money the organization then massages the constituency in place of doing the work for which the money is actually meant for.²⁷

Assessing the movement's impact, Dhungel said: Overall it questioned the donor agencies. Millions are spent in Nepal, but very little impact is made by this investment. But within two months all are talking about this movement. Unfortunately, no established political party came forward to associate with the cause of women, as at least one of the primary accused were considered to have political ties, despite the importance of the case and topic in the eyes of both national organizations and agendas of international funders.

This case was also not unique, as a number of other cases of violence against women were brought to the streets. Kin of many women who were missing, raped, or killed, joined the protesters and asked for answers from the government. But Nepal's political parties were loath to express solidarity with the issue in question.

Still, almost all the major players in Kathmandu's INGO scene continued to offer financial and logistical assistance. Despite the dire need for resources and powerful partnerships to legitimate the cause, this aid was universally declined by the protesters. The leaders of the movement were clear on one issue that they did not want to align themselves with any foreign funding agency, lest it is construed that the entire movement is motivated by 'a foreign hand.' So close to the hearts of the protesters was the issue of demanding justice to the victim and making Nepal safe for women that they did not consider accepting support from outsiders.

Many local organizations feel that international support is so tainted by foreign agendas, and so laden with foreign frames, that they consider it better to go it alone in an attempt to create positive change rather than have their own agenda potentially subverted by INGOs, or to have the agenda itself subsequently.

Take away?

So whereas New Delhi looked at the protesters with sympathy and quite a great deal of urgency to bring about changes in the Cr PC, and even conceded to their demands of reforming the law, Kathmandu suspected them of being agents of foreign countries, out to malign the culture of Nepal²⁸. Not only that, none of the political parties of Nepal came forward to express solidarity with the protesters, as the cases that came to be linked with the OB protest, had one or the other political party worker involved in the episode. Hence they exercised their political muscles to ensure that the protest movement did not gain wide social acceptance.

India too faces the dilemma of not having adequate socio-economic support system as well as resolute political will to decisively curtail the extent of gender-based violence. The violence against women continues to take place, in 'routine' notwithstanding the more stringent laws and policing. This is despite the epoch making potentials of protest which led to fast-tracking laws and public interrogation of issues of patriarchy and masculinity²⁹. But in all fairness the protests like Nirbhaya have certainly enhanced public and also private awareness against sexual violence. India is surely inching towards a GBV free world, but hasn't yet got there. As long as this goal is not reached, the relevance of such agitationist politics can never be ignored or understated. The significance of such actions lies in their being and not in the scales that they climb.

Notes:

1. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at Uppsala University, on 11 May, 2016, and Karlstad University on 8 December, 2015 and at Martin Chautari, Kathmandu in October 2013.
2. Based on a systematic exploration of successful employment of nonviolent methods by the civilian populations in Serbia (2000), Madagascar (2002), Georgia (2003) and Ukraine (2004–05), Lebanon (2005), and Nepal (2006), the study evidences that major nonviolent campaigns have achieved success 53 per cent of the time, compared with 26 per cent for violent resistance campaigns.
3. One of the earliest protests took place in 1951, when PottuSreeramulu, a former Gandhian freedom fighter, went on hunger strike to press the issue of creating a separate state of Telugu speaking people as the State of Andhra Pradesh. His death while fasting, led the then Prime Minister J.L. Nehru to declare the creation of a new state of Andhra Pradesh in 1953.
4. The 'Chipko' was a movement that began in 1973 primarily by hill women of India against the indiscriminate shelling of tree for commercial purposes.
5. A movement to protest (starting 1989) against the making of a dam on river *Narmada* as it would threaten the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of people on the land that would be submerged.
6. In 2006, the matter related to acquisition of 997 acres of land for a small car manufacturing company by a lead industrial house of India, the Tatas. The main opposition came from women, and also the then party in opposition.
7. In the Mathura case (a teenage tribal girl raped by two police men in custody on 26th March 1972) the district (lower) Sessions court found policemen innocent as the victim showed 'no resistance', and since Mathura had a boyfriend, it was stated that Mathura was a woman of 'easy virtue'. Though a higher court reversed this judgment, it was again reverted by the Supreme Court of the country because 'sexual intercourse' was peaceful, as she did not raise any alarm.
8. Maya Tyagi involved a 25 years old married women stripped and raped by policemen in a small municipality of Baghpat in Uttar Pradesh.
9. Paswan complained that he was harassed by the police in Baghpat when he visited the area after rape case. After his protest, campaigns of feminist organizations took form of public protest and hundreds of women gathered outside the parliament demanding judicial probe and justice in the matter.
10. The dowry prohibition act 1961 was also amended by act 63 of 1984 in view of the ever-increasing number of dowry deaths. The offence was also made cognizable so that the police was given power to register a case under the act to take up investigation. The act also made it clear that demand for dowry itself was an offence and made it punishable with imprisonment for a term, which shall not be less than six months. If the demand were satisfied it would constitute an offence under section 3 that provides penalty for giving and taking dowry.
11. As late as in the spring of 2013, a group of women came together to file a public interest litigation to reinvestigate the atrocities unleashed on women of villages of Kunan-Poshpora who were raped by soldiers of the Rajputana Rifles in 1991. In June 2013, a Public Interest Litigation filed in the Jammu and Kashmir High Court, by 50 Srinagar- based

