

## Peace: Resurgent Perspectives\*

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The idea of peace has long been presented as one of the most cherished goals of humanity, a vital precondition to fulfilling its potential. Peace is an overarching expression that denotes the ambitious quest of living together in harmony. As Johan Galtung (1969: 167), one of the founders of peace research remarks: 'It provides opponents with a one-word language in which to express values of concern and togetherness because peace is on anybody's agenda. Peace serves as a means of obtaining verbal consensus, as it is hard to be all-out against peace'. It is no wonder that the vast majority of humanity has preferred, and actively worked towards, creating institutions and structures of peace.

Peace is a continuous process and a journey of discovery. It requires constant reviewing and updating based on changing realities on the ground and the specific time and context. It is therefore not surprising that the concept of peace, despite its universal appeal, defies a common definition. Aside from the ever-changing imperatives of peace, there are numerous contestations about its underlying philosophies, preferred values and methodologies.

Most of the conventional Western discourse predicates on a sharp distinction between war and peace and typically defined peace as the absence of war, a view that is foundationally attributed to the philosophy of Hobbes. Philosophers like Spinoza, on the other hand, have employed this binary conception to interpret the autonomy and primacy of peace as a function of power. Some extreme opinions have even gone so far as to view peace as a part of the 'system' of war. Michel Foucault famously remarks that 'war is the motor behind institutions and order. .... [P]eace itself is a coded war' (2003: 50-51). There are similar debates and contentions about peace in other cultures and traditions. Notwithstanding the maze of divergent interpretations and

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\*. The article draws from the author's recent contribution in UNESCO sponsored '*Long Walk of Peace: Towards a Culture of Prevention*' (UNESCO: 2018)

contentions, peace is too vital a cause to be left without conceptual clarity. As Oliver Richmond (2005: 207) puts it: 'To know peace, provides a clearer understanding of what must be done, and what must be avoided, if it is to be achieved'.

There is now an emerging consensus among peace researchers that terms such as 'peace' and 'peacebuilding' cannot be precisely defined because they 'represent durable and coherent domains of concern [that] have their own set of norms and assumptions' as well as 'containing contradictions, which is what prevents their being expressed in universally accepted definitions' (Buzan, 1984: 125). In a similar vein, Oliver Richmond argues that, 'many assertions about peace are forms of orientalism in that they depend upon actors who know peace, then creating it for those that do not, either through their acts or more through the peace discourses that are employed to describe conflict and war as located in opposition to agents of peace' (Richmond, 2006: 307-308).

### *Peace: Diverse and Relational*

Many critical perspectives interrogate the effort to assert a universally valid ontology and methodology of peace. The reductionist and universalistic approaches emerging from the West, and its influential institutions, are being questioned by a new generation of scholars from postmodern, postcolonial and feminist perspectives. These writers construe peace as a diverse and relational phenomenon that must accommodate images and efforts from diverse cultures, as well as from the subaltern and marginal strata of the society (Dietrich, 2012; Mac Ginty, 2006; Samaddar, 2004; Upadhyaya, 2013). In the postmodern context, peace is in permanent flow and should be reinvented in every context, never confined within a rigid rational structure (Alvarez, 2014: 63). Such plural understandings also complement Mahatma Gandhi's injunction to 'be the change we want to see in the world', which acknowledges that approaches useful for personal transformation can hold similar potential for social healing and transformation.

A very different trajectory has been pursued by scholars who underscore the associations of 'peace' with a wide range of expressions and meanings in different cultures and languages (Anderson, 2004; Dietrich et al., 2011). For instance, in Mandarin Chinese the word peace (*heping*) combines two characters, one signifying the harmonious (*he*), the other the level or balanced (*ping*). In Hindi and Sanskrit, the expression for peace is Shanti (*santi*), which emphasizes spiritual and inner peace and harmony with nature. In the Hebrew language, peace is translated as *shalom*, and in Arabic it is translated as *salaam*,

which is also the root word for Islam (Anderson, 2004). Across the world, expressions for peace are infused with deep-rooted values and associations, a far cry from the contemporary term ‘peace’, which has been stripped to the minimalistic ‘absence of violence’.

Peace researcher Wolfgang Dietrich has explored the varied meanings of peace in different cultures. While discounting the narrow application of a singular and universal notion of peace, Dietrich and his colleagues promote the idea of world peace as a plural of ‘many *peaces*’, and maintain that peace should be perceived as a plurality in which many versions of peace can be sought – and indeed have been sought – throughout recorded history (Dietrich et al., 2011). Christopher Mitchell notes that: ‘To any peace and conflict researcher brought up in a “North Atlantic” tradition of positivism, empiricism, and practice, the notion that the term peace itself can have a multitude of meanings in a wide variety of cultures and traditions – in other words, a contested concept – can initially be rather disturbing’ (Mitchell, 2012: vii). The paradigm of ‘many *peaces*’ challenges the universally projected conceptualization of peace as a singular and uniform idea, which negates its wide-ranging patterns in diverse cultural, social, economic and political conditions.

### *Towards Positive Peace*

The definition of peace as the ‘absence of war’ is probably the most popular and yet simplified definition of peace. However, numerous scholars and activists describe this narrow interpretation as ‘negative peace’ across cultures. ‘Positive peace’ has been posited as an alternative definition of peace embodying broader issues of development and social justice. Johan Galtung’s ‘positive peace’, Kenneth Boulding’s ‘stable peace’ and John Burton’s ‘human needs’ were among the earliest attempts to broaden the peace template (Boulding, 1978; Burton, 1990; Galtung, 1969, 1985). In fact, the emergence of ‘peace research’ as a discipline is allied closely to the idea of ‘positive peace’ finding war as an aberration rather than a constant or primary state of affairs. This approach construes peace as an autonomous, primary, indigenous, normal and ontologically permanent state of being (Gleditsch, 2014; Rogers and Ramsbotham, 1999).

Galtung defines ‘positive peace’ as the absence of structural violence, which concerns structure-generated rather than actor-generated harm to human beings. Structural violence refers to the social, economic and political conditions embedded in unequal, unjust and unrepresentative social structures that

contribute systematically to violence, inequality and injustice, or lack of access to social services contributing to death, poor health, or the repression of individuals or groups of individuals within a society (Galtung, 1969). These conditions threaten the very survival of an individual – his or her general physical well-being, personal identity and freedom of choices. Galtung also introduced the concept of ‘cultural violence’, which denotes cultural tools that legitimize different forms of violence as normal (Galtung, 1990). For example, one may be indifferent toward the homeless, or consider their expulsion or even extermination as a norm. According to Galtung, a precondition of ‘positive peace’ is the absence of both direct and indirect violence, where indirect violence connotes both structural and cultural violence.

While developing the concept of structural violence, Galtung was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi’s visions of non-violence. Gandhi spoke about the everyday violence ingrained in the very structure of society and believed in the possibility of creating peace in the course of transforming unjust relationships, transcending structural conflicts through non-violent confrontation. Gandhi, according to Galtung, was the only contemporary author or politician who ‘clearly fought against both the sudden, deliberate direct violence engaged in by actors, and the continuous, not necessarily intended, violence built into social structures’ (Galtung, 1975: 24). Gandhi offered an expanded definition of violence that included oppressive structures that erode and damage human dignity, and prevent humans from achieving their full potential. For Gandhi, deprivation and impoverishment are the visible markers of an unjust and violent social order.

Gandhi’s holistic vision of non-violent activism continues to stimulate innovative conceptual trajectories for coping with social injustice and external aggression peacefully. This has, in turn, led to the emergence of several successful non-violent movements in many parts of the world, steered by activists such as Joan Baez, Helder Camara, Cesar Chavez, Martin Luther King Jr, Gene Sharp, Desmond Tutu and many others (Upadhyaya, 2013). In 2007, the UN General Assembly declared 2 October, Mahatma Gandhi’s birthday, the International Day of Non-Violence. This has provided renewed recognition to the significance of non-violence as a universal path towards positive peace and social progress.

### ***Just Peace and Conflict Transformation***

The idea of ‘just peace’ is another notable contribution to the expanding horizons of peace. Defined by John Paul Lederach as a dynamic social

construct, ‘just peace’ offers ‘approaches that reduce violence and destructive cycles of social interaction and at the same time increase justice in any human relationship’ (Lederach, 2005: 182). The broad project of building a ‘just peace’ in and between societies thus involves a wide range of activities and functions that both precede and follow formal peace accords. It involves the United Nations carrying out sanctions against terrorist groups in a way that promotes good governance, human rights, and economic development in the countries where the sanctions are targeted.... It involves educating the children of the next generation to transform their hatred into tolerance and even friendship.... It involves religious actors, who are all but ignored in most current thinking on peacebuilding. It involves combating inequalities that are embedded in global structures of power and wealth (Lederach and Appleby, 2010: 4).

Lederach’s pyramid of conflict describes three levels at which peace work should be carried out: ‘the grassroots, the leaders, and the middle level creating a genuine sense of participation, responsibility, and ownership in the process across a broad spectrum of the population’ (Lederach, 1998: xvi). All actors in a dysfunctional or conflicting system interact across various social strata, from the grassroots to the middle range of regional experts, and from local leaders to heads of state. All these actors are relevant to the process of transformation, and they must all be addressed in a contextual manner, using appropriate forms of intervention. As described by Lederach (1995: 212), the lens of conflict transformation focuses on the potential for constructive change emerging from and catalysed by conflict. To build peace, negative or destructive interaction patterns need to be transformed into positive or constructive relationships and interactions. Lederach (2005) further describes the imperative of applying moral imagination to imagine – much like an artist – creative ways to transcend the destructive patterns of day-to-day violence. Lederach’s ‘elicitive’ approach to conflict transformation paved the way for many more innovative conceptualizations of peace (Alvarez, 2014). For instance, Wolfgang Dietrich’s framework of many ‘peaces’ reintegrates spirituality into rational, modern and postmodern interpretations of peace (Dietrich, 2012).

### *Liberal Democratic Peace*

The liberal democratic theory of peace, with its many variations, dominates the current scholarship of peace, as well as the policy discourses within international institutions. This theoretical framework assumes that

democracies are unlikely to engage in mutual war and that democratic governance reinforces peace and stability within states. While numerous thinkers and scholars have substantiated the discourses on the liberal theory of peace, it essentially draws on Immanuel Kant's essay in 1795 on 'Perpetual Peace'. Proponents challenge the artificial dichotomy between the internal and external aspects of peacebuilding by establishing an empirical correlation between democracy and peace across borders. Scholars like Michael Doyle (2005) emphasize democratic and human rights-based governance, free trade, interdependence and involvement in international organizations as the prerequisites of peace.

The main variants of a liberal peace framework are the *victor's peace* in which a negative peace is imposed by a victor in war, *constitutional peace* in which democracy and free trade are taken to be fundamental qualities of any peaceful state's constitution, which in turn contributes to a positive peace, *institutional peace* in which international institutions, such as the United Nations, international financial institutions and state donors, act to maintain peace and order according to a mutually agreed framework of international law; and finally the *civil peace* tradition in which civil society organizations, NGOs, and domestic and transnational social movements seek to uncover and rectify historical injustices that engender the risk of war (Richmond, 2014: 20).

### *Local Turn and Hybridity*

Recently, there has been interest in 'local ownership of peacebuilding' where local actors are 'integrated into the design and decision-making process' of peacebuilding. There is increasing recognition among international organizations and donor agencies of the legitimacy and sustainability advantages to be gained by cooperating with local partners. This new thinking, described as 'the local turn', is a consequence of increased assertiveness among local actors, paralleled by a loss of confidence among the major actors in international peace support, and the recognition that 'peace building, state building and development should support their subjects rather than define them' (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013: 769). This is reminiscent of the 'orthodox' dilemmas of the bottom-up approach in which actors are sensitive about local ownership and culture, but remain determined to transfer their methodologies, objectives and norms to the new governance framework (Richmond, 2006: 11). Today, contextual sensitivity is understood as a basic requirement of any peacebuilding

project. Creative engagement with local actors and constituencies to ascertain local needs and expectations is not only a top priority, it is a key imperative of successful peacebuilding.

Along with the ‘local turn’ in international peacebuilding, there is renewed interest in exploring indigenous, customary and traditional institutions and approaches to conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and in considering whether they can co-exist with traditional and context-specific approaches to conflict resolution (Upadhyaya and Upadhyaya, 2017). The key issue is whether such co-existence leads to more or better conflict resolution options for the population, thereby promoting conflict settlement processes (Galvanek and Planta, 2017).

The ‘local turn’ may in certain respects contradict the universalism that lies at the heart of the liberal peace model, as well as notions of universal human rights. However, the focus on local agency highlights the multifaceted nature of peace and redefines the meaning of peace and legitimacy in different contexts, from maintaining a livelihood to striving for autonomy, aspiring for social justice or expressing an identity. One implication of the ‘local turn’ is a retreat from some of the certitudes and binaries that underpin conventional modes of thinking. This opens up the possibility of emancipation and empathy in a local to global framework. In comparison to the top-down service delivery and capacity-building approach, the ‘local turn’ is grounded in grass-root perspectives, drawing on the values, identity and needs of subjects, rather than the ‘benevolent’ assumptions of national and global elites, whose vanguard cosmopolitanism and centralized narratives of peace and globalization seldom manifest themselves in sustainable outcomes.

Described as hybrid forms of peace, the new generation of peace theories represents a combination of norms and interests prescribed by international actors as well as local actors and their cultural imperatives. Peace in such emerging visions is no longer viewed as a state-centric activity, but rather as everyone’s business. It revolves more around everyday action in accepting, resisting and reshaping interventions, and the unique forms of peace that emerge from interactions between local and international actors (Richmond and Mitchell, 2012).

### *Development and Human Security*

Development perspectives have influenced the advancing approaches to peace, ushering in a range of new concepts and theorizations. Recent decades

have seen worthy attempts to bring together the twin conceptual trajectories of peace and development, which overlap and intersect in numerous ways. Taken together they provide a useful guide to analysing conflict-inducing vectors such as poverty, resource scarcity, structural inequalities, food insecurity, gender violence and environmental degradation. Among others, Amartya Sen's (1999) theorization of 'development as freedom' offers an important perspective. Sen conceives of poverty as lack of the capability to live a good life and 'development' as the expansion of this capability. Building on Sen's ideas, Martha Nussbaum (2011) provided a capability theory of justice derived from the requirements of human dignity, a list of central capabilities to be incorporated into national constitutions and guaranteed up to a certain threshold. This new conceptualization reflecting human development became the cornerstone of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Some researchers have conjectured a 'theory of peace as freedom' (Barnett, 2008), supplementing Galtung's vision of structural violence. Peace from this perspective is predicated on the equitable distribution of economic opportunities, political freedoms, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, protective security and freedom from direct violence. This conceptual track highlights the imperative of pluralist institutions and agencies to provide and sustain peace as freedom.

In this context, the idea of human security stands out as the most relevant, complementing human development by paying direct attention to the security and safety of people. It suggests a paradigm shift from state-centric notions of security, which focus on the protection of state boundaries, institutions and values from external attacks. Post-Cold War intra-state violence unveiled a new phase wherein the state was frequently found wanting in its role as the protector of people, ensuring 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want'. Evidently, the challenges of the twenty-first century necessitate an expanded notion of security, not restricted to the well-being of the state, but taking care of the basic security needs of the citizens residing therein. As affirmed by UNDP reports since 1994, human security is defined around two aspects: freedom from fear and freedom from want, including safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, repression and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions to the patterns of daily life. This definition dovetails with the notion of the capability approach. Subsequent UNDP documents maintained that threats to human security at the societal level are root causes of protracted internal violence, thus recommending peacebuilding to support divided societies in their efforts to prevent violent conflict.

Echoing this, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan observed that the peace agenda itself should be revisited: '[w]e must also broaden our view of what is meant by peace and security.... it must encompass economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, disarmament, and respect for human rights and the rule of law' (Annan, 2001). The search for alternative approaches to meet new security challenges led to the establishment of the Commission on Human Security, which prepared a comprehensive report entitled *Human Security Now*, following two years of comprehensive discussion with various stakeholders. The report offers an innovative framework of action that addresses critical threats to human security.

### *Quality of Peace*

Liberal and emancipatory peace discourses have now begun to consider the assumed qualities of peace as a *sine qua non* for successful peacebuilding engagement. However, there is increasing scepticism about the type of peace being referred to, who defines it, and for what reasons. Oliver Richmond observes: 'The way in which we think about peace, both in conceptual and ontological terms and the methods we apply to construct it, have a significant impact on the qualitative sustainability of this peace' (2005: 394).

The notion of 'quality peace' has recently emerged as an innovative tool to spell out conditions and strategies that could pre-empt the recurrence of war and make peacebuilding a sustainable effort. Peter Wallensteen (2015) provides a model of 'quality peace' that aims to overcome the traditional dichotomy of negative versus positive peace. Drawing on past peacebuilding experiences, he defines quality peace as the creation of post-war conditions that make the inhabitants of a society (whether an area, a country, a region, a continent or a planet) secure in life and dignity, now and for the foreseeable future. Peace is not simply a matter of living without war for a period: 'It is a matter of maintaining conditions that don't produce wars in the first place or - as some form of peace has failed previously - not repeating the same failure' (Wallensteen, 2015: 6-7).

The quality of peace is composed of three critical standards: security, dignity and predictability (or durability). The consolidation of peacebuilding requires the assurance of security, equal rights and respect for the dignity of all inhabitants and stakeholders in the conflict. Wallensteen refers to the citing of human dignity in the UN Charter and amplifies its significance to argue that: 'Violation of dignity in the form of discrimination, repression and persecution

may have sparked the war that the world much later tries to prevent from recurring' (ibid).

### *Women and peace*

The widened concept of peace not only includes gender-related structural violence, but also the role of women in peacemaking and post-conflict reconciliation. Most of the recent studies and publications that link gender and peace reinforce a holistic vision of peace, defying the narrow confines of the statist notion of security and highlighting, instead, everyday insecurities. Feminist perspectives, thus, fundamentally disagree with the hitherto dominant concepts of peace and security, and offer many alternate visions. For instance, gendered power relations and identity are recognized as socially constructed rather than static or inherent. As with other social relations and identities, gender relations are inevitably reconfigured during a conflict (Kolas, 2017).

The promotion of women's rights and equal political participation are among the key objectives of multilateral peacebuilding efforts today. Substantive scholarly effort has gone into the study of women's empowerment in peacebuilding (Beckwith, 2005; Porter and Mundkur, 2012; Waylen, 2007). Much of this work has been carried out in 'post-war' countries such as Burundi, Liberia, Nepal and Sierra Leone, where multilateral and international organizations have played a major role in peacemaking and post-conflict interventions for women's rights and gender equality. Such interventions are also a key topic of gender and peace studies (Black, 2009; Kuehnast, de JongeOudraat and Hernes, 2011; Mayanja, 2010). A related strand of research focuses on the contributions of women peacebuilders to the establishment of a more egalitarian post-conflict gender order. Beginning with the negotiations for a settlement, peacebuilding is construed as a potential site where women can both contribute to and benefit from lasting and inclusive peace

Indeed, women have contributed to peace in many different and documented cases, highlighting unique methodologies and skills for building alliances and interacting with other conflict stakeholders (Anderlini, 2007). Women can provide a different notion of peace and tend to take a more holistic approach. They are also often more capable of reaching across to the 'enemy', including people of different cultures, ethnicities and so on. Yet, contrary to stereotypes of women as united and 'natural mediators' between conflict actors or 'anchors of peace', they are just as likely as men to engage in divisive political rivalry (Kolas, 2017). Hence, women's engagement in peace

processes offers no shortcuts to peace, nor should such processes be seen as providing the best windows of opportunity for women's empowerment. This, however, does not mitigate their immense potential in peacebuilding. There is a need for more critical engagement with the women, peace and security literature and its assumptions, highlighting both local perspectives on the meaning of gender (in)equality, and experiences from conflicts where multilateral intervention is absent.

### *Peace as an ecosystem*

Peace research has kept a continuous focus on the ways in which resource scarcity and unbridled development generate large-scale displacement, insidious civil strife and insurgency. Environmental degradation and excessive exploitation of natural resources, engendered by unsustainable consumption and population pressure, not only aggravate existing conflict, but also hinder its resolution (Kahl, 2007). Climate change is fraught with similar conflict-generating potential, especially in fragile states and among populations living in extreme poverty.

Recent research on environmental and resource-related conflicts has identified multiple linkages between peace and sustainable development. This has led to the recognition that a harmonious ecosystem functions as a hub of peacebuilding. In many traditional cultures, peace connotes a pathway to expanding human potential without harming others in the community or the larger ecosystem. Hindus, for instance, evoke planetary peace in their prayers, while celebrating the Earth as one family (Upadhyaya, 2013). Mahatma Gandhi's dictum of living in harmony with the environment influenced philosopher Arne Næss, who in turn coined the term 'deep ecology' (Næss, 1989; Weber, 1999). Related conceptualizations such as 'ecological peace' provide 'a better understanding of the inherent capacities of the environment to inform and sustain peace' (Kyrou, 2007). More recently, numerous studies have connected hitherto compartmentalized research on ecological integrity, socio-economic justice, democracy, non-violence and peace. Vandana Shiva, for instance, unravels the links between issues such as genetically modified food, cultural theft and natural resource privatization, and the rising tide of fundamentalism, violence against women and planetary death. She also writes about new kinds of wars being waged around ecology and the ethical limits to profit, where the enemies are coercive free trade treaties and production technologies based on violence, bioengineering and nanotechnologies (Shiva, 2005).

One remarkable initiative in this area is the Earth Charter, which has generated a composite pedagogy linking together the human community, ecology and planetary concerns in a mutually enriching manner. The Earth Charter project, which began as a UN initiative, was carried forward and launched on 29 June 2000 by the Earth Charter Commission, a global civil society initiative. The preamble of the Earth Charter serves as an expression of people's quest for 'a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, human rights, economic justice, and culture of peace'. The pedagogy of the Earth Charter presents practical visions of ecosystem protection, equitable and sustainable development, the eradication of poverty, accountability, transparency and prevention of conflict. The production of such transformative knowledge may lead to a much-needed review of policies and actions intrinsic to ushering in democratic, equitable and ecologically sound communities, and provide inclusive guidelines for sustainability drawing on indigenous knowledge as well as planetary imperatives.

### *Peace Education and Multicultural Literacy*

Peace education has long been recognized as a transformative vector for sustainable peace. It is defined as the 'process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavioural changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level' (Fountain, 1999: i). Imbued with the values of non-violence, human rights and social justice, peace education can create peaceful constituencies that can help prevent conflict, resolve conflict peacefully when it arises, and create social conditions conducive to peace. Non-violent social movements associated with Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. inspired an ethos of a 'culture of peace' – an idea furthered nurtured by Felipe Mac Gregor and academics such as Michael True and David Adams within the UN context (Adams and True, 1997).

Alongside peace education, scholars have highlighted the imperatives of multicultural literacy in today's diverse and troubled world. They argue that global problems are not a result of lack of basic reading and writing skills, but can instead be traced to the inability of people from different cultures, races, religions and nations to co-exist peacefully and work together to solve intractable problems such as global warming, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, poverty, racism,

sexism and war. Multicultural literacy prepares citizens to explore diverse ethnic and cultural perspectives to create a more humane and just world. It entails an awareness and appreciation of different beliefs, appearances and lifestyles and 'of the poly-cultural origins of a global intellectual heritage and understanding that bespeak a multipolar worldview even if it manifests in an apparently fragmented form' (Taylor and Hoechsmann, 2012).

Certainly, ignorance of the customs and lifestyles of other cultures and the resultant suspicion and mistrust are a common cause of conflict and violence. Sectarian violence often occurs when both sides maintain an illusion of what constitutes the 'other' (Sen, 2006). The deep fissures in social justice and surges of radicalization and violent extremism in recent years clearly indicate that the values of pluralism and tolerance embedded in a culture of peace have yet to be assimilated in our societies. The respect for diversity in everyday life is a *sine qua non* for positive peace, denoting the optimum realization of human potential. This can only be achieved through structures and processes that nurture constant dialogue through the active participation of individuals and communities.

Lately, there has been a notable upsurge in arts-based contributions to conflict transformation and peacebuilding. Peace campaigns often receive the support of the visual and literary arts, films, theatre, music and dance with a view to facilitating intercultural understanding and promoting a non-violent culture of peace. Efforts are also being made to utilize the press and the media to promote peacebuilding, rather than encourage intolerance.

### *Resurgent Perspectives*

The gradual broadening and deepening of the conceptual understanding of peace reflects changing imperatives during the post-Second World War period. First-generation approaches, steeped in Cold War legacies, has focused on the management of inter-state conflicts as the core concern of peacebuilding.

The absence or cessation of physical violence was the *sine qua non* in such conceptions of peace. The next generation focused more on the positive dimensions of peace, and highlighted conflict transformation as an approach to addressing basic human needs, as well as issues of economic inequality, social oppression and justice. New and upcoming approaches to peace promise greater inclusion of emancipatory discourse and the recognition of a range of actors, from the grass roots to elite levels and transnational peace agencies, as well as participatory forms of democracy ranging from the local to the global.

Indeed, the scholarship on peace, as well as institutional practice, is still mired in tensions between the proponents of a universal, objective and singular approach to peace, and those who view it as plural, diverse, subjective and culturally contextual. The schism between the two approaches is not only theoretical, it also has a critical bearing on the institutional practices of peacebuilding. While Universalists insist on universal norms and principals, and centralized coordination, integration and ‘delivering as one’, their opponents argue for the local ownership of peace, indigenous knowledge and skills, and local participation in the peace process.

However, serious efforts are now underway to reconcile these contrary positions by adopting positive elements from both. Gezim Visoka (2016), for instance, highlights the importance of bringing about ‘peace between peace theories’. He suggests that ‘reality congruent’ research can help find a path drawing on the strengths of both liberal interventionism and critical emancipatory approaches. Visoka draws on Norbert Elias’s ideas of ‘figurational sociology’ to explore structured configurations, unexpected outcomes and agency in a locally rooted approach that goes beyond critical thinking to explore ways to advance more ethical and more useful research findings. In practice, though, the emerging trend in several conflict zones favours hybrid forms of peace, blending international norms of liberal peace and interests with local forms of agency and identity. Scholars such as Richmond (2014: 125) describe such phenomena as ‘the emergence of a post-liberal peace in hybrid form (i.e. a positive hybrid form of peace), representing the next step in peace theory and practice’.

### *Towards Sustaining Peace*

The holistic vision of ‘sustaining peace’ is one of the key trajectories of the new UN plan to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies, free from fear and all forms of violence. Predicated on the concept of ‘sustaining peace’, the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council have reached a well-formulated consensus to prevent all forms of violence, recognizing the symbiotic relationship between peace, sustainable development and human rights across a wide humanitarian expanse.

The concept of ‘sustaining peace’ has indeed reframed the scope and methodology of UN peacebuilding. While the term ‘sustaining peace’ is not distinguished explicitly from peacebuilding, it sets out a new ambitious agenda and approach for UN efforts to build peace. Hitherto, the mandate of the

Peacebuilding Commission was confined to post-conflict situations and treated prevention solely as a form of post-conflict mitigation, rather than a means of averting the outbreak of conflict in the first place. ‘Peacebuilding’, instead of denoting a comprehensive process, was narrowly construed in terms of time-bound, exogenous interventions that take place ‘after the guns fall silent’ in fragile or conflict-affected states (UN, 2015). Sustaining peace, on the other hand, does not define peace as the binary opposite of conflict, and as such, can ‘reclaim peace in its own right and detach it from the subservient affiliation with conflict that has defined it over the past four decades’ (Mahmoud, 2017). The term ‘peacebuilding’ thus no longer remains confined to the post-conflict scenario. Detaching peacebuilding from the margins of post-conflict situations increases its relevance to all phases of conflict – before, during and after hostilities, implying that peacebuilding should be undertaken simultaneously with peacekeeping, development and humanitarian activities. Conflict prevention has been assigned a central role in ‘sustaining peace’. Making eight separate references to conflict prevention, the preamble of the joint resolution highlighted the centrality of prevention in the ‘sustaining peace’ schema (UN, 2016). According to this resolution ‘sustaining peace’ is ‘a goal and a process to build a common vision of society’.

While this process is hard to define and harder still to break into concrete, operational steps, the resolution offers several building blocks to that end. These include enhancing the links between peace, development and human rights; creating inclusive national ownership in which local actors have a consistent voice and women and youth play a critical role; and promoting more strategic and close partnerships with diverse stakeholders. Conceptually speaking, the idea of sustaining peace seems to be well grounded in endogenous processes and context-specific capacities embedded in national policies. Conceived as a shared public good and a collective endeavour engaging all stakeholders, it lacks the features of a donor-driven outside intervention, as apprehended by some sceptics.

The emerging consensus equates peace not only with the absence of conflict, but also with the synergetic presence of diverse vectors that prevent and transform conflict in a peaceful and constructive manner. Nurturing peace in today’s interconnected world thus requires a broader canvas that along with the imperatives of human rights and development also entails a vibrant focus on education for peace, global citizenship, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. Such holistic visions of peace resonate well with the ethos of ‘culture

of peace', which has been described as 'a set of values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups, and nations' (UN Resolution A/Res/52/13, 20 November 1997). Leading peace researchers consider this description to be the most progressive definition of peace to date (Richmond, 2014: 121).

The preceding discussion while highlighting the long walk of peace from a narrow definition of peace to a comprehensive understanding of peace also brings in focus the contested nature of peace and security. Indeed, peace is never apolitical, it is always politically charged. Peace can be radically transformative or it can be a passive acceptance of wrongdoing and injustice. Just as conflict is inevitable to the human experience, the concept of 'peace' will always be a site of arguments and a journey of discovery. This contestation should also be recognized as a lively feature of the process of conceptualizing as well as achieving peace. Instead of trying to conflate peace with one or other schema, all those involved should constantly anticipate and nurture its plural ramifications. While there is every reason to support the emerging paradigm of 'preventive action' embedded in 'sustaining peace', the diverse and politically contested nature of peace needs to be recognized, not as a part of the problem, but as an inherent part of the solution.

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# Nonviolent Communication : An essential tool for Volunteering

*Vedabhyas Kundu*

## *Introduction*

Volunteering is a distinct human characteristic. It is a socio-psychological bridge connecting the self and the individual consciousness to the collective consciousness of the community. On the one hand, it is an expression of free will of an individual, while on the other it is an expression of a certain set of values imbibed from society values that enable an individual to locate her or himself in relation to others. (Kundu, 2005 & 2010)

Volunteering can be either a conscious or an unconscious act. A large number of human beings consciously volunteer in some way or the other almost every day. Such unconscious acts of volunteering play an important foundation in the formation and survival of various processes of socio-cultural institutions. The conscious act of volunteering is often defined by socially and culturally evolved values. The conscious act of volunteering is often defined by socially and culturally evolved values. Therefore, when a person helps an elderly woman cross a busy road or feeds the hungry, all these acts are defined by a set of socially evolved values. (Kundu, 2005 & 2010).

The socio-psychological need of every human being for a sense of belonging in relation to the other forms the basis of volunteering. The need for a sense of belonging also arises from the need for emotional well-being and for a socio-cultural identity. The need also propels human beings to go beyond the self to reach out to people and nature. (Kundu, 2005 & 2010) This need leads us to the notion of selfless nature of volunteering. Clamouring for self-aggrandisement through volunteering is against the spirit and philosophy of volunteerism.

In fact, the essence of the selfless nature of volunteerism is reflected by Swami Vivekananda who said, “Ask nothing; want nothing in return. Give what you have to give; it will come back to you- but do not think of that now,

it will come back multiplied a thousand-fold- but the attention must not be on that. Yet have to power to give; so give willingly. If you wish to help a man, never think what that man's attitude should be towards you."

The life and message of Mahatma Gandhi also reflects the selfless nature of volunteerism and service. He writes, "He who gives all his time to the service of the people, his whole life is an unbroken round of prayer." (M K Gandhi, Harijan; November 10, 1946).

Seth (2012) notes some important elements of effective volunteering. He observes, "To be an effective volunteer requires a strong degree of commitment in which the volunteer extends to be service to a wider cause. The spirit of selfless service runs high in volunteers since their motivation is not primarily for money." Seth talks about how in the midst of materialistic world, 'acts of selfless service helps a volunteer to find inner peace- an essential attribute to be in harmony with oneself and society'. Acts of volunteering helps an individual in the construction of positive identity, he adds.

He further talks on the importance of deep listening skills of volunteers. "The process of becoming peaceful and building confidence can develop during social engagement. It is possible with deep listening skills. Seth's stress on acquiring deep listening skills and the need for peaceful social engagement for effective volunteering leads us to different aspects of communication central to the very act of volunteerism.

Mazur and Wood (2016) points out, "Connecting with another through language and listening creates reciprocity- the responsive actions that allow us to fully participate in the act of giving and receiving. How we listen and use our language, both written and spoken, is paramount on how we communicate, setting the stage for mindful engagement." Mazur and Wood's stress on the essence of language and listening for deepening of engagement is in sync with Seth's perspective on effective volunteering. To be an effective volunteer it is essential to be meaningfully engaged with the constituency one is volunteering with; and for that nurturing the habit of using proper language and listening skills is paramount. This essentiality takes us to the significance of nonviolent communication and its centrality in volunteering.

This chapter explores different dimensions of nonviolent communication and how these are integral part of volunteering work. Through in-depth interviews of active volunteers, it will try to look at volunteers can become

more efficient and contribute more meaningfully when practising nonviolent communication.

### *Nonviolent Communication and Volunteering*

Senior Gandhian, Natwar Thakkar (2017) gives a nuanced view of his understanding of nonviolent communication. He says, “To me nonviolent communication literacy would mean how our communication efforts should be nonviolent; how our ability and capacity to communicate not only with ourselves but with our family and society be nonviolent in all aspects and overall how the entire process of communication whether between individuals, groups, communities and the world at large should be nonviolent in nature. This would entail deep understanding of the art and science of nonviolence and its centrality in all our daily actions. It’s not just verbal and nonverbal communication, nonviolent communication literacy would also include whether our thoughts and ideas are nonviolent or not. This would also mean how we can rid of our preconceived notions of individuals or groups with whom we want to communicate and stop evaluating them to suit our own ideas.”

His ideas of nonviolent communication stems from the notion of nonviolence practiced by Mahatma Gandhi. Parekh (1997) articulates Gandhi’s ideas of nonviolence, “Gandhi carried his search for nonviolence into the realm of the human mind itself, and asked how one should relate to one’s thoughts, beliefs, and feelings in a truly nonviolent manner.” This is also the true essence of nonviolent communication. In this context, Seth (2012) argues, “For a volunteer, it is essential to realize the connectivity between the self and the society. It is only when one works for others that we realize the interconnectedness.” This connectivity between the self and the society and others is best realized when one acts using nonviolence from the realm of human mind. He says, “Volunteering can make an individual peaceful not only within oneself but also inculcates qualities of peaceful behaviour in their daily interactions with other fellow human beings.”

The intrinsic link between volunteering and nonviolent communication is aptly encapsulated by S Saba, a law student of Aligarh Muslim University and the Peace Gong Aligarh Coordinator. She says, “By practicing tools of nonviolent communication, we students are able to engage in dialogues more efficiently. Whether within the group or while reaching out to other students and the community the ability to engage in efficient dialogues are critical.

Nonviolent communication teaches us to imbibe values of compassion, empathy, mutual respect, tolerance and the spirit of forgiveness. So even if some conflict arises, engaging in dialogues using nonviolent communication techniques helps us resolve these. These also helps us to develop better relationship with the communities in which we work.”

Saba links the need of young volunteer leaders to be able to engage in meaningful dialogues to their initiative to contribute to social cohesion. Talking about how nonviolent communication shapes meaningful dialogues, she laments at the unwillingness of large number of people to enter into dialogues for resolution of conflicts which results in violence and hatred. Her perspectives on nonviolent communication emanates from what Martin Luther King had said, “Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence, but also internal violence of spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him.” Nonviolent communication enables us to desist from using words of hatred and intolerance, Saba points out. Many a times while volunteering we might find ourselves in challenging situations handling difficult people; it is where the importance of nurturing nonviolent communication comes to the fore, she adds. She further delves on her perspective of nonviolent communication from this quote of King, “Mankind must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.”

The importance of dialogue which Saba argues is pivotal for effective volunteering has been articulated by Ikeda (2007), “Through dialogue, we can arrive at a deeper mutual understanding. Dialogue starts by clearly recognizing the positions and interests of the respective parties and then clearly identifying the obstacles to progress, patiently working to remove and resolve each of these.” Ikeda (2011) talks about the need to further face-to-face and soul-to-soul communication. It is only when immersed in words and dialogue that human beings can become truly human; one cannot mature into a complete and full-fledged human being without such experiences, he adds.

Another important dimension of engaging with others is how volunteers can develop empathetic connections. Rosenberg (2005) explains how nonviolent communication helps in making empathetic connection. He notes, “Empathetic connection is an understanding of the heart in which we see the beauty in the other person, the divine energy in the other person, the life that’s alive in them. We connect with it...Empathic connection involves connecting with what is alive in the other person at this moment.”

Volunteers in the field have to work with large number of communities having diverse needs. To be able to make meaningful contribution there is need to develop empathetic connection which can help a volunteer to critically understand the needs of the community.

In a world facing crisis of global warming and biological degradation, Saba articulates on the need of volunteers to nurture nonviolent communication not just with other fellow human beings but all living beings and nature. The Peace Gong Aligarh team has initiated an effort to put up sparrow boxes in different places in the Aligarh Muslim University campus. She opines, “We young volunteers who are committed to contribute towards a peaceful society must understand the deep interconnectedness that exists between human-nature-and all other living beings. By trying to find spaces for sparrows which are hardly seen in our cities or saving a tree from being felled we are using nonviolent communication at a higher plane. Here our communication is that of love, care and compassion for birds like sparrows. So, our communication ecosystem should respect the interconnectedness between all living forms and nature, only then we can contribute towards sustainable peace.”

The perspective of Saba stressing on the importance of interconnectedness in our communication ecosystem emanates from the Indian tradition of respect for all beings and nature. In fact, the Gandhian notion of nonviolent communication stems from this perspective. Parekh (2014) explains Gandhi’s idea of interconnectedness or interdependence of human beings. He notes, “Gandhi followed the Indian tradition in taking a cosmocentric view of human beings. The cosmos was a well-coordinated whole whose various parts were all linked in a system of yajna, or interdependence and mutual service. It consisted of different orders of being ranging from the material to the human, each governed by its own laws and standing in a complex relationship with the rest. Human beings were an integral part of the cosmos and were tied to it by the deepest bonds.”

Shantum Seth (2016) in the book, ‘Do Not Harm: Mindful Engagement for a World in Crisis’ also talks on the significance of interconnectedness. He says, “Interconnectedness is so embedded in the reality of existence that social and universal responsibility becomes enlightened self-interest.” Further Gandhian ecologist, Vandana Shiva aptly describes the philosophy of interconnectedness, “We are all members of the earth family, interconnected through the planet’s fragile web of life. We all have duty to live a manner that

protects the earth's ecological processes, and the rights and welfare of all species and all people. No humans have the right to encroach on the ecological space of other species and other people, or to treat them with cruelty and violence." "It is through nurturing of nonviolent communication that young volunteers can develop deep understanding of the philosophy of interconnectedness and volunteer accordingly," Saba points out, "This is essential if we want to volunteer for mutual coexistence."

Another important dimension which Seth (2016) underlines for effective volunteers is the quality to be remain humble in all situations. "Whenever I go to work in a village, for example, I always feel like I am getting far more than I am giving and I try to instil this in volunteers. In this kind of work, don't think you are going to be a do-gooder. The person who is gaining the most is you, by developing your mindfulness, your compassion. Ultimately you are helping yourself."

The quality of humility is again intrinsically connected to nonviolent communication. By practicing nonviolent communication, we become humble and learn to appreciate and express gratitude. Albert Schweitzer has rightly said, "*At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.*"

Linking nonviolent communication with gratitude, a Peace Gong Coordinator, Neelakshi Maliktakes inspiration for her volunteering work from the idea of Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you, and to give thanks continuously. And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude." Neelakshi talks about the inherent link between volunteering and nonviolent communication as both are selfless act. She further points out how acts of gratitude which is an important element of nonviolent communication are essentially done unconditionally to show to people that they are appreciated. "I firmly believe that acts of gratitude are contagious in a positive way and we all should seriously make it an integral part of our life."

By expressing gratitude, volunteers not only contribute to their own well-being and happiness but also of the group with which they are working, Neelakshi stresses. She opines on the importance of gratitude to strengthen relationships and trust. "We volunteers have the challenge to develop relationships with the communities with whom we work, so the habit of

expressing gratitude contributes to this,” she adds. She feels humility and gratitude enhances the personality of a volunteer. “Gratitude reduces feelings of envy, makes our memories happier, lets us experience good feelings, and helps us bounce back from stress,” Neelakshi points out. On the importance of humility for volunteers, she says one should take leaf from what Mahatma Gandhi had said, “It is unwise to be too sure of one’s own wisdom. It is healthy to be reminded that the strongest might weaken and the wisest might err.”

Neelakshi has a message for aspiring young volunteer leaders, “Use nonviolent communication to enhance your personality, build relationships and promote team building. Inculcate nonviolent techniques to contribute to humanity.” She concludes by quoting Lao Tzu on leadership, “I have three precious things which I hold fast and prize. The first is gentleness; the second is frugality; the third is humility, which keeps me from putting myself before others. Be gentle and you can be bold; be frugal and you can be liberal; avoid putting yourself before others and you can become a leader among men.”

### *Conclusion*

This preceding discussion underlines the intrinsic link between volunteerism and nonviolent communication, both of which aim to promote mutual upliftment and evolution to a higher plane of consciousness. By practicing nonviolent communication, volunteers can truly experience the joy of volunteering and work for common good.

Gandhi had aptly said, “Be the change you wish to see in this world.” But to be catalysts of change, effective volunteers have to face myriad challenges and difficulties in the backdrop of our post-modern culture. Using techniques of nonviolent communication gives them new tools to handle difficult situations and ensure inner peace. The volunteers need to remain undeterred and continue their endeavour to serve humanity can be aptly described by these famous lines of Nobel Laureate, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore:

*Our voyage is begun,  
 Captain, we bow to thee!  
 The storm howls and the waves are  
 wicked and wild, but we sail on.  
 The menace of danger waits in this way  
 to yield to thee its offerings of pain,  
 And a voice in the heart of the tempest cries:*

*‘Come to conquer fear!’  
 Let us not linger to look back for the laggards or benumb the  
 Quickening hours with dread and doubt,  
 For thy time is our time and thy burden is our own and life  
 and Death are but thy breath  
 playing upon the eternal sea of life.  
 Let us not wear our hearts away  
 picking small help and taking  
 Slow count of friends.  
 Let us know more than all else  
 that thou art with us and we are  
 Thine forever.*

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# Baby Halder: A Study of Violence, Voice and Visibility

*Saptaparna Roy*

*Voice is part of the physical world, and its psychological power comes from this fact: that it transposes what has no physical manifestation - the psyche, the soul, ourselves...*

*Carol Gilligan, 83*

## *Introduction*

An investigation into the Indian women's participation in the workforce places us at a dichotomous crisis with India securing one of the lowest rates in the world and the escalating rate of educated Indian women in recent times. Mired in household maintenance acts such as reproductive responsibilities, unpaid care work and social care functions, women have been debarred from the 'productive' involvement in the market. A gendered hegemonic perception has created distinct spheres of performance for men and women. The crisis compels us to rethink and reinscribe the expanse of what is not considered productive. According to the UN, in India nearly 54% of women aged 15 to 59 cannot engage in work due to the burden of domestic chores. It is important to understand how domestic work has been defined by Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), Article 1- "(a) the term *domestic work* means work performed in or for a household or households; (b) the term *domestic worker* means any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship; and (c) a person who performs domestic work only occasionally or sporadically and not on an occupational basis is not a domestic worker." Hired domestic workers relieve women from such work especially in urban areas, leading to the invisibility of women helpers as a working force in society. Domestic workers form a part of the unorganised sector and their labour covering a wide spectrum of household activities is not recognised as 'work' despite attempts at legislation through the Unorganized Social Security Act, 2008, Sexual Harassment against Women at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and Minimum Wages Schedules. The

crisis poses questions on national-level intervention into uniformly applicable legislation on terms of employment and working conditions ensuring justice and equality for domestic workers. Domestic work takes place in the private uninvaded space of the household where regulating and inspecting minimum wages, working hours, job descriptions and productive outcomes as defined in other forms of labour, remains a major challenge. The uniqueness of domestic work makes legislation a complex issue. It cannot be ignored that domestic work is an easily available means of sustenance for millions of Indian women. Their status needs to be ensconced at par with other employed workers, endowing them with the rights and dignity of labour. This paper, a métissage of approaches, will review the present condition of female domestic workers in India, the laws in force and the impediments and possibilities in legislation along with an analysis of the historic documentation by Baby Halder, a domestic help-turned-author, the first of her kind in India.

### *Baby Halder's Life and its Vicissitudes*

Baby Halder is a 'voice' breaking the silence of non-existence and speaking out the violence and trauma experienced to make herself and her class 'visible'. Born on 19<sup>th</sup> June, 1973 to a lower middle class Hindu Bengali family in Jammu & Kashmir and forced to work as a domestic help, she redefined her identity as an author through her autobiographical writings- *AloAndhari* (2004), *EshatRupantar* (2008) and *GhaarePherar Path* (2014). Her father, a man of erratic nature, was in the military services. The family suffered financial crisis due to the inconsistent contribution by her father though he earned enough to support and sustain a family. Her mother wrecked by the strain of penury and squabbles, abandoned home and the young Baby. Her father married two more times and finally retired to a life of domesticity in Durgapur. At age 12 years 10 months Baby was married off to a man 26 years of age, stopping her from studying further. Incessantly troubled by an abusive husband, Baby was compelled to desert home with her two sons and one daughter and leave for an unknown destination, first at Faridabad, then Gurgaon. She 'becomes' a domestic help and faces indignity perpetuated by different households. She happens to find work at the house of the writer and anthropology professor Prabodh Kumar, grandson of Munshi Premchand, who discovers her unquenchable thirst for reading and knowledge while dusting books in shelves. He inspires Baby to read Taslima Nasreen's *Amar Meyebela*, an autobiography that moves her to write diaries on the vicissitudes of her own life, its displacements, disruptions and dislocations. "My employer Prabodhji

has lots of books, including many Bengali books. While dusting them, I always used to think if one day I could read them. Even as a child, I always wanted to go to school. Despite our poverty, my mother never stopped us from going to school and even after she left us, I continued going. I studied till class 7th. So when Prabodhji once saw me a little lost while dusting the books he asked me whether I would like to read a Bengali book, to which I said yes. He gave me Taslima Nasreen's autobiography and soon I realised her life is so similar to me," Baby Halder narrates (May 15, 2006, *The Hindu*). He translates Baby's *AloAndhari* into Hindi which was published in 2002 before the original in Bengali released by Taslima Nasreen. Baby Halder's books have been translated into several Indian and foreign languages, truly justifying Urvashi Bhutalia's English title of the translation, *A Life Less Ordinary* (2006). Her work received phenomenal media attention as a significant watershed in the image of the domestic workforce in India. In fact, her book has found a place in the N.C.E.R.T syllabus of the XIth standard. From international literary meets to book fairs to documentaries, Baby's 'voice' has been heard. Baby Halder is a unique case of a subject empowered by agency who questions patriarchy, class discrimination, religious justice, and socio-economic structures in her writing and enters an intersectional dialectics between the family, the state and the market.

Baby was forced to do household chores from a very early age and only then attend school. She has lived a life of fear, fear of her father, step-mother, husband, and employers. Deprived of the simple pleasures of life like wearing bangles, playing with friends, roaming around, she endured incessant pain, violence and had a series of crises. She loved reading history, especially about Jhansi ki Rani Lakshmi Bai and enjoyed telling tales or fables to others. She narrates in her life history the story of her parents' marriage, her premature birth, her menstruation, early marriage, domestic abuse, miscarriage, alienation from her father, abandonment by her mother, her sister's murder, her mother's return after 20 years followed by an oblivious death, and the stories of other women who have suffered intensely, yet uniquely through acid attack, murder, suicide or being possessed by ghosts or God.

Interestingly, she addresses herself as "Baby" in the text as though she is looking at her own life as a witness and writing her own testimony, empathising with herself. She savours the process of recollection of the past events and she looks back at the memories lovingly. She worked very hard but never ended pleasing anyone at home, she grieves. She became like wood on hearing that

she would be a mother at age 14. New York Times captures her condition thus: “A realization of the horror of her new married life comes suddenly. Soon she is pregnant and, barely understanding what has happened, finds herself being rebuked by the doctor for “choosing” at so young an age to have a child. Two more children follow; then her husband splits her head open with a rock after he sees her speaking with another man, and her elder sister is beaten and strangled by her own husband.” (August 2, 2006) Baby had to independently learn to take care of herself and her children. Like her father, her husband Shankar wouldn't give money for household expenses. She suffered a loss of faith that her husband would care for her; instead she mustered courage to protect herself and her children singlehandedly. She had silently tolerated all his verbal abuses, physical assaults and irritable behaviour. She had no pocket money to fulfil her basic desires like eating something she liked when she was pregnant. She questions God about the sins she must have committed to have earned such a destiny. Too troubled with her life, she broke into hysteric outbursts, once half naked in acute labour pain while her husband slept peacefully. When the female chaperon in the hospital asks for money for her service, Baby justifies that no money is good enough for the work they do. Baby did all the work at home with the new-born child in her lap, while her husband was unwilling to pay for its food. She felt helpless, always at the receiving end and continued a dehumanised life comparable to cats and dogs. Even if she rested during illness, her father would be enraged. Contrarily, she was much respected in her in-laws' place because she was the mother of a son. She believes in treating everyone with a sense of equity and recounts the plight of other women- those divorced or widowed. Her husband would beat her ruthlessly if she spoke with others, especially men or spent time out of home. She shared a feeling of sisterhood with the neighbouring women and never paid any attention to hearsay or small talk about anyone. She questions the sincerity of a man named Ajit who claimed to love her because he never rescued her from her husband's wrath. She was stoned on her head and beaten with a bamboo, bleeding profusely when she was pregnant causing a miscarriage. Social pressure compelled her to return to her husband even if she wanted to stay separately with her children. Shankar even snatches her son away from her so that she is forced to come back as she was still breast feeding him. She admits her eldest son to a school and starts teaching small children of the locality, earning around Rs. 200 to 300 per month. Gradually, she becomes fearless, inured to violence and trauma.

