

SACH

South Asian Composite Heritage

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Shades of Intolerance

Cultural and religious Intolerance is a rising global concern and South Asia is no exception. It is the most serious and disturbing challenge today that is threatening the composite heritage of South Asian nations. More and more nations in the region are falling prey to this dangerous trend. India, the largest democracy in the world is experiencing frightening growth in cultural and religious extremism. What is of great concern is the impunity with which extreme Hindu fundamentalist groups freely operate in the society despite the fact that Indian Constitution proclaims it as a 'Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic'. Number of attacks targeting Indian religious minorities mainly Muslims and Christians, the most marginalised sections of Indian society dalits (scheduled casts) and adivasis (scheduled tribes), women and secularist intellectuals by Hindu chauvinists pose an alarming threat to the secular cultural traditions. Even cultural choices such as dress codes and food habits are being forced entirely by the culture of the majority. Ironically even symbols like cow are being used to perpetuate injustice and violence on religious minorities violating their right to life with disturbing impunity. Wave of attacks and lynching of members of Muslim community and attacks on low-caste Dalits over rumours or suspicions of beef consumption and cattle slaughter and clampdowns on free speech through a campaign of "anti-national" branding have created an atmosphere of terror in the entire country. Perhaps mob lynching was not an isolated incident, there have been other incidents too. During the last 3 years more than 40 Indian novelists, essayists, playwrights and poets returned their awards from the country's most prestigious literary institution, the Sahitya Akademi in protest against what they call a "climate of intolerance" in the country. The move of the writers was triggered by the institution's "silence" on the murder of Kannada writer, scholar and rationalist Dr M M Kalburgi in Karnataka in 2015 as well against the "communal" atmosphere in the country following the Dadri lynching incident of 2015. Increasingly, the fundamentalist forces have been using various social mediums to impose certain cultural norms, and even attack those who do not conform to these or hold views contrary to dominant cultural and religious norms. Even more disturbing has been the reluctance of the ruling governing party to speak and act against such motivated violent assaults on the rights of citizens. In some cases, the ruling government seems to have used these divisive forces to vilify and discredit critics, dissidents and anyone opposing injustice. This trend of political mobilization of chauvinistic forces still continues. The hate campaign of the Indian right wing forces has united eminent Indian citizens to express their anguish who launched an online protests campaign 'Not in my Name' in June 2017 in major Indian cities to protest against the rising culture of mob lynching and "reclaim the Constitution" and "resist the onslaught" on the right to life and equality.

SUNIL KUKSAL
E D I T O R

Nepal Local Elections : Grass Root Democracy and Peace Building

By **SUNIL KUKSAL**, INDIA



IT is said that strong and inclusive local governance is crucial for peace building in the post-conflict transition phase of a nation. In this context, the local polls in Nepal, the landlocked central Himalayan country in South

Asia were seen as a landmark moment in its transition to democracy and important step to strengthen grass root democracy. After emerging from a decade long bloody civil war, Nepal held its local elections for the first time in 20 years. The elections were held in three phases on 14 May, 28 June and 18 September, 2017 in 6 metropolitan cities, 11 sub-metropolitan cities, 264 municipalities and 481 rural municipalities. These polls were to elect representatives in the ward, village, municipal and metropolitan councils that will have decentralised decision-making powers related to local revenue generation, spending and law making. In the post-conflict transitional period the polls would help Nepal in reinforcing the peace building process in many ways.

Nepal has been enmeshed in a prolonged and difficult political transition period. The country has seen a sea of changes in the two decades since the last local elections were held in 1997. Local-level elections could not be held after 1997 largely as a result of the decade-long Maoist insurgency and political instability. These local elections in 2017 were held for the first time since the nation became a federal

democratic republic on 28 May 2008. The poll process also represented a significant step forward for the country as it implements its new constitution, promulgated in September 2015. Elections are expected to put an end to the political disorder and anarchy that the country has been witnessing for almost over a decade. It is a significant step towards implementation of the new constitution that envisages a restructured nation-state which is federal, secular republic with a plural political order and inclusive social character. In addition to that the elections of local representatives for self-governing Ward, Village, Municipal and Metropolitan councils would help facilitate the devolution of power and resources and would provide a new opportunity for local participation in governance system. The new Constitution has provisions that empower the elected local representatives to make laws, raise revenue and formulate policies.

PEACE AGREEMENT AND CONSTITUTION

The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) launched an armed rebellion in 1996 with the main aim of overthrowing the Nepalese monarchy and establishing a People's Republic. The conflict led to immense suffering in terms of thousands of deaths and injuries. More than 16,000 people were killed, over 1,300 disappeared and thousands displaced during the decade-long civil war between Maoists and government forces. After ten years of bloody civil war, a comprehensive peace agreement

(CPA) signed on 21 November 2006 between Maoist insurgents and the government of Nepal promised constitutional and political reform, reconciliation, and transitional justice. It also included rewriting the country's constitution (including whether it will remain a monarchy). It called for political, economic and social change in the country and adherence to humanitarian law and human rights principles, including through the establishment of a National Human Rights Commission, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a National Peace and Rehabilitation Commission. The agreement called for the election of a constituent assembly to end the transition period. For too long, Nepal's polity has been caught up with Constitution-writing and wrangling over power amid political instability. It was one of the demands of the Maoists, who had waged the decade-long armed struggle against the state, for joining the peace process. The delay has resulted in lack of attention to economic development leading to large-scale labour migration of Nepalese, and poor response systems to disasters such as the massive earthquake that struck the country in 2015.

The first Constituent Assembly (CA) was elected in 2008 but it was dissolved in 2012 as it failed to deliver the constitution despite

several postponements due to profound differences among political parties on matters of federalism, government, inclusion and representation. The second CA was elected in 2013 and political parties pledged to deliver the constitution in one year. Federalism remained the bone of contention but the 16 point agreement to federate the country into federal provinces paved the way for the promulgation of a new constitution. Local-level elections were put off to focus on the drafting process and address divisions over how to divide power between the northern hills and mountains on one hand, and the southern plains on the other.

Nepal faced a political vacuum after the local government representatives were last elected in 1997. Their five-year terms expired in 2002. Due to the Maoist insurgency, the then Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba was unable to hold the periodic local elections in 2002 and decided not to extend the term of the local bodies. Although King Gyanendra, who took over executive power in February 2005, tried to hold municipal polls in February, 2006, his efforts proved unsuccessful as major parties boycotted the poll and instead expedited their campaign against King Gyanendra's rule. Nepal government under the then Prime Minister



Pushpa Kamal Dahal announced the election date on February 2017 and initiated a crucial countdown for Nepali democracy to forge ahead.

Politically Nepal succeeded in ending seven year long political deadlock by adopting a new constitution on 20th of September, 2015 creating a federal state structure intended to decentralize power from Kathmandu to seven newly-created provinces and re-arranged local government units. Promulgating the Constitution was a herculean task by the CA and the implementation brought new challenges. The main objectives of formulating the new constitution via the CA was to undo the concentrations of power — political, social and economic — to make the Nepalese society inclusive and democratic in the widest sense. Under the new constitution of 2015, a three-tier governance system was introduced, with national, provincial and local levels of governance. The charter mandated that local elections, followed by provincial and then national elections, be held by January 2018 - the final step in the drawn-out peace process. A Local Body Restructuring Commission was established as required by the constitution under the chairmanship of Balananda Paudel. The commission proposed 719 local structures which was revised to 744 by the government. The new local levels were formed by changing the existing cities and village development council and came into existence on 10 March 2017.

INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY: WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION.