- women, supported by a human rights group, Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil society (JKCCS), had resulted in a Magisterial order for further investigations of the mass rape by the Indian army personnel of women of Kunan and neighbouring hamlet Poshpora on the night of February 23-24, 1991. The Support Group for the Kunan-Poshpora Survivors was formed after joint consensus emerged among motley group of women regarding the pending status of the KunanPoshpora case. The closure report had not been filed for 22 years and the victims await justice endlessly.
12. This was against the rape and subsequent murder of ThangamManorama, a Manipuri woman by members of the armed forces of India. Even as the curfew was imposed, members of the NaoriaPakhanglakpaApunbaMeiraPaibiLup gathered at the market shed at HaobamMarak and staged a sit-in-protest in defiance of the curfew.
 13. There are also evidences to indicate that not all reported cases are factually corroborated. The Badaun rape case was one such case where it was detected that no rape had taken place, instead, it was a case of honour killing of the women since they were going out with men who did not have parental approval. There are also land disputes where rape is inserted in the complaints to make the conflict serious enough to warrant police action against the accused.
 14. On 16th December, 2012, a 23 year old paramedic student was criminally assaulted by 6 men on a bus that she had boarded on her way from a movie with a male friend. Her resistance earned her the name of Nirbhaya (the fearless one),13 days later, she succumbed to the injuries sustained during this incident, in a Singapore hospital. In 2013, the Criminal law (Amendment) Ordinance, 2013 was promulgated by President Pranab Mukherjee,several new laws were passed, and six new fast-track courts were created to hear rape cases.
 15. Bhanwari Devihas an iconic status within the Indian Women Movement (IWM). In the year 1997 women's organization filed a Public Interest Litigation in Supreme Court with the objective to use the Bhanwari Devi case to get the rights of all the women who face sexual harassment and assault at workplace. The judgment in response to this PIL (Vishakha and others vs. State of Rajasthan) resultedin the enactment of Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal)Act, 2013.
 16. I am referring to Kymylca's notion of active and passive citizens here.
 17. More recently Delhi also witnessed what was popularly known as the Slut walk, "unequal, unfair and the stereotyped treatment of women in society" in 2011, where not more than two hundred women turned up.
 18. In an earlier protest (slut walk) there were initiatives towards preparing for the same "We campaigned at places such as Seemapuri and Shahdara where we performed street plays and held discussions with people. The issues which we highlighted struck a chord with them as well."
 19. As the movement was on a high powered Committee to suggest reforms in the Cr PC , Justice Verma Committee was set up.
 20. According to Nepali law, women younger than 30 years could not undertake foreign employment in the middle east, and Sita was younger than 30.
 21. According to the rape laws of Nepal there was a time bar of 35 days to report an incidence of rape to the police.

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22. Rai, Dewan. 2014 'A look back at Occupy Baluwatar', in *The Kathmandu Post*, January, 18.
23. Baluwatar is the neighbourhood where the official residence of the Prime minister of Nepal is located.
24. Available at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/south-asia/state-apathy-toward-nepal-rape-protests/article4469641.ece> (accessed 17 January, 2016).
25. Based on personal interactions with the main organisers in Kathmandu during 2013.
26. Based on personal interactions in Lalitpur in September 2013.
27. Based on interview in Lalitpur Nepal in September 2013.
28. My personal exchanges with many notable people in Kathmandu and also in the plains left this impression that the protesters were looked upon as people paid by the donor agencies to make a case for yet another intervention in the internal affairs of Nepal.
29. "One Billion Rising: Playwright Eve Ensler Organizes Global Day of Dance Against Sexual Abuse". *Democracynow.org* (accessed 28 March 2015).

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