Incidentally, she would write loveletters for couples, even for those who shared an illicit relation. She tells stories of women who uncomplainingly suffer yet do not blame or expose their husband's crimes. She comments on how population kept increasing in the locality and how she underwent a ligation herself for birth control without informing her family. When she started looking out for work in people's homes, they laughed at her since her husband earned enough and her father had a certain reputation. She procured a job where she would clean the house and utensils, wash clothes, chop vegetables, make preparation for cooking but she didn't know how much money to ask for which work. So she accepted whatever they gave her. Leaving her young children at home, she had to venture out to work and bear the temperaments of inmates in those households. She became well known for her good work since she did extra chores when requested unlike other maids and used endearing terms to address the family members. In the wee hours of the morning she would go to work and returned by 8p.m. to her children, cooked at home and supervised their studies; she describes her daily routine. She laments why the children of the poor must be untouchables and distanced due to class difference. She tries to justify her husband's behaviour as a committed wife even as she saves money for her daughter as a dutiful mother. Determined to leave home, her husband and a despicable life, she had to keep moving from one place to another, one work to another. She wondered how several women who didn't have a husband managed their lives on their own or travelled alone. Baby left for Faridabad to her brother's place, ridden with anxiety and uncertainty. Unfortunately, her brothers didn't welcome her and she had to search for work to survive. No one was ready to employ her when she said that her husband was not with her. Gathering all her strength she finds work at a memsahib's house who maltreats her and makes her overwork. She faced threats of not being paid for her work and gives hard labour in lieu of a meagre amount of money. Having no place to stay, she conceded to continue the work and met other Bengali girls with a similar fate. Baby had to live in a claustrophobic environment of mistrust, not allowed to speak with other maids bearing the ire of the mistress. The memsahib looked for opportunities to find faults with her to oust her out of the house.

Finally, she lands in the house of Probodh Kumar (whom she endearingly calls Tatush) where she would cook and take care of the whole household. He helped her to admit her children to a government school. It was for the first time that she found a sahib who was caring and loving, treating her as his

daughter and not a domestic help, “kajermeye”. She describes Tatush speaking softly like Sri Ramkrishna, forever smiling with no anger or regrets. She is found browsing three almirahs full of books when Tatush gives her a pen and a copy and insists that she writes her life history, at least one page a day. She ultimately moves to a room on the roof of his house with her children and begins to live a happy life after long. Social stigmas about a woman staying away from home and husband did not bother her. She introspects that she too has the right to live freely. Men were curious about her, finding excuses to speak with her, whistling and taunting her since she didn’t have a man in the house. She was allowed rest between work and was told that studying and writing is her duty. In fact, her children were given half litre of milk every day. Baby’s potential was tapped and her writing on women’s issues encouraged and appreciated by Tatush’s friends, Ramesh Babu, Ananda Babu and Sharmiladi. All her bare necessities of life were fulfilled and like Ashapura Devi she worked and wrote simultaneously. Tatush even helped her find her eldest son and gave him work close by. Baby received letters from Tatush’s friends and reverted to them in whatever way she could write. She was elated to see her writing published in *BhashaBandhan* magazine. Every man or woman can maintain his or her subsistence through work and earn enough, Baby believes. Baby read the letters from her well wishers and again in moments of distress and realised how beautiful her life had become after she began writing. Reading novels, poems and the English newspaper, Baby seeks sublimation in reading and writing away from all the trivialities of life. She prays to her deceased mother for blessings to proceed with her writing. She achieves for herself and her class what Carol Gilligan states:

*...finding a voice that has been lost, meaning swallowed, buried deep within oneself, held in silence; finding a way to say what could never be said because there were no words or no possibility of being heard, or because speaking was too risky, too dangerous...Both literally and metaphorically, finding a voice brings one into relationship. (1998, p.x- xi)*

### *Feminist Theory on Voice*

Judith Herman appositely points out that ‘the most common post-traumatic disorders are those not of men in war but of women in civilian life.’ (Shattered Subjects: Trauma and Testimony in Women’s Life-writing). Women’s survival stories expressing individual and collective trauma

should receive research concentration to appreciate the trajectory of trauma. As Suzette A. Henke proves in her book *Shattered Subjects* that woman frequently indulge in writing to nurse wounds incurred on their psyche. Henke explores the testimonies of six 20th-century women authors such as Colette, Hilda Doolittle, Anais Nin, Janet Frame, Audre Lorde, and Sylvia Fraser revealing traces of post-traumatic stress disorder caused by experiences of sexual assault, incest, childhood abuse, misery, undesired pregnancy, miscarriage and sickness. Writing as such is a means of negotiation with the self, trying to reorganize experiences and make meaning out of it. Recounting a struggle for survival by looking back and forth is a way to find coherence in a series of experiences of a shattered identity. Henke treats trauma tales as crucial to the understanding of autobiographical writings leading to narrative recovery. Consequently, the shattered subjects' use of autobiography as a medium of expression is in a sense a restructuring of experiences that are emotionally wrecking. Incidentally, Baby confesses in an interview: "I was nervous when I held the pen in my fingers. I had not written anything since my school days. But when I started writing, words began to flow effortlessly. In fact, writing turned out to be a cathartic experience," (Jan 05, 2014, Hindustan Times). She explains the process of writing thus: "When I wrote, I felt like I was talking to someone, and after writing I would feel lighter, as if I had taken some sort of revenge against my father, who never took care of me as a father should, and against my husband," she explained. "I never thought that other people might be interested in reading my story." Baby is very conscious of her identity as a domestic help and she believes, "I want to be a writer and I will continue to write," but she also categorically mentions "so I will go on working here." in the house of Mr. Kumar. (August 2, 2006, New York Times)

Writing autobiography becomes a process of penning the processual memory (Olney, *Autobiography*, 20-21), healing and rediscovering Baby as Suzette A. Henke in *Shattered Subjects: Trauma and Testimony in Women's Life-Writing* (1998) calls "scriptotherapy" (19). Baby's life history is a remembering of the vestiges of the past to weave it together to make meaning out of it as Smith and Watson mentions to "situate the present within that experiential history" (*Reading*, 16). Remembering is a socio-historical act of contextual politics of a culture, a collective act rather than an individualised one as W.J.T. Mitchell proposes, "...memory is an inter subjective phenomenon, a practice not only of recollection of a past 'by' a subject, but of recollection 'for' another subject" (193). Especially, the modern female-

author of a memoir knits a quilt to stitch various aspects of transdisciplinary concerns to make a strong claim for feminism by juxtaposing the personal with the cultural from the point of view of the female experience. The memoir consequently cuts across disciplinary boundaries and reveals the “complexity of the world and requires us to have a better understanding of the relationships and connections between fields that intersect and overlap” (Strober, 2011, p. 5). Apart from an insight into the narrative self, the personal narrative portrays life experiences that are irrefutably and essentially rooted in cultural contexts, exposing gendered practices. The research focus on autobiography as a genre of interrogation connects several disciplines and disrupts disciplinary cartographic boundaries, making it challenging to define the genre. Interestingly, this explosive nature of autobiography questions conventional limits and definitions and has become a focal point in feminist scholarship and hence autobiography is a melting pot of different strands of feminism (Cosslett, 2000, p. 1).

In memoirs written by women an expanding outlook into the lives of contemporary women is found, the voices of whom have been historically silenced or Othered: “traditionally, knowledge, truth, and reality have been constructed as if men’s experiences were normative, as if being human meant being male” (The Personal Narratives Group, 1989, p. 3). Therefore, the female author shoulders an overwhelming responsibility by scripting her story through which she must “find her self-in-the-world...by facing (affronting?) and mounting an enormous struggle with the cultural fictions—myths, narratives, iconographies, languages—which heretofore have delimited the representation of women. And which are culturally and physically saturating” (Showalter, 1985, p. 274). Feminist activism is about making women’s voices heard. The research into women’s life narratives is crucial in “examining the interaction between the individual and society in the construction of gender” with a much-needed female perspective (The Personal Narratives Group, 1989, p. 5). In the articulation of the personal by various women, they shatter the silence of coercion and amass a dominant force that can initiate change and expose the reality. Meredith Maran (1997) explains the significance of women’s stories thus:

*We might miss the chance to change the world—for ourselves, for our daughters, and yes, for our sons. We might miss the chance to finally see who a woman might be, who a man might be, set free from the confines of gender rigidity. And what better way to begin*

*than the way women have always begun: by telling the truth about our lives? (p. xiii).*

Autobiography thus opens new avenues into a world characterised by multiplicity and interconnectedness wherein the reader delves into the cultural veracity of women's lives. Instead of silencing the female experience, the female authors celebrate and appraise it by looking through their speculative lenses, encouraging other women writers and reinforcing the feminist voice. Current trends in feminist research brings forth a "strong interest in the autobiographical, beginning with the attempt to connect the 'personal' with the 'political', and the concomitant emphasis on women's experience as a vital resource in the creation of women's knowledge" (Cosslett, 2000, p. 2). In the verbalization of the inner recesses of her private life, the memoirist opens the window to the bare realities of her existence and her female experience, unmasking the acute atrocities and impediments posed by society on women and the challenges threatening her relational identity. Patriarchy normalises and naturalises women's roles and sexualisation, silencing their protests. The memoir renders the raw personal experiences contextualised in transdisciplinary cultural paradigms, raising a strong voice for the female experience and feminism. Consequently, writing the personal must be taken as a solid ground for the exploration of women's experiences, making a meaningful contribution to feminism by individual women writers. Though autobiography here has been seen as representational, the debate over the individual identity of the writer being subsumed into the social cannot be ignored: "[T]heir sharing is a gift of themselves, and a gift to themselves also," (Silverman, 1984, p. viii). This incisively posits the fact that women's stories are not falsities, they do matter.

Two theorists, Rakow and Wackwitz in 2004 underlined three central themes of feminist communication theory: difference, voice and representation. The first, difference relates to the means by which the political, symbolic and other systematic oppressive relations within racial and ethnic communities, sexualities, economic classes and political affiliations are created. In fact, feminist communication theory acknowledges the differences between women considering their problematic contexts and commonalities for positive action (p. 8-9). The second, voice refers to the opportunity of women's admittance into the communicative process, the circumstances and complications in voicing and the systems through which women are forcibly silenced (p. 9). The third, representation indicates the results of women's misrepresentation in media and popular culture, the practices of omission and the drawing of divisions such

as class, caste, and age. Rakow and Wackwitz foregrounded how Feminist Communication Theory postulates on gender, communication; and social change (p. 5). They recognize the characteristics of feminist communication theory as “political, polyvocal and transformative” (p. 6). In fact, feminist communication theory is explanatory (“It speaks of and to experience,” p. 6); political (and “because it is political it is personal,” p. 6); polyvocal (is “generated by multiple voices and experiences, with sometimes conflicting interpretations of reality,” p. 6); transformative (“contributes to intellectual and spiritual growth by providing different perspectives through which to conceptualize experiences and the structures of society,” p. 6). It can be summarised that feminist communication theory is inspired not only by research interests but also by the need for transformation, reflecting a responsible response to research subjects and for self-introspection and bearing a social accountability to voice the truth to power (Gilligan, 1982).

### *Domestic Work and Legislation*

In February 2014 the Employment and Social Protection Task Team headed by ILO initiated public debate on Rights for Domestic Workers focusing on the safety, working conditions, wages, social protection, employer’s expectations and employer-employee relationships. Incidentally, in February 2014 the Ministry of Women and Child Development published data in response to a question tabled in the upper house of Parliament, revealing reports of violence against domestic workers between 2010 and 2012. There were 3,564 cases of alleged violence against domestic workers reported in 2012, rising from 3,517 in 2011 and 3,422 in 2010 in India’s 28 states and 7 union territories. The escalation is a marker of the vulnerability of women working in the less intruded domestic sphere. Baby strongly feels, “Unfortunately, there is no respect for physical labour in India. The rich and the powerful feel that they have a right to exploit their domestic help,” (Jan 05, 2014, Hindustan Times). Despite state protection through registration with Welfare Boards, innumerable domestic helpers still remain unprotected by labour laws. The truth is that India has not endorsed the ILO Convention No. 189 on decent work for domestic workers as the national policies on labour laws and practices are not in consonance with the provisions.

In India two draft bills were placed in 2008 by the National Commission for Women and the National Campaign Committee of Unorganised Sector Workers. The Policy has been under review by the government and no deadline

has been set to finalise it. The central government has enforced the Unorganised Sector Social Security Act, 2008 for ensuring social security to unorganised workers encompassing the domestic workers. Several states like Karnataka and Kerala have stipulated minimum wages for domestic worker. The *Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana* (RSBY) has been framed to provide benefits to different kinds of workers including domestic workers. Some states like Tamil Nadu incorporated domestic workers in their Manual Workers Act and has allocated a distinct board for them. Similarly, Maharashtra is initiating a law with draft bills under consideration. Maharashtra codified conduct through Section 27 (A) of the Maharashtra State Public Service Conduct Act, 1997, prohibiting government employees from engaging children below the age of 14 as domestic workers. Moreover, the Government of India has effected amendment to the Central Civil Service Conduct rules forbidding Civil Servants from keeping children below the age of 14 as domestic help.

One of the major challenges has been to organise domestic workers because the work place is a multifarious and unapproachable space, characterised by a high rate of attrition and volatility. Consequently, collective bargaining for better wages and decent working conditions through a union has not been possible due to the lack of a unified work force. According to ILO and WIEGO's 2013 statistics, domestic work has been a burgeoning sector of employment for women in numerous countries. Even conservative estimates reveal that the number of domestic workers augmented from 33.2 million in 1995 to 52.6 million in 2010 leading to 3.6 per cent of global wage employment. Though in many countries the projected number of domestic workers is a critical issue, in India it is especially interesting to note the yawning gap in figures. The figures cited by NGOs and the media on the one hand, and the NSOs and NSSO on the other, is unbelievably high ranging from 2.5 million to 90 million domestic workers.

In actuality, domestic workers are often beyond the purview of labour force surveys, so the figures could be way higher. WIEGO underlined three major challenges in counting domestic workers in statistical surveys: (1) the difficulty of defining and restricting the types of activities, (2) the problem of classifying and coding in statistical systems to include all kinds of domestic work, and (3) the complexity of tabulation to calculate data with diverse codes at disparate levels of classification. As per ILO, in 2010 the percentage of domestic workers in Asia is the highest at 41% and in Asia and the Pacific region 61% are not covered by law and 29.9% domestic workers across the

globe are beyond national legislation. About 83 per cent are women among the counted number of domestic workers in 2010. In fact, young girls and women cover almost half of the approximate 200 million migrants across the world. Domestic workers form a large part of this rising movement. Moreover, Asia is a major spring of international migrants who serve as domestic help. Around the mid-2000s, about 6.3 million Asian migrants were lawfully establishing their livelihood in more advanced Asian countries (United Nations Population Fund 2006). Incidentally, around 1.2 million officially invisible migrants are working in the region with many as domestic workers (United Nations Population Fund 2006).

Some countries have taken serious measures through legislation to regularise domestic work. In Hong Kong the right to form unions and protection through the Employment Ordinance as well as standard contracts reviewed by the Immigration Department have been introduced. Again, in the Philippines a Magna Carta for Household Helpers has been created. France, Belgium, and a portion of Switzerland have initiated a subsidize state “service ticket” system to facilitate collective bargaining through Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997, with an obligatory mandate to safeguard the domestic workers in South Africa. Ghana has framed a Domestic Servant Service Policy in Ghana in 2012 to oversee contracts. Moreover, in New York a bill empowering the Labour Department as well as the attorney general to enforce law for domestic workers has been passed.

### *Conclusion*

Notwithstanding impediments, domestic workers have attempted to organise themselves in present times and the outcome is the movement for ratifying C189. For the first time in 2013 the International Domestic Workers’ Network moulded itself into the first of its kind worldwide union supervised by women, the International Domestic Workers’ Federation (IDWF). On 16 June 2015, International Domestic Workers’ Day, the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) along with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) had coalesced with national-level trade unions in India for organising a strategic meeting on unifying domestic workers and guaranteeing India’s agreement on the ILO Convention 189 for the Rights of Domestic Workers. In about 13 states in India trade unions are operating with domestic workers. According to the Indian Ministry of Labour and Employment, seven states have preset minimum wages and ten

states have recognized Welfare Boards that register names of recruitment agencies for domestic workers. At present 21 countries have ratified Convention 189 on domestic work, but India has not made a move so far. India, one of the world's largest economies, needs to create national legislation upholding domestic work as actual work for long subsumed as unproductive household work or care responsibility.

Undoubtedly, domestic work has given women an entry into the labour market resulting in financial autonomy. But has it ensured gender equality? ILO has attempted to mobilise a shift in the perception of care giving as a task exclusive to women and has mooted to redistribute responsibilities between the home, the market and the state; and reallocate unpaid care work or reproductive work between men and women. Women alone balance out productive labour with familial responsibilities. A state-level intervention in providing full-day child care facilities to such women workers of low income population will make them available for productive labour. Socialised meanings of maternity, paternity, femininity and masculinity need to be deconstructed for a more inclusive social restructuring. The massive burden of care work has been unloaded from women in households to domestic workers, creating an invisible class, doubly marginalised on grounds of gender and nature of work. Baby Halder's voice against violence and silencing needs to be resounded to ensure visibility and equality.

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# Nonviolent Footprints to promote a Culture of Peace

*Sayantani Roy*

## *Introduction*

*Nonviolence is a permanent attitude we bring to the breakfast table and bring to bed at night. - Coretta Scott King*

According to King's description of nonviolence as a permanent attitude that one brings in the breakfast table is significant in the backdrop of innumerable stories of violence that we get to read in newspapers, television or through our mobiles while taking our daily breakfast. Horrendous stories of violence including rapes, killing and murders seem to hit the headlines more than stories of compassion and altruism. Almost every day newspapers report about small children being sexually assaulted and brutally killed. Recently a new threat faces our children, youth and the education system. The death of children in this case is motivated by technological aids and basically self inflicted and there is fear among parents, teachers and everyone else interested in the well being of the children, because of an online game. Then right through the day there may be instances when we ourselves show our anger, end up indulging in some form of violence which may hurt others, or be party to trivializing individuals or groups.

The incessant desire to acquire material objects or the mad race for achievements forces many individuals to use coercive methods, aggression and competitiveness as instruments. Though this tendency to acquire material possessions and become a victor has been a human endeavour since time immemorial, in modern times these individuals and societies tend to push such efforts with impunity using new technologies.

To delve on these concerns and the conflicts that arise due to these endeavour to acquire material possessions or achieve glory through shortcuts, His Holiness The Dalai Lama talks of four ideas to counter such

tendencies: a) Universal humanitarianism is essential to solve global problems; b) Compassion is the pillar of world peace; c) All world religions are already for world peace in this way, as are all humanitarians of whatever ideology; d) Each individual has a universal responsibility to shape institutions to serve human needs. Peace Scholar Howard W Hunter arguing on the need for a peaceful world says, “We need a more peaceful world, growing out of more peaceful families and neighbourhoods and communities. To secure and cultivate such peace, we must love others, even our enemies as well as our friends.” Worldwide large numbers of peace practitioners, scholars and groups have been contributing to the challenge the menace of violence, coercion and intolerance.

Gene Sharp (1973) outlines three methods of Nonviolent Action that serve to undermine unequal systems of power while encouraging the creation of innovative and alternative solutions:

- Nonviolent protest and persuasion are “symbolic acts of peaceful opposition” often used to denounce or show dissent toward a specific issue or policy. These methods are also used to gain publicity for a cause. Parades, vigils, picketing, posters, teach-ins and the other educational forums, mourning, and protest meetings are all considered acts of protest and persuasion.
- Noncooperation involves intentionally removing oneself from cooperation or relations with a disagreeable activity or institution. Common methods are strikes, boycotts, divestment of funds, and acts of civil disobedience through peaceful violation of laws or regulations.
- Nonviolent intervention encompasses methods that disrupt or deconstruct established institutions, behaviours, or policies that are viewed as undesirable by the nonviolent actor. Nonviolent interventions may also strive to create new patterns and institutions to take their place. Methods of disruption might include nonviolent occupations, blockades, fasting, and seeking imprisonment, in order to over-fill facilities. Methods of creating new structures might include the construction of alternative schools, media, transport, markets, and other political, economic, and social institutions.

Using the work of peace apostles like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Dalai Lama and Daisaku Ikeda, this chapter aims to develop the concept

of nonviolent footprints for individuals to gauge and measure their own efforts towards nonviolent action in their daily lives. This chapter will also use the ideas of Nagaraj and Thomas for a nonviolent literacy mission which could be an initiative to counter hatred, intolerance and violence in our societies and homes. They note, “Nonviolent Literacy Mission should be to incessantly work to explore the goodness in people and be a catalyst to become part of a nonviolent action force. Nonviolent Literacy entails critical understanding and learning of the art and science of nonviolence, imbibe the spirit of nonviolence and exhibit nonviolent practices in our daily lives. Nonviolent Literacy should be able to encompass nonviolent behavior, nonviolent communication, nonviolent attitude, nonviolent thoughts and nonviolent action.” (Kundu, 2017)

### *Towards a Culture of Peace*

Building and sustaining cultures of peace does not mean eliminating violence. Humans cannot deny their role in the uprising of global violence. They also cannot blame it on only several people- the spread of violence shows that we all have played a role in contributing to the gruesome state of the world today. The challenge for building a culture of peace, therefore, becomes how such debate is expressed and managed. As written in UNESCO (1995), “In practice, the key to a culture of peace is the transformation of violent competition into cooperation for shared goals...It may be understood as the managing of conflict through the sharing processes of development” (p. 16). Spring (2009, p 218) points out this type of peace culture is not a static process that can be permanently achieved. It requires continual dynamic negotiation among groups and interests, and over time, the focus and priorities will change. All these unstable conditions oblige humans to continually renegotiate, and it is this process of struggling for agreement that is a culture of peace.

Michelle Cromwell and William B. Voegelé (2009, p. 231) has very nicely pointed about nonviolent action which is actually a method of making contention, makes three important contributions to building and sustaining a culture of peace. First, nonviolent means of struggle promote social norms that eschew violence, even without any kind of overarching commitment to pacifism. Second, nonviolent struggle helps to build trust among individuals and groups, even when they find themselves in contention. Third, the structural requirements for effective nonviolent action diffuse power throughout society—effectively empowering groups who might otherwise be excluded, broadening

democratic participation, and valuing inter-group communication. As written in UNESCO (1995), “In practice, the key to a culture of peace is the transformation of violent competition into cooperation for shared goals...It may be understood as the managing of conflict through the sharing processes of development” (p. 16). Johan Galtung (1996, p.9) defines peace as *the absence of violence in every form* by which means that violence occurs in three manners. The first manner is *direct violence*. Direct violence is evident in various forms of intentional bodily harm, including killing, maiming, siege, and any other form of force to the body that causes harm and poses an affront to basic human needs. The second manner of violence is *structural violence*. Galtung (1996, p.196) refers to this as a third form of violence: *cultural violence*, which “makes direct and structural violence appear and feel right—or at least not wrong.”

In context of a culture of peace, the idea of the nonviolent footprint is ingenious as it will enable us to see the impact we can make. Often we think that an action has minimal value and thus refrain from doing it but nonviolent footprint stresses on how even the smallest of actions can lead to a bigger action. It reminds us of our responsibility and accountability to Mother Earth and to other humans because we live in a shared space and each of us has equal ownership in resources. In our earnest journey in the search of nonviolence, no one is more powerful than the other. As we think of nonviolent footprints, we think of the Earth as a gigantic sheet of white fabric laid out and children, adults and senior citizens walk all over it, leaving their colourful footprints so colourful that the black spots can be seen no more.

Mahatma Gandhi had pertinently said, “The very first step in non-violence is that we cultivate it in our daily life, as between ourselves, truthfulness, humility, tolerance, loving kindness.” The foundation of the philosophy of Nonviolent Footprints can be grounded in this idea on the need to cultivate nonviolence in our daily lives.

The concept of nonviolent footprints will also be grounded on the essence of nonviolence as articulated by Martin Luther King who had said,

*“Nonviolence says that within human nature there are amazing potentialities of goodness.... I think we all must realize that there is within human nature a sort of dualism, something within all of us which justified Plato in saying that the human personality like a*

*charioteer with two strong horses each wants to go in different directions.... There is this tension and this struggle within human nature between the high and the low.... we must recognize that just as there is a capacity for evil, there is a capacity for goodness just as a Hitler can lead man to the darkest and lowest depths a Gandhi can lead, men to the highest heights of nonviolence and goodness. We must always see these possibilities within human nature; the nonviolent discipline goes on with this belief that even the most difficult person, even the person who is committed to the old order with all his might, can be transformed.....”*

The measure of nonviolent action in one’s daily lives will have to be an individual effort. It cannot be mechanical but has to evolve from within. It cannot be measured by others. In this regard, Mahatma Gandhi had pointed out,

*“It is not for us to sit in judgment over anyone, so long as we notice a single fault in ourselves and wish our friends not to forsake us in spite of such fault. Being myself full of blemishes, and therefore in need of charity of fellow beings, I have learnt not to judge anyone harshly, and to make allowance for defects that I might detect”.*  
(*Harijan*, 11-3-1939, p. 47)

To achieve peace within a person, the Buddha taught that *“You should carefully guard your mind/Maintaining the mindfulness all the time/ In order to cease conflicts”* (The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, Taisho 1: 26). Lord Buddha ideas to live in peace depends not so much on what happens to people, but on what attitude, comprehension, and response they give to the happenings this is his insightful reflection as the practice of intra-personal peace. Whereas Buddha enlightens us with five precepts (pañchasilā) as practice of interpersonal peace as the minimum moral obligations for living a harmonious life in the secular society, such as (a) *to abstain from taking life*, (b) *to abstain from taking what is not given*, (c) *to abstain from sensuous misconduct*, (d) *to abstain from false speech*, (e) *to abstain from toxicants as tending to cloud the mind* (Buddhaghosa’s Pāpāncasudāni Sutta, in Buddhist Scriptures, 1959: 70).

Daisaku Ikeda in one of his remarkable quote mentions, *“The real struggle of the twenty-first century will not be between civilizations, nor between religions. It will be between violence and nonviolence. It will be between barbarity and civilization in the truest sense of the word.”* Peace, Ikeda emphasizes, is not just the absence of war. He defines a truly peaceful society

as one in which everyone can maximize their potential to lead fulfilling lives free from threats to their dignity. Genuine peace can only be established on the basis of respect for the dignity of human life, on recognition of our shared humanity. Ikeda firmly rejects the idea that the different cultural and religious traditions that underlie the great civilizations of our planet are in intrinsic conflict.

He writes, “Since 9/11, much has been made of the role religious belief plays as a factor in terrorism. But the real issue is that of exclusionary ideology and fanatic actions cloaking themselves in the language and symbols of religion. If we fail to appreciate this, and start looking askance at the practitioners of a particular faith, we will only deepen mistrust and aggravate tensions.” In Ikeda’s view, all cultural and spiritual traditions are expressions of human creativity responding to the challenges of life. He has described culture as growing from people in different historical and geographic circumstances attuning their ears and hearts to the wisdom and compassion inherent in the cosmos itself. Strengthening the bonds of connection and mutual respect among different peoples is the first essential step to building a robust and inclusive culture of peace on a global scale. Ultimately, such a culture of peace represents the only fundamental solution to the challenges of war and terror.

### *Evolution of the Concept of Nonviolent Footprints: The Peace Gong Endeavour*

Soni and Singh (2018) notes, “While we young people read and listen to talks and ideas on how different social, economic and cultural issues may influence a young person to indulge in violence, The Peace Gong team after talking to children, youth and seniors felt on the need to evolve the concept of ‘nonviolent footprints’ to measure and gauge our acts of nonviolence in our daily lives.” (The Peace Gong is a children’s newspaper where all articles are written by children themselves. Both Noopur Soni , Class XI and national editor of The Peace Gong and Babita Singh, Class XI are from Jhansi)

The Peace Gong child reporters and youth coordinators interviewed about 50 children, youth and seniors to develop the concept of nonviolent footprints. Here are some key points which emerged from the interviews:

1. In order to help people to measure their nonviolent footprints, the need of the hour is to propel a **NONVIOLENT LITERACY MISSION**. The Mission should be to incessantly work to explore the goodness in people

and be a catalyst to become part of a nonviolent action force. Nonviolent Literacy entails critical understanding and learning of the art and science of nonviolence, imbibe the spirit of nonviolence and exhibit nonviolent practices in our daily lives. Nonviolent Literacy should be able to encompass nonviolent behavior, nonviolent communication, nonviolent attitude, nonviolent thoughts and nonviolent action.

2. By being nonviolent literate, we will be in a position to start measuring our nonviolent action. It will help our critical faculties to gauge at the end of the day how violent or nonviolent we were.

The interviews by The Peace Gong team helped in encapsulating the possible measures of nonviolent footprints. These included:

**a. Our attitude** towards not only our fellow humans but also towards all forms of life. The measure should encapsulate ideas of mutual coexistence and take a cosmocentric view of human beings. Bhikhu Parekh (2001) in his seminal book, *Gandhi: A Very Short Introduction* talks about how Gandhi took the cosmocentric view of human beings. He said how ‘human beings were an integral part of the cosmos, and were tied to it by the deepest bonds.’ We can measure our nonviolent footprints through our attitude and behavior towards others- not just human beings but all forms of life and nature. Our aim should be to promote mutual respect and not hurt others through our action. We should learn to live in harmony not with our fellow beings but nature and other living forms. The idea of mutual coexistence is directly proportional to our nonviolent footprints.

**b. Our behaviour.** How we behave with others and even ourselves needs to be included in the gamut of indicators for measuring Nonviolent Footprints.

**c. Our expressions- both verbal and non-verbal.** How we choose to communicate with our fellow beings, the words we choose and the manner we express can be important indicators for measuring Nonviolent Footprints. Also equally important is our nonverbal communication methods- these can be both violent and nonviolent and we need to self-introspect if our body language becomes too aggressive to hurt others. We can measure and expand our nonviolent footprints through the use of our expressions. This includes both verbal and nonverbal expressions. How we communicate with others and the words we use are important measures of nonviolent footprints. Also our body language in communicating with others is an important indicator to measure

our nonviolent footprint. Nonviolent communication is an important measure of our Nonviolent Footprints and this can be explained through the perspective of senior Gandhian, Shri Natwar Thakkar. Thakkar (2017) arguing on the need for nonviolent communication literacy notes, “To me nonviolent communication literacy would mean how our communication efforts should be nonviolent; how our ability and capacity to communicate not only with ourselves but with our family and society be nonviolent in all aspects and overall how the entire process of communication whether between individuals, groups, communities and the world at large should be nonviolent in nature. This would entail deep understanding of the art and science of nonviolence and its centrality in all our daily actions. Its not just verbal and nonverbal communication, nonviolent communication literacy would also include whether our thoughts and ideas are nonviolent or not. This would also mean how we can rid of our preconceived notions of individuals or groups with whom we want to communicate and stop evaluating them to suit our own ideas. More than often we are attuned to think in terms of moralistic judgments which may be our own constructions. By developing deep understanding of the art and science of nonviolence and integrating it in our communication practices we could get over with biased and moralistic judgments; this in turn could contribute to emotional bridge building.”

**d. Our Thoughts.** There are times we may start thinking negatively about people with whom we have difference of opinion. We may even start hating others without openly confronting them. This is also violence.

**e. Ability to indulge in dialogues.** The space for dialogues and discussions is shrinking as most of us start believing that we cannot be wrong and our views must prevail. As humans we will always have differences of opinions and views. All these differences can be plugged through meaningful dialogues and discussions. Our enhanced ability to indulge in dialogues with our opponents and all others should be an indicator to measure our Nonviolent Footprints. Thoughts and ideas constitute important measures of nonviolent footprint. We can expand our Nonviolent Footprint by positive thoughts and ideas. When our thoughts and ideas are negative and aimed at hurting others, it is violence and it is when our nonviolent footprints shrink.

**f. Anger Management:** In the mad race to achieve big, we tend to get over stressed. Also it contributes to our getting angry many a times without any specific reasons. Young people are stressed more than ever before due to

increasing competitions and expectations to achieve big. This leads to situations when they become angry easily. Learning the art of anger management in this age of stressful existence contributes to expansion of our Nonviolent Footprints. Just like Mahatma Gandhi maintained an 'anger journal' to meticulously write down the reasons for getting angry during the course of the day, measuring our Nonviolent Footprints would entail maintaining an anger journal.

**g. Self acceptance.** An important measure of Nonviolent Footprints has to be the idea of self acceptance. Accepting one's flaws could be an important way to nurture compassion and empathy towards others. An important measure of Nonviolent Footprints has to be the idea of self acceptance. Accepting one's flaws could be an important way to nurture compassion and empathy towards others.

**h. Acceptance of others** as worthwhile human beings not just by the class or caste they belong to. Treating people who are considered below us without civility has been the bane of our society. An early realization of this reality has to be inculcated, this is an important measure of our nonviolent footprints.

**i. Getting rid of hatred:** Behind almost all social conflicts and violence have their origins in deep rooted hatred and prejudices. Homes and educational institutions need to help children to be free from such mindsets so that they can expand their nonviolent footprints. As with Gandhi, love was not a weak and insipid sentimentality, but a source of power and energy the movement of power toward the world. King's 'beloved community', conveying agape, was the counterpart to Gandhi's vision of Sarvodaya, the good society. For neither Gandhi nor King was this utopian. It was realism: the recognition of interdependence, so as the Peace Gong's belief.

**j. Ego:** Violence breeds in the minds of people who are obsessed with their hubris. If they are trained to understand their 'self' such people can be rid of unwarranted ego states.

**k. Developing Cognitive skills:** Being socialized by the traditional and new media, there is a growing tendency to be passive receivers of messages without being discerning. Training young minds to interact face to face with their mentors and peers and discuss issues threadbare need to be planned and executed and cognitive skills could only be developed through education. Gandhiji wanted education to embolden the ability of the young to make decisions for their entire lives. Not surprisingly, Gandhi felt that the ultimate

solutions for the problems that had so engrossed him would have to come from education. Education, according to Gandhiji is not a linear activity. It must address itself to the head, heart and hand, symbolising the senses, the mind and the spirit. It must lead to a harmonious development of body, mind and spirit and develop an interested personality. That integration can best be effected through a life-centred, activity-centred and problem-centred education. An active mind would develop positive thinking thereby expanding nonviolent footprints.

### *Conclusion*

Soni and Singh (2018) explain how children across the world need to come together to expand their nonviolent footprints. They note, “Children can take the lead for contributing towards a global nonviolent planet by coming together in solidarity and motivating their peers to expand their nonviolent footprints. Only when we, children, are able to expand our nonviolent footprints, we can inspire adults to follow us and restrain from conflicts.” The measures of nonviolent footprints as articulated in this chapter using the perspectives of Buddha, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Daisaku Ikeda can be important tools for individuals and societies to inculcate the habits of nonviolent action. In the backdrop of violence and aggressive behavior of not only young people but adults in different situations, the idea of nonviolent footprints holds great promise for people to follow the path of nonviolence in daily lives. Indeed, it is imperative to introduce the idea of being nonviolent and to gradually expand one’s nonviolent footprints right from childhood, as aptly revealed in this instructive study.

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# Role of Law in Ordering Violence in the Family

*Anuja S.*

## *Setting the tone*

Life's greatest moments occur behind closed doors. So, too, do some of modern life's most outrageous exploitations. Domestic violence or violence within the family is a universal phenomenon, though its manifestation varies depending on the social, economic and cultural background. It is one of the most insidious forms of violence against women, and is an issue which is often shrouded in silence and cloaked with societal shame. Family as a social institution acts as the transmission belt for the diffusion of cultural standards to the next generations, as a psychological agent of society, as a shock absorber, and as an institution of many enhancing and valuable qualities. India is a multifaceted society where no generalization could apply to the nation's various regional, religious, social and economic groups. In India, the family in the format of joint family system or a multi-generational household is the most predominant institution that has survived through the ages. India has a documented heritage of stable family life and structure that has been able to withstand the vicissitudes over the centuries.

Marriage, considered to be an inviolable social institution, is between families not individuals, as per the Indian culture. In a traditional Indian family, the wife is typically dependent, submissive, compliant, demure, non-assertive, and goes out of her way to please her husband. Women are entrusted with the responsibility of looking after the home and caring for the children and the elderly parents and relatives. According to Amartya Sen, the India born Nobel Laureate in Economics, in his book 'The Argumentative Indian': Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity has described the culture of modern India as a complex blend of its historical traditions, influences from the effects of colonialism over centuries and current Western culture - both collaterally and dialectically. There is often a culture of silence around the topic of domestic

violence, which makes the collection of data on this sensitive topic particularly challenging. Community gender norms tacitly sanction domestic violence. The strongly held belief that marriage as a social institution should be preserved at all cost and that family honour is important forces women to remain silent on the issue and live tolerating abuse.

Violence in general is a coercive mechanism to assert one's will over another, in order to prove or feel a sense of power. Violence is an act committed to put down, silence, and to keep under control someone with the intention of hurting or humiliating the person. Domestic violence is violence that takes place between people on private territory. The term domestic violence depicts violence between individuals who are usually bonded through law, blood or personal intimacy. Psychologists assert that people deal with their own insecurities and inadequacies by abusing and controlling the lives of others within the safe precincts of domestic walls. The domestic situation usually makes the abused very vulnerable and fragile. Violence on the domestic front has been a part of human society since times immemorial. Violence does not only include beatings, rape or sexual abuse, it is anything which infringes on the rights of the person to be treated as human being. That violence which occurs within the periphery of household is domestic violence.

Women's subordinate position in the home makes their experience different from men. The image of the family as a protective retreat has been created largely through male eyes, disregarding women's oppression and the extensive discrimination against them which is inherent to the patriarchal structure and the functioning of the family. (Iyer, Saroj, 1999:3) The significance of family for women is also more vital than that of men, because while a man is allowed an independent existence, woman's identity and survival is not socially conceivable without family. Human Rights violations from foeticide, incest to women, battering and murder are committed within the safe confines of the home, making woman highly vulnerable in families. They remain largely invisible, being considered family matter. The emphasis is always on preservation of the family at all cost even, if it compromises women's safety and security. (Iyer, Saroj, 1999:4) As relationships are universal, so is the form of co-residence, intimacy, sexuality and emotional bonds. But the forms they take can be infinitely variable. So, the rights and freedoms guaranteed to women in the family depends on how the familial ideology reacts to it.

Family as the basic cell of the society is acknowledged throughout the national and international Human Rights documents as the 'basic and

fundamental unit of the society.(Art. 16 (3), UDHR) The journey from ‘violence against women’ to ‘domestic violence against women’ within the private space is reflected through the International Instruments on Human rights. But desperately, no foundational philosophy seems to be offered through the international documents for the preservation of family and its continuance. Though domestic violence is caused by individuals in the private sphere, International human rights law makes the state accountable for the same taking justifications from *Due diligence* principle, and places on states the responsibility to eliminate domestic violence through numerous measures. These include creating legal and policy frameworks for addressing domestic violence (including formulating and implementing laws), ensuring a responsive criminal justice system, providing for social and support services to victims / survivors of domestic violence, and formulating and implementing policies for empowerment of women.

### *Legal Responses*

The history of the law’s response to domestic violence can best be described as a transition from one extreme to its opposite. Traditionally, the law refused to intervene in intimate relationships and therefore denied victim’s requests for legal remedy. A strict adherence to criminal strategies is harmful in dealing with the issue. Criminalization of domestic violence was an important step in changing societal views towards violence in relationships. To fill up the inadequacies of criminal strategies the civil law to prevent violence in homes has been enacted creating more harm than good. More recently the law has offered victims legal relief, but the relief generally requires ending the relationship. Thus the law has moved from leaving abusive relationships alone to dissolving them. Neither of these approaches meets the needs of survivors of domestic violence who seek to end the violence without ending the relationship and neither of them attempts to harness the law’s power to affect relationships in constructive ways. The legislative intervention into the familial relationships is likely to have a deterrent effect only if the victim pursues to go for litigation and proceed to complaint.

To attain the overarching principle of gender non- discrimination as extrapolated from CEDAW, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women recommended “A Framework for Model Legislation on Domestic Violence”, 1996 (UN Model Code), which provides valuable guidance on the provisions that should be included in domestic violence legislation. The

parameters fixed while enacting a law on domestic violence are that such laws should be complying with international standards condemning domestic violence; 2) recognize domestic violence as gender-specific violence directed against women, occurring within the family and within interpersonal relationships; 3) recognize that domestic violence constitutes a serious crime against the individual and society; 4) create a wide range of flexible and speedy remedies; 5) assure survivors the maximum protection; 6) establish departments, programmes, services, protocols and duties to aid survivors; 7) facilitate enforcement of the criminal laws by deterring and punishing violence against women; 8) enumerate and provide by law comprehensive support services; 9) expand the ability of law enforcement officers to assist complainants and to enforce the law effectively in cases of domestic violence and to prevent further abuses; 10) train judges to be aware of the issue; 11) provide for and train counsellors to support police, judges and the survivors of domestic violence and to rehabilitate perpetrators of domestic violence; and 12) develop greater understanding within the community of the incidence and causes of domestic violence and encourage community participation in eradicating domestic violence.<sup>1</sup>

One of the golden ideals that run throughout the Constitution of India is that the violation of Fundamental rights guaranteed under part III of the Constitution is the violation of the natural basic human rights, inherent in human beings. Human dignity is the quintessence of human rights. Women's rights as human rights are elusive in the absence of right to live with human dignity. Domestic violence is one of the crimes against women which is linked to their disadvantageous/marginalized position in the society. The intimate relationships between the woman and the man masks the harm, complicate and distorts the victim's and society's understandings of the violence, her ability to escape and the approach of society to her experience. It is this element that distinguishes domestic violence from other forms of violence in society. In the National scenario the ought proposition as laid down by UN Model Code gets reflected in the Act passed in the year 2005. With the passing of Protection of Women Domestic Violence Act, 2005 the Indian Legal system has stepped into a social space that has hitherto remained unwilling to lend itself to legislation- the home and the family, and the violence faced within the same.

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1. Refer for more details Domestic Violence Legislation and its Implementation-AN ANALYSIS FOR ASEAN COUNTRIES BASED ON INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND GOOD PRACTICEScedaw [seasia.org/docs/DomesticViolenceLegislation .pdf](http://seasia.org/docs/DomesticViolenceLegislation.pdf) last visited on 13/3/2009

*Dichotomy of Law in text and Law in action*

Violence within the home is a phenomenon that has only with difficulty achieved recognition as socially unacceptable behaviour in India. The objective articulated behind the Act is “to provide for more effective protection of the rights of women guaranteed under the Constitution who are victims of violence of any kind occurring within the family and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto”. The Act recognizes the very fact that house is not a safety zone for the women inmates therein and thereby attacks the very strong base of the holding of the traditionalists that women are born to endure all sufferings within the house. The Act clearly identifies the victim groups and what are the processes and reliefs to be made entitled to them in cases of different types of violence. The Act manifests a combination of civil reliefs backed by criminal sanctions and they are dealt with in a detailed manner. Women and children are the primary beneficiaries of this Act. Civil reliefs of temporary nature are guaranteed. A social participatory process involving the stakeholders of the Act i.e. Protection officers, service providers, police Government and NGO’s is envisaged under the Act. The fundamental purposes of governmental intervention mandated in cases of domestic violence are to ensure the *safety of the victims* and hold the *perpetrators accountable*. Laws reflecting this principle identify the system - not the victim - as the problem and the focus of change. The challenge therefore sets in as to how to reconcile these ideas together harmoniously in the Indian cultural scenario.

The PWDVA, 2005 has invited criticisms from different quarters. The basic inherent limitation with the Act is that law cannot be a tool for moralizing men. The introduction of concepts of individual autonomy, freedom and integrity when induced into a woman’s status and personality typical to India, is likely to damage the social fabric of the society thereby leading to disintegration of family ties. Law is expected to be in tune with the pulse of the society. The social institution of family and marriage is considered inviolable according to the social and cultural rubrics. The social fabric of India which is predominantly governed by patriarchal joint family system furthering the subjugation of Indian women is the major challenge to the implementation of this Act in India. There exists a dichotomy as to the existing social spectrum, the values cherished and the introduction of new concepts of autonomy and dignity rights of woman. Viewed in this perspective, the Act appears to be a western duplication. As Lord Moulton puts it, Law is the crystallized common sense of the society. Unless the treatment and attitude towards the plight of

women within four walls changes laws cannot do miracles to wipe out domestic violence against women.

The definition on *domestic Violence* under the Act includes sexual abuse and economic abuse. A bare reading of the Act gives the impression that when a woman is sexually abused against her will, the offence of sexual abuse is committed. To raise an argument against the husband or to do a job independently against the wishes of the husband in Indian family are uncomfortable discussions and are construed as offences. To counter argue this criticism we need to have a strong culture of tolerance and respect for the status of women which is completely lacking in India. But how far an Indian woman who doesn't want to sever her marital bond for the sake of her children will come forward with the complaint of sexual abuse perpetrated by her husband is perplexing. The concept of economic abuse has widely attracted criticisms from male counterparts wherein in the Indian culture we do not have a system of matrimonial property as against the English counterpart. The way in which the concepts of autonomy and privacy are construed by the west and as reflected in the Act is not in conformity to Indian context. Indian cultural traditions attach an extremely high value to decisional autonomy for males. The socio cultural background of India evidences the fact that members within a family is more oriented/nurtured towards the intergenerational dyad systems within the family. To introduce the politics of '*rights within the home*' is itself a major challenge to deal with. This proves the limits of the new law to settle domestic issues within the family structure.

The beneficiaries of the Act encompass the women partners involved in *relationships in the nature of marriage*. We have penal laws as against bigamy propagating the ideal that monogamy is the rule. Laws reflect minimum code of morality for the society. Guaranteeing reliefs to live in partners on par with the legally wedded wife creates an ideological dichotomy. The case of *Indra Sarma v. V.K.Sarma* (S L P (CRL.) NO.4895 ) pronounced by the Apex court stands as a testimony to the extent to which live in partner women and their rights are guaranteed under the Indian socio- cultural context. The negotiated intimacies can never be set at par with socially accepted set of standards and values nor it had been legally accepted considering the vulnerability of the women involved in such relationships.

Another challenge is that the Act provides remedies in the nature of a temporary/urgent relief to provide a safety zone to women victims from

violence. The nature of remedies provided under this law is temporary in nature; the permanent solution still remains within the framework of matrimonial laws under which a woman would have to decide on whether or not to continue in the relationship. The Act works out a framework of restorative justice to the victims. The Act revolves round the process of counselling which takes into its ambit the concept of restorative justice. Restorative justice values are based on the notions that: all parties involved in crime should be included in the response to crime; offenders become accountable through understanding the harm caused by their offences, accepting the responsibility for that harm and taking actions to repair the harm they have caused; and crime is defined as harm to individuals and community. The dynamics of power and control in an abusive relationship make it inherently difficult for a level playing field to exist as is required for successful mediation. Further, mediation cannot work where there is no real opportunity to voice one's concerns and have one's needs represented. Resolving the problem with a collective mind-set making the perpetrator accountable in the lines of internationally ought strategies rarely happens. A woman victim who is completely dependent on the husband in the specific matrimonial set up can never expect such transitional changes happening to resolve her plight. Unless the attitude of society changes it has least effect in India. The stay away orders in the form of restraining orders guaranteed by the Act aggravates the situation of non-reconciliation in the Indian context. The contradictory ideas distort the effectiveness of the Act in promoting a genuine cause. The long term solutions are yet to be worked out/tailored by the nation to combat this growing global menace to the development.

The adversarial procedure adopted by the Act purportedly to protect the women in familial relations from violence does more harm than good, when viewed practically. The very complaint procedure envisaged leads to disintegration of the long cherished familial bonds in the Indian family. Once the women adopt the remedial procedure envisaged by the Act she is out of the matrimonial house. No restorative or preventive remedy is ensured by the whole process of empowerment as guaranteed by the Act. It appears like posting a policeman inside the family to check the behaviours of the inmates, which is rather impossible.

The concept of domestic violence as defined in the Act includes the concept of sexual abuse. Concepts like right to residence in matrimonial home, rights of live in partners on par with legally wedded wife, etc though adopted

in the legislation, are yet to be indigenized in terms of cultural determinants, location and history. Counselling, under the Act, continues to be a grey area. Counselling, as approached by the Act again takes the cases back to the fate of what is being reiterated in the form of counselling in family courts earlier constituted. The whole objective of counselling as envisaged in the Act is to get the abusive partner to give an undertaking/assurance that there will be no further domestic violence being perpetrated from his/her side. The need for this form of counseling would involve the re-establishment of the basic trust and the sense of safety to be given to the women who faces violence. A victim cannot be assured safety within the domestic space after the restraining or protective order is passed by the courts. Most victims in Indian context, face further traumatization both through the system of restitution and justice as also from family members and society at large. So need to find out other methods that are culturally and socially suitable are necessary to deal with the problem.

In a case before the Kerala High Court, where the parties were involved in eleven litigations against each other before different fora, in view of the worsening relations between the parties, the court appointed a conciliator to enable the parties to settle the disputes between them. Upon arriving at a settlement, the court said:

“In the light of the discussions the court and the conciliator had between the parties and thanks to the cooperation extended by the learned counsel appearing on both sides, it is heartening to note that peace could be purchased not only between the parties to the marriage, but also between the families of both parties. True, they have agreed to disagree. But we could convince them that on disagreement also, the parties to the marriage can still be friends. For the only reason that the matrimonial bond is terminated and the marriage is dissolved, the parties to the marriage need not be strangers and enemies; they can still continue to be friends, and they have to continue as good friends in this case for the additional reason that they have a child”.

- *T. Vineed v. Manju S. Nair (KLJ, 2008: 525 Para 3)*

In cases of domestic violence in grave forms, prioritizing conciliation could have the effect of compromising the safety, security and dignity of the aggrieved woman and forcing her back into the violent home. The good intention of the court in this judgment was to prevent further hostilities between the parties, avoiding multiplicity of litigations and arriving at an amicable

settlement of all pending issues between the parties. It appears to be a good ideal. While this is desirable, conciliation may not be the viable and standard practice in all cases under the Act. To advise a man to be friendly towards the ex-partner and be friends appear awkward in a situation of domestic violence where a victim has suffered a torturous life. It is both dangerous and futile to emulate western models with a single colour and brush.

A law that addresses violence in the home raise a number of questions, implicitly or explicitly challenging received ideas about the family as social structure, the members within, the roles played by each of them and their ideological cultural beliefs and attitudes in India. The challenges posed by the enactment creates a distorted picturesque –‘*a bull in the China shop*’. The questions mooted at this juncture are:

1. How far the Indian society tolerates the legal intervention into the so called sacrosanct “familial space”?
2. Does the Act integrate or does it disintegrate the family relationships?
3. Does the rights granted to the victims by the Act lead to Restitutive / Restorative justice?

The PWDVA, 2005 is meant to operate in a patriarchal set up which is very much clear from the definition of domestic violence adopted as per the Act. The Act is structured for the purpose of effective protection to women from violence within familial relationships. But the problem of effective implementation lies in difficulty in reconciling the familial values in India with the rights culture propagated by the Act. To be useful in an Indian context, they need to be adapted to a relational world view and idea of self that is based on the integration of the individual with the family group. These constructs need to be modified to take into account the multiple, complex and hierarchically ordered boundaries, the centrality of the intergenerational dyad and the lifelong independence between generations. Without modification, the use of these constructs as per the Act in the treatment of problem of domestic violence within familial space may cause disintegration or dysfunctional result in the family relationships and thereby strain the social fabric ties. In such a context, to draw experiences from the West and emulate them in the Indian cultural set up appears to be a dichotomy.

What remains outside the ambit of law is the sensitivity over handling the issue and the subjectivities of suffering of the victim. Law in its attempt to

correct something immoral or something wrong, intends to end disorder within the familial space. Legal system tries to assert its presence like any other institutionalized hierarchical structure, emerging as a moral guardian, rather than a neutral arbiter. Creative approaches are needed in order to move a private matter into the sphere of public concern and to translate that public concern into a widespread social consensus for action. A one size fits all approach is dangerous and self-destructive in emulating western models. The Act demonstrates a half-baked solution without any understanding of the cultural fabric of the Indian society. Taking into account our cultural ethos and ideology of preservation of family ties much pro-active/affirmative and not reactive measures are to be adopted in this scenario by the State. A healthy cohesive family with cordial relationships is the need of the hour.

### *Some Reflections*

The first step in addressing the issue of domestic violence against women holistically is to understand the specific nature of violence perpetrated in the name of violence in homes as against other types of violence. Accordingly it can be characterized as consisting of five important specificities of this issue which paves a way forward for dealing the same in a socio cultural background of power matrix with attached misogyny:

**Who perpetrates violence:** It is perpetuated by someone close to the victim, usually her partner, ex-partner or other intimate family members;

**The site of violence:** It happens in intimate settings which are presumed by society to be sites of support and care;

**Form and nature of violence:** It is a recurring form of abuse generally characterized by a cycle of violence: the abuse is followed by a period of respite after which tensions build up again and eventually explode into another violent episode;

**The weapon of violence:** The abuser uses domestic violence to control and coerce the victim;

**The impact of violence:** The abuse has profound emotional and psychological effects on the victim, who often believes (and is often told by the abuser) that she is to blame for the violence.

The question of intimacy, i.e. whether domestic violence should be treated as an ordinary crime or whether there should be an emphasis on counselling

and mediation, poses a major dilemma for policy makers. These facts are not fully incorporated into a criminal justice policy. Minor children of the couple may present significant issues with regard to their protection and often the victim's desire for an intact family structure. Financial ties that make some victims critically dependent on abuser's financial support for minor children, a factor at odds with strict punishment models (Buzawa Eve; Hotaling Gerald T.; Klein Andrew & Byrne James, 1999). The civil protection orders also play a limited role due to the specific nature of violence unleashed between the once loved ones. They could neither guarantee any reduction in the extent of such violence, nor could they expedite the justice delivery system in India.

According to Yehezkel Dror; "basic institutions rooted in tradition and values, such as the family, seem to be extremely resistant to change, imposed by the law" (Chatterjee Mohini, 2004:125). There is danger in stressing the social importance of law. Particularly when a country is concerned with institutions with a special place in our culture, such as family, popular moral evaluations as patriarchy etc. are unlikely to be altered by the mere existence of a law. It conveys the idea that a 'sui generis model' is to be carved out to deal with the problem of domestic violence in India.

Domestic violence is a social, health, psychological, legal and a developmental problem that cannot be resolved by a single person or agency. Domestic violence is not solely a legal problem alone but has its affinity with other disciplines. Viewing domestic violence solely from the legal point of view is not advisable and finding solution by enacting legislation will be akin confirming to the opinion of four blind men who viewed elephant from their own restricted perspectives. A social counsellor's solution to the problem can be narrated that every individual must begin to: introspect intensely learn to curb one's animal instincts and manifest human instincts, develop a better value system, learn to empathise, become assertive so that one is not a victim to any kind of violence, give each one his space, take responsibility for one's thoughts, feelings and actions, grow spiritually. A psychologist will be keen in looking into the behavioural traits of the persons concerned in the conflict-accountability of perpetrator and the root causes. A social worker will rather be keen to look to the welfare of the family as a whole. In my opinion, law will never be a solution to such a complex social problem on its own, but laws are powerful tools for change, both in terms of their practical value and the wider educational function.

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs is relevant here in this context. The hierarchy of needs is one of the best-known theories of motivation. Created by psychologist Abraham Maslow, the hierarchy is often displayed as a pyramid, with the most basic needs at the bottom of the pyramid and more complex needs at the peak. The four lowest-level needs are what Maslow referred to as D-needs (or deficiency needs). These needs are due to a lack of something and need to be satisfied in order to avoid unpleasant feelings and to move on to higher level needs. The uppermost needs in the hierarchy are referred to B-needs (being needs or growth needs) and involve the desire to grow as an individual and fulfill one's own potential (Cherry Kendra, 2018). The relevance about the hierarchy as unfolded by Maslow is that it is built on a foundation of basic needs that must be met and satisfied before higher levels of the needs are met.

The issue of domestic violence viewed from the causative and consequential theoretical aspects very well relates to hierarchical needs as propounded by Maslow. In social psychology, the need to belong is an intrinsic motivation to affiliate with others and be socially accepted (Cherry Kendra, 2018). The need for love and belonging lie at the centre of the pyramid as part of the social needs. While Maslow suggested that these needs were less important than the physiological and safety needs, he believed that the need for belonging helped people to experience companionship and acceptance through family, friends, and other relationships. The individual intrinsic need as a human being and the autonomous need of human being for esteem and self-actualization are to be reconciled at this stage. Woman in India is a human being worth capable of desiring/aspiring for the hierarchical needs within the social structure. Maslow states that educators should respond to the potential an individual has for growing into a self-actualizing person of his/her own kind. Akin to the same methodology as prescribed by Maslow the empowerment of women from domestic barriers is possible. All victims of domestic violence face the challenges that keep them stuck in the safety needs of the stage of development. The need for family bondage and ties as cultural necessity in the Indian context is often viewed sceptically. Man and woman as effective productive units and that reinforce family bondage is the ideal/value to be achieved. A blind imitation or duplication of western strategies evolved out of individualistic style of living in the Indian context which represents collectivist characteristics can be counterproductive to its cultural ethos. The goal is to work with her to develop her capacity to decide her own future. Whether to

leave the abuser or to remain back with the abuser should be the decision of the victim alone.

Blaming a class of population, either be the males/husband or their relatives as abusers and perpetrators of the issue is not the advisable approach in dealing with this cause. Each instance of domestic violence is to be studied in the light of the experiences of each individual's life. ie a case study method; analyse the reasons behind, find out the grassroots of the problem with the assistance of family welfare counsellors (scientifically trained ,practically oriented in their opinions and unbiased ).Empowerment is essential but it must not be at the cost of the individuals well-being.

An integrated, multidisciplinary approach with the criminal justice system and the service providers working together to gain a holistic understanding of each particular case and the needs of the individual is the best option. Role of the State in this venture is to be re-casted in the mould of *DurbalasyaBaloh Rajah*. Rome was not built in a day. Thus goes the proverb. A whole lot of attitudinal transformations both vertically and horizontal with State playing the lead role as educator as to the harmful effects of domestic violence in the societal fabric in the long run is the need of the hour. Producing a culture of peace therefore requires strengthening family's ability to model and promote peaceful interactions and prevent violence. Governmental efforts to change societal norms refer to the top-down approach (as in the case of enactment of legislation creating a deterrent or restitutive effect) whereas targeting individual families represents the bottom-up approach. These two interventions have the potential to reduce conflict, increase co-operation, negotiation and tolerance. The Act requires complete remodelling in the Indian cultural set up. Taking into account our cultural ethos and ideology of preservation of family ties much pro- active/affirmative and not reactive measures are to be adopted in this scenario by the State. A healthy cohesive family with cordial relationships that promotes individual rights in the backdrop of the socially integrative institution of family is the need of the hour.

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S L P (CRL.) NO.4895 of 2012

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# Reconciling Plural Identities in Lebanon : Role of Civil Society

*Vrinda Dar*

*....the main hope of harmony in our troubled world lies in the plurality of our identities, which cut across each other and work against sharp divisions around one single hardened line of vehement division that allegedly cannot be resisted..... The illusion of unique identity is much more divisive than the universe of plural and diverse classifications that characterize the world in which we actually live.”(Amartya Sen)*

With the present Lebanese Constitution officially acknowledging 18 religious groups amongst Christians, Muslims, Jews and the Druz, politically represented through a demography-based power-sharing system, Lebanon has one of the most diverse religio-cultural demographic compositions in the world. Although the plurality of the multi-religious and multi-sectarian identities of Lebanon are its strength, they have, in the past decades, been more often a source of conflict than celebrated, rendering people more vulnerable to divisive influences than contributing to their resilience and unity.

Through an insight into the socio-cultural and political dynamics of Lebanon, this paper explores the ever-increasing role of civil society in facilitating processes and initiatives (advocacy for rights and local needs-based development, supporting people’s participation in local governance, creating opportunities for dialogue and peacebuilding, valuing diversity, etc.) where multicultural identities are celebrated and become catalysts for peace rather than a source of conflict. This article further explores the role of civil society in enhancing people’s capacity to dialogue and in creating the enabling environment for diverse communities to move beyond their conflicts and cooperate together for the common good.

## ***Identity based Conflict in Lebanon:***

With its high literacy rate and traditional mercantile culture, Lebanon has traditionally been an important commercial hub for the Middle East. It has also

often been at the centre of Middle Eastern conflicts, despite its small size, because of its borders with Syria and Israel and the uniquely complex multi-religious composition of its population: Shia Muslims, Sunni Muslims, Christians and Druze are the main population groups in a country that has been a refuge for the region's minorities for centuries. Lebanon has also seen several large influxes of Palestinian refugees. Comprising one-tenth of the country's population, they are largely housed in shanty towns and enclosed townships and enjoy few legal rights.

Lebanon achieved independence in 1943 and a 'National Pact' was created to balance political power between the main religious groups including Maronite and Greek Orthodox Christians, Druze, and Sunni and Shia Muslims. This principle was later extended to other government institutions, so that the president is a Maronite Christian, the prime minister a Sunni and the speaker of parliament a Shia. Although Muslim groups have demanded that representation should reflect their increased proportion in the population, no census has been taken since 1932. By reinforcing political dynamics along confessional lines and contribute to growing social tensions, the "National Pact" contributed to the destruction of the economic and democratic 'miracle' of Lebanon and finally to the break-out of war in 1975. During the civil war from 1975 until the early 1990s, regional players - in particular Israel, Syria and the Palestine Liberation Organisation - used the country as a battleground for their own conflicts, involving Christians, Muslims and Palestinian refugees. In 1982, Israel attempted and failed to install a pro-Israeli government. The United States intervened in 1983 but withdrew within a year because of suicide bombing attacks on U.S. forces. In 1990, Syria imposed "peacekeeping" forces and became the dominant political force in Lebanon for the successive 15 years.



The Taif Agreement brought a formal end to the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) and reconfirmed power sharing among religious communities that had been in force in Lebanon since the adoption of the Constitution of

1926. It was an internal Lebanese agreement that was discussed, negotiated and concluded in the town of Taif, Saudi Arabia, in 1989, under the auspices of Riyadh and the Arab League, with the support of the US and the direct supervision of Syria. Flaws in the Taif peace settlement continue to resonate and undermine peace today, leaving Lebanese political life stuck in stalemate that has lasted longer than the war itself. In fact, Lebanon's political powers are divided into two coalitions: the pro-West, pro-Gulf Coordination Council (GCC) March 14 alliance, and the pro-Russia/Iran March 8 alliance. Their leadership and families all played an active role in the Lebanese civil war, which killed 150,000 people between 1975 and 1990. By 2005, Lebanese leaders, including former prime minister Rafiq Hariri, began pushing for Syria's withdrawal. Hariri, who had once worked with the Syrians, was preparing to break with them when he was killed by a car bomb on Feb. 14, 2005. A wave of massive street demonstrations blaming Syria for Hariri's death ensued, forcing Syrian president Bashar Assad to withdraw his troops in May 2005.

Lebanon's much praised post-war model of power sharing and liberal economic growth failed to deliver for most Lebanese. The combination of current domestic tensions, economic and political fragility and regional pressures grossly impact the possibility of dialogue amongst diverse communities, often resulting in the breakdown of the Lebanese state whose political, social and economic fabric is based on its multi-cultural identities. Despite Lebanon's efforts to reconstruct its economy, largely driven by the Lebanese themselves, and to heal its social fabric, the country is unable to enjoy peace and sustainable development. Internal sectarian divisions, exacerbated by the social, economic and security repercussions of the Arab Spring and the ongoing civil war in Syria, potentially risk Lebanon being drawn back into civil strife. The strategy and interventions of the international community in Lebanon and the region are unable to adequately address the factors that impact peace in the country

Despite the 14 million strong Lebanese diasporas, active in reconstructing the social and economic fabric of the country, economic outlooks are grim, emigration of qualified Lebanese is even higher than during the civil war years, and acute underdevelopment of peripheral areas has still not been properly addressed. A crucial hindrance for free, public debate about the war is the fact that the vast majority of Lebanese continue to live within the confines of sectarian neighborhoods, associations, schools and even media. The most difficult challenge has been how to involve political leaders in the reconciliation process.

The massive influx of people fleeing the Syrian conflict has also placed a severe strain on the country's resources.

### *Civil Society in managing Identity conflicts*

Before analyzing the role of civil society in reconciling conflicts in Lebanon, it would be relevant to examine the role of civil society in addressing the key factors of conflict and contributing to peacebuilding, in general. The past two decades have witnessed an increase in civil society numbers and participation in national and international policy processes. National and international development agencies channel development aid largely through civil society organisations that are increasingly active in conflict prevention, peacemaking, and peacebuilding; being engaged in preventive diplomacy, facilitating dialogue and mediation, networking and initiatives for cross-cultural understanding and relationship-building (Barnes, 2005) as well as informing, monitoring and demanding better governance, respect for human rights, justice, accountability and transparency, especially at local levels. Several civil society networks active in the field of conflict prevention or peacebuilding like the GPPAC (Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict), EPCPT (European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation), EPLO (European Peacebuilding Liaison Office), IANSA (International Action Network on Small Arms), etc. call for conflict sensitive aid and increased space and opportunities for dialogue. Playing a crucial role in service delivery, emergency response and mobilizing diverse campaigns, civil society is now also an integral part of mandatory consultative processes for international policy processes, implementation and evaluation; a practice adopted by many countries across the world.

Civil society has a vital role in responding to conflicts and contributing to peacebuilding. As elaborated by Catherine Barnes in an "Issue Paper" on civil society and peacebuilding, (i) *civil society is a force for people-centered security*. A great strength of civil society is its capacity to support changes in how people respond to conflict and to direct attention to the underlying causes that need to be addressed if sustainable and just peace is to emerge; (ii) *civil society can contribute depth and durability to peacebuilding*. CSO-led processes often focus on enabling ordinary people to articulate what they really need and finding a common ground from which they can work to establish peaceful co-existence. Instead of the use of force, civil society actors often stimulate a new sense of what is possible and how it can be achieved. This capacity is rooted,

ultimately, in a sense of agency: the ability to act together with others to change the world.

CSO roles in humanitarian relief, development and human rights protection are well understood. What is less well known are the myriad ways that they actively build peace: *(i)challenging oppressive power structures*. Sometimes prevailing power structures in a society are deeply oppressive. Civil society activists can play crucial roles in changing these situations by surfacing the conflict and escalating it nonviolently to bring about necessary changes; *(ii)channeling conflict through peaceful processes*. Civil society activists have the ‘power to persuade’ both popular opinion and decision-makers of more constructive and peaceful ways to respond to specific conflict situations and to address the structural problems that give rise to conflict; *(iii)shifting conflict attitudes*. Many grassroots peacebuilders, in societies locked in protracted conflict, promote people-to-people dialogue across conflict divides to shift entrenched conflict dynamics and change people’s perceptions and stereotypes. This is often facilitated by establishing direct communication between people with some common attribute: such as a similar occupational role (e.g., teachers, journalists), identity characteristics (e.g., women, youth), or common experiences of the conflict (e.g., ex-combatants, policy advisors). The experience of encountering those regarded as enemies and perceiving them as human beings can shake perceptions of ‘the other’ and challenge discourses of hate; *(iv)envisioning a better future*. Civil society actors can help shape peace policy by identifying overlooked problems and policy gaps, analyzing issues and recommending solutions., especially as local people are often unable to address all dimensions and drivers of conflict on their own; *(v)mobilizing constituencies for peace*. In cooperation with interest groups and key stakeholders, civil society actors often challenge justifications for violent confrontations by reaching out to the wider public to generate support and applying pressure through advocacy initiatives- Peace media, art projects, concerts, are some effective methods; *(vi)Promoting security*. It is very difficult for people to engage in and support peacemaking when their basic security is threatened. Community level structures – especially when they work in partnership with authorities and international missions - can monitor developments and take proactive steps to de-escalate violence; resolving localized disputes and preventing those with specific personal grievances from mobilizing others in conflict; *(vii) Making peace*. Negotiations to end conflict are often viewed as the exclusive realm of governments and the leaders of opposing groups. However, civil society actors can often have a direct

peacemaking role, opening channels of communication between parties in conflict. Using their unofficial and low-key status, they can provide confidential 'back channels' to convey messages between opponents. Also, if the public and organized civil society have been excluded from the process or believe that it did address their real needs, they are less likely to work actively towards its implementation; *(viii) Pragmatic peace.* Many initiatives - especially those undertaken by civil society peacebuilders - are aimed at peacebuilding at the local community level. Effective conflict prevention and peacemaking locally can underpin macro-level peace processes by creating sufficient stability so that wider political processes towards peace can take hold; *(ix) Transforming the causes and consequences of conflict.* Agreements on paper mean very little if people are still suffering from the consequences of war and if the inequities that gave rise to it are left unaddressed. Local civil society, often supported by their international partners, can play a crucial role in promoting the structural transformation over the longer term and in helping to address ongoing conflicts over developmental priorities through peaceful processes. While it is rare for grassroots efforts to transform wider systems of conflict and war, it is not possible for these wider systems to be transformed without stimulating changes at the community level.

### *Reconciling multiple identities*

Primary responsibility for conflict prevention rests with national governments and other local actors. Greater ownership is likely to result in a more legitimate process and sustainable outcomes. The primary role of outsiders is to create spaces and support inclusive processes that enable those directly involved to make decisions about the specific arrangements for addressing the causes of conflict. Partnerships for peace may be the antidote to systems and networks sustaining war. Yet to achieve this potential, we need to acknowledge the legitimacy of CSOs in peace and security matters and to strengthen official recognition of their roles in the conflict. We can best work towards sustainable peace through collective efforts at meeting basic human needs and strengthening systems for managing differences peacefully. (Barnes, 2006, pg. 100)

Lebanon's civil society developed from the Nahda movement of cultural and political renaissance that began in the late nineteenth century in the Arabic speaking regions of the Ottoman Empire. Civil society associations largely performed charitable work mainly directed at the 'family' or 'community' and were an expression of religious, confessional or regional identity. In the twentieth

century, civil society grew rapidly with the administrative, economic and social reforms of President Fouad Chehab (1958–64), as development NGOs in particular were considered complementary to the state. As state presence declined, civil society was called upon to act primarily as a humanitarian relief mechanism for the displaced, the wounded and the marginalised. It became common for powerful political families to ‘own’ private associations in order to provide for their clientele and the religious community – such as the Hariri Foundation, the Randa Berri Foundation, the Bachir Gemayel Foundation and the René Moawad Foundation.

Lebanon has a history of social mobilization, moving beyond sectarianism in its aim to bring about political change. With more than 8000 registered civil society organisations, Lebanon’s civil society is proactive in addressing the needs, rights and vulnerabilities amongst its peoples. Although civil society, in Lebanon, has always been linked to confessional diversity, Lebanese society has also, since the final years of the civil war, mobilised through trans-sectarian associations devoted to peacebuilding, social reconstruction and welfare, and to ecology and human and political rights. Grassroots mobilisation in the late 1990s around common rights succeeded in making a political impact. Anticonfessional demonstrations in Lebanon in 2011 – inspired by the Arab Spring – illustrated popular (particularly youth) dissatisfaction with the current political setup. Workers’ unions and other interest groups have sought ways to mobilise to confront socio-economic crisis and to agitate for change.

During the civil war years, an estimated 19 humanitarian associations were established to deal with the consequences of the war, and 114 collective actions of civil resistance to denounce it. After the end of the war, civil society associations had to readjust their objectives and modus operandi to the communal and clientelist logic of the state. Against a domestic background of intra-Lebanese sectarian animosities and their instrumentalisation by political elites, the EU has joined efforts with UN agencies and national and international NGOs to promote activities aimed more explicitly at strengthening civil peace and reconciliation, based on participatory conflict analysis, and strengthening citizens’ sense of national identity and state capacity for managing social diversity. Reconciliation, reform and national self-determination do not exist in isolation, but should be addressed together. Resuming the National Dialogue, started in 2006, provided an opportunity to refocus internally. The Dialogue brought together leaders of key sectarian groups and political affiliations in the broadest gathering since the civil war, to address issues ranging from the status of the

president, assassinations of prominent Lebanese figures, disputed border regions and the disarmament of Hezbollah. The Dialogue has been and could be a positive step to bring opposing Lebanese positions closer together on the definition of state security and national strategy, based on achievable and incremental objectives and including all Lebanese parties.

Some examples of civil society organisations/ initiatives that have gone beyond sectarianism in their aim to address social and political issues, include:

- 1 The Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) that brought together more than 15 local associations in a national campaign. After four months of mobilising, petitioning and sit-ins, the campaign eventually convinced parliament to vote in favour of holding local elections on time. This success inspired many other trans-confessional collective actions.
- 1 A new generation of politically-oriented activists emerged (the ‘new left’) who participated in the anti-globalisation movement of 2001 (including an anti-WTO meeting in Beirut to oppose the launch of the Doha round of negotiations) and the anti-war movement of 2002–03 opposing the US-led invasion of Iraq (‘No war/No dictatorships’).
- 1 The General Confederation of Lebanese Workers (CGTL) was, in the aftermath of the civil war, one of the rare political and social forces where strong trans-confessional identities prevailed.
- 1 The taxi drivers’ union, created in 1969 by a group of leftist taxi drivers with the support of Kamal Jumblatt, Minister of the Interior and leader of the Progressive Socialist Party.
- 1 UMAM (Memory for the future) organizes documentation, archiving and public dissemination. According to Ahmad Beydoun, Professor of Sociology at Lebanese University, “the attempts at writing an educational narrative of the war promoted by the state have tended to reproduce the main cleavages that characterised the war itself and efforts to develop a ‘consensual’ narrative have failed.”
- 1 In February 2011 more than 3,000 people joined a march for the overthrow of the sectarian regime (*hamlatisqât al-nidhâm al-tâ’ifiwarumûzihi*). The demonstration grew (according to the organisers) to 10,000 and then 25,000 people on 6 and 20 March, respectively. Its organisers included leftist and secularist political groups, NGOs, gender and sexual preference collectives, and many independent activists. These demonstrations differed significantly

from confessional mobilisations – such as 14 or 8 March demonstrations – as participants organised their own logistics and transportation and funded themselves through individual contributions, rather than being organised and facilitated by their political patrons. The movement in 2011 has also sparked the birth of several campaigns and groups removed from the polarisation of 8/14 March and the classical Left. It acquired new layers of activists around the country, such as the Haqqī ‘alayyi (‘My right’) campaign in Beirut, the Tripoli Without Arms campaign (focusing on local mobilisations in north Lebanon against sectarian violence), the Civil Forum in the Beqaa which managed to bring together secular and leftist activists from the different villages and towns, and the ‘Amalmubâshar (Direct Action), a coalition of independent activists in Beirut, Beqaa and the Chouf. Inspired by other Arab uprisings, a group of young people initiated a call to ‘bring down the sectarian regime’, which, along with parallel struggles (eg. against rape and the physical abuse of women, for civil marriage, for freedom of expression, for the right to Lebanese nationality, and for lowering the voting age from 21 to 18), has the potential to reclaim public and political questions from their international focus.

- 1 An important post-war initiative in Lebanon is the establishment of the Permanent Civil Peace Observatory, which is a group of intellectuals and civil society activists engaged in monitoring the evolving situation of civil peace in Lebanon. The Observatory monitors and documents events that directly or indirectly affect the situation of peace in the country, and puts out a yearly report on the index of civil peace. (Safa, 2007: 10)
- 1 A UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project, started in 2007, enhances mutual understanding and promotes social cohesion by addressing root causes of conflict in Lebanon. The project supports different groups from local leaders and local actors, to educators, journalists, youth and civil society activists, in developing medium and long-term strategies for peace building, crisis management and conflict prevention. The project works with the heads and members of municipal councils as well as with representatives from various sectors in the community to develop “Mechanisms for Social Stability” (MSS). Building on the understanding and successes of the previous two phases, the third phase of the project (2014-2015) focuses on addressing the new challenges to civil peace and peace building in the country posed by the Syrian crisis through engaging local stakeholders in a participatory process (education for social cohesion; media for balanced and conflict sensitive media coverage; local level peace

building strategies where Syrian refugees are hosted; NGO platform promoting nationwide truth and reconciliation).

- 1 The UNESCO Office in Beirut and the Youth Forum for Youth Policy jointly organize national consultation meetings in Lebanon. Its purpose is to share updates on the national youth policy process among young professionals and activists of civil society, and reflect together on the role of civil society and young people in the implementation and monitoring of the national youth policy.
- 1 The National Youth Policy, endorsed by the Lebanese government in April 2012, is based on the participatory policy formulation process which involved young women and men from civil society organizations, political parties, universities, and high schools. From 2009 to 2012, they worked together with policymakers, including relevant Ministries, through numerous consultations and negotiations, and in close collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and United Nations agencies.
- 1 The Committee for Islamic-Christian Dialogue promotes inter-religious understanding. According to Secretary General, Mohammad Sammak, “understanding among leaders of the main communities is the first step as it relates to mutual respect within society. Broad consensus among these leaders is necessary to fight sectarianism. It is not easy to imagine a future Lebanon without sectarianism. It is a ‘mini-Middle East’: a place where so much blood has been shed, so many tears wept, and prayers raised. At the same time, all civilisations and religions started here. Someone once said: “a problem well stated is a problem half solved”. People need to define the problem first, before trying to solve it, and that means understanding the complex story of this land. My aim is to make people aware that we can all help build bridges and improve interfaith understanding, and that it is in our common interest to do so.”
- 1 Although civil society organisations are indispensable for peacebuilding and in particular for processes of reconciliation between hostile communities, civil society initiatives in fragmented and fragile societies can influence political and social change only to a limited extent. Experience in several cases of intervention has shown that building state institutions and developing society in post-war societies cannot simply follow models of western democracies but has to reflect the respective cultural context and historic experience. (Fishcer, 2011, pg. 307-308). These civil-society driven initiatives have adopted implicit local peacebuilding approach, primarily aimed at

bringing together divided communities on developmental issues, and prioritising an apolitical approach.

The combination of current domestic tensions, economic and political fragility and regional pressures grossly impact the possibility of dialogue amongst diverse communities, resulting in the breakdown of the Lebanese state whose political, social and economic fabric is based on its multi-cultural identities. Implementing a coherent approach to Lebanon's multiple identities has proved challenging for the international community: (i) efforts targeting civil peace have repeatedly been affected by, and mixed up with, broader regional dynamics; (ii) cycles of violence in Lebanon have diverted international support away from longer-term needs aimed at dealing with the root causes of Lebanon's internal fragmentation and sectarian divisions, to more immediate post-conflict reconstruction and recovery. A key step would be to find ways to extend or 'democratise' dialogue, to include Lebanese people's participation and perspectives so that they are party to any deals reached on their future, and so are part of implementing solutions for positive change.

Civil society activism is less obvious on the streets today, and is operating through alternative channels such as online. It also remains largely piecemeal, coalescing around individual events rather than around a single, tangible cause. Whilst it is true that Lebanese civil society is strong and multifaceted, seeping through various channels of the free press, unions, syndicates and university clubs, the majority of it is still operating online rather than on the streets. The disunity displayed within the top political echelons, within the population (with well over a quarter of the population currently consisting of refugees), within sectarian divisions, is making for a potent yet directionless voice, increasingly frustrated yet equally hamstrung.

However, compromise and intersectarian balance are an integral part of Lebanon's *raison d'être*, which has historically been held as an example of the value and strength of diversity. Prioritising this path would allow the Lebanon to renew and reinforce its regional role as a model for the value of diversity - especially for its neighbour in turmoil. A key step would be to find ways to extend or 'democratise' dialogue, to include Lebanese people's participation and perspectives, to give value to multiple identities in the country, so that they are party to any deals reached on their future, and so are part of implementing solutions for positive change.

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# Challenges of Internal Security and Terrorism in India

*Chitaranjan Das Adhikary*

The post-modern celebration of multi-culturalism often camouflages the overriding divides that pervades the social formations of developing societies like India. India since it became an independent member of the comity of nations has consistently struggled to plough through a multitude of divisive forces emanating from within and outside. Among the post-colonial states, India's security concerns are particularly complicated and varied. The problematic of security is located in the local but manifestly international in its ramifications. While inter-state war is no more a viable option in the era of globalisation, terrorism, especially the one which has ethnic and religious overtones, has become a new and festering source of stress in our internal as well as external relations.

No region of the country today is insulated from Islamic and in a limited sense Hindu Terrorism. Every now and then a new terrorist outfit takes birth in South Asia. Many of these terror machines are sponsored by hostile States across the national border. Geo politics pursued by neighbouring countries like Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and China has important implications for the protection of our national interest. Recent terrorist killing fields in Peshawar (Pakistan), attests to the fact terrorism knows no border. The present paper attempts a sociological analysis of these security threats to the country and critically reflects on India's relations with its neighbours in the backdrop of terrorism being a fact in national security concerns. Why do these terror organisations take birth? Who, notwithstanding the routine blame game, sponsor them? What will the future trajectory of the threat of terrorism to India as a Nation State and the larger South Asian region? These are some of the questions that finds place in the present paper.

## *The Global backdrop*

The international security system during the Cold War was based on bipolarity and was predictable. During this period, the world survived without

major wars in a highly competitive security regime between the United States and the Soviet Union. Most of the Third World aligned with either the US or the Soviet Union camp. But many of the Third World countries could not secure themselves from the threats of intra-regional rivalry as in South Asia, West Asia and the Korean peninsula. For these countries, management of national security became a highly challenging task. The world politics in the post-Cold War period has moved apace, but with markings of uncertainty and instability. Conceptions of security and stability, and offence and defence have undergone transformations. Today's international security system is characterised by the American pre-eminence and unilateralism; continuing and increased role of nuclear weapons as means of political blackmail, conflict and deterrence; role of rapid technological developments in national security management; regional security problems; and emergence of non-state actors as a source of national and international instability. The world is not the same since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 on the World Trade Center (WTC) and the Pentagon- America's symbols of power and pride. The world community is getting increasingly concerned at the threats from the non-state actors, particularly the terrorists having capabilities of carrying on transnational operations. The emergence of an international alliance against terrorism is the newest feature of the international security system, but it is not without complications. It has several implications for the security systems, both at the regional and the global level (*Budania, 2003*).

Locked in the geographical reality of an unstable South Asia, India continues to reel under an intense onslaught of externally designed jihadi terrorism. The scenario in the recent years presents even more brazen, sophisticated and surprising capabilities of terrorism than anything that the country had ever known. The Mumbai attacks in November showed that any scale of assessments and mightiest of the militaries cannot match the evil designs of a few misguided minds. The serial blasts across Indian cities were a clear demonstration that assembling locally available chemicals into deadly explosives was a cost effective way to cause death and havoc, and that terrorism was creeping deeper into the Indian society, thanks to collision between Pakistan-sponsored jihadi groups and a few fringe elements within the country. Terrorist attacks by Pakistan-backed groups since 9/11 in places as far as Hyderabad, Kolkata, Varanasi, Rampur, Lucknow, Delhi, Mumbai, Ajmer, Gandhinagar, Faizabad, Ayodhya, Panipat, Malegaon and Bangalore, as well as the detection and disruption of terrorist modules virtually across the country - in combination, afflicting as many as 15 states outside J&K and the Northeast - are evidence of a complex and long-term war of attrition by Pakistani state

agencies and their jihadi surrogates. The blasts in Bengaluru and Ahmedabad mark a further step in the ISI-sponsored pan-Indian spread of the jihad.

As the plague of terrorism increases day by day the authority of the state and its legitimacy has come under severe challenge in the recent upsurges in South Asia and around the world. The very nature of terrorism in South Asia has a strong cross-border context and content, which is at the core of any discourse on sub-continental terrorism (Lama 2008). The complexities and uniqueness of its approach in the present day sets it apart from traditional forms of terrorism. While terrorism existed in the early 1970s, it was mainly a coercive tactic adopted as part of territorial nationalism fighting to achieve a political objective and contained within regional borders. Established under a well-defined chain of command, it had defined political and economic objectives. Terrorist groups engaged in highly selective acts of violence that included many people watching rather than dead. The principal goal, therefore, was to raise public awareness over grievances, and not necessarily to cause a high number of casualties.

The rise of modern terrorism has been more complex and often tied to diverse ideological/religious and political goals, an astounding capacity for lethal violence, and a transnational extension beyond regional or local borders. Terrorist groups have mastered a deliberately unpredictable quality in order to achieve greater psychological effect and to create fear and anxiety in a given target group. They have succeeded in (1) creating a sense of vulnerability across the world; (2) gaining attention and publicity by acts of violence and by the use of the media to enhance the effectiveness of their violence; and (3) gaining support from similar groups around the world.

### *Threats from within and without*

Let's begin with the domestic sources of threat groups. Among such groups are the Naxalites, Maoists who operate in the states of West Bengal, Jharkhand, Orissa, and others; Hindu extremists; and various separatist groups. The Naxalbari movement of militant peasants against rich landowners is one of the greatest threats to India's internal stability and security. Currently India faces Maoist insurgency violence in more than fourteen states (Chopra 2008). A Hindu extremist organization was found to be linked to the 2006 Malegaon blasts that killed Muslims in a mosque. The North Eastern states have experienced serious insurgency movements since 1956, when states like Nagaland and Mizoram demanded independence. The rise of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), which sought to create an independent

state of Assam in the northeast, is another indigenous insurgent movement with which India contends. The Indian government's response to the grievances of such groups has been a mix of political accommodation, economic development and the use of military force to restore peace. Such movements account for the domestic sources of terrorism in India. The beginnings of religious insurgency can be traced back to the rise of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front in Indian controlled Kashmir (*Ganguly 1997*). Over the years this group was marginalized in favor of more radical groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Harkat ul Mujahideen, which became violently active and adopted terrorist tactics with the involvement of Pakistan to perpetuate a low intensity conflict with India (*Asthana, 2010*).

- a) *Maoists*: The emergence of a new group, Maoist, since 2005, has become the single biggest internal security threat to India by all measures—level of violence, area covered and complexity. It is a bloody engagement for Indian security forces in the mineral rich heartlands, in the tribal and poorest regions, stretching across states, and against armed insurgents who rise from the common crowd and disappear into it with ease. It indeed looks like India's Long War. Euphemistically many refer to the area under Maoist influence as the Red Corridor that stretches from northern parts of Kerala, through Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh.

Naxal threat is very clear now- that the armed guerillas are spreading across the states, many parts of country are under their firm control and it is a far more complex insurgency to fight than any that Indian security forces have fought until today. It is deeply entrenched in the socio-economic realities of the poor, enjoys wide support among the locals and is drawing strength from the inefficient government structures present in their areas of influence. Without fully putting out the separatist embers in northeast and Kashmir, Indian state has entered yet another, and far deadlier terrain of identities, grievances and armed rage. Maoist insurgency, in fact, never left India, and is back with a vengeance. The merger of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) People's War (usually referred to as the People's War Group) and the Maoist Communist Centre of India in 2004 led to the creation of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), with a common national leadership and influence stretching across states.

- b) *North-east*: A host of insurgencies, linked to various tribal and political identities, continue to trouble India's northeast. The festering wounds of the region are slipping out of the mainstream national agenda. The year

2008 was a grim reminder – as Manipur went up in flames and Assam, Nagaland and other states continued to burn – that New Delhi needs to come up with a robust, multi-faceted policy response to bring peace back to the scenic northeast. It is all the more necessary given the strategic sensitivities of the region. Some of northeast's armed resistances are already among the world's oldest active insurgencies, and the Indian army's deployment against militancy in the region probably has no parallels elsewhere in the world in terms of the duration. Worse, most of the armed movements in the region are increasingly turning into kidnap and extortion rackets, with intricate links within the government machineries.

- c) *Jihadis*: Since 2005, militant groups like the HuJI, LeT and Jaish-e-Mohammed, with considerable assistance from local groups like the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), have established an extensive network across India's heartland. SIMI has also allegedly been involved in all major terrorist attacks outside J&K and Northeast in terms of providing logistics and foot soldiers to Pakistan-based militant groups after 9/11. In fact, evidence of joint operations and cross-pollination has been seen in many of the terrorist attacks across India since 2005. Such pooling of resources may intensify in the near future, as jihadi groups trade strategies and personnel. Currently, the LeT, JeM and Harkat-ul-Jehad-al-Islami Bangladesh (HuJI-BD) are active in locations spread across the southern states. Cadres of these groups receive considerable support on the ground from the SIMI which has a strong presence in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. In Kerala, SIMI operates under the cover of some 12 front organisations, at least two of which are based in the capital, Thiruvananthapuram, and a third in the port city of Kochi. Kondotty in the Malappuram district has also emerged as a hot bed of SIMI activities. What has also been seen since 2005 is the emergence of a new group of Indian Muslims in hinterland India calling themselves the Indian Mujahideen (IM) denying any links with the ISI and the Pakistani jihadi organizations. While the arrest of IM operatives has provided details of tactical significance, they have not brought out much information of strategic value, which could enable us to make a quantitative analysis of the threat facing us in 2009 and beyond and prepare ourselves to counter it: Who are the real brains behind the IM? What is its command and control like? Does it have any strategic Objective? What are its external sources of funding? What are its external linkages – with the ISI, the Pakistani jihadi terrorist organisations and the world of organized crime? It is important to get more details regarding the composition and structure of the IM.

When the Mumbai blasts of March 1993 occurred, analysts saw them as the beginning of an attempt by the ISI to target India's economic sinews, when the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) was attacked in Bangalore in December 2005, India's technological and scientific capacities were thought to be the 'new target', when the temple at Varanasi, and much later, a mosque in Malegaon, were hit, it was seen as an attempt to disrupt India's 'communal harmony'. It must be noted that on each occasion, the terrorists had simply moved on to new targets and agendas of opportunity, their defining criteria of identification being their own operational capacities and networks, the damage they can inflict, and the demoralisation they can cause.

If one carefully analyses the various serial blasts which have taken place in different parts of India since November 2007, one could notice an organic, mushroom-like growth of jihadi terrorist cells in different parts of India – self-radicalised, self-motivated, self-organised with self-planning and self-execution of the strikes – with each cell motivated by its own local grievances, but with all these cells having invisible connectivity with a single brain and a single source of inspiration orchestrating them (*Task Force Report, FICCI, Vol. 1*).

### *Emerging Trends*

From small towns to metropolitan cities, terror, has acquired a pan-India spread. The strategy is clear – cripple India's economic nerve centres, create fear among tourists and foreign investors and undermine India's global image. Significantly, tactical adaptation has made the terrorist networks far more effective and difficult of detection. Terrorist attacks in hinterland are no longer orchestrated by integrated terrorist networks and cells established within the target city (though local modules may provide support), with their various members in intimate contact with one another. What we now have are synchronized operations, with individual members of more than one group backed by handlers located in Pakistan or Bangladesh, entering into anonymous contact with members of other groups to provide specific materials and services: explosives, detonators, safe haven, bomb making expertise, and local support with most disappearing without trace long before the attack. The HUJI headquarters are located in Pakistan. It has an active branch in Bangladesh, consisting only of Bangladeshi nationals of the Afghan war (1980s and 1990s) vintage, which is referred to by US counter-terrorism experts as the HUJI-B. Members of the HUJI-B were coming to India for organising terrorist strikes with the co-operation of recruits from the Indian Muslim community. It is further assessed that HUJI set-up in India consisting of recruits from the Indian Muslim community has now come up, which could be projected in future as

a purely Indian organisation with no Pakistani or Bangladeshi involvement. It is only a question of time before the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, the Jaish-e-Mohammed, the anti-Shia Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Al-Qaeda itself set up their own outfits or sleeper cells in India consisting only of Indian Muslims so that these too could be projected as indigenous Muslim organisations of India and not as Pakistani or Arab organizations. The pan-Islamic jihad in India to support Al-Qaeda's pan-Islamic objectives is sought to be given an Indian facade with the encouragement of the ISI.

Several factors explain the rise of terrorism as a more global phenomenon and the steady increase in their destructive capacity. First, terrorism now has a global reach due to technology and communication. The development in terrorist weaponry is getting smaller, easier and more powerful. With the dramatic progress in communications and information processing these groups have greater opportunities to divert non-weapon technologies, namely cell phones, the Internet, and publicly available websites—all off-the-shelf technologies—to destructive ends. Second, terrorism today has become more lethal and layered in terms of leadership and cadre membership. Groups are more diffuse in structure and the rise of sleeper cells and amateur terrorists has added to the complexity. The lack of a discernible organizational structure with a distinguishable chain of command enables these groups to avoid easy identification and evasion of detection. Third, over the years increased state sponsorship of terrorism has grown in some contexts, where governing state regimes have promoted sub-state actors as an indispensable element of state power. The greater resources accorded to these groups by state actors have brought about a dramatic proliferation of the groups. These sub-state groups with state support use a mixture of seditious, racial and religious dictates to justify their actions. Fourth, terrorism today is driven by an extreme sense of fundamentalism and ideological leanings that tend to become the core identity of these groups, for which even death is a lesser price to pay. Lastly, with a deliberate unpredictable quality meant to have a psychological effect, the hyper-religious motivation of small groups and a broad enabling environment of bad governance, nonexistent social services, and poverty that punctuates most of the developing world tends to add to the sense of injustice and grievances characterized by many as the "knowledge gap" (Persaud 2001). While there is no universally accepted definition of international terrorism, the United States Department of State describes international terrorism as "involving citizen or the territory of more than one country, and the term "terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant

targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience (Country Reports on Terrorism 2000).

### *Conclusion*

Terrorism has evolved significantly in the contemporary time. While earlier it was centred around historical injustices, now it is more on ideological, political, identity and religious issues. Emergence of a more plural and multicultural world order adds to chances of more collective expression, assertion and consequent conflict. In line with Huntington's clash of civilisation, the whole world is coming to terms with Islamic terror as reaction to modernisation and modern development. Uneven and asymmetrical global development is going to keep the discontent ticking. Some States strategically use terrorism as a proxy war to score and exploit geo-political points. A new hope is to be found in a global network against terrorism. As more and more countries come under the spell of terrorist threat, State positions are definitely going to harden further and may someday snap the fuzzy distinction between good terror and bad terror.

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# School Feeding Program in SAARC Countries : Comparative Study

*Priya Pandey*

The article is based on the secondary data and the relevant material was searched by using variety of methods. The research has majorly been done on the basis of government reports of the respective countries and the reports published by various international organizations. The focus is on the studying about the implementation of the school meal program in different SAARC countries and evaluation of the same. To learn more about the nutritional guidelines and menu composition the reports published by WFP have been rigorously referred. Literature searches have been done using the WFP database and the program website of different countries have also been accessed. The article presents the national representative data of all the SAARC countries and the data is collected from authentic sources.

## *Introduction*

Childhood malnutrition still remains a major public health problem impacting academic aptitude of school-aged children (SAC) particularly in limited resource countries. Child stunting is a common problem in SAARC countries as the member countries have limited resources and most of them generally fall in the low income group nations. School Feeding Program (SFP) is one of the many and most effective ways adopted by the countries to address the problem of malnutrition and under-nutrition among the children. Along with nutritional value the school meal programs also help to build trust in the national education system and foster social inclusion for millions of children. School meal programs have deep impact on different countries like in some countries of Africa these programs have helped to prevent early marriage for girls and their child pregnancies. School meals are thus visualized as sound investment in the future of the next generation.

Child malnutrition is approached and analyzed by different conceptual and complex models which require multi-factorial interventions with emphasis

on the basic, underlying and immediate factors at household, environmental, socio-economic and cultural domains (Z.A.Butta, 2008). The government interventions are done in one form or the other to prevent and to overcome the problem of child malnutrition. Nutrition specific intervention is the most effective form of intervention and can give assured results. Good nutrition is essential for every human being as it is the bedrock for well-being of each individual. Childhood malnutrition causes serious health complications among the children and results in making them unhealthy adults in the future. The school meal programs thus help to provide nutritious food to the children so that they can concentrate in their studies and not on hunger. It is also an incentive for the parents to send their children to schools and this is why the world members have come together with this safety net for the future generations.

#### *What is School Feeding Program?*

The School Feeding Program (SFP) aims to achieve variety of positive outcomes which is determined according to the income level of the country. The countries under the school feeding program aim to provide food to the school going children as per the regulations of the member countries. The SFP exists as a social safety net and aims to alleviate hunger and also results in increase enrollment and low dropout rate (Jomaa, 2011), thus improving the nutritional status of the children, attendance and their cognitive development. This is generally done with the interventions like grains, fortified biscuits, micronutrient supplementation and de-worming programs. In the SAARC countries the school meals are provided through different means as in countries like India have indigenous system to supply meals while other countries like Bangladesh depend upon foreign aid like **World Food Program (WFP)** and **McGovern Dole School Feeding Prog (MGS)** are two such bodies that help to meet the nutritional requirements of the children across the globe.

#### *World Food Program*

The World Food Program (WFP) is the first global picture for development in school feeding. It is the food assistance branch of United Nations and it aims to promote the issue of food security. The WFP is the result of collaboration of the World Bank and the Partnership of Child Development (Hogray, 2016). The foundation provides ample of data on

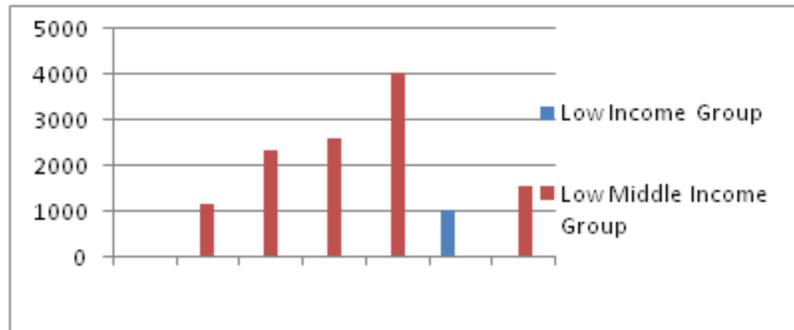
how the government of a respective country uses food to promote safety net for the children. The WFP is known to play dual role as it acts as safety net for the vulnerable section of the society by supporting the governments in the development of the national programs and it directly provides the school meal to the children. The WFP is essentially providing technical assistance so that the governments have all the financial and political means to introduce the quality programs. It currently supports meal programs in 74 countries (Hongray, 2016) which are not self efficient to cater to their needs.

#### *About the McGovern Dole School Feeding Program*

McGovern Dole is International food for Education and Child nutritional program. It provides help to support child development and food security in low income countries. The chief objective of the program is to reduce hunger and to improve literacy and primary education especially among the girl child. The program aims to provide teachers training and all the necessary support that is essential for the overall development of any child. It supports some of the SAARC countries and Sri Lanka is in the list of McGovern Dole Priority Countries and Regions (USDA).

#### *Country Comparisons*

The school meal program is being run in almost all the countries of the world, the feeding aim of one country differs from the other and it highly depends upon the income groups to which the respective country belongs. The income of the country also determines the delivery services, implementation and nutritional content of the food being served. The food being served in the high -income countries can be much different from the low income group countries. The standards and guidelines of the high-income countries are recommended to combat the problem of obesity and to provide the children healthier lifestyle, whereas for the low-income group countries the aim is to meet the nutritional standards and to encourage more and more children to continue their studies. The SAARC member countries generally fall in the category of low-income group countries ( GDP \$995 or less) or Low middle-income group (GDP \$ 996-\$3895). According to the World Bank report Afghanistan and Nepal are regarded as low-income economies while Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka fall in Lower-Middle Income economies (Bank W. , 2018).



GDP of the SAARC Countries in the Year 2017

### *The School Meal Program in SAARC Countries*

Here is the detail description of the school meal program run in different member countries of SAARC.

#### *Afghanistan*

Afghanistan has gone through severe humanitarian crisis as the desperate humanitarian situation in the country has restricted the development of the human capacity. Ironically the country is known to be in the frontline of the war of terrorism. The humanitarian growth of the country is worst in the global context as the generations remain deprived of the basic education as the UNDP reports that the literacy rate in Afghanistan is 6<sup>th</sup> lowest in the world with only 4.7% of the female over 15 years of age who are able to read (Bronwen, 2002). The decades of continuous war have devastated the education system of the country and the country continues to face challenges and gender disparity remains a significant issue in the education sector (Jennifer Solotaroff, 2009). The country has shown significant improvement in the education sector since 2002, especially there has been rise in the enrollment of girl children in the schools. According to the report of relief web there has been significant rise in the number of schools from 6,000 in (2000) to 15,500 in 2012 (Reliefweb, 2016).

In order to revise the education system of the country constant efforts are being made at various levels by government, NGOs and international agencies. The collaborated efforts of different agencies are trying hard to rehabilitate the education system in the country by providing nutritious diet to the children. It was found that the Afghan children generally suffer from Iron, Vitamin D deficiency and Iodine disorder (Reliefweb, 2014) due to multi-faceted reasons like chronic food insecurity and prolonged war.

For the promotion of education in the country WFP started to focus to explore the best ways to provide food aid as a tool of education as the foundation is operational in Afghanistan since 1963 (WFP, Afghanistan ). Afghanistan is also the part of the McGovern-Dole Global School Feeding Program of United States. Afghanistan with the help of these organizations is providing school lunches to the impoverished children. Some studies reveal that in Afghanistan and Pakistan the school lunch programs also benefit the children by providing them nutritious food and by keeping them away from the potential terrorists recruiters (Lambers). Afghanistan is thus dependent upon foreign aid for fulfilling the dietary requirements of their children.

### *Bangladesh*

Bangladesh has experienced consistent economic growth after attaining liberation from Pakistan in 1971. The country has also enabled significant improvement in access to education and poverty reduction but high rate of under-nutrition and food insecurity still remained significant in the country. Persistent poverty, malnutrition, and hunger are the chief reasons why the progress of Bangladesh remains hampered. Reports suggest that estimated 3.3 million children of the country do not attend school at all of which majority are girls (Bank, 2010). The children in Bangladesh are also known to suffer from Vitamin A and D Deficiency (Zaman, 2017 ). To deal with such grave situations the government of Bangladesh partnered with WFP for more systematic service delivery and contribution for the welfare of the people.

WFP Bangladesh Country Office has commissioned decentralized evaluation which covers the School Feeding Program (SFP) implemented by the World Bank. WFP has been present in Bangladesh since 1974 and has been providing technical assistance to the government (Lindow, 2015). The Government of Bangladesh (GOB) on the other hand initiated the “School feeding in Poverty-Prone Areas” in the year 2011 (Lindow, 2015), the program that has been successful so far. WFP runs this program in the country with support of McGovern-Dole (MGD) for Education and Child Nutrition Program of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Food for Education (FFE) programs was started by Bangladesh in 1993 and under this program free ration i.e. wheat/ rice is provided to the poor families if their children attend the primary schools.

Despite Government of Bangladesh (GoB) initiatives such as free and compulsory primary education, about half of the children in the country never

complete the five-year primary school cycle. An estimated 3.3 million children are not attending school at all, of which a majority are girls from rural areas (WFP, 2012). A complex set of issues combined creates this situation, among else including children's contribution to household income, child marriage and adolescent pregnancies. To check this grave situation the food program is being run so that this vicious cycle of poverty, illiteracy and malnourishment can be broken.

### ***Bhutan***

The Royal Government of Bhutan receives support from the WFP to run the feeding program in the schools, the organization came to Bhutan in 1974 with aim to provide school meal to the underprivileged children. In an attempt to provide meals to the school children and increasing the rate of enrolment and attendance the government has received constant support from WFP. The enrolment in Bhutan has increased from 53% in 1998 to 93% in 2010 (WFP, School Feeding in Bhutan, 2011). The School Feeding Program (SFP) is collaboration between the Royal Government of Bhutan and WFP with the aim to increase the enrollment in the school and to reduce the dropout rate. The schools are thus provided meals under SFP to eliminate short term hunger among the children and thereby improving their concentration and performance. In July 2014 the Government of Bhutan had implemented the centralized procurement system for the school meals. With the well established food program in Bhutan WFP now intends to phase out from the country as it is convinced that government is now self efficient in providing meals to the children as the country is already supporting 80% of the school feeding program (Rinzin, 2018).

The WFP is gradually reducing its responsibility by transferring, knowledge, system and skills to the government partners as Bhutan becomes self sufficient. This is also an indicator that Bhutan is entering the club of middle-income countries as they have enough resources to run the feeding program. The Ministry of Education in Bhutan has introduced the centralized procurement of non-perishable items like pulses, oil, chickpeas, soya chunks etc and the school feeding was standardized with the same ration scale, this system also benefited the far flung schools. The Ministry had also developed a handbook on School Feeding Management in order to improve and provide guidance on managing SFP (Authority, 2017 ).

### *India*

The Constitution of India made education compulsory in 85<sup>th</sup> amendment since then it has become the fundamental right of every Indian child. Mid Day Meal Scheme in India is the world's largest school feeding program that reaches out to 12 million children in over 12.65 lakh schools (Menezes, 2014). The program was started with the twin objective to boost the universalization of education and improve the health of the children. The children in India are commonly found to have deficiency of Vitamin A, iron, iodine, zinc and folic acid (Kotecha, 2008) and MDM thus aimed to fulfill the nutritional requirement of the children and to lower the dropout rate.

This highly ambitious scheme of the Government of India adheres to provide Mid Day Meal (MDM) in Government schools and government assisted primary schools, upper primary schools and EGS including Madarasas and Maqtabas. For the better implementation of educational system the Government introduced the Mid Day Meals Scheme (MDMS) on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1995 as a National Program for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) (Menezes, 2014). The roots of this program can be traced back in 1925 as Mid Day Meal was introduced in Madras. The responsibility of implementation of MDMS was levied on the shoulders of the State Government and this Scheme was later complimented with SarvaSiksha Abhiyan and Operation Blackboard.

Initially under the scheme 'dry ration' was distributed with an expectation that the states would later start serving the cooked meals to meet the dietary requirements of the children. The scheme remained a low key concern till 2001 when the Supreme Court directed all the states to provide cooked meals. Initially the cooking cost was shared between the government of India and States in the proportion of 25:75. Presently the meals in the schools are supplied by the Akshaya Patra Foundation that had begun its operations in India in 2000. The foundation makes all efforts to provide fresh and nutritious meal to eliminate the classroom hunger. Akshaya Patra now serves meals to almost 1.7 million children in 14,173 schools in 12 states of India. The rest of the states continue to provide indigenously cooked fresh meals to the children.

### *Nepal*

The SFP in Nepal has been implemented by World Food Program (WFP) with the support of McGovern-Dole. Unlike Pakistan and India Nepal is a food insecure country with approximately 2.2 million people affected by

malnutrition (Stephen Turner, 2017). The country is home to highest rate of stunted children in the world as 41% of the children below the age of 5 are stunted. The country therefore works in collaboration with various international organizations to meet the dietary requirements of the children. The school meals are provided to the children to reduce the opportunity cost of school versus child employment and it also becomes an incentive for the parents to send their children to schools.

The WFP is the pioneer organization working in Nepal to school meals to the children. The foundation has been working in Nepal since 1963 but it introduced SFP in 1974 through government's food for education program (Stephen Turner, 2017). It is focused on 29 of 75 districts of Nepal in the Mid and the Far Western Development Regions (FWDR). WFP actively supports the Government of Nepal (GON) in meeting the nutritional requirement of the country. The program aims to provide school meals to almost 1,90,000 children in 1800 schools (Stephen Turner, 2017). The current (2013-2017) WFP's program is to have an overarching theme of social protection and government gives education support and looks into the nutrition of mother and child.

### *Pakistan*

Pakistan does not have an established school meal program; the country is likely to make some initiative in this direction in the future in collaboration with WFP. A brief project named Tawana Pakistan Project was started in 29 districts of Pakistan, this is the first evaluation of the relationship of school feeding program with the developmental outcomes in Pakistan (Soofi, 2013). The Tawana Pakistan Project was started in the country in 2002 and it was funded by the government of Pakistan to address the nutritional demands of the rural girls. This multifaceted pilot project began in Sep 2002 and continued till June 2005 to address the nutritional requirements of the primary school going girls (WFP, WFP Pakistan Country Brief , 2016). It was a 3.6 billion mega social safety net to redress educational and nutritional bereavements of the rural girls between 5-12 years of age. The aim of the scheme was to improve the nutritional status, increase enrollment and reduce gender gap.

The objective of the program was to create safe environment and village level job opportunities for to 5,300 community organizers for the local women in the villages and through this collective learning system women even learnt to plan balanced menus (Khan, 2005). In the effort to provide meals to the children the Aga Khan Foundation partnered with the government and helped

in management, design, evaluation and monitoring of the project. The program did not sustain for long due to various bottlenecks but it showed remarkable improvement as enrollment of the students which increased by 40%.

In 2016, the WFP again started its activities in Pakistan under the new operational model “Transition: Towards Resilient and Food Secure Pakistan”. The WFP will now continue to work with the Government of Pakistan to ensure the improvement of food security, address malnutrition among the vulnerable section of the society. The WFP will also rigorously run SFP to support the education in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) (WFP, WFP Pakistan Country Brief , 2016), this will be done to increase the enrolment and stabilize the attendance in the primary schools with special focus to reduce the gender gap.

### ***Sri Lanka***

The School Feeding Program began in Sri Lanka in 1931 when the country was under the foreign rule. The WFP began the School Meal Program in Sri Lanka in 2003, the meal program that started with 4 districts in the beginning expanded to 6 provinces after the tsunami in 2005. The school feeding program that started with the collaboration between the government and WFP has lead to provide nutritious meals to 1,60,000 students everyday in 958 schools. The aim was to inculcate healthy food habits among the children the school feeding program is currently managed by MoE (Ministry of Education ) in Sri Lanka Sri Lanka comes under the 2018 list of McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program of US (Labers, 2007).

The school meals in Sri Lanka are based on three modalities (Bank W. , Sri Lanka School Feeding: SABER Country Report , 2015):

- i) **Cash based school meal program:** Under this the prepared meal is delivered to schools by the contractors, the program is funded by the Government of Sri Lanka.
- ii) **Milk Program:** Where children are given a glass of milk or yogurt, this program is also funded by the Government of Sri Lanka.
- iii) **In-Kind School Meals:** Under this the food commodities are brought to the school and prepared at the school level for distribution among the children. The program is supported by World Food Program and the funds for items like vegetables are provided by the Government, these vegetables are purchased from the local farmers.

All the School programs in Sri Lanka are under the management of the School Nutrition and Health Service Branch. Partner Organization WFP works with the Ministry of Finance and Planning and the Ministry of Education in the implementation of the School Meals Program (Program).

### *Summary*

The SFP has received enormous attention in all the countries respective governments have been collaborating different agencies to fulfil the nutritional requirements of their children. It is found that out of all the seven SAARC members which run meal program for the children only India runs indigenous scheme to benefit the children rest all the countries depend on foreign assistance and foreign aid to support their program. Not all the countries have shown remarkable changes after the school meal program. As Pakistan still does not have a definite plan to fight the persisting malnourishment and increasing the school enrolment. Afghanistan also abstains from running any tangible plan. Some countries that have shown adequate improvement include Bhutan, India and Sri Lanka whereas Bangladesh also does not show any major changes as large number of students continue to remain out of school.

### *Funding in School Food Program*

The source of investment in the SFP is also an essential part of the scheme as most of the countries depend upon the foreign aid. The table below thus represents the sources and the amount of funds received by the respective countries in the year 2017.

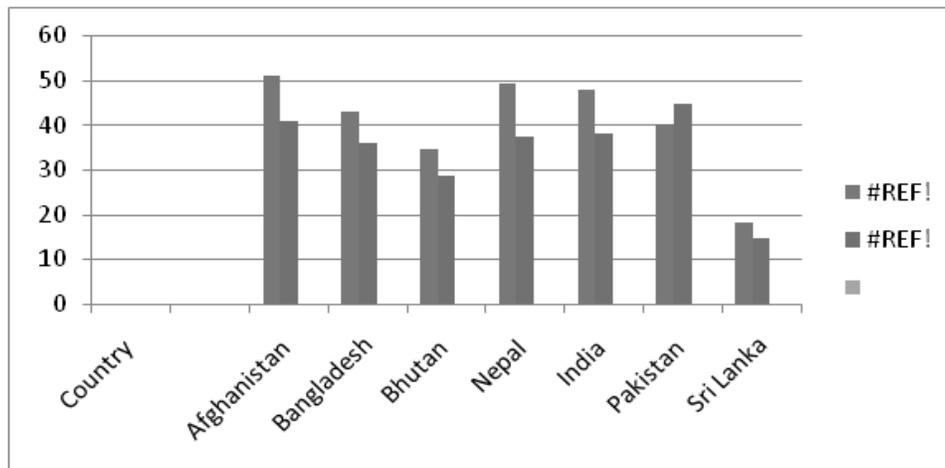
Country	Working Body	Monetary Contribution in (2017-18)
Afghanistan	WFP +McGovern Dole	NA
Bangladesh	WFP+GOB	US \$ 4,370 <sup>1</sup>
Bhutan	WFP (Now to phase out)	US \$ 5,056 <sup>2</sup>
Nepal	WFP+McGovern Dole	NA
India	GOI+Akshaya Patra Foundation	US \$ 14,515 (10,000 crore) <sup>3</sup>
Pakistan	WFP (To make fresh start now)	NA
Sri Lanka	WFP+ Ministry of Education	NA

1. <http://www.wfp.org/funding/year/2017>
2. Donor Profile Bhutan 2017 retrieved from <http://www.wfp.org/about/funding/governments/bhutan> on July 20
3. GBCA from Union Budget of Various Years; retrieved from [http://unionbudget2017.cbgaindia.org/nutrition/mid\\_day\\_meal.html](http://unionbudget2017.cbgaindia.org/nutrition/mid_day_meal.html) on July 20

### *Global Hunger Index*

The Global Hunger Index indicates the worldwide level of hunger and under-nutrition. The school meals provided to the children claim to improve their dietary requirements, the graph below will compare the prevalence of stunting in children. It compares the data between 2006-10 and 2012-16. The difference in the ranking of the countries will help to determine the effectiveness of the school meal programs in the SAARC countries. All the countries other than Pakistan show improvement in their position.

Country	Year 2009-10	Year 2016
Afghanistan	51.3	40.9
Bangladesh	43.2	36.1
Bhutan	34.9	28.9
Nepal	49.3	37.4
India	47.9	38.4
Pakistan	40.3	45
Sri Lanka	18.3	14.7



Prevalence of Stunting in Children

1. Global Hunger Index 2017 retrieved from <http://www.globalhungerindex.org/pdf/en/2017/appendix-c.pdf> on 25July 2018

### *Conclusion*

The school lunches are thus essential part of every child's meal and they play dominating role in the lives of the children from less developed or developing countries. The countries should therefore strive to establish nutritional guidelines so that they can assure nourished health to their future generation. The countries like Pakistan should strive harder for the welfare of the children and provide them with all the necessary nutrients. The countries that depend upon the foreign aid should also strive to contribute with towards the services for making a better world for the future generation so that more effective results can be obtained.

There should also be subsequent evidence based policy implementation so that the life of millions of people can be enhanced and improved. Proper monitoring and evaluation of the system is also necessary for checking the implementation of the scheme at various levels. The government and civil societies should work in collaboration to improve the nutritional level of the children.

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## Nurturing Emotional Bridge-Building A Dialogue with Nagaland's Gandhi

*Vedabhyas Kundu*

*Shri Natwar Thakkar also known as "Nagaland's Gandhi" passed away recently after carrying on Gandhian legacy in India's northeast for over six decades. The Nagaland Gandhi Ashram which he set up at the height of Naga insurgency has served as the hub of building emotional bridge between the people of northeast and India as a whole. This intimate dialogue between him and Vedabhyas Kundu of Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti carried out during 2018 unravels his thoughts on Gandhian nonviolent communication as a crucial vector in promoting culture of peace and nonviolence.*

**Vedabhyas Kundu:** Every day as we turn our newspapers, television channel or browse the Internet, we find horrific stories of people killing each other, conflicts and different forms of violence debasing our society. Mostly conflicts start when we think ourselves to be superior and develop feelings of contempt towards our fellow human beings. The former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech in 2001 had said, "We have entered the third millennium through a gate of fire. .... New threats make no distinction between races, nations or regions. A new insecurity has entered every mind, regardless of wealth or status....In the early beginnings of the 21st century – a century already violently disabused of any hopes that progress towards global peace and prosperity is inevitable – this new reality can no longer be ignored. It must be confronted....The 20th century was perhaps the deadliest in human history, devastated by innumerable conflicts, untold suffering, and unimaginable crimes. Time after time, a group or a nation inflicted extreme violence on another, often driven by irrational hatred and suspicion, or unbounded arrogance and thirst for power and resources..."

Also Samuel Huntington (1997) in his book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* says, "People are always tempted to divide

people into us and them, the in-group and the other, our civilization and those barbarians.” In the backdrop of deep fissures engineered by people themselves and the environment of intolerance, racism and xenophobia, the challenge today is to work assiduously to plug these fissures and make sincere attempts to stop the culture of intolerance and hatred. As Kofi Anan had stated further in his speech, “Peace must be made real and tangible in the daily existence of every individual in need. Peace must be sought, above all, because it is the condition for every member of the human family to live a life of dignity and security.” The 1980 Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel in his acceptance speech had also stressed that to build a society in which peace is the foundation of life ‘we must reach out our hands, fraternally, without hatred and rancour, for reconciliation and peace, with unfaltering determination in the defense of truth and justice. We know we cannot plant seeds with closed fists’.

Esquivel’s thrust on the need for people to reach out for a peaceful society underlines the importance of different strategies human society has to constantly use to nurture solidarity among communities and individuals. Communication is one of the most important elements for people to reach out for a peaceful society. It has the ability to play a dual role-while it can contribute to make peace real and tangible; if used in the wrong way it can aggravate conflicts and spread hatred. It is for people on how they use tools of communication.

**Natwar Thakkar:** You have rightly stressed on the dual nature of communication. Though the media tries to do a fairly good job, more than often it attempts to sensationalize violence which can accentuate cases of conflicts. The media is also accused of furthering what Huntington says, attempts to divide people into us and them. Throughout history we will find how different forms of communication have been used to accentuate divisiveness and intolerance. In this context, Mahatma Gandhi’s stress on the need to exercise self-restraint and critically ponder on what messages one is trying to take to the masses should be a guiding post for all communicators today. He had said, “To be true to my faith, therefore, I may not write in anger or malice. I may not write idly. I may not write merely to excite passion. The reader can have no idea of the restraint I have to exercise from week to week in the choice of topics and my vocabulary. It is training for me. It enables me to peep into myself and make discoveries of my weaknesses. Often my vanity dictates a smart expression or my anger a harsh adjective. It is a terrible ordeal but a fine exercise to remove these weeds.”

The need for communicators today is to challenge the attempts to divide people on the basis of class, religion and race. While communicating they need to imbibe what Mahatma Gandhi had so eloquently stressed, “I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible.” He had further noted, “Nothing can be farther from my thought than that we should become exclusive or erect barriers.” So right from a young age we need to teach children to use communication to promote human values which contributes to a spirit of solidarity. The communication education to my mind should integrate the values of pluralism, mutual respect and inclusivity. It should not be a vehicle to sensationalize or incite passion but a lesson to practice self-restraint and principles of nonviolence in all aspects.

My experience of working in Nagaland suggests that the role of communication should be for emotional bridge-building, connecting and facilitating dialogue amongst people from diverse cultural communities together. Emotions play a significant role in the process of communication. Majority of the time we are not aware of what emotional impact our speech has on others. So it is crucial that we try to develop our emotional vocabulary.

Our communicative abilities should be able to further compassion and empathy while developing deep understanding of each other’s concerns. If we are compassionate and empathetic, we will be able to understand other people’s views and we will be able to connect with them. By being compassionate and empathetic, we can promote emotional bridge-building. This can help in narrowing differences and help in nurturing relationships.

**Vedabhyas Kundu:** The role of emotional bridge building which you have described as an important function of communication needs to be promoted among all sections of the population. Emotional bridge building can result in meaningful dialogues. Our efforts should be to draw people and groups who may have differences to be engaged in dialogues. John Dewey (1859-1952) had pertinently said that those who have not had the kinds of experience that deepen understanding of neighborhood and neighbours will be unable to maintain regard for people from distant lands. We need to develop a habit of continuously engaging with others and reaching out to them with mutual respect. On the importance of dialogue, peace scholar, Daisaku Ikeda (2007) notes, “Through dialogue, we can arrive at a deeper mutual understanding. Dialogue

starts by clearly recognizing the positions and interests of the respective parties and then clearly identifying the obstacles to progress, patiently working to remove and resolve each of these.” He further says, “I firmly believe that the true value of dialogue is not to be found solely in the results it produces but, more significantly, in the process of dialogue itself, as two human spirits engage with and elevate each other to a higher realm.... Dialogue is what opens the eye of the human spirit and liberates people from the curse of narrow-minded prejudices and hatreds.” In his Peace Proposal 2005, Ikeda further writes, “The numerous problems we confront are caused by human beings, which means that they must have a human solution. However long the effort takes, so long as we do not abandon the work of unknotting the tangled threads of these interrelated issues, we can be certain of finding a way forward. The core of such efforts must be to bring forth the full potential of dialogue.”

But in today’s world we increasingly see that many of us abandon the spirit of dialogue and conversation, they are in a hurry and are intolerant. They are not ready to listen to others and this result in fiction and conflicts. It is worrying. Instead of communication playing the role of emotional bridge building, there is communication of hatred and intolerance.

**Natwar Thakkar:** Definitely when communication is used to spread hatred and there is little space for dialogue, it is worrisome. Instead of playing the role of emotional bridge-builder, communication starts contributing to divisiveness. Breakdown in communication leads to the rise of differences and even conflicts. I sincerely believe that continuous dialogue is important to keep the channels of communication open. Mahatma Gandhi was an exponent of this art. Way back in 1939, he had told a correspondent that the object of a satyagrahi was *‘not avoidance of all relationship with the opposing power’* but the *‘transformation of the relationship’*. Gandhian Scholar B R Nanda (2002) in his book, *In Search of Gandhi* has beautifully encapsulated this, “In India, through a quarter of a century, Gandhi corresponded with all the Viceroys- Chelmsford, Reading, Irwin, Willingdon and Linlithgow- keeping his lines of communication open even while he engaged them in non-violent battle.” This is the true essence of dialogue that even when there are serious differences of views we do not snap communication but make all efforts to keep the channels of communication open. The importance of dialogues for peace has been beautifully put by a great follower of Gandhi, Nelson Mandela who said, “We inhibit the peace and negotiated resolutions of conflicts not only by the extent to which we

demonize one another. We do so also by the degree to which we separate, on the one hand, the processes of politics and international affairs, and on the other hand, the moral relations between ourselves as human beings...talking to one another and discussion must be the prelude to the resolution of conflicts.” So let’s keep on talking to each other even in situations where there seems to breakdown in communication; let’s solve our problems through discussions and not through violence and antagonism. Let’s use our power of communication to be emotional bridge-builder.

**Vedabhyas Kundu:** I think when you talk on the importance of keeping the channels of communication open, it is essential that we learn the importance of listening. In fact we need to exercise the habit of deep and insightful listening. Without developing critical listening abilities it may not be possible to ensure that the channels of communication remain open. More than often, in this post-modern world when most of us are running to outdo others and feel that our views are more important, we seem to forget the habit of listening. What is important is to learn to respect others views and pay attention to what they want to say. Rather than being judgmental, we need to develop empathy and be receptive when others are trying to put their views across. Overall, I think critical listening abilities, capacities to engage with dialogue even with one’s opponents and emotional bridge building in our communication efforts should be the fulcrum of our training to be effective communicator. Daisaku Ikeda in his speech on ‘Interaction of Civilizations Leads to a Flourishing Culture of Humanity’ in 1987 suggested three principles and guidelines for communication: (1) exchange among civilizations as a source of value creation; (2) a spirit of open dialogue; and (3) the creation of a culture of peace through education.... However, the challenge today to what Daisaku Ikeda reflected on principles of communication, has been aptly encapsulated by Victor Ordonez, former Director of UNESCO Basic Education Division, who had said, “We can create experts in information technologies, yet it seems we are unable to improve the capacity for listening, for tolerance, for respecting diversity, for making the most of people’s potential for the social good, or for the spreading of fundamental ethics, without which neither skills nor knowledge will be of any benefit to us. (UNICEF, 1995)

**Natwar Thakkar :** To possibly address the challenges which Victor Ordonez reflected, I would suggest that we promote nonviolent communication literacy amongst all section of the population across the world. This should not

just be in schools and colleges, but nonviolent communication literacy should start right from families and percolate to our societies. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization defines literacy as the “ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society”. Communication literacy, according to me entails deep and critical knowledge of communication. It also entails critical understanding of how we communicate, the way we communicate and the expressions we use to communicate. It includes both verbal and non verbal forms of communication. It is also the ability to discern between what is wrong and what is right. Being self-aware of what message we are using is part of communication literacy.

To me nonviolent communication literacy would mean how our communication efforts should be nonviolent; how our ability and capacity to communicate not only with ourselves but with our family and society be nonviolent in all aspects and overall how the entire process of communication whether between individuals, groups, communities and the world at large should be nonviolent in nature. This would entail deep understanding of the art and science of nonviolence and its centrality in all our daily actions. It's not just verbal and nonverbal communication, nonviolent communication literacy would also include whether our thoughts and ideas are nonviolent or not. This would also mean how we can rid of our preconceived notions of individuals or groups with whom we want to communicate and stop evaluating them to suit our own ideas. More than often we are attuned to think in terms of moralistic judgments which may be our own constructions. By developing deep understanding of the art and science of nonviolence and integrating it in our communication practices we could get over with biased and moralistic judgments; this in turn could contribute to emotional bridge building.

By being nonviolent communication literate, an individual/group/community will be able to self-introspect whether the message they want to share has elements of violence and whether such a message will hurt others. Nonviolent communication literacy would automatically help in strengthening and deepening relationships. When we are able to emotionally build bridges with others we will be able to empathize with their views.

Nonviolent communication literacy also includes mastering the art of listening. His Holiness The Dalai Lama has rightly said, “When you talk you are only repeating what you already know; but when you listen you may learn something new.” Essentially we should learn to listen with a sincere intention to understand, open and focused on what the other person is trying to tell.

The way we use language and words while writing and conversations is an important aspect of nonviolent communication literacy. We had discussed above, the Gandhian approach to communication clearly emphasized on the importance of restraint and that which did not incite passion. His approach also stressed on the importance of brevity and the need to think before speaking. He had said, “My hesitancy in speech, which was once in annoyance, is now a pleasure. Its greatest benefit has been that it has taught me the economy of words. I have naturally formed the habit of restraining my thoughts. And I can now give myself the certificate that a thoughtless word hardly ever escapes my tongue or pen. I do not recollect ever having had to regret anything in my speech or writing. I have thus been spared many a mishap and waste of time.” (The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi)

So by studying and practicing deeply the ideas of great leaders like Gandhi, King and Mandela one can start grasping on how to use nonviolent communication in our daily lives and aim to become nonviolent communication literate. Nonviolence according to Mahatma Gandhi is ‘infinitely greater and superior to brute force’. He had said, “Nonviolence is like radium in its action. An infinitesimal quantity of it embedded in a malignant growth acts continuously, silently and ceaselessly till it has transformed the whole mass of the diseased tissue into a healthy one. Similarly, even a little of true nonviolence acts in a silent, subtle, unseen way and leavens the whole society.” So if our communication ecosystem is nonviolent in nature, it would act like radium contributing to resolution of many contentious issues.

I am also reminded of this powerful idea of Martin Luther King, “Nonviolence says that within human nature there are amazing potentialities of goodness.... I think we all must realize that there is within human nature a sort of dualism, something within all of us which justified Plato in saying that the human personality like a charioteer with two strong horses each wants to go in different directions.... There is this tension and this struggle within human nature between the high and the low.... we must recognize that just as there is a capacity for evil, there is a capacity for goodness. Just as a Hitler can lead man

to the darkest and lowest depths, a Gandhi can lead, men to the highest heights of nonviolence and goodness. We must always see these possibilities within human nature; the nonviolent discipline goes on with this belief that even the most difficult person, even the person who is committed to the old order with all his might, can be transformed.....”

King had also said, “Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time; the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence. Mankind must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation.”

So I firmly believe that by practicing nonviolent communication, there can be amazing opportunities to promote goodness in our world which keeps on getting struck with conflicts. It is an essential part of efforts to evolve a culture of peace and nonviolence not just in our homes but in the entire world. This is also an antidote to all acts of revenge, aggression and retaliation as all these arises from breakdown in communication or our reliance in violence in communication.

Overall I firmly believe that nonviolent communication literacy opens new spaces for dialogues and engagement, mutual respect and tolerance. This will definitely contribute towards a humanistic society.

**Vedabhyas:** We definitely have a lot to learn from peace apostles like the Mahatma, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Daisaku Ikeda and others. King always used positive language in his writings and speeches. By using positive language and refraining from negatives, we can uplift the level of our dialogues. For instance if we analyze this powerful quote of King, *“If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward,”* it evokes great positivity. Similarly all other dialogues and speeches of King underline the use of positive language. Nonviolent communication literacy also entails how we can speak from our heart and our critical abilities to connect with all those with whom we are communicating. If we are truthful, honest, sincere and authentic it would not be difficult for us to communicate with others. These can also be a powerful strategy to prevent and resolve conflicts. The lives of Gandhi, King and Mandela and their communication approaches definitely need to be deeply understood to become a nonviolent communicator.

**Natwar Thakkar:** I believe when we are trying to promote nonviolent communication literacy, we are trying to facilitate relationships based on truthfulness, honesty, genuineness and empathy. Nonviolent communication also entails the elements of gratitude and forgiveness. All these ideas are important factors to promote love and peace amongst human beings. For Gandhi, truthfulness was of great importance, he had said, “There can be no room for untruth in my writings, because it is my unshakable belief that there is no religion other than truth and because I am capable of rejecting aught obtained at the cost of truth.”

On the essence of love in our communication, he had further said, “Little quarrels of millions of families in their daily lives disappear before the exercise of force...two brother quarrels; one of them repents and reawakens the love that was lying dormant in him; the two again begin to live in peace.” I totally agree that nonviolent communication is an important tool to resolve conflicts and help in reconciliation. Mahatma Gandhi had rightly said, “It is the acid test of nonviolence that in a nonviolent conflict there is rancor left behind, and in the end the enemies are converted into friends.” Nonviolent communication has the ability to convert those with opposing views and in conflicts to become friends.

Similarly His Holiness the Dalai Lama has rightly said, “Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive.”

Another important aspect of Gandhian nonviolent communication is the power of gratitude. This quote of Buddha sums up the importance of gratitude and why we should be thankful, *“Let us rise up and be thankful, for if we didn’t learn a lot today, at least we learned a little, and if we didn’t learn a little, at least we didn’t get sick, and if we got sick, at least we didn’t die; so, let us all be thankful.”* For Mahatma Gandhi, appreciation was an important element of his ahimsa or nonviolence. The Mahatma’s grandson, Arun Gandhi in his book, *The Gift of Anger* says, “Bapuji was masterful at appreciating the world around him. He looked for the good in everybody.” This is true essence of nonviolent communication to look for good in everybody and respond accordingly.

Hence to me nonviolent communication literacy is essentially to rekindle the dormant values of compassion, love, empathy and rediscovering our authentic self. It is an important tool to nurture gratitude and appreciation. By practicing

it we can learn to forgive others. It is also a channel for conflict resolution, enhance tolerance and promote reconciliation.

To conclude I would like to share these beautiful thoughts of Buddha which is the central idea of our dialogue, *“Words have both the power to destroy and heal. When words are both true and kind, they can change our world.”*

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# Indo-Nepal Relations in the Context of Madheshi Politics

*Saurabh & Dhawendu*

The theme of social inclusion has constantly characterized the movement of marginalized communities in South Asia. The ongoing struggle of Madheshi community in Nepal is an instructive case in point. Suffering a historic sense of socio-economic deprivation and injustice the Madheshis have sought greater political representation. Their primary claim is that the Nepali state is exclusionary, non-representative and discriminating against Madheshis and other marginalized communities.

The issue of inclusion and the equitable redistribution has continually transformed the political agenda among Madheshi political parties. The lines of identification have distinct political connotations and geographical divisions which served as the basis of much rhetoric capturing Madheshi Movement for the rights and representation in Nepal. (Singh, Chandra Prakash, 2011:1047) One school recognizes Madhesh as a regional entity in its geographical depiction. Thus, the people living in this region have been broadly called Madheshi or Madheshiyas. Madhesh has historically been a part of Mithila region neighbouring eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar of India. This view holds that the term Madheshi refers to all non-Pahadis which includes the traditional caste hierarchy such as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Basiya and Dalit and indigenous Janjati ethnic groups, other native tribes and Muslims. (Lawoti, Manendra, 2003: 63-85)

The second understanding of Madheshi identity is perceived through the sociological view of identity. Krishna Hachhethu describes the region as 'traditional homeland of tribal people and the people of Indian origin'. (Hachhethu, Krishna, 2007) For generations, many Madheshis have shared close associations with the Indian communities existing across the open border. Cultural overlapping and homogeneity led to frequent cross border inter-marriages between families on either side. In that sense, Madheshis shared

major transcendent lifestyles, food habits, language and culture common with the people who live across the Indian border.

In the history of Nepal's planned development efforts, the Government only included policies and programs related to the development of Madheshis, indigenous peoples, women, Dalits and other marginalized communities in the Ninth Five-Year Plan of the late 1990's. There is a clear admission from the government about its weaknesses to accommodate these communities of the country in the mainstream development programs. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Program in the Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002-07) of Nepal acknowledged human development and social inclusion with objectives to enhance access and quality of primary education in mother languages of the communities. On the contrary, the development programs displaced indigenous peoples and other marginalized communities from their own lands and territories. The land reform program degraded the Tharu and Madheshis from land owning communities to Kamaiyas or bonded labourers in the western Terai.

The formation of National Parks in Nepal has banished indigenous communities of Chepangs, Majhis, Botes, Darais, Rajis, and Mushars. (Jason Miklian, 2008) The community forestry program has deprived many indigenous people of their customary usage rights of forest resources. It has not just impacted the economic life of the local communities but traditional knowledge, technology, expertise, beliefs, and practices disturbing their independent ethnic identity. The government failed in the honest and serious implementation of the development agendas for these marginal communities. It is worth remarking that even though Terai and inner-Terai cover only 17 percent of Nepal's total land area together, they are inhabited by nearly half of Nepal's population. The question of identity amongst the Madheshis and other populations of Terai who claim counter identities are critical in analysing the upsurge of Terai-based parties championing a corresponding Madheshi cause. (Karna, Vijay Kant, 2007)

#### *Anatomy of a Conflict :*

An intense feeling of deprivation and mistreatment made the Terai or Madhesh region a centre of the pro-democratic movement throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Since that time, psychic sovereign insecure political leaders have been perceiving India as anti-establishment and the Madheshis as India's agents apprehensive that Indian immigrants in Terai might provoke India to claim ownership over it as Indian territory, the Nepali elite adopted stringent policies to restraint the Madheshis' activism. This has led to the expansion of

identity-based movement in Madhesh, particularly with the creation of two groups: the Nepal Terai Congress of Vedanand Jha in 1951 and the Madhesi Mukti Andolan led by Raghunath Thakur in 1956. However, in the contemporary time, numerous political parties and non-state actors are tangled in representing the Madhesi concern.

The existence of several major armed groups in the Terai region has also amplified volatility in the political state, such as the Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM), Terai Cobra, Nepal Defence Army (NDA), Nepal Janatantrik Party (NJP), and Chure Bhawar Ekta Samaj (CBES). Although most of these factions are involved in the political or armed revolution in Nepal, there is a clear divergence in the objective goals each of them aspires to accomplish. While JTMM stresses the establishment of an autonomous Terai region, and Terai Cobra seeks to promote an armed secessionist struggle for a sovereign Terai, the objective of NDA is to shape a Hindu army with suicide bombers to fight religious fanaticism, conversion, as well as Maoists. Likewise, the NJP, a royalist outfit aspires to recall constitutional monarchy and multiparty democracy in Nepal, the CBES fundamentally stresses the formation of a Chure Bhawar federal region in Terai and is strongly opposed to the idea of 'one Madhesh one Pradesh'. (Nayak, Nihar R, 2010)

In the early 1960s, when the question of Terai rights was made by Vedanand Jha, this undertaking concluded with his co-option in the power circle. He was made a Minister and Nepal's ambassador to India later in the later 1970s. In most cases since then whenever Madhesi grievances have been brought, leaders are silenced or made to compromise by giving significant political position and the movement paused not to intensify at a larger scale. After the advent of democracy in 1990, again leaders like Gajendra Narayan Singh asked for a reasonable stake to Madhesh. Since 2007, following the end of decade long civil war, more aggressive and vocal regional parties have joined the scenario. Time to time, they are wooed by mainstream major parties to secure political mobilisation. (Ghimire, Yubaraj, 2015) The panchayat era (1960-90) attempted assimilation of the various ethnic identity of Nepal through compulsory language, education, and legal directives. Policies codifying upper caste Pahadis culture legalised systematic discrimination and underrepresentation of people in Nepal as a strong tool of solidifying control. The program architects viewed citizens of terai as illegal Indian migrants or conquered people with no rights on the land.

Indigenous Nationalities movement of 1990's to defend their culture and practices challenged the state's conception of who is "Nepali". (Asia Report N°276, 2016) The Madhesh Janadhikar forum (MJF) of Upendra Yadav in 1997 was earlier an academic platform to air grievances and discrimination against Terai became the spearhead of the movement. Radical ethno racial construction and evolution of Madhesh movement created sympathies under the guise of "colonial racial subjugation" operated by Pahadis. It has reinvented identity incorporating ethnicity, class, and caste of specific geography in the high rhetoric of "Madheshi under the threat of extinction". They asserted that Madheshi has a caste structure, languages, religious rituals and traditions distinct from Indian and Nepali pahadis. MJF aligned with Maoists during the ten year long civil war sympathising their cause.

The Terai elites and affluent are mostly educated in India. The neighbouring Indian state politics quite influence Nepal's power play among elites. With higher political awareness and reactions ascertained with events, it has been observed that a pattern that most of Indian Ambassador to Nepal since 1990 hails from the region of Bihar-UP and, half of them somehow related to Terai castes. It led to Nepal blaming micromanagement of affairs and interference in local issues suspecting close class interest and concern for the region. Strong identity based political movement witnessed enlarged participation of the Terai people and since 2007, their agenda is driven by the demand of federalism. The first constituent assembly has three parties negotiating and later, enlarged fragmentation made them divided into 13, weakening their political strength of bargaining.

Over the years, Madheshis have agonized from discrimination and consequential deprivation. They also feel subjugated and discriminated against by the higher caste Pahadi migrant groups. Hindi-speaking Madheshis predominantly feel discriminated against by the Nepali government due to numerous aspects. Firstly, under the Citizenship Act of 1964 and then the 1990 Constitution, Madheshis were excluded from citizenship certificates, due to which they could neither get land ownership nor could benefit from various government assistances. Although the Citizenship Law was amended in November 2006 making it likely for persons born in Nepal before 1990 and those staying permanently to obtain Nepali citizenship, still around 40 percent of Madheshis and Dalits are citizenship deprived. Rather than taking into consideration the Madheshis' cultural affiliation with India, it has been accused

that the Nepali government has deliberately adopted a discriminatory attitude towards this group by trying to introduce compulsory Nepali language for both official works and as the medium of education in the Madhesh region. Even though the Madhesi population constitutes nearly one-third of the Nepali population, their share at the level of gazetted level employees is less than 10 percent. Madhesi people have also voiced concerns about the economic exploitation of the resource-rich Madhesh region by the Nepali government. Although Madhesh contributes around three quarter of the agricultural production, 65 per cent of the GDP, and three quarter of the total revenue, the infrastructure in this region is much backward than in the hill areas. (*Asia Report N°276, 2016*)

Madheshis were for centuries complaining denial of equal citizenship. Before 2007, a Madhesi had to present his land ownership certificate when he wanted to obtain his citizenship certificate and passport. In the similar manner and time, he would not be able to get a Land Registration Deed (lalpurja) if he could not present his certificate of citizenship. This has directed to the persistent issue of landlessness not only among the Madheshis but also Janjatis, Dalits and Muslims from the Terai. (Baral, Lok Raj, 2000: 11-99)

The Madhesi Movement catapulted in 2007 as a wide-ranging coalition of civil society organizations taking to the streets to demand the inclusion and rights of the Madhesi populace of the Terai region. With the promulgation of interim constitution of Nepal, Upendra Yadav, at that time the leader of Madhesh-centred activist group Madhesi Jana Adhikar Forum, burned a symbolic copy at the Maitighar Mandala, in Kathmandu. (Sen, Puja, 2016) This provoking representative protest by the prominent Madhesi leader flashed the major Madhesi undertaking of movement the country had up till now seen. Their primary demands were 'federalism' as an abiding mechanism towards state restructuring that would seriously contemplate ethnic identity, proportional representation for Madheshis and improved representation for electoral seats in the Constitution. (Jha, Hari Bansh, 2015) And indeed, the adoption of federalism was the foremost amendment made in the interim constitution, assuring a federal edifice for Nepal. Federalism had, by that point, begun to be articulated as an apparatus that would not only devolve authority to the upcoming states but also would correct the sequence of history in which Madhesi and indigenous janjati groups were deliberately left out of power sharing and sustained marginalised structurally. (Sen, Puja, 2016)

After the signing of 2006 peace agreement between Maoists and the Nepal government, prominent Madheshis in the Maoist movement was relegated away from the limelight, witnessing first-hand that Maoist rhetoric of equivalence did not suit in their situation. Their demand is recognized in common phraseology as 'One Madhes' in Nepal. The first elections in post-war Nepal were held nationwide in April 2008, and each of the organizations under the UDMF chose to partake with a common election slogan of 'EkMadhes, Ek Pradesh' (One Madhes, One state), collectively gaining 11.3% of the national vote and major 81 out of 601 seats. (Asia Report #155 & 149: 7-9) Other political promises made included better representation in the administrative, political and military spheres, Nepali citizenship, getting Maithili accepted as an official language of Nepal and ending Pahadis exploitation of Madheshis even by evicting them from the Terai if needed.

### *New Constitution and Madheshi Blockade*

Nepal finally adopted a constitution on September 20, 2015, after post-earthquake haste and several false starts nearly ten years after the initiation of the peace processes tracked with a long period of chaos confusion and civil war. But the constitution, instead of resolving the essential issues of political representation and minority communities mainstreaming along with women who were historically at the lowest of both the social and political structure, marginalised them further to the breaking point of belligerence.

The Madheshis and Tharus were already side-lined in the complete constitution making procedure because of the dominant distrust towards them amongst the mainstream political parties. Consequently, none of the main Madhesh-based parties taken part in the procedure and refused to sign the Constitution. The new Constitution had a provision for a 165-member Parliament, but the constituencies had been demarcated in a manner that the people of the hill and mountain region got 100 seats, even though their share in Nepal's total population is less than half. On the other hand, the Terai region claimed to be constituting over half of the country's inhabitants had been allocated merely 65 seats. (Jha, Hari Bansh, 2015)

The simmering sense of alienation blown up into an agitation of Terai. Because of the inconsiderateness showed towards the demands of the Madheshi parties, a call was given by the Unified Democratic Madheshi Front and Tharuhat/Tharuwan Joint Struggle Committee for an indeterminate strike in Terai beginning August 8, 2015. Security Forces applied disproportionate force to

defeat the agitation aggravating the resentment of stakeholders. Even the army was mobilized for this purpose and the situation worsened fast resulting in violence in which 40 protestors were killed. The Madhesi parties decided to increase the stakes by shifting protest to the border areas and blocked supplies, generating economic and political burden on Kathmandu. According to media reports, more than 2,000 Madheshis had taken political asylum in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in India and the government has been resorting to extremes to suppress the protests. Normal everyday life has been severely suffered as various parts of Nepal have been witnessing a scarcity of numerous essential goods due to extended protests and road blocks by the Samyukt Loktantrik Madhesi Morcha (SLMM), the Tharus and the Janjati groups. As part of the protest, some of the Terai regions elected members have either resigned from the Constituent Assembly or shunned the Constitution making course.

The marginalized groups of Nepal – the Madheshis, the Tharus, and the Janjatis, asserted that the Constitution promulgated has been inadequate to accommodate their longstanding inclusion demands. Alleging betrayal of demands that comprise: delineation of provincial boundaries on ethnic lines, the formation of two Madhesh provinces, proportional representation of ethnic groups in State agencies and Parliament, equal political rights to persons obtaining citizenship by naturalisation, and implementation of preceding agreements between the State, Madheshis and other Janjatis. After the proclamation of the Constitution by closely 85 per cent of members of the Constituent Assembly, the stirring groups intensified the protests.

### *Party Politics*

The Madhesi blockade at the Nepal-India border point of Birgunj – which Nepal had blamed India of imposing even as Delhi highlighted to the internal nature of the remonstrations – concluded on February 5, 2016. (Jha, Prashant, 2016) The constitution has serious flaws that undermine the legitimacy and objectives it aspired to achieve. Nepal's constitutional federal division of provinces has been attempting of “gerrymandering” to limit Madheshis, Tharus voices. The current provincial structure scattered Madheshi population across the seven provinces where fewer of them will get parliamentary representation under the demographic structures. The highest constitutional positions are reserved for those who are citizens by descent only and natural citizens made ineligible. The hanging issue of citizenship rights for the people of the Indo-Nepal border is also a soaring point as discriminating based on citizenship.

Gender discriminating stance is exhibited that citizenship by descent will not be given to Nepali women married to a foreigner. There is a provision that children born out of cross border marriages will get citizenship rights only with a Nepali father. The core of the constitution writing process was the issue of consensus which has been eroded through majoritarianism to protect the entrenchment in power of the hill elites.

Madhesi want to restructure the 20 districts of Madhes in two federal provinces. (Pattanaik, Smruti, 2015) The present federal structure separates five Madhes districts of Kanchanpur, Kailali, Sunsari, Jhapa, and Morang from Madhesh provinces and merged in other neighbouring provinces. As claimed 51 per cent of the population lies in the Madhesh, it should be allocated 83 out of the proposed 165 for direct elections from the region. The interim Constitution had the provision for re-demarcation of electoral constituencies every 10 years, according to the census; but the new constitution has increased it to 20 years.

The government led by CPN(M-C) Chairman Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal, had introduced amendments for addressing few of Madhesi apprehensions, like the establishment of a federal commission to investigate redrawing of federal borders, and the acknowledgement of local languages as national ones. The amendments were rebuffed by Madhesi parties stating it was not satisfactory in its existing discriminatory undertone. (Editorial, *The Hindu*, 13 April 2017) The Madhesi party leaders were trounced in the 2013 elections which led to a widening gap between the Madhesi people and the Madhes-oriented parties' leaders. It opened an opportunity for mainstream parties to exploit the rumbling distrust. The election of 2017 was to base upon politics that can restore linkages between hills and plains but not the ones that attempt to divide the regions.

For their part, the Madhesi parties have decided that their democratic future can only be guaranteed by keeping the federalism pan hot. The political gimmick in stoking Madhesi animosity against Pahadis not just resulted in violent agitation but also, radicalised young Madheshis, and the feeling that level of rage needs to be preserved for political survival. The mainstream parties got the sense that in the Madhes towns, mostly people of Birganj and westwards, do not have the calibre or stomach for another extended agitation. The delicate dependent economy of towns in the Terai border taken a heavy toll due to the blockade, forcing even Madhes parties to relax rhetoric later. The demographics shifting with disproportionate out-migration of young population and

displacement from the eastern Terai also had a critical impact. Plains hill settlers anxious, therefore, form a bigger proportion of voter turnout on election time than they would otherwise normally. (Editorial, Nepali Times, 20-26 Jan)

### *Elections and Aftermath*

The election of 2017 witnessed a new culture in Nepalese politics formation of alliances. The Communist Party of Nepal - Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) - formed an alliance with the Communist Party of Nepal -Maoist Centre (CPN-MC) and the Naya Shakti Party, Nepal. (Jha, Haribansh, 2017) The government also tried before elections to bring Constitution Amendment Bill under threat from Madheshi parties boycotting elections. The Bill tried dealing with the enhanced representation of people in Parliament from the Madhes region and other electoral bodies while distinct commissions to address issues related with local languages. On citizenship, proposed that foreign women married to Nepali men can get naturalised citizenship after starting the procedure to relinquish their citizenship. However, the bill failed to get the approval of parliament of Nepal.

The Madhes parties lost in the other six provinces both at the provincial as well as national level because of inner deep divisions among the competing ambitious Madhes groups. They could not forge stable unity amongst themselves and had competing factions such as the RJP and the Federal Socialist Forum of Nepal of Upendra Yadav. Another Madhes-based group led by Bijay Gachhadar of the Tharu community combined with the NC but remained unsuccessful in making an impact. The cause of Madhes identity inclusion has instigated severe loss of political credibility and proven in the aftermath of elections result. (Muni, S.D., 2017)

There is prevalent fear is that the new Left government can become an authoritarian for vested interests in rewarding sectors. In this scepticism, also lies a lot of hope that the new federal set-up with decentralisation of power will finally get realised. The misgivings on the Madheshis part need to be handled carefully and essential that the new government address it in an open understanding mind and broad spirit of inclusion. (Baral, Biswas, 2017) The inclusion of Madhesh parties has helped in bolstering the dominance of the Oli government. (Pradhan Tika R., 2018) However, several issues of power sharing, the leadership of the government in the left alliance which has now become a unified Communist party of Nepal remains unsettled and can derail the stability in the future. The top leaders of all parties agreed to forge consensus to take the

Constitution towards implementation and have realised the needs of amending in a just manner for enforcement with a positive note.

### *India's Stand*

For India, a peaceful neighbourhood is a must for its rise geopolitically and economically. The deeply intricate social relations become both boon and bane in certain scenarios as it was the case of Madheshi issue in Nepal. India is a convenient scapegoat of Nepal's internal political polarisation. India always wished for a consensus constitution for Nepal that treats the country as an integrated whole of both mountain and plains.

Geography has made India-Nepal natural development partner. There recent elections in Nepal has shown the growing pressure of Nepal politics to diversify their relations away from India. In that situation, the China tilt of Nepal is making India wary of the decreasing reliance. It can't be implied directly that closer ties with China will be in the complete interest of Nepal with minimal people to people contacts and diverse political systems.

The Indian stand on the Madheshi issue, Kanak Mani Dixit reputed editor of Nepal said that India has become progressively interventionist as Nepal got mired in internal crisis during and after the Maoist 'people's war', and as the hill-plain polarisation intensified on the provisions of constitution writing. (Dixit, Kanak Mani, 2018) The sense of entitlement and exceptionalism of the Indian nationalism for all its vigour cannot overpower nationalism across the frontier of their counterparts. The elections recently concluded in Nepal proved this point beyond doubt. Nepali take a sense of pride as the source of remittances to India and economic growth channel for bordering Indian states on its three sides.

However, the South Asian region is witnessing an assertive China and India is comprehensibly apprehensive as the Chinese geo-economics juggernaut infiltrates the area of its geopolitical dominance including Nepal. The opening of access for Chinese ports and trade routes for Nepal will be a game-changer in the longer run and, alter the equation in bilateral relation. The Chinese presence in the Indian neighbourhood can't be wished away or giving imperious warnings rhetoric seems inadequate to contain this anxiety.

Nepal has seen the interplay of around 40 governments in 60 years. The age-old dream of Nepal to have a future independent of India made them expediate the connectivity options with China. Kathmandu's temptation to play

off Delhi against Beijing changes the fundamental nature of India-Nepal relations and requires both sides to recalibrate their “special” relationship. (Xavier Constatino, 2017) The reality is that India cannot browbeat neighbours into following its diktat and learn to work with a constructive manner accepting Chinese presence. The Nepali Prime Minister K.P. Oli stressed that “Development must not be seen through the optics of geopolitics.” (Battarai, Kamal Dev, 2018)

The best way to move forward in this direction for India is to hasten the pace of various development projects undertaken and address Nepal’s concern by including them at every step of the process. Multiple communication channels, power centres and dialogue partners in India create confusion of priorities and perception for Nepal and the highhandedness of Indian foreign policy disturbs the constructive equilibrium. C. Raja Mohan asserts that the Indo-Nepal destinies are inseparably intertwined, problems have often arisen whenever Delhi or Kathmandu has acted against the logic of extraordinary interdependence. (Mohan, C.R., 2016)

For Nepal, it has historically failed to look beyond the obsession of sovereignty and often missed opportunities from Indian development. If Nepal wants to assert authority independent from India, it needs to ensure that disruptions in the Terai do not have spill over consequences on India and political leadership need to halt courting the Indian establishment to regain political influence. The Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi has asserted that “Border should be a bridge not a barrier between the two neighbours”. (Times of India, Aug 3, 2014) Both countries need to start a new chapter of relationship settling disputers of the border, the contention of 1950 treaty of Peace and Friendship along with prospects of economic development shedding hesitations of past which are not in tune with the changing times.

### *Towards Future*

India knows that consequences of violence and instability of the Terai region will adversely affect India’s geo- security Interests. Madheshi agitators exploited Nepal’s dependence on land route to India as trade partner by blockading specially Raxaul-Bihar point in Bihar that saw the supply of more than 70 per cent of essential goods to Nepal putting populist pressure on Nepal’s government. They tried to leverage close Indian ties for political scoring with historical discrimination and geography on their side.

India is looking for a recalibration, the yearning for rapprochement is seen in the phone conversations Prime Minister Narendra Modi has had with Mr. Oli since December, and the visit of Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj to Kathmandu before the new government was even shaped.

Nepal's prospect is that the durability of government will ipso facto make for steadily improved governance. The key lies in implementing the Constitution of Nepal (2015), which was adopted despite huge conflicts and strong opposition primarily from Madheshi groups. (Ghimere Yubaraj, 2017). India's fervent lobbying can be again misused by Madheshis to support their cause through different means.

India must play an enabling role in the democratic transition and development of Nepal allaying fears of unnecessary intervention. The future demands pragmatism of balanced politics and strengthening of Indo-Nepal relations through building trust, goodwill, and mutual interdependence.

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**PEACEWORKS**

A peer reviewed interdisciplinary Journal

ISSN 2320 - 1754

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Volume 8, No. 1

June 2018

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