

SACH

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Role of South Asia Youth in the Era of Transformation

SOUTH Asian countries are amongst the fastest growing regions today. They all share deep, historical, cultural linkages and have developed extensive political, economic and social ties over several decades. However, with current rising population and various socio-economic challenges, sustainable development and progress of South Asia have become one of the crucial factors. At present there is a need to identify various possibilities of sustainable growth of these countries, which may lie in the empowerment of its youth. South Asia needs strategic steps and understanding. It needs to tap the common shared factors and resources for its youths.

South Asia has always been riven by conflicts and different dimensions of conflict/tensions have been observed. We have also seen that even while facing several challenges, the South-Asia has entered a critical demographic time where the number of working adults exceeds dependents (children and the elderly). It is the need of the hour that we must focus on this adult population i.e., youth and help them cope with various challenges.

Although countries of the region have formulated their respective youth policies but a proper implementation is lacking. Youth today doesn't have access to proper health-care services especially for mental illnesses. Thus, we must ensure that they have all the essential amenities. We should provide them opportunities for better education and decent employment. This will secure lives of the future generations.

In this issue we discuss, that despite facing several challenges, how the youth is fighting against all odds and have become hope for the future. We share about the conflict in Myanmar where youngsters are sacrificing their lives for freedom. It, however, is sad that the youth is facing such conflict and is involved in war crimes. There is a need to look after such a generation who is struggling in such manner.

We also discussed about the flood which wreaked havoc in Pakistan and the youth initiatives for providing aid to flood survivors. We have also included climate change and the subsequent conflict in Bangladesh and how youth have become agents to tackle the crisis and are helping in policy making. In Nepal, youth have increased their political participation and have taken up leadership for bringing change in their region.

There are articles which also show the positive initiatives for social change. In Warangal, tribal youth, after getting education, have come back to their villages and are working for their community. In Rajasthan, a girl is educating youth on gender issues. In Bihar, a boy fought against the orthodox practices such as dowry. Such positive efforts prove that there is still hope and if we focus on youth, they can set positive examples for the next generation.

Positive efforts of youth and their participation in socio-economic and political sphere show that they are one of the key factors who are pushing the boundaries and demanding change in society. They have already become a part of many struggles and often play leadership roles in different movements. They are the one playing a crucial role in this era of transformation and will help in building a peaceful. They have the power to bring change we wish to see in the society.

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY -2022

INTERNATIONAL Youth Day began in 2000 by the United Nations to recognize the contribution of the youth in education, community development, environmental groups, different social issues and projects.

In 1965, General Assembly of the United Nations started its rigorous effort to work in the direction of empowering the youth. The aim was to recognize their leadership in building understanding amongst communities by taking inspiration from the declaration of promotion of ideals of peace and mutual respect.

On December 17th 1999, the UN General Assembly endorsed the recommendation made by the 'World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth' which led to the formation of International Youth Day. It was first celebrated on the twelfth August 2000, and ever since the day has been marked as the day to educate society, mobilize the youth in politics, and manage resources to address global problems.

The youth, especially in South Asian countries, is facing various problems. They are struggling with infinite difficulties and are unable to meet their basic requirements such as education, employment, healthcare etc. A significant number of young people around the globe are fighting for the necessity of recognizing the importance of mental health.

Institute for Social Democracy, while working with youth groups, has realized that in the past few years, due to various socio-economic challenges which were exacerbated by the Covid-19 induced lockdowns, they have been suffering tremendously. They not only lost access to education, but also were left in the lurch in a job market with barely any opportunities. This, however, isn't just restricted to the youth, everyone has had to suffer major losses which has caused significant financial and psychological suffering.

This year's International Youth Day theme- Intergenerational Solidarity: Creating a World for all Ages- is about recognizing the ageism which is embedded in the very structure of society. An age-based discrimination is about young and older people facing age-related barriers in various spheres of their lives such as education, employment, political participation, health and justice, which impacts society at large, as well. These problems not only impact the individual but further limit the thinking and fair approach for all ages and create difficulties in policy making at societal level.

This year's theme amplifies that every generation needs to take an action to achieve different sustainable goals and ensure that no one is left behind. The effort will also be made to raise awareness against certain barriers to solidarity, notably ageism. It will focus that co-operation and harmony between youth and older generation is necessary to achieve a sustainable society.

On this day, while celebrating the youth leadership, we should make sure to address the interlinking challenges of gender equality, poverty reduction, social inclusion, health care, biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation. We know that the youth have always been considered the future of any country and society so let's empower our youth and help them participate in various socio-economic and cultural initiatives. So that they continue to be a part of dialogues and actions to integrate biodiversity with mutual respect.

The Taliban Are Stuck in the Past — But Afghan Youth Can Create a Better Future

By ABDUL BASIT AMAL,

WHEN pressed on the future of girls' education in Afghanistan, Taliban Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai stated that their government law requires education for "both men and women" and signaled the former insurgent group would reopen girls' schools once the Taliban government developed "some sort of solution."

That was over 25 years ago, at the outset of the Taliban's first stint governing Afghanistan from 1996-2001. Stanikzai and several other Taliban officials continually assured that a policy shift was imminent — but the Taliban never lifted the ban on women's and girls' education.