The long process of transition and social reconstruction paved the way for landmark achievements in post-war women's inclusion in Nepal's politics. It provided an opportunity for integration of issues of concern to women into development plans and increased participation of women in political decision-making. For the first time in Nepal's political history, a legislative assembly had nearly 33 per cent female members, representing 20 different political parties, participating in the country's highest law-making body. The number of women representatives increased since the election of the Constituent Assembly

(CA) in 2008. Around 40% women were in the CA in 2008 and in 2013 The CA provided a platform for the women to bring their own concerns into the constitution making process. The new Constitution contains provisions to reserve 33 per cent of government positions for women, and 33 per cent of parliamentary seats under Article 84(8). A-86 (2)(a) stipulates that three seats in the 59-member national assembly are to be reserved for women, whereas eight members are to be elected from each of the seven provinces. The Local Level Election Act 2017 requires political parties to nominate at least 50 per cent women for major posts. In the first phase of local elections about 50000 candidates contested to hold 13556 different positions such as Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Ward Chairpersons in municipalities. Of the total candidates, about 31% were women. 5,445 women were elected out of 13,400 local elected representatives in the first phase securing 40% representation in the local bodies in the local elections.

PEACE PROCESS AND MADHESI CONFLICT

Transition to peace in Nepal faced setbacks immediately after the adoption of the new constitution in 2015. The controversy erupted after a major protest by groups representing the Madhesi and Tharu populations predominant in Nepal's southern Terai plains bordering India. Protests against the new constitution culminated in an unofficial economic blockade starting November 25, 2015. The government, with the support of the Hill people, blamed the tension as a provocation by India. The Madhesi and Tharus, who together comprise 70 per cent of the Terai population were side-lined when the seven provinces were carved in the new constitution. Of the 22 districts in the Terai, only eight command constitutional autonomy. The remaining fourteen districts are now a minority (in spite of a large Terai demography) after integration with the Hill provinces.

Madhesi community claims that the document leaves them politically marginalised and led to month-long blockade of the India-Nepal border that caused a crippling shortage

of goods across the country. The landlocked country imports almost all of its fuel from India and relies heavily on its southern neighbour for most of its domestic and industrial needs. The Madhesis' violent struggle for regional autonomy and political representation began when Nepal's civil war ended. Madhesi political groups launched their first mass protests against the country's interim constitution in 2007. As the transition process began, Madhesis came to see federalism as the only way to ensure that they can remain free of political and economic domination of hill people. The Madhesis, many of whom speak languages other than Nepali and share cultural ties to Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in northern India, have long been excluded from Nepali civil society, which is centered in Kathmandu. In the Interim Constitution of 2007, their demands for better representation and federalism were excluded, leading to protests and riots across the southern plains, known as the Terai. Although Madhesis represent over 33 percent of the population, they only hold 12 percent of government positions, including the police and army. As the Constitution neared ratification, the Madhesis stepped up their protests, demanding provincial boundaries based on ethnic groups, which would allow Madhesis to control several provinces and give them greater representation in the central government. In the aftermath of the 2015 earthquakes, the Constitutional Assembly fast-tracked the ratification, creating a federalist system with seven provinces that merged plains districts with hills districts. However the Nepali Parliament passed a constitutional amendment that appointed seats in the lower house based on population over geography and gave the Madhesi districts greater representation. However, Madhesi demands for two federal provinces exclusively in the Terai were not met and they vowed to continue protests.

Madhes-based political parties opposed the government's decision to hold the election without amending the constitution since it was declared in September 2015. However, in April 2017 Nepal's Madhesi parties reached an agreement with coalition government under

the conditions of a fast track endorsement of revised Constitution amendment bill and conduct local elections in more than one phase. The decision to split the elections into three phases was based on the understanding that before the last phase, the current coalition government would honour the constitutional amendments that the Madhesis have been demanding. A full implementation of the new constitution, declared in September 2015 requires three level elections which are local bodies (municipalities and village councils); provincial legislature and federal legislature consisting of the House of Representatives and the National Assembly. Elections to the national parliament must be held by Jan. 22, 2018, and stipulated that the transformation of the state from a unitary to a federal structure must be completed by January 21, 2018.

For Nepali citizens the local elections represent a necessary step toward progress. Since 2002, local governments have been administrated by centrally-appointed bureaucrats and as a result several development initiatives failed to make any real impact. Therefore local elections became a crucial test for Nepali democracy and the Constitution, resulting in either a democratically elected government across the country or a continuation of the instability that has plagued the nation since the advent of democracy here in the 1950's. It is equally important to note that no matter what happens in terms of political victory in the provincial and parliamentary elections slated for 2018, the local elections would laid the foundation for grassroot democracy in Nepal and help bridge an ever-widening gap between the state and citizens by decentralizing power and rebuilding trust in the country's political representation. Nepali constitution experts believe that "If the government is able to hold local elections and state as well as parliamentary elections before the year end, it would accomplish a major constitutional responsibility. That would end the political transition, which began after the end of the Maoist conflict followed by the abolition of monarchy."

Safe and Inclusive Spaces- Tool for Conflict Transformation

By **SUSAN RISAL**, Nagarik Aawaz, NEPAL



SINCE the 1990s conflict transformation researchers and practitioners have been concentrating their work on a new emerging phenomenon which they call “new wars”. According to this approach wars are more complex in today’s world and are frequently internal to a country. Scholars have also used the term “protracted social conflicts” to describe them as “hostile interactions extending over long periods of time with sporadic outbreaks of open warfare fluctuating in frequency and intensity.” Nepal is one such example where a long civil war affected the country for almost a decade from 1996 to 2006. More than 17,000 people died since the Maoists declared a so called “people’s war” in February 1996. More than 1400 people disappeared, abducted, raped and tortured. Hundreds of thousands of people were forced to leave their homes behind to live in miserable conditions in shelters. The people of Nepal lived through far too much violence and social sufferings in these years.

A conflict or war impacts situations ranging from personal to social aspects of human experience. In conflict transformation perspective conflict affects physical well-being, self-esteem, emotional stability and damage the physical, spiritual and psychological integrity of the individual and, by extension, the integrity of the family and community. Therefore conflict transformation perspective represents deliberate intervention to minimize

the destructive effects of a violent conflict and maximize its potential for individual growth at physical, emotional, and spiritual levels.

In my long post conflict peace building work in Nepal, I have observed that mostly a country entering into the post conflict era after the peace accord, gives priority to sustaining liberal notion of peace by creating huge structures and formulating policies but fail to address the issue of individual reconciliation. The conflict transformation approach should be based on the premise that no political or strategic goal can be pursued that ignores basic human needs for safety, well-being and livelihood. People on the ground, and their legitimate aspirations, should be an integral part of any political or strategic considerations. Conflict-resolution activities should be pursued at all levels of society, not just at the level of the state or inter-state processes which dominated the conflict-resolution community in the past. Therefore local peace building activities should focus on the psycho-social effects of conflict such as traumas and other invisible effects of a violent conflict that were often ignored earlier.

In the time of violent conflict and also in post conflict period as well, there is a general erosion of space for individual and collective sharing in the society. Due to large scale violence and power dominance, ordinary people suffer and face break down of their social relationships and as a result they develop a sense of fear and deep rooted mistrust with each other. The prevailing uncertainty and fear further contributes in

destabilizing social and cultural fabric of the society. Creating safe and inclusive spaces for individual and community at large is very important for sustainable peace building. The fact is that it is the basic human needs for identity, meaning and justice that bring the communities together in conflict and post conflict situations.

Allowing people to come to the common space, talk about their problems, traumas and sufferings and creating space to seek alternatives to their problems with creative means by themselves is very important in developing the self-esteem and building relationship for the survivors who experienced the deep rooted impact of the violent conflict. The safe spaces can be in closed rooms or in open places where every diverse group (like women, children, men, elderly people, and marginalized group) can have an opportunity to express their opinions, feelings and sufferings as well. Creating safe spaces can open an avenue for the people to move forward for individual reconciliation through ventilating

their stories and through dialogue between divided societies. Constructive individual and community communication helps in building bridges between the ordinary people and developing a healthy nonviolent response to injustice. Opening the space and structure for sharing the past sufferings is critical for collective democratic change in the structure of power. It also provides important social opportunities for communities to come together and challenge the legitimacy of power.

Peace building is inevitably a difficult and lengthy process to achieve in practice. Especially in the context of South Asian nations empowering individuals and communities is essential to address human needs for justice and reconciliation in the aftermath of a conflict. It becomes all the more important as most of these nations suffer from more pressing issues such as unequal power structures, lack of good governance, corruption and serious deficits in the rule of law which are generally the underlying causes of conflict.



Composite Culture and Its Discontents

By **M.P. RAJU**, INDIA

The evolution of a composite culture reached its zenith during the independence movement, which found its expression in the Constitution. The Sangh Parivar has expressed its unhappiness with this Constitution from time to time.

HOW much Indian is India's Constitution? This question is raised by a few on the basis of an allegation that the constitutionalism based on the value of composite culture is alien to Indian traditions and civilisation. Recently, there has been a call from some quarters to frame a substantially different and new Constitution on a purported tradition, culture or religion. This bogey is flogged to life by some now and then.

Last year, Ram Bahadur Rai, a senior Hindi journalist who is the Chairman of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) and a former Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarti Parishad (ABVP) general secretary asserted in an interview with Pragma Singh of Outlook (June 13, 2016) that the present Constitution is "a new testament of our gulaami (slavery)". He also desired that the 16th Lok Sabha should be converted into a Constituent Assembly to draw up a new Constitution.

The Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) has been unhappy with this Constitution and had wanted it to be replaced by Manusmriti (Codes of Manu). Organizer in an editorial ("The Constitution") on November 30, 1949, specifically expressed it and wrote: "The worst about the new constitution of Bharat is that there is nothing Bharatiya about it." M.S. Golwalkar, who was

the second sarsanghchak of the RSS (1940-1973), had expressed similar sentiments in his Bunch of Thoughts (1966), stating that our Constitution has "absolutely nothing, which can be called our own" and that it contained some lame principles drawn from the United Nations Charter and some features from the American and British Constitutions which have been "just brought together in a mere hotchpotch".

Before and after the demolition of the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992, there have been instances of booklets being released denouncing the Constitution as "anti-Hindu" and putting forward a prototype of the kind of Constitution visualised by them. On January 14, 1993, RSS leader Rajendra Singh in an interview to Indian Express called for a new Constitution more suited to the ethos and genius of this country since India's was "not a composite culture".

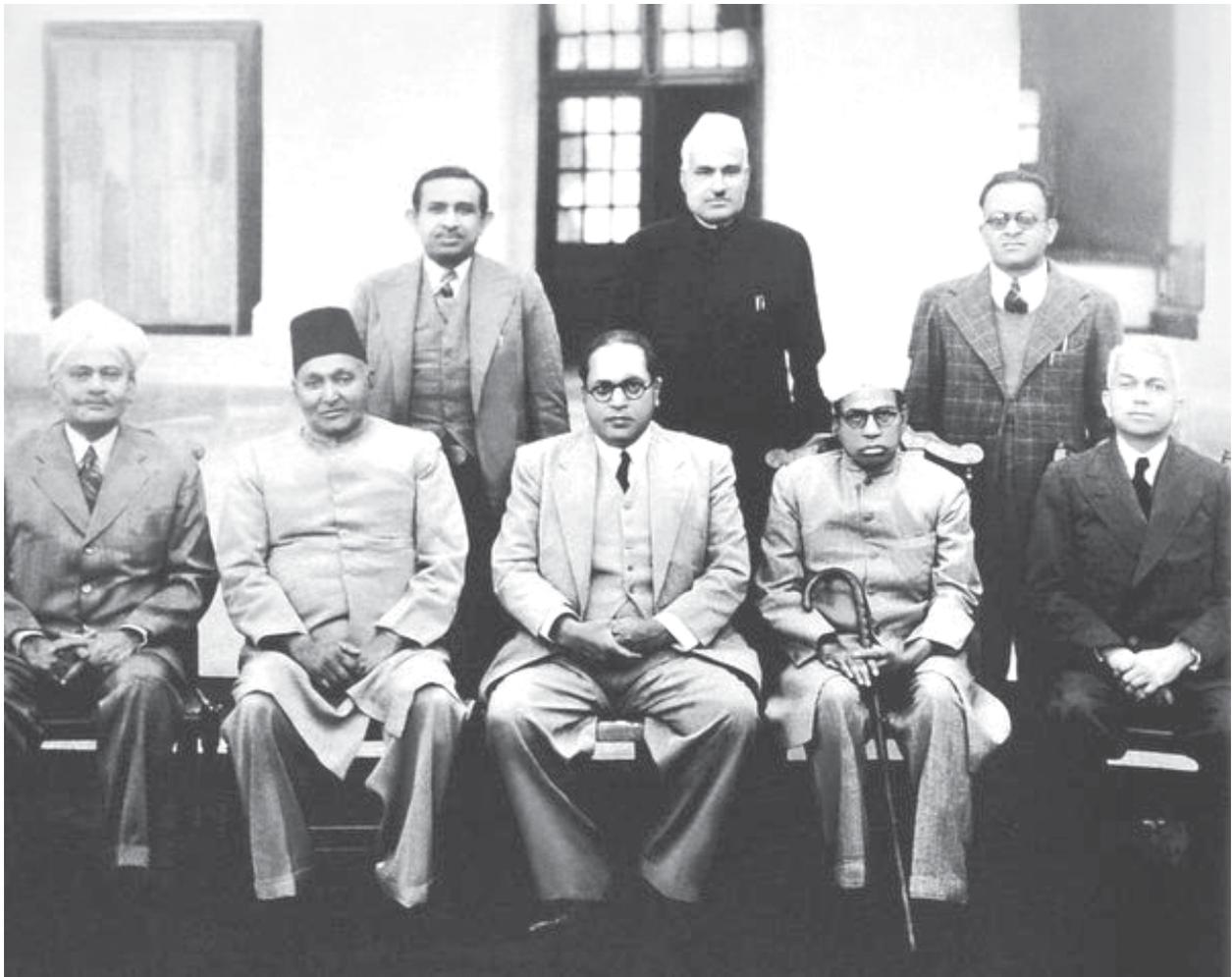
Human race as a whole and each civilisation individually have been evolving a few core values as universal values. These were derived from all their constituent cultures and subcultures, including the little ones, through a process of mutual cross-pollination. At the same time, with a few exceptions, even unpopular cultures and their values were permitted and promoted unless they were diametrically opposed to a few publicly

accepted universal values. India was no exception and our Constitution is based on the ideal of such a composite culture evolved gradually from very ancient times.

In Article 51A(f) of the Constitution, we have declared a solemn fundamental duty of every citizen to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture. This was the result of an amendment in 1977, but it did not add anything new, reiterating what was already expressed throughout various provisions of the Constitution. For example, with regard to the duty to develop the Hindi language, Article 351 requires the Union to see that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of “the composite culture of India”.

A constitutionalism based on a few universal objectives flowing from the

composite culture of India was at the root of the framing of the Constitution. This is exemplified in the words of Dr Rajendra Prasad in the Constituent Assembly: “I will request(all) now to stand in their places...”. He was addressing the members of the Constituent Assembly as its President. The Assembly had gathered to frame the Constitution for independent India. India had not yet become independent; nor had it suffered the tragic partition. The Assembly consisted of great persons who represented almost all the different sections and groups in India. Thus, at the threshold of framing the Constitution, the founding mothers and fathers wanted to try whether they could agree on the values and objectives of the Constitution to be framed. This was called the Objectives Resolution. After detailed debate



and discussion, the resolution was ready to be passed on January 22, 1947. The members wanted to send a message to posterity on the importance they attached to it. Hence, they decided to pass the resolution, all the members standing.

Thus, at the outset of the framing of the Indian Constitution, the centrality of our composite culture was categorically stressed and declared. The declaration of these composite values as the objectives resolution with a few changes found place in the Constitution when it was finally framed—the Preamble of the Constitution of India.

SHEEL AND SUCCESS

More than 4,600 years before the passing of the Objectives Resolution, there was an important occasion which stressed the centrality of composite culture in the theory of governance. We find the narrative in this occasion as an anecdote repeated throughout the history of this subcontinent. The time was pre-Vedic. It certainly came from the collective memory of two distinct groups of peoples and cultures—devas and daityas, or aryas and asuras.

Sheel (virtuous character) consisting of universal values of non-violence (adroha), compassion (anugraha) and charity (danam) came to be accepted by both daityas and devas (aryas and asuras) as the key to successful and good governance. From the time of the initial rivalry between Aryans and non-Aryans, sheel was considered to be the secret of the success of a king and his governance (Mahabharata 12 (Shantiparva) 124:66).

Prahlada, the leader of the asuras, could win the battle over Indra, the leader of aryas, on the strength of the sheel consisting of these values. Indra could win over Prahlada only when Indra could obtain this sheel from Prahlada. This is quoted in Mahabharata as being narrated by Dhritarashtra to his son Duryodhana, the eldest of Kauravas. The importance of sheel as the key to a king's success being the composite theory of both devas and daityas has been highlighted from the earliest available narratives belonging to

the collective memory of our composite culture of this subcontinent. Moreover, the three values of non-violence, compassion and charity were considered to be the main constituents of a constitutional governance flowing from the values of dignity and fraternity.

Like similar civilisations of the world, Indian civilisation had accepted some universal values or principles of conduct as central not only to different aspects of human life, but even to nature. This idea of "rita", which subsequently got morphed into the concept of dharma, included both cosmic law and social law. This dharma is substantially different from the present popular usage of this term to mean religion.

FOURFOLD DUTIES

When various Vedic and Brahmanic traditions were agreeing on a few values as universal and fundamental, the Sramanic groups were also developing almost identical values as universal. They were preaching a few values as applicable to all people even though they had been questioning and rejecting some of the values that were being followed in Vedic tradition such as the necessity of performing Vedic yagnyas and animal sacrifices. Among the Sramanic groups of the time Parshvanath (872-772 BCE) had preached four supreme values, which he recommended for all, Chaturyama Dharma: the fourfold duties (ahimsa, satya, asteya and aparigraha). During the Upanishadic period, Rishi Gora Angirasa gave the instructions on the fundamental values to Krishna, son of Devaki, to the extent stating that these values are the real essence of the sacrifice or yagnya (Chandogya Upanisad III/17/ 4): "atha yat tapo danam arjavam ahimsa satya-vacanam iti, ta asya daksinah" (And austerity, alms-giving, uprightness, non-violence, truthfulness, these are the gifts for the priests). Some authors suggested a close relationship between the Sramanic and Upanishadic teachings of a few fundamental universal values.

In Mahabharata, a composite culture evolving from plurality of lifeways is accepted

by Krishna when he explains to Arjuna that according to some people dharma (moral values) is derived from Vedas whereas others hold that dharma (moral values) can be known only through reasoning. Krishna states that he does not want to contradict any of them (Mahabharata, Karnaparva:69:58).

Around 600 B.C. a healthy rivalry was apparent among a number of sects, such as the Charvakas, Jainas and Ajivikas, whose doctrines ranged from pure materialism to determinism. This intellectual liveliness was reflected in the eclectic interests of the Mauryan rulers, since it was claimed by the Jainas that Chandragupta was a supporter and there is evidence that Bindusara favoured Ajivikas. The five precepts taught by the Buddha are almost identical to the universal values arrived at in both the Brahmanic and Sramanic traditions.

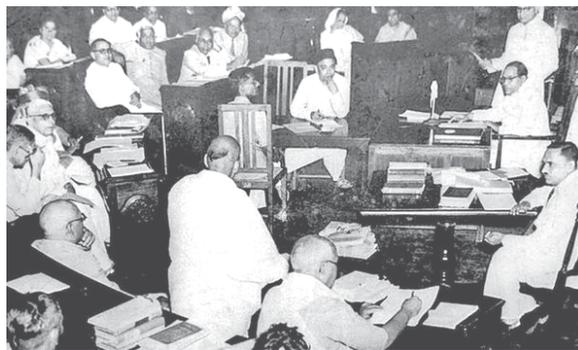
We also have this ideal of composite culture prescribing universal obligations, duties common to all, that is, as sadharana dharma or sarvesham without any difference of varna or ashrama, profession or stages of life. Thus, we have in Kautilya's Arthashastra, considered to be of 4th century B.C., that the duties common to all are non-violence (ahimsa), truthfulness, uprightness, freedom from malice, compassion and forbearance (Arthashastra 1:3;13).

In ancient India, Asoka, the Mauryan king, was one of the famous rulers who established the importance of universal values in the political realm. He used the term dhamma, or dharma, for these universal values and ideals to be followed by everybody.

According to P.V. Kane, almost all the Dharmashastra works prescribe for all varnas a brief code of morals, such as ahimsa, truthfulness, non-stealing (that is, no wrongful taking of another's property), purity and

restraint of senses. Thus, we see in India, there has been a long tradition of agreeing on a few values as universal ones while acknowledging different values followed by different groups and persons. It is safe to infer that this tradition helped us to arrive at a composite culture as the basis for a constitutionalism.

The Dravidian region has given us examples of an evolution of this composite culture. Chitalai Chathanar's Tamil poem Manimekalai (sixth century C.E.) is remarkable in its comprehensive treatment of the



composite culture of that period. Manimekalai is the eponymous story of a south Indian temple dancer and courtesan, Manimekalai. She decides, with her mother Madhavi, to leave her profession and become an ascetic

and pursue the virtue of charity.

Chathanar's descriptions of different world views through Manimekalai make it explicit that the lifeways or sects which were popular at that period were not solely the religious ones in the modern sense, they included major materialist and non-religious ones, like Lokayatas and Bhutavadis. These were in addition to the Nastik, or heterodox, ones like Nirgranthas and Buddhists on the one side and the Vaiseshikas and Samkhyas on the other. Medieval Bhakti movements of the south and the north are the evolved expressions of the secular or pluralistic character of the Indian society evolving a composite culture. All these movements were popular movements, which can rightly be termed as people's movements.

The Nath Yogi Gorakh, or Gorakhnath, who lived in circa 11th or 12th century, gives examples of the concept of composite culture: By birth [I am] a Hindu, in mature age a Yogi and by intellect a Muslim (Sabadi 14, in Barthwal (ed.) 1960: 6).

Kabir (1450-1520) admonishes both Hindus and Muslims and his verses invite all to embrace the true composite human values:

God has taken many names:/ Names like Allah, Ram, Karim,/ Kesav, Hari, and Hajarat./ Gold may be shaped into rings and bangles./ Isn't it gold all the same?/ Distinctions are only words we invent/ One does namaz, one does puja./ One has Siva, one Mohammed,/ One has Adam, one Brahma./ Who is a Hindu, who a Turk? / Both must share a single world. /Koran or Vedas, both read their books./ One is a panda, one a mullah. /Each of them bears a separate name,/ But every pot is made from clay (Kabir bijak, Sabda 30 (Kabir, 1982)).

Guru Nanak (1469-1539) gives the call for adhering to composite universal human values forgetting the silly differences between the religions of Hindus and Muslims. For example, we have this famous phrase, "Nobody is Hindu, nobody Turk" (Hindu turka na koi).

Kanhavat (an epic poem on Krishna) by Malik Muhammad Jayasi, the Sufi poet who is famed for his work Padmavat, is an eloquent example of Islamic contribution to the composite evolution of our constitutional culture as indelibly recorded in popular literature.

This pluralistic evolution of a composite culture reached its zenith during the independence movement, which found its expression in the Constitution. Thus, what our composite culture requires and the Constitution mandates is a regime of relative universality, or "variform universals", as Lonner (1998) called it, or a pluralist universalism as Bhikhu Parekh advocates or a regime of human rights-sensitive pluralism. This can also be seen as an "overlapping consensus" among differing ideologies and world views.

MOSAIC AND NOT A MELTING POT

The democratic ideal of a composite culture can best be conceptualised as a mosaic and not as a melting pot. In the Minerva Mills case (1980) the Supreme Court said: "India

represents a mosaic of humanity consisting of diverse religions, linguistic and caste groups."

In 2002, the Supreme Court through a Constitution Bench of 11 judges unequivocally reiterated the same in beautiful words in the case of the TMA Pai Foundation: "The one billion population of India consists of six main ethnic groups and 52 major tribes; six major religions and 6,400 castes and sub-castes; 18 major languages and 1,600 minor languages and dialects. The essence of secularism in India can best be depicted if a relief map of India is made in mosaic..." In the same case, Justice Ruma Pal was categorical when she said: "The Constitution as it stands does not proceed on the 'melting pot' theory. The Indian Constitution, rather represents a 'salad bowl' where there is homogeneity without an obliteration of identity."

CONSTITUTIONALIST HERITAGE

According to the great advocate and jurist N.A. Palkhivala, India has developed these constitutional values through her crowded history of 5,000 years. They are essential not only for the rebirth of the Indian nation but also for the re-education of the human race (India's Priceless Heritage, 1980, pages 38-39). Constitution is not a parchment of paper as Justice H.R. Khanna has put it: "The edifice of nations and national institutions, we should remember, take long to build. Behind them is the story of sweat, blood and tears, of untold suffering and sacrifice; yet they can be destroyed overnight by the banishment of principles or by the selfishness, petty mindedness or folly of men. If the Indian Constitution is our heritage bequeathed to us by our Founding Fathers, no less are we, the people of India, the trustees of the values which pulsate within its provisions" (Making of India's Constitution, 1981, page 121).

Dr M.P. Raju is an advocate practising in the Supreme Court of India. His latest book, "India's Constitution: Roots, Values and Wrongs", published by Media House, is expected to be released soon.

Courtesy—Frontline

Sri Lanka Post-War Reconciliation and Peace Building through NGOs/Communities

By MUGILAN PERUMAL, ISD, INDIA



SRI LANKA, a tiny island country in South Asia was ravaged by a long running and bloody civil war, due to ethnic tensions between the Buddhist Sinhalese majority and the Hindu Tamil minority. The civil war in the

North and East provinces broke out in July 1983. The war finally ended in 2009 almost after three decades. The war was devastating and left numerous questions over the prospects for reconstruction and peace. A member of Institute for Social Democracy, New Delhi (ISD) visited the war torn regions of Sri Lanka to assess the post-war rehabilitation, reconstruction and reconciliation process. This report summarizes the prevailing conditions and developments observed during the field visit to the affected localities, communities and extensive interaction with the grassroots level NGOs in Central and Northern provinces of Sri Lanka.

GLIMPSES OF SRI LANKA AND CIVIL WAR :

Sri Lanka, an island nation previously referred as Ceylon. The name was changed into Sri Lanka in 1972 as it was termed by the foreigners. It means the “Respected (Sri) Land to Shine or Glitter (Lanka)” in Sinhala language. There are about 70% Sinhalese, 18% Tamils, 09% Muslims and other minorities like Christians and tribes living in the country.

The majority follow Buddhism and other minorities follow Hinduism, Islamism, Christianity and other religions. There are two major key elements such as language and religion making an unbridgeable divide among different communities in the country.

The civil war (armed conflict) started in 1983 by LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) for creating an independent Tamil state called ‘Tamil Eelam’ and it was ended in 2009 with horrible experiences. The conflict cost the lives of an estimated 80,000 to 100,000 citizens and hundreds of thousands of civilians were displaced. There were multiple attacks carried out on minorities such as Tamils and Muslims in Sri Lanka over the issues of language, religion and political power. The innocent people were used as human shields by both the conflicting groups and brutally killed and butchered in a ruthless way. Sri Lanka’s main ingredients of conflict/war/tension can be listed as below:

- Political Instability and Military Power
- Religious Extremism
- Language and Culture
- Land Grabbing and Misusing
- Racism
- Denial of Education to Tamils and Unemployment
- Psycho-Social-Economical Effects

There were multiple factors contributed to the war to break three major communities Sinhalese, Tamils and Tamil Muslims into

many pieces, especially in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka.

VOICES AND EXPERIENCES OF THE WAR VICTIMS :

The victims' ordeal will never fade away, but the forgiveness, moral reparations and reconciliation process are the only solution to bring back peace and harmony. In Sri Lanka, the war went on for virtually three decades and left the victims only with dreadful memories and bitter experiences. One of the victims from war-torn province shared her miserable experience,

"I am having heart problem and the doctor advised me to take proper care of myself. During the war, I had to run with my family right from Kilinochi to Mulli Vakkadu village and sometimes I had to starve without food and water. I had to eventually lose some of my family members especially my two brothers. One of my brothers fled to a European country and another chose to hide in the country itself to save his life. Throughout my journey, I saw many people being killed at the hands of the armed forces and helicopter bombing. Somehow, I managed to get both of my brothers' contacts after the war, but still the security forces keep threatening me to reveal the details of my brothers". – Sudha (Name Changed)

In Kilinochi village, a group of women literally cried while sharing their war experiences. They were made to live in the cloistered houses for many days during the war. The security forces were in and out hunting Sri Lankan Tamils and Muslims to rape, kill and dispose the bodies. They also confronted with the horrible situation of leaving the child with the dead mother. They still regret of not being able to protect the child. However, they want to obliterate those gloomy days by living together as brothers and sisters.

In Jaffna survivors narrated the appalling war conditions including Indian government's role. War made its severe impacts on the socio-economic scenario. It was inconceivable to buy a bicycle, one liter of

petrol was being sold at Rs. 3500/- (\$ 23), no electricity throughout Tamil inhabited regions to cripple them down. The intervention of Indian Peace Keeping Forces working in connivance with the Sri Lankan armed forces adversely affected the Sri Lankan Tamils.

According to one survivor, "I have been struggling to survive since 16 years and now, I am 42 years old. I was displaced in 1990s and lost all my belongings including my house. I had seen cluster bombing on civilians from the aircrafts. My education was discontinued as a result of this bloody war which left me dispirited. We are law abiding citizens of Sri Lanka, I am not expecting equality between Sinhalese and Tamils, but the rights of human beings should be enshrined in the constitution and protected in a pragmatic way". – Vetrivelan (Name Changed)

In Kalvelan village, the coastal area of Northern Sri Lanka, most of the inhabitants were displaced and came back only after spending several years in the refugee camps in Sri Lanka as well as in India. Majority of them lost their traditional occupation 'fishing'. The armed forces grabbed those areas and have been involved in drug dealing businesses. As a consequence, people from the same region got involved in drug business. Drug abuse resulted in serious social problems such as sexual abuse, violence, loss of livelihood and domestic violence. The communities took some initiatives to check violence and continued to draw government's attention to improve their livelihood. They are desperately looking for reparations from the new government, but could not get any justice so far.

COMMUNITIES/NGOS' STRATEGIES TO BUILD PEACE :

Puttalam Region (Central Province):

The Puttalam district became the region which provided conducive conditions and environment to take refuge for all three major communities such as Sinhalese, Tamil Hindus and Tamil Muslims. During the war, more than 80,000 internally displaced people came to the region and all of them were given the common lands by the village local body

government. The NGO/Organization has been working to build peace and harmony by using different strategies.

Sun Women Federation : Formed in 2010 under the Ministry of Women Affairs, the federation has more Sinhalese women as members. Women members from three communities started interacting with each other through this officially recognized organization. They could manage many language related issues. Most significantly, the involvement of youth through awareness programmes helped subsequently in increasing the membership. Their efforts succeeded in forging unity and solidarity among themselves as a result considerable number of Sinhalese women protested against the armed forces atrocities in Jaffna, particularly when a woman named Vidya was raped and murdered. The Sun women federation is spreading social and political awareness and planning to contest in the local body elections to press for socio economic reforms.

Healing of Memory : Healing of memory technique is used to relieve and help the war victims to gain normalcy which is done through storytelling and experience sharing.

LLRC (Lesson Learnt and Reconciliation Commission) : The LLRC started in 2010 and consisted of judges, academia, administrative officers, and united nation authorities. It prepared the report on the plight of displaced people and submitted cases for reparations and its recommendations. Although the report had been submitted to the then president Mahindra Rajapaksa in 2011, but their demands were not completely fulfilled. The women federation and other civil society groups are constantly advocating for justice for the victims.

JAFFNA REGION (NORTHERN PROVINCE) :

The primary work of the NGOs in Jaffna has been to promote and strengthen good governance, women empowerment, value based education and addressing main issues through awareness.

Amara Widow Women's Association :

The widows association is having members from 54 villages of Jaffna region. They hold meetings and discuss about various issues including income generation activities. Fortunately, they are receiving a sum of Rs.250/- (\$ 1.63) per month from the government, but it is hardly sufficient for their living. They still hope that they would get satisfactory results through their advocacy in future.

Transitional Justice : The Truth-Seeking Programme makes different communities to come together and understand each other's situations. The fact of the matter is that the conflict also can probably and possibly take place due to each other's misunderstandings and misrepresentations. Therefore, it is important to bring affected and non-affected people together in order to share the actual circumstances.

Heart-Heart Approaches : These approaches are carried out through the cultural components like drama, songs, dance, celebrating various festivals, etc. to heal the psychological pain of war victims. It also includes conflict transformation workshops with frameworks like visual sharing, participatory approaches and other conflict resolution training programmes in the field and at NGO level.

PRA Workshop : The Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tool is applied on the ground level to figure out problems of the communities and address them with the available resources.

Participatory Approaches : The communities are encouraged to participate in different sessions dealing with teaching, training, conflict management, social development and gender awareness.

People have started working in public sector enterprises like banks and financial institutions. The other livelihood activities such as tailoring, making Palmyra sweets and its products, handicrafts are made available for the survivors in order to relieve their minds from inconsolable memories.

REHABILITATION AND RECONCILIATION PROCESS :

The new government (came into power in 2015) has paid only lip-service to the interests of minorities such as Tamils and Muslims who were severely affected by the war. It is only the communities which had made some efforts to rehabilitate and reconcile with the help of the NGOs and other groups.

The communities collected some paltry funds from people to organize pamphlet distribution campaign to spread the political messages against Mahindra Rajapaksa's regime. They were able to reach out to three districts with three lakh pamphlets demanding political reforms.

Kilinochi Village : There are two women's organizations namely Uvasakthi and Mahasakthi formed under Social Service Defense with the help of an NGO. Initially, there were 15 to 20 war affected women but later their number increased to 2000. Their main activities are capacity building, income generation activities, vocational training to engage themselves in the process of rehabilitation.

In Kalvelan village, people organized themselves and established a small primary school after they learnt about the Indian Gandhian peace theory. They understood that the education is the only way out to transform their community.

In Jaffna region, the affected victims were given only 2460 acres land out of 6400 acres of land occupied by the army personnel. The communities took up the issue by involving Tamil politicians and policy makers and negotiated with the government to release their lands. On Jan 2017, the government allotted 500 acres of land to the survivors.

COMPOSITE HERITAGE COMPONENTS TOWARDS PEACE AND HARMONY :

History : Puttalam village situated in central part of Sri Lanka, has people from Singhalese, Tamil and Muslim communities living a peaceful coexistence. 'Kuyani' is a term refers to Singhalese woman who married to an Indian Tamil. They live together and

people also accepted the new form of inter-ethnic marriage. Art and Language: Janakaraliya ('people of the theater' in Singhalese language) Cultural Foundation was formally established by Parakrama Niriella in 2004 with the vision of promoting peace through theater and street performances. They also make documentaries and short films based on social culture themes and organize mobile theatres and dramas in both 'Tamil' and 'Sinhala' languages. They are encouraging Tamil artists to perform in the Singhalese language in order to understand the diversity as well as to be united and vice versa. The UNESCO recognized it as a 'theatre for social change.' They continue to use the two major languages to promote peace among Sri Lankan civilians and unite the different communities through theatrical and street performances.

Life Skills Development and Cultural Events: children are encouraged to take up activities to acquire skills and knowledge through play way learning methods. Programmes and cultural events like festivals, traditional sports, and songs are conducted for the children along with their parents to build interpersonal relationships effectively.

There is a famous idiom, "Every cloud has a silver lining" and there is no doubt that the Sri Lankan war devastated lives of people in all respects, but the post-war situations made people to unite to save them from impending catastrophe. They formed organized and unorganized federations/ groups by themselves in order to address social, political and economic issues and try to solve them with all their capacities. Still, they keep hoping that the government would bring justice to them.

The people, especially women have the sense of pacifism. Some of the survivors fervently expressed that they would never let another war to occur and they would continue to build fruitful relationships with everyone irrespective of their differences. Their positive attitude would certainly lead to positive actions in the present as well as in the future.

Kashmiriyat as Composite Heritage

By SANIA MUSHTAQ DEEN, ISD, INDIA



KASHMIRIYAT is an integral part of cultural value system and social consciousness of the Kashmiri people. It is the amalgamation of world views, identities, belief systems, language transcending the boundaries of religion. Every Kashmiri holds the essence of Kashmiriyat. Kashmiriyat as a social cultural value setup has always helped in uniting communities of Kashmir to live together and fight against all odds. Be it music, food or festival, everything carries the quintessence of Kashmiriyat. Historically, the concept has existed with many versions. Some believe that Kashmiriyat as social cultural value system grew under the rule of Muslim Governor Zain-ul-Abidin and the Mughal emperor Akbar both of whom gave equal protection and patronage to Kashmir's different religious communities. According to a popular belief, the term Kashmiriyat has come to signify century's old indigenous secular tradition of Kashmir developed much before Mughal Empire. People look upon Kashmiriyat in its diverse versions encompassing political, social and cultural fabric. For an ordinary Kashmiri, the term Kashmiriyat signifies cultural values passed from one generation to the other. People also believe that Kashmiriyat as part of Kashmiri heritage has evolved with the advent of Islam in Kashmir and propagated through a vibrant Sufi movement.

Religious Harmony as an inherent characteristic of Kashmiriyat was believed to

have been epitomised by the teachings of Sheikh Noor ud-Din - Nund Reshi (patron saint of Kashmir) for his Hindu devotees and Muslim followers. Kashmiriyat as a significant component of Composite Heritage personifies human bonding and sense of responsibility among Kashmiris inspiring them to build a just society and promote peace and harmony between people living in conflict ridden Kashmir. The recent killings of Amarnath Pilgrims is one such example. The incident took place on 10th July, 2017 in Anantnag area of Kashmir where 8 Amarnath pilgrims (yatris) returning from Amarnath shrine were killed and left several pilgrims (yatris) injured. After this incident it was heartening to see that how all Kashmiris rose to the occasion and unequivocally denounced the killing of innocent Amarnath pilgrims (yatris) by uniting against the odious act of terror and speaking vociferously against it. In the past few years Kashmir has seen a new tendency among youth for their liking or support for militants of Kashmir due to continuous denial of Justice to them from the governance system. But when the killings of Amarnath pilgrims took place, it was well visible that Kashmiri youth raised their voices and made it clear that these killings are a matter of disgrace irrespective of their tacit attachment with new age militants.

People of Kashmir have been living under the shadow of a severe violent conflict situation for more than two decades now which has affected the entire Kashmiri society physically and psychologically. The conflict created a schism among ordinary

Kashmiris who see the conflict as a division of power or power play between centre and the state. But despite this schism in perspective, it is highly significant to note that youth and people of Kashmir unequivocally condemned the killing incident. It was the strength and essence of Kashmiriyat (cultural values) as composite heritage which brought people together to stand unitedly against the heinous crime. Not only the civil society and youth condemned the act but also took initiative to donate blood to the injured without taking in consideration the religious confines. Even the bus driver present at the time of attack was a Kashmiri Muslim who saved lives of over 50 yatris without caring for his own safety. This gesture of bus driver was overwhelming and of worth appreciation. Perhaps he did it inspired by humanity and Kashmiriyat. This incident shows that Kashmiriyat as a cultural value and source of inspiration for Kashmiris cannot be eradicated from the land of Kashmir and

Kashmiriyat as a crucial component of composite heritage tool can contribute in peaceful transition in the state of Kashmir. Amaranth pilgrimage has always been important part of Kashmir's cultural and religious traditions where Hindu pilgrims are welcomed by local Muslim population. It is a living manifestation of Kashmir's cultural diversity and harmonious coexistence. It can be said that it is the spirit of Kashmiriyat that contributes in preserving and strengthening this journey of faith.

Besides Amarnath pilgrimage there are other incidences which show that Kashmiriyat as a tool of composite heritage has a unifying power. Firstly it is vital to note that Kashmiriyat is not only followed by Kashmiri Muslims but in fact Kashmiriyat is even adhered by Sikhs, Kashmiri pandits and other communities of Kashmir. Kashmiriyat is about respecting and protecting all religions of Kashmir. It is the power of Kashmiriyat that inspires all communities of Kashmir to come together



and stand up against any unforeseen incident, disaster or injustice in the society. If we take into account the Kashmir unrests in 2008,2010 and 2016 it was remarkable to see that Sikh community of Kashmir has always extended their support to Kashmiri Muslims during every unrest.

Despite several intercommunity differences in Kashmir, Kashmiriyat as composite heritage has always encouraged people to live together in peace. Such intercommunity differences can be found between rural and urban people in Kashmir. Rural communities are always discriminated by people living in urban areas and even urban people are not much liked by rural people. Urban people always look at rural people as villagers and mock at them by referring as “gruss” (which is a negative remark and means illiterate, not well dressed and ill-mannered). In vice-versa rural people also call urban people as “keak” which means that urban people have unnecessary attitude with high ego. In many instances the urban rural differences turned into scuffles at workplaces, schools and universities.

But even then historically it has been seen that in case of any tragic situation, event, incident or disaster, it is the quality and spirit of Kashmiriyat that helped in forming linkages between rural and urban people to address the emerging situation. This is evident from the two major disasters that hit Kashmir badly which are 2005 earthquake and 2014 floods. In 2005 earthquake around 100 people lost their houses in hilly rural areas, at that time people living in urban areas provided relief and assistance to the victims. People from urban areas provided relief materials to the earthquake victims in rural areas. They also provided them financial support and youth of urban areas aided the victims to rebuild their houses leaving behind their differences.

During 2014 floods the whole Srinagar valley (city/urban areas) was submerged

under water for more than three months. During this disaster people from various rural villages reached with 100 of trucks loaded with food items, beddings and other relief items to help flood victims and even young people came forward to rescue the stranded people by putting their own lives in jeopardy. Such incidents set an example of Kashmiriyat. Moreover it was also marked that Kashmiriyat as a tool of composite heritage succeeded in forming strong emotional bond among Sikhs and Muslims during 2014 floods when both communities opened up their religious places to give shelter to the flood victims.

Apart from regional differences, caste differences also contribute in creating rifts among people of Kashmir. In particular Syed caste among Muslims consider themselves as elite caste and look up at other castes as inferior to them. Members of Syed caste marry only in their own caste and never go for inter-caste marriage. It is also believed that Syed caste tried to always attain some power as they think they are born to rule and their caste has been endowed with some spiritual powers. Other caste members often scoff at Syed caste by referring them as “malle” which means that some people from Syed caste sit at shrines and earn money by giving spiritual healings to people. Whereas people think it is unethical to use shrines as source of income that is the reason Syed caste people are criticised by other castes. But it is not the case, it is just that other castes have developed strong antipathy against Syed caste because they think Syed caste consider themselves elite and powerful. So the caste differences among Kashmiris have at the times shown uglier side but during unrests it was observed that irrespective of caste affiliations people together supported Kashmir struggle. Even Syed caste and other castes together provided aid to the transport community during 2016 unrest when community suffered major losses in their work. Perhaps it is the Kashmiri

cultural and social values embedded in Kashmiriyat that helped people to forge strong bonds to help each other.

One more striking example of Kashmiriyat is evident from the incident when 200 year old historical Peer Dastgeer Sahib shrine in summer capital of Kashmir was gutted in a blaze in the year 2012. Scores of locals gathered at the shrine weeping, wailing and trying to set off the blaze. Reverence for the 11th century saint in Kashmir cuts the religious barriers while Muslims call the saint “ghaus-e-azam” and the Hindus adore the saint as “kahnoow”. During this incident it was noticed that large number of people from Shia community were present to set off the blaze even if they do not have faith in that shrine. It was out of courtesy of Kashmiriyat which united Shia Sunni community together. This incident aroused love and compassion in the hearts of both the communities

During the month of Ramadan, the Sikh community of Kashmir organized Iftar stalls to help Muslims break their fast. Even on the occasion of Shab-e- Qadir (religious night when Muslims pray for whole night in the month of Ramadan) Sikh community served juices and snacks to the Muslims. Witnessing this emotional bond, it can be said that love doesnot care about existing religious boundaries and it is the essence of Kashmiriyat which is even adhered by Sikh community of Kashmir. The cultural values (Kashmiriyat) make every Kashmiri to realize that they should respect and love every religion, so it is Kashmiriyat which again and again demonstrated that it is an important part of composite heritage of Kashmir.

Historically, Kashmiriyat, a single thread of belongingness held both Kashmiri Pandits and Kashmiri Muslims together for ages. If we look at the history of this relationship before late 80's there was an astonishing relationship between two communities. Kashmiri Pandits and Kashmiri

Muslims were in continuous contact with each other by visiting each other's places, by celebrating festivals together and children of both communities used to play together. But this beautiful scenario totally went off from the sight after late 80's due to the emergence of the conflict situation. All Kashmiri Pandits migrated from their motherland and only a few Kashmiri Pandit families left in Kashmir. We could make out that the late 80's conflict created the rift between the two communities which deeply disturbed both the communities. After that both communities had no hope that there will be any sympathy and affection left towards each other. But there were some instances which assured that still there is emotional bond and respect between the two communities. And it is Kashmiriyat which has always held that string of hope and emotional attachment between the two communities.

During Kheer Bhawani Mela, Muslims helped Kashmiri Pandits in making all the arrangements to mark the occassion. Kashmiri Muslim youth were giving their best services to the devotees at Kheer Bhawani Mela. Kashmiri Pandits always appreciated this kind of attitude and it was well evident that love between two communities can never be lost. Also when Kashmiri Pandits were moving out of Kashmir, Kashmir Muslims were very emotional. So it is the Kashmiriyat which has safeguarded and preserved the internal bond between the two communities. All the incidents shared in this write-up make it clear that Kashmiriyat as a timeless composite heritage has always united people of Kashmir. Despite the existence of several other cultural components such as music, dance, festivals and historical places in Kashmir, Kashmiriyat occupies a unique status as important aspect of composite heritage that can play major role in bringing peace and harmony by forging strong emotional bonds among various Kashmiri communities.

The World and the “I”

By CHRISTOPHER CAUDWELL



THE characteristics of poetry flow necessarily from the nature of language and the active function of poetry in relation to society, man and reality.

When we speak of “man” we mean the genotype or individual, the instinctive man as he is born, who if “left to himself” might grow up into something like a dumb brute, but instead of this he grows up in a certain kind of society as a certain kind of man – Athenian, Aztec or Londoner. We must not think of the genotype as completely plastic and amorphous. It has certain definite instincts and potentialities which are the source of its energy and its restlessness. Nor are all genotypes alike. Men differ among themselves because of inborn characteristics. Society is not, however, opposed to this inborn individuality; on the contra, the differentiation which comes with increase of civilisation is the means of realising men’s particularities. Man cannot choose between being an artist or a scientist in a society which has neither art nor science; nor between biology and psychology where science is still no more than vague astrological superstition.

This genotype is never found “in the raw.” Always it is found as a man of definite concrete civilisation with definite opinions, material surroundings, and education – a man with a consciousness conditioned by the relations he has entered

into with other men and which he did not choose but was born into.

Men were originally drawn into these relations by their struggle with Nature or outer reality. There are certain laws of the individual – physiological and psychological. But in the extent to which man as one part of reality has separated himself from the other part (Nature) not in order to cut himself from it, but to struggle with it and thereby interpenetrate with it more closely in economic production – to that extent man has generated yet another field of laws, those of sociology. None of these sets of laws contradicts each other; they enrich each other.

But it is obvious that the field of sociology holds a special place because it is the field of the interpenetration of man and Nature, and the source of the generation ideologically of the other laws.

The struggle of man and Nature is a material movement which in the field of thought takes the form of the subject-object relation, the oldest problem of philosophy. It becomes insoluble problem only because the division of society into classes, by separating the class which generates ideology from society’s active struggle with Nature, reflects this cleavage into ideology as a separation of subject from object whereby they become mutually exclusive opposites.

In the field of thought as a whole this struggle of man and Nature in society is reflected as reality or “truth.” This truth

or reality is not something dropped down from on high, it is a living, growing, developing complex. Because it is truth about the Universe, it is a truth about matter. When we say the universe is material we mean that all phenomena have underground connections, in the form of causes or determining relations, which have an ultimate homogeneity called "matter." This is the first assumption of science, because to include anything in the field of science is to assert it has connections of this kind. To deny such connectedness of any phenomena is to deny their knowability and therefore the possibility of their inclusion in the field of science. The history of science is the discovery of these connections, and their demonstration as objective. They cannot be discovered by contemplation alone, but at every stage experiment – the practical demonstration of connections – is necessary.

Thus truth is an organised product of man's struggle with Nature. As that struggle accumulates capital (technique and knowledge) and grows in complexity, so the truth which is the reflection of reality blossoms in man's head. Only a partial aspect of that truth, at any time, can be in any one man's head. Distorted, partial and limited, in one head, this perception of reality yet acquires the power of truth, of science, in the heads of all living men, because it is organised by the conditions of society which themselves spring from the necessities of economic production. Thus at any time truth is the special complex formed by the partial reflections of reality in all living men's heads – not as a mere lumping together, but as these views are organised in a given society, by its level of experimental technique, scientific literature, means of communication and discussion, and laboratory facilities.

In each man "truth" takes the form of perception – what he seizes of reality with his senses – and memory – what is active at any moment of former perception,

affecting his present perception. Because these human consciousnesses acquire tremendous power when their contents emerge organised by association, and become truth, they reflect back again with increasing penetration on the individual, whose memory and perception thus become more and more modified by being in society. An individual's consciousness is, in this sense, a social product.

Truth is individual man's experience of the connections of phenomena, become organised by homologation with millions of other such experiences. It can be organised because these perceptual worlds are all phenomena exhibited by the one material universe of which all individuals are a part, and not phenomena of so many private subjective Universes. Without this common factor, there would be no congruence of private worlds and therefore no objective truth. Science, which is objective truth, therefore is concerned with demonstrating the material connections or "causality" of phenomena.

There is no absolute truth, but there is a limit to which the truth of society at any moment continually aims. This limit of absolute truth is the Universe itself. When man shall have completely interpenetrated with Nature.... Yet even this theoretical limit supposes both a Universe that stands still and a truth which is outside the Universe. Truth, however, is a part of the Universe. Yet truth is generated by man's struggle with the rest of reality, and hence, with each stage of the struggle, new reality is generated and the world made more complex. As a result reality itself is enriched, and the goal-post of "absolute truth" removed a stage further by that very increase in the complexity of reality. Society can no more reach absolute truth than a man can be tall enough to look down on himself – yet just as man's height by continually increasing extends his range of view, so society's development endlessly extends its truth.

Language is the most flexible instrument man has evolved in his associated struggle with Nature. Alone, man cannot plough Nature deeply; hence alone he cannot know her deeply. But as associated man, master of economic production, he widens his active influence on her, and therefore enlarges the truth which is the product of that action. Language is the essential tool of human association. It is for this reason that one can hardly think of truth except as a statement in language, so much is truth the product of association.

How does truth emerge in language? The word is a gesture, a cry. Take, for example, a herd of beasts that give a certain cry in situations of danger. When one cries, the others, as a result of a current of primitive passive sympathy, are terrified too, and all flee together.

The cry therefore has a subjective side, a "feeling-tone," all feel terrified at the cry.

But the cry also indicates some thing terrifying, a foe or danger. The cry therefore has an objective side, a reference to something perceivable in reality.

Evidently for purely animal existence a few brief cries suffice. Some animals are dumb. But for the animal engaged in economic production in association – the animal called man – the cry becomes the word. Its "value" is now no longer instinctive – resulting from the relation of genotype to habitual environment – it becomes "arbitrary" – resulting from the relation of modified genotype to artificial environment in economic production. In becoming the word as a result of association for economic production, the cry still retains its two sides, its instinctive feeling-tone and its acquired perceptual value, but both are made more precise and complex.

The feelings of the herd have a general similarity, because of the similarity of their instinctive make-up. Their

perceptions also have a similarity, because of the likeness in their way of living. These like feelings are not known to the individual animals as like, any more than each knows the other's perceptual worlds are like. The individual animal feels and sees alone. We, the onlookers, deduce the likeness in the emotional and perceptual worlds of the animals from the similarity of their behaviour; but the animals cannot be conscious in this way of a like world.

Man knows that there is a likeness in the worlds of men; this likeness is expressed for example in science, the world of perceptual reality. In the same way he knows there is a likeness in feelings. This likeness is expressed in art, the world of affective reality.

Man only came to know this likeness in his perceptual worlds when he entered into association with other men. Why did he so enter? In order to change his perceptual world. This contradiction is simply the basic contradiction of science – that man learns about reality in changing it. That is precisely what an experiment does; and the experiment is crucial for science. This characteristic contradiction reaches its final expression in Heisenberg's Principle of Indeterminacy, which declares that all knowledge of reality involves a change in reality. All laws of science are laws stating what actions produce what changes in reality. Science is the sum of the changes in perceptual worlds produced by men in their history, preserved, organised, made handy, compendious and penetrating.

In the same way, man learns of the likeness of the egos of other men by attempting to change them. This change is essential for living in association as men. Man's instinct is to do always such and such. Unless therefore these instincts can be modified to make him do something different, man will respond instinctively instead of in a conditioned way, and society will be impossible. Men live in a

common feeling-world only in so far as they are able to produce changes in each other's feelings by action. This change in feeling is crucial for art. The sum of such changes, organised and made independent of men, is what art is, not in abstraction, but emerging in concrete living.

Both science and art exist nascently in the animal. The wooing of the female, the frightening of enemies, mean that the active animal must change feeling in the other. The courtship dance and the threatening preliminaries to a fight are art in embryo. But both are done instinctively. They lack freedom and are therefore unconscious. They do not belong to a socially conditioned world. Only those feelings which are changed by means not given explicitly in the nature of man or of the natural environment are the subject of art. In so far as art exposes the real necessity of the instincts by exposing all the various possible changes following from the various possible means of influencing them, art becomes conscious of the necessity of the world of feeling, and therefore free. Art is the expression of man's freedom in the world of feeling, just as science is the expression of man's freedom in the world of sensory perception, because both are conscious of the necessities of their worlds and can change them – art the world of feeling or inner reality, science the world of phenomena or outer reality.

The common flight of a herd from a

terrifying object indicated by the cry of one, is science in embryo, but only becomes science when it is the consciousness of a change in the perceptual world produced, not by fleeing from danger instinctively, but by altering it economically – by, for example, making weapons or a snare and killing the dangerous animal, or retreating in an organised way, covering the rear.

Science and art, although expressions of the social commonness in perceptual and feeling worlds, do not reduce men to replicas of each other. On the contrary, because they deal with possible changes, and are expanded and enriched in proportion as new changes are discovered, they are the means whereby individual differences are realised. Differences which at the animal level reveal themselves as a hare-lip or an extra plumpness, now appear as subtle differences of emotional life or *Weltanschauung*, colouring and enriching the whole complex of reality. Language is the special medium whereby these changes are made social coin. Words are the money of the ideological market of mankind. Even as a few exchange transactions express all the bewildering complexity of modern social being, so a few sounds express all the rich universe of emotion and truth which is modern man's ideological world.

to be continued...

Courtesy—Illusion and Reality

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