More than two decades later, with the Taliban in power once again, Stanikzai has reassumed his position as deputy minister of foreign affairs. With that familiar title has come familiar rhetoric regarding the need to reopen girls' education.

But this time, the Afghan people understand the truth. They know the intervening years have failed to soften the Taliban's stances — that the words of an official like Stanikzai don't represent a new consensus within the Taliban. Afghans know that underneath the Taliban's hollow promises, the group as a whole still

exhibits the same obstinance toward popular reform that characterized their rule in the late 1990's. To create a better future, Afghans cannot wait for the Taliban to see the light. We need to build it ourselves.

A RETURN TO THE PAST

Prior to August 2021, Afghan youth — especially Afghan girls — had taken immense steps to create a better future for themselves and their country, expanding their rights, access to education, economic prospects, and bolstering a fledging democratic process.

The progress was hard-won, and countless challenges still stood in our path. But the rise of the Taliban government only served to exacerbate any problems Afghan youth and girls faced a year ago. Since the fall of Kabul, Afghanistan's catastrophic economic crisis has left a vast majority of youth unemployed. And after promising both Afghans and the West that schools for girls would reopen, almost all of them remain closed.

Afghan girls can play an important role in the growth and development of society. Learning and education are some of the most basic and essential rights, and nothing should deprive Afghan girls of this. By closing the gates of girls' schools to Afghans and the international



community, the Taliban have once again proven that they are petrified and backward-thinking. The group, which has been at war for nearly three decades, continues to kill innocent people, threaten and assault educational facilities, and remains a major threat to Afghans and global peace.

Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of Afghans, myself included, have been forced to flee the country out of fear for our safety. Being torn from our communities and loved ones is hard enough. But the suddenness with which our lives changed is something that many in the Afghan diaspora are still struggling to process.

My wife and I were given only two days' notice — and two backpacks for our belongings — before being swept into a life of near-constant transit. Since leaving

Afghanistan, we've stayed in Qatar, Sicily and eventually New Mexico before finally settling in North Carolina. Almost a year later, the reality of what transpired is just now beginning to sink in.

However, the peacebuilding lessons I learned from my work in Afghanistan are still with me. From starting my social activism in high school, to becoming a medical doctor, to my time spent teaching and promoting youth education in all subjects, I've seen time and again that when Afghans embrace one another and commit ourselves to creating change, we will always find practical solutions for the betterment of Afghan society.

THE YOUTH-LED PATH FORWARD

Young people are one of the biggest and best assets a country has when it comes to building a bright and prosperous future. And

in Afghanistan, more than 60 percent of the population is under the age of 25.

This figure reflects a massive constituency ready to be mobilized on behalf of peace and human rights. The Taliban may attempt to stifle youth in Afghanistan by closing schools, threatening violence and restricting freedom of speech — but they can't stop young leaders from trying.

Young people have been at the center of Afghanistan's progress over the past two decades. And while there is still a long way to go — even longer now that the Taliban have returned to power — young Afghans' hard work and immense patience are certainly up to the challenge.

Based on my experience, I would like to suggest the following recommendations that those inside and outside the country can adopt to increase the literacy of women and improve the education of youth in general:

1. VOLUNTARY EFFORTS TO SPREAD KNOWLEDGE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

This could be done by organizing independent educational classes in homes and neighborhoods that are relatively safe from Taliban reprisals. For us Afghans abroad, we can assist by raising funds and supplies to support Afghan students. From our new home here in the United States, my wife and I founded The Two Doctors Mission in part to support similar education resources.

Even starting from the smallest of steps — like collecting necessary study materials such as textbooks, notebooks, pens and pencils — can give parents a reliable network that facilitates the education of their daughters and sons in a homeschool environment.

2. AMPLIFYING OUR VOICES AGAINST OPPRESSION AND INJUSTICE

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube

and other social media platforms are some of the best ways to raise your voice and support other youth and their activities. Orchestrating campaigns and publishing them through social media will play a big role in making them stronger and more successful. The relative versatility of social media campaigns allows leaders to assess the situation and seize opportunities as they come along. And the digital environment offers a place where all Afghans — whether in the country or abroad as part of the diaspora — can still make their voices heard as a united people.

3. PARTNERING WITH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS THAT WORK FOR PEACE, EDUCATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

As youth peacebuilders, we can leverage our contacts and connections to support our activities by, for example, introducing ourselves, our organizations and our plans to NGOs. Tapping into international networks, such as my time as part of USIP's Generation Change Fellows Program and my current role on the Institute's Youth Advisory Council, can offer a trove of expertise and inspiration from other young peacebuilders around the world.

Forging these connections with other institutions working for peace, positive change and the rights of the younger generation can provide leverage over the Taliban government and force them to stop violating the rights of Afghans, especially Afghan girls, and improve the country. In a situation where the lives of those inside Afghanistan are in danger, and the lives of those outside are subject to extreme uncertainty, standing on our own will not be easy — that's why we young Afghans are stronger when we work together.

Courtesy : usip.org

Mahabubabad: Group of Educated Youth on Mission to Change Lives of Fellow Villagers

By P. LAXMA REDDY, INDIA

A group of youngsters from a remote tribal hamlet, who achieved success in their professional careers, are striving a lot to transform the lives of fellow villagers and youngsters with the support of the like-minded people from different parts of the country.

An alumnus of the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Warangal, M Mohan, who is presently working as a Senior Research Engineer (SRE) in the Telecom Department in Bengaluru, embarked on this mission to help the people grow in their lives.

As a part of his efforts to develop the village and change the lives of the locals, Mohan along with a few other youths from the village formed one association called 'Harischandru Thanda Girijana Youth Association (HTGYA)' at their village Thavurya Thanda of Kesamudram mandal in 2004. "Since then, we have undertaken several awareness and guidance programmes including the online classes during the Covid-19 pandemic for school and college going children. We tried to make the people aware of the importance of maintaining clean surroundings and personal hygiene to avoid seasonal diseases. Medical camps were also conducted at the village which has a population of around 1500 people,"

Mohan told to 'Telangana Today'.

To provide safe and clean drinking water, the association consulted Bala Vikasa, a noted NGO, and raised funds for setting up a water plant with an estimated cost of Rs five lakhs. "While the members of the water plant committee raised Rs one lakh, the association collected nearly Rs four lakhs from the donors and employees of the village. The construction of the plant is almost over and the machine is to be installed," Mohan said. Much to the surprise, this remote thanda produced nearly 40 government employees working with the state and central governments. "There is a student who graduated from an IIT," Mohan said, explaining about the sheer commitment of the youth from the village. "The association has so far spent Rs 10 lakhs for the service activities. We also helped two sisters at Reddypalem village near Warangal by donating Rs 15,000 for their studies, and also helped the school children by donating notebooks and other material at Surya Thanda of Raghunadhapalem mandal of neighbouring Khammam district," Mohan said.

The association has also helped young mountaineer from Bhukya Thanda in Maripeda mandal Bhukya Yashwanth who climbed Mt Kilimanjaro. "With a view to

expand our activities and garner the support of the people from different parts of the country, we have established the Nation's First Human Chain (NFHC), an NGO, in 2020. We are yet to register the NGO," Mohan said. President of the association M Harikrishna said that Mohan was the leading light of the service activities at the village. "Our villagers must thank Mohan for his support and guidance to the villagers," he said. Mohan, who completed his SSC from the tribal welfare residential school, Damaravantha of Gudur mandal in 2006, said that he was inspired by Mathematics teacher G

Venakateswar Rao (GVR) who helped him financially and other means to get the seat in the NIT Warangal and achieve a good position. "I wanted to help others as I was supported during my tough times by GVR sir," Mohan said. While a Superintending Engineer of TS Housing Corporation Ltd Chaitanya Kumar is acting as honorary president of the NGO, an ADE of the TS GENCO Ravinder is the chief advisor to the organisation. An ISRO scientist Mahender, an Assistant Professor Dr Mahesh and others are working as the members of the NGO.

Courtesy : telanganatoday.com

Bringing Social Change! Know How This Rajasthan Girl Is Educating Youth On Gender-Related Issues

By RONIT KUMAR SINGH, INDIA

VITHIKA Yadav was born in Alwar, Rajasthan; according to her, women there were not liked to talk openly or come out of the veil. But, born in an educated and progressive family, Vithika started appraising the youth on issues that no one wanted to discuss. She started her career solving cases of human trafficking and worked with organisations across South Asia. Interest in this subject kept increasing for Vithika, and she never looked back. Since childhood, she considered Kiran Bedi her idol, inspiring her to work on such issues. She started collecting information on crimes related to women and children, understanding the problems, and working on solving them. Multimedia Platform- 'Love Matters' She started the multimedia platform Love

Matters, keeping every aspect of pregnancy, marriage, relationships, and rights for all genders. It is a digital Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) information platform catering to the needs of young people. They provide open-end and science-based information using innovative media formats. The vision is to give complete and unbiased SRHR information to young people of all gender using websites, social media platforms, discussion boards, campaigns, podcasts, radio programs, and videos, including animation, virtual reality, and augmented reality. It started in India in 2011, has since scaled to five other regions, and is now a part of the Love Matters Global Network. While talking to The Logical Indian, Vithika said, " Love Matters started

with solid research and insights from the target audience of young people. It fulfilled an unmet need, and hence right after the launch, it was a huge success. I was passionate about what I was doing, and I tried my best to understand young people's challenges regarding their health and well-being. I spent time speaking to the youth about their problems. What problems they face, limitations, issues on which they cannot talk about openly, do they want such information?" According to the company, the aim is to work as an intersection between media and public health, specialising in media for social change. Harnessing the power of technology, popular culture, design thinking, and storytelling, they seek to bridge the gap between young people, SRHR organisations, experts and service providers.

The Love Matters focuses on the needs of young people between the ages of 18-30 and produces right-based, gender-sensitive, and pan-sexual information on SRHR issues to suit the needs of all young people. Understanding The Core Of Societal Issues Vithika worked with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, BBC World Service Trust, Free the Slaves, and MTV EXIT. Her experiences helped her understand the core of societal issues, yet people don't talk freely about the same. She currently serves as the Chair of the Global Advisory Board on Sexual Health and Well-being. In 2016 she was one of the Top 120 under 40 New Generation of Family Planning leaders in the world by Bill and Melinda Gates Institute for Population and Reproductive Health.

Courtesy : thelogicalindian.com

Silent Social Revolution: Bihar Youths Rebel, Opt Dowryless Marriages

By STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE, INDIA

THERE seems to be a new kind of social revolution silently taking place in the hinterland of Bihar. Call it the impact of the sustained campaigns or the sheer impulse to change the old social order, the young generations in the state are now revolting against their parents seeking dowry from brides' families and opting for dowry-less marriages, bringing pleasant changes on the social horizons. In the past one month itself, as many as four such weddings have taken place in various corners of Bihar.

In a fresh incident, a youth from Jharkhand reached the house of his would-be bride in Rohtas district and entered into wedlock at a local temple after his parents

broke the pre-scheduled wedding programme for not paying enough dowry. The wedding of Pankaj Kumar Chaudhary, a resident of Hussainabad block in Jharkhand, had been fixed with Pratima Kumari who hails from Rohtas district. However, the matter got stuck over the issue of dowry and eventually the wedding got cancelled.

Once the news reached the youth, he rushed to the residence of the girl and offered a dowry-less wedding which the girl's parents agreed to. Instantly, the wedding was solemnized at a local temple on Sunday in the presence of local villagers. "I don't want dowry but a worthy bride. So I opted for dowry-less marriage," the groom said.



Similar incident took place at Karahgar village in the same district last week. Here in the case too, the boy Rakesh Gupta reached the house of the girl Soni Kumari, and tied the nuptial knot free of cost after the youth's step mother had nearly cancelled the wedding over the issue of dowry. The wedding was solemnized at a temple with the local villagers playing both baratis (guests from groom's side) and saratis (wedding guests from bride's side).

Identical scenes were witnessed last month in Saran district where the groom straightway reached the house of his fiancé to marry the girl when their wedding came on the brink of collapse due to inability by the bride's family to pay dowry. The wedding of Ravindra Kumar, a resident of Gopalganj district, was scheduled to be solemnized with Neha Kumari in November last year itself but the groom's parents delayed the wedding for not meeting their dory demands. The news worried the boy who subsequently rushed to the girl's home and proposed to marry the girl which was instantly accepted. The wedding was solemnized on 23 April.

Mittal Rajvanshi, another eligible

bachelor, did the same in Nawada district around a month back when he rebelled against his parents to marry his sweetheart Sushmita Kumari with whom his wedding had been fixed but dowry came in the way. Their love affairs began in 2016 but it was in 2021 that boy's parents agreed for marriage with the girl. However, as the girl's parents came with the marriage proposal, the boy's parents demanded a motorbike as well as jewelry as dowry. Eventually, their marriage appeared to be in trouble but in the meantime, the youth reached the girl's house and entered into wedlock with her without accepting any dowry.

Social scientists describe the trend not all of a sudden but as a result of sustained campaigns against dowry, coupled with the increasing literacy rate in the society. "Marriage as an institution has, of late, undergone an enormous change in the society. The present generation now thinks they won't be getting good brides if they look for attractive dowry," explained prominent social scientist Prof Scahindra Narayan.

Courtesy : thestatesman.com

For a “New Nepal”, More Youth in Political Leadership the Need

By ARJUNA RANAWANA, NEPAL

TWO young Nepalis beat senior politicians at the recently concluded Local Government elections, becoming the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the capital city Kathmandu. The win is a fillip to local efforts that have, for several years struggled to increase youth participation in politics.

Kathmandu’s new Mayor, Balendra Shah, is a 32-year-old structural engineer and popular rapper who contested as an Independent. His Deputy, is 29-year-old Sunita Dangol, a Social activist, Broadcaster and Communications Manager.

The nationwide Local Government election maybe a harbinger of things to come; 41 percent of the elected candidates are youth, and a majority contested as Independents. The choice for these youth to contest as Independents points toward a breakdown in trust levels between youth and the country’s established political parties.

In the country’s main decision-making bodies, at both federal and regional level however, the usual trend prevails; thirty six of the 275 Members of Parliament are youth, while in the Upper Chamber only 7 of the 59 Member assembly are youth. It is the same in the Provincial Assemblies, where only 130 of the 550 members fall into the 25-40 age group.

The Local Government win was a cause for celebration during a webinar hosted by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) South Asia on May 25th, where panelists discussed “Youth Participation in Nepal Politics.” Bisesh Sangat, a Communications Practitioner was the Moderator, with Sunita

Baral, President of the All Nepal National Free Students Union, Kanchan Jha, a Youth Leader with the Nepali Congress and Pradip Pariyar, Executive Chairperson of Samata Foundation making up the panel.

The aim of the discussion was to identify the interconnected role of young people “in improving the Nepalese political landscape and ways to address limits to participation.”

The webinar heard that the percentage of youth, women, and marginalised communities at the centres of power was low, and that the main cause is the hesitation on the part of major political parties to nominate representatives of these groups to decision making bodies.

The panellists agreed that youth are a quintessential aspect of modern democracy. “Engaging young people in formal political processes certainly help shape politics in a way that contributes to building stable and peaceful societies that promptly responds to the needs of general citizens, especially the younger generation, fostered through a unique and innovative way of thinking, full of energy as well as a passion for contributing to the betterment of their respective countries,” they said.

“The world today has experienced an upsurge in youth involvement in political processes whereby they are engaged in fighting for sustainable change that would address the pressing challenges of society – authoritarian regimes, accountability, corruption, and inequalities” Bisesh Sangat pointed out.

As Kanchan Jha pointed out, Nepal’s

population is very diverse, and youth belong to different social and economic groups.

"In politics, youth mean the power to innovate and to change. They can be a driving force of change. They have zeal and they understand the dynamics of change and aim for a better future" Jha said.

Jha also pointed out that Nepalese below the age of 30 "have never known the monarchy or the absolute barriers of traditional Nepal. Those who were young children during the Maoist insurrection are now young adults in a restructured, decentralized, democratic republic. This group has an empirical reality and in my opinion are the youth of this country."

The Nepalese Civil war which began in 1996 pitted the then ruling Monarchy against Maoist rebels for ten years. In 2006 a comprehensive peace deal was reached which saw the birth of the current Federation. Two years later the Monarchy was abolished.

Nepal's youth, pointed out Sunita Baral, have always been involved in politics, mostly engaged in organising and participating in mass protests. "However now it has changed, and they are playing an important role in the democratic process in Nepal. They want to be leaders in social and political organisations in the country," she said.

Pradip Pariyar, whose has worked in Nepal and on international assignments, added that the conflicts the country faced negatively impacted the youth.

"They lost their lives as well as their education," he pointed out, adding that the Shah and Dangol victories are a cause for celebration. He pointed out that senior political leaders must be congratulated for their role in changing an autocracy to a democracy. However, they are failing to train young leaders he said, adding that. "This is one of the most important challenges we are facing right now."

Jha agrees with Baral that the youth of yesteryear lent their muscle power to political parties. "The patrimonial party leaders demand blind loyalty to themselves," he said.

The main challenge faced by youth in

moving up in the ranks of established political parties is the lack of training in decision-making roles, the panellists noted. In fact, Baral had spent 20 years in her Union, before becoming its leader.

Moving into a role that she can contest for a Parliamentary seat still seems distant. "But we are fighting for it," she said.

Admitting that part of the problem is his party, the Nepali Congress Jha added. "But recently the party has taken a decision to include a minimum of 15 percent of members between 16 and 30 into all the Committees at the Convention."

According to the panel constraints imposed on young by established political parties has resulted in a majority of candidates contesting as Independents.

Youth and older politicians accuse each other; while the youth claim that political leaders do not address the aspirations of the youth, the more mature politicians argue that the youth are not prepared for political leadership.

Pariyar says he would like to see more ethnic and religious diversity the youth groups. "I don't see that as much as it should be," he said. Though Hindus make up a majority of the population, there are Buddhists, Christians and Muslims too in Nepal. The country was officially Hindu during the time of the Monarchy, but since the creation of the Federal Republic, Nepal has been officially secular. There are also many caste and linguistic groups.

Jha claimed his Party has had a long record of inclusivity with a place for all the groups. However, Pariyar noted that not many minority religious or ethnic groups are represented in leadership roles.

The election of two young individuals to head Nepal's most important municipality is indeed a progressive step, however, the challenge the country now faces is to work out strategies that would create the space for more youth to be elected to higher decision-making assemblies

Courtesy : economynext.com

Pakistani Youth Rally to Bring Aid to Flood-Hit Areas

By THE OBSERVERS, PAKISTAN

A long, arduous relief effort is underway in Pakistan after weeks of devastating floods. Despite the threat of insurgent attacks, the growing risk of epidemics, and warnings of more floods to come, teams of volunteers have rallied to help the worst hit. Our Observer was one of them.

Over 14 million people have been affected by the floods, and an estimated 8 million are in immediate need of water, shelter and emergency assistance. The rising waters cover 1/5 of the country - a chunk of land the size of Italy - beginning in the northwest before moving down the country by way of the River Indus. Millions of acres of crops and livestock, which used to account for 20% of the country's economy, were devastated.

The IMF has predicted that the catastrophe will have a "major and lasting" economic impact on the country, and Pakistani president Asif Ali Zardari warned the nation might "never fully recover" from the floods.

With international aid still not coming fast enough (over 30 countries have pledged a total of 700 million dollars) and the government under fire for its sluggish response to the disaster, local groups have stepped in to breach the aid gap. Our Observer, a member of a Pakistani youth group, tells us how she and other students organised themselves to distribute first aid to displaced populations in some of the worse hit areas.

"EFFORTS LIKE THESE PROVE THERE IS STILL HOPE FOR OUR COUNTRY"

Sana Saleem lives in Karachi. She worked as a project coordinator for a the non-profit youth organisation called "Future Leaders of Pakistan" (FLP), which recently distributed care hampers for flood survivors in Sindh and the Swat Valley.

I visited Thatta and adjacent areas with a relief convoy on August 22, in collaboration with the Rotary Club Of Karachi City Hills. We distributed water, food and first aid in two different locations.

We began by identifying the town of Sujawal, in the Thatta district, as the base camp for aid distribution. According to the local district officer, Sujawal hosts over 27,500 internally displaced families.

Most of these people live in abysmal conditions, sleeping on charpoys [traditional Pakistani beds made of woven rope] on the side of the road or in temporary tents made out of straw.

We witnessed deteriorating living conditions as we moved further into Sujawal, with a family of ten sharing one charpoy, without shelter. Roads remain flooded at some points. Snakes, poisonous insects and stray dogs are rampant. Lack of electricity makes the situation worse, especially after sunset.

Our second distribution spot was the

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Youth Engagement in the Climate Change Policy Arena of Bangladesh

By AFSARA BINTE MIRZA AND MASRURA TAHIAT. BANGLADESH

AS climate change is becoming a common phenomenon it is intensifying floods, droughts, wildfires, sea level rise, and ocean acidification. However, vulnerable groups such as the youth, women, and girls are trying to turn this disadvantageous scenario into a golden opportunity by becoming agents of change to tackle the climate crisis. They are showing their relentless efforts in creating sustainable and greener business models, leading climate strikes, and raising awareness amongst their communities.

In Bangladesh, several youth-driven platforms, social enterprises, and organizations are flourishing currently — such as Gross International Nature, Garbageman, Reach Community BD, Footsteps, YouthNet, etc to become part of solving the climate crisis. However, the youth are still under-represented when it comes to policy-making or decision-making at the local, national, and global levels. Against this background, Youth Policy Forum (YPF) is a Bangladesh-based knowledge-sharing advocacy platform that aims to bridge the gap between the youth and policy-makers by promoting active and informed discourse on policy issues.

YPF has a number of networks but its most recent one was launched in 2021, which is the Environment and Climate Change network. This is mainly run by young future climate leaders and enthusiasts who are volunteering as leads, coordinators, and associates regularly. The

group of young individuals supports the policy-makers by conducting secondary research to make evidence-based decisions. For instance, the young group of researchers provides a summary of key documents such as IPCC reports, the Paris Agreements, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), etc. Additionally, the youth of this network also conduct ad hoc research for the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF).

Recently, YPF's Environment and Climate Change network got invited to take part in the consultation of Bangladesh's National Adaptation Plan (NAP). During the consultation, one representative from the network had the opportunity to take part in group work and discussions to validate the NAP. Additionally, the youth network is actively working with the Earth Society (Climate Parliamentarians) to analyze the FY2022-23 Budget and find the relevant climate change and environment allocation.

Moreover, knowledge dissemination and capacity-building are key priority areas of the Environment and Climate Change Network. In March, the youth network partnered with the British High Commission in Dhaka and led a project called Youth, Climate Action, and the Commonwealth. One of the key activities of this project was to collect primary data from the south-western part of Bangladesh in Khulna and Satkhira, the two most climate vulnerable regions of Bangladesh.

The young researchers went to the field and collated climate change and disaster-related data through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interview (KII) from the local communities. In addition to this, the researchers also arranged virtual webinars on loss and damage; and youth's role in commonwealth nations to tackle the climate crisis. This year, the young researchers initiated a standalone conference titled Road to COP27 to bring NGOs, civil society organizations, policy-makers, and academics to pave the way forward for COP27.

This dynamism of the environment and climate change network of YPF signifies how the youth has the potential to understand the intersectionality of climate change and develop solutions through

transformative knowledge dissemination.

When the perspective of the younger generation is incorporated into policies and initiatives, it resonates with higher transparency and inclusiveness of the government to build greener habitats. In the future, YPF's environment and climate change network aims to provide tailored capacity-building sessions to its young research associates on locally-led adaptation, usage of renewable energy in rural areas, and non-economic loss and damage.

Additionally, in the future, the network intends to transmit local, vulnerable communities' messages to policy-makers at COP27 and the global platforms, and also develop capacity-building modules for future youth negotiators to participate at COPs.

Courtesy : Dhaka Tribune

Pakistani Youth Rally to Bring Aid to Flood-Hit Areas

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Sharif Solangi camp, which hosts about 50 families. Due to lack of tents, women and children are forced to live in poultry farms with poor hygiene and sanitation. Maternal health care is a major concern, and these camps need immediate medical attention. We carried out a basic survey of medical needs to facilitate the work of a team of medics scheduled to visit the area next week.

Eight other members of my team went to the Swat Valley, despite warnings of ongoing insurgent activity in the area. We decided the risk was worth taking because the population of that area is completely cut off from the rest of the country, and desperately needs help. Their convoy was not armed and had no security guards, but they didn't encounter any problems at all - in any case, the area remains heavily militarised. The local people were extremely helpful and friendly, and astonishingly calm, given all that they've been through.

The fact that young volunteers continue to go into the Swat Valley despite security risks speaks volumes about the courage and humanity of the Pakistani youth. Efforts like these prove that there is still hope for our country. I only hope that the rest of the world will also donate generously to help the 14 million affected by this disaster."

Courtesy : observers.france24.com

Graduate Unemployment and Skill Mismatch in Bangladesh: A Broader Context

By OMAR RAAD CHOWDHURY, INDIA

THE staggering rate of unemployment among university graduates in Bangladesh, and the difficulty faced by employers in securing a skilled workforce, pose a conundrum for the country's development journey, with implications regarding productivity, growth, social welfare and integration in the global value chain. A World Bank study found that, more than a third of university graduates remain unemployed for one or two years after graduation. The unemployment situation is all the more dire for graduates of National University (colleges offering degrees in tertiary education), as 66% of these graduates are unemployed, according to a BIDS study. On the other hand, higher education can be the key to a "decent" job, as found in a SANEM study on labour and employment, which may be a key reason behind youth's pursuit of higher education.

Notably, the skill level of the graduates seeking employment has been found to be unsatisfactory by employers. According to a study conducted by CPD in 2021, a shortage of skilled applicants for professional positions had been reported by 46% of employers. The study also identified lack of work experience and required qualifications as two other major issues. In 2019, the World Bank found 69% of employers reporting a shortage of applicants for highly-skilled positions such as professionals, technicians and managers.

While it can be argued that there is

ample evidence to ascribe skill mismatch to unemployment among graduates, the issue, however, demands to be examined in the broader context of institutional deficiency, private sector's engagement with public initiatives, and inter-generational inequality. The agency of the young students enrolled in universities and colleges also becomes an issue of interest in this regard, as they themselves are the primary and perhaps the most prominent stakeholders in this matter.

The graduates' skill level is but a reflection of the educational training they received from the academic establishments they were enrolled in. The quality of the training therefore becomes a major, if not the prime, determinant of the graduates' employability. If the employers do not find candidates to be skilled enough, then the responsibility, to a large extent, lies with the academic status-quo, which is more or less configured by state institutions, in terms of resource distribution and policy design. Since, without a reconfiguration of the academia, which may involve large scale shift in curriculum and insistence on best practices on the part of administration, it would not be possible to upskill the graduates, the logical deduction is that the capacity and political will of the state institutions have to be reoriented as well.

However, it would be unreasonable to acknowledge the role of state institutions

without recognizing the obligation of the private sector in ensuring a skilled workforce. Much discussion have been dedicated to the issue of industry-academia collaboration, a lacking that can be argued to be one of the driving forces behind skill mismatch. So far, the record of industry-academia collaboration is poor. A tracer study in 2018, found “serious” lack of collaboration between university and industry, with only 40% of the surveyed employers and 65% of the surveyed departments maintaining some kind of collaboration. The areas of collaboration were found to be reviewing and updating curriculum, arrangement of internships, opportunity to visit the workplace, professional network with teachers and recruitment of new employees. Thus, the scope of these collaborations is quite limited, as there is little to no investment in capacity building or academic research on the part of the private sector. The private sector, being the other primary stakeholder in the matter, needs to engage with the academia on its own initiative, for its own sake. Notably, private sector led initiatives to upskill young employees are also lacking. Rather, there is a tendency to recruit candidates with experience, which indicates a tendency of free-riding and ultimately lead to market failure in terms of skill gap.

The extent to which inter-generational inequality influence the skill level of an individual, might be a matter of further research. However, the tracer study mentioned above, found strong correlation between parents’ education and graduate employability: more than 40% of the graduates, whose parents have at least a master’s degree, got a job after graduation, whereas in the case of the graduates whose parents have no formal education, employment rate is only 21.9%. Moreover, the study found, in case of graduates whose father have no formal education, unemployment rate is 56%. There is thus room for argument that parents’ level of education is a significant factor behind skill level. Graduates whose

parents did not have access to tertiary education are therefore, more likely to be unemployed. In this connection, inter-generational inequality needs to be taken into account as a possible factor behind graduate unemployment.

The demands and targets of the young graduates need to be weighted in any policy action as well. The youth have their own perceptions of job opportunities in private sectors, which in many way shape their interests and aspirations. The “Youth Survey 2018”, conducted by BIGD, had found that around 57% females and 42% males preferred government jobs, for better salaries, facilities and job security. The survey also found a significant portion of the youth, about 20%, aspire to go abroad in search for better living and career opportunity. In the 2020-21 academic year, 8,598 Bangladeshis were granted study permit by the United States alone, according to the 2021?Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange. According to the Foreign Admission and Career Development Consultations Association of Bangladesh (FACD-CAB), US scholarships for Bangladeshi students may double in number in 2022. Other top destinations include Canada, UK, Australia, and Japan. Many of these students may not return and participate in the domestic labour force.

Evidently, perceptions of scope for better salary, job security, and better living are shaping the career preference of the graduates. It might be so that, just as employers do not find enough skilled candidates, many of the new graduates, and especially skilled ones, also do not find job opportunities in the private sector to be good enough, and opt for government jobs or, study or work opportunities abroad. Policymakers, as well as private sector stakeholders therefore need to come to terms with the agency of young graduates, otherwise, the domestic industry will not be able to accommodate even a skilled workforce.

Courtesy: countercurrents.org

Myanmar's Youth Sacrificing Life and Limb

By FRONTIER, MYANMAR

AS 26-year-old *Ko Pyae Sone approached a café, it was clear he was struggling to walk. There was a reason for this — his body is riddled with bullet wounds.

"The first time, I was shot in the right arm and waist. The injury was not too bad, so it healed after about a week, and I was able to go back to the frontline," he told *Frontier*. "The second injury was more severe. The bullet penetrated my pubic bone, the bone joint, and my genitals were also damaged."

A member of a People's Defence Force called the White Tiger Battalion, Pyae Sone is one of thousands of young people who sought training from ethnic armed groups after the military seized power in a coup and killed hundreds of peaceful protesters.

When the military toppled the elected National League for Democracy in February 2021, Pyae Sone was studying electrical engineering at the Hpa-an University of Technology in Kayin State. He was part of the earliest wave of civilians to join armed resistance to the military, participating in training with the Karen National Union in March 2021, before being sent to the frontlines in August of that same year.

In December, he was wounded for the first time during the fighting in Lay Kay Kaw, when the military attacked a town where the KNU was sheltering political dissidents. In February of this year, he was injured again during an assault on a military outpost in

Thay Baw Boe, which the KNU eventually seized in May.

While Pyae Sone remains committed to the cause of overthrowing the military dictatorship, the sacrifices he has already made may be permanent. A new generation of Myanmar's youth is growing up against the backdrop of war, and many of those who are lucky enough to survive are left with lifelong disabilities.

"The problem now is there are a lot of young ones injured, the PDFs," said Busaba*, a woman working for a clinic across the border in Thailand. "What is going to happen to these kids? What is their future with no limbs? Some of them still want to go back and fight."

Naw Esther*, who works for another clinic across the border, said the number of surgical trauma patients has increased dramatically since the coup. "Before 2021, we rarely see the case," she said, adding that her clinic alone has had 50 cases in just two months this year. "There are more, but if they don't come to [our clinic] they won't be in our data," she said.

Esther said one civilian had to have his leg amputated after being wounded in a military airstrike. "He said one of his friends, he saw him die on the spot," she said.

While some of the wounded are civilians, most are PDF fighters who are still struggling to get their hands on guns. "I don't know if we can even say PDF, most say they don't even have a weapon," Esther said.

LANDMINES IN KAYAH STATE

The military's use of landmines is also having a devastating impact, especially in Kayah State where the Karenni Nationalities Defense Force has clashed regularly with the military. The KNDF is an umbrella group that includes armed groups formed specifically in response to the coup and the Karenni Army, which has fought the Tatmadaw for decades.

Mr David Eubank, who spent around four months on the ground in Kayah State this year, said his humanitarian group Free Burma Rangers confirmed 32 landmine victims in 2022 as of March in just two townships of Demoso and Hpruso. He said he personally saw six landmine victims, including a 16-year-old who had his foot blown off right next to him.

"It's the highest incidence of landmines I've seen in 29 years," he told *Frontier*.

The teenager was injured in June while documenting the clashes, when soldiers planted landmines around a church in Hpruso Township and then set it on

fire. The military, which claims itself to be the protector of Buddhism, has long been accused of oppressing religious minorities.

"There's a level of viciousness on the ground I've never seen before," Eubank said. "In the past, they might have tortured you, but now you can pretty much guarantee it." In a recent report, Amnesty International said it has "credible information" that the military planted landmines in at least 20 villages in Kayah State, with more likely to be affected. According to the Landmine Monitor, the Myanmar military is the only state armed group confirmed to have used landmines in 2020-2021.

"The military appears to be systematically laying landmines near where it is based as well as in areas from which it retreats," the Amnesty report said, claiming this "amounts to war crimes".

Albert, a battalion commander for the KNDF, said six young men in his unit have lost limbs due to landmines.

One was Henry, a 20-year-old KNDF fighter from Demoso Township who is the



eldest of five brothers. He stepped on a landmine in April while trying to repel the military from villages they had occupied.

"When the terrorist junta used excessive artillery strikes and strikes from airplanes, we had to fall back and gave up our villages," said Albert, adding that they were running low on ammunition at the time. He said the soldiers then burned and looted houses, occupying the villages strategically located near a major road.

Henry lost his right foot in the landmine explosion. "It is a big loss to him. He used to play football and volleyball a lot and he was good at it," said Albert. "However, he keeps smiling most of the time."

In a video message to *Frontier*, Henry said he did not regret his decision to fight. "Under military rule, there is nothing good for us. They just work for their own interests. We protested peacefully to demand federal democracy, but they brutally killed the people. That's why I chose armed struggle," he said.

CDM HEALTH WORKERS PROVIDE CARE

After his second, more serious injury, Pyae Sone tried to go to Ason Hospital in Kayin State's Kawwareik Township, where he was treated after the first shooting. But they were unable to help him due to the severity of the wounds.

Ason was a state hospital before the coup, but it is located inside KNU territory, and has been run by striking public healthcare workers since the KNU gave an ultimatum for civil servants working for the regime to leave. Thousands of healthcare workers refused to work for state-run institutions following the military takeover, joining a mass strike known as the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Unable to get treatment in Kayin State, Pyae Sone turned to Thailand.

"The doctors told me that I needed

surgery, and the cost of the treatment should be about 150,000 baht [nearly \$4,200], so I am in financial trouble," he said.

He appealed to the International Committee of the Red Cross, which helped pay for his first treatment, but said they refused to pay again.

"I can't afford the surgery cost. Now, I can't even walk because it's not possible for me to get treatment," he explained.

Pyae Sone said he has also received some financial assistance from the National Unity Government, a cabinet appointed by lawmakers elected in the 2020 polls, which the military declared annulled due to unsubstantiated allegations of voter fraud. Most people in Myanmar see the NUG as the legitimate government, and it formally declared a "people's defensive war" against the military junta in September 2021.

"When I was in the Ason hospital, I was given K130,000 [around \$70] by a representative from the NUG," he said, appealing to the parallel government to do more to help. "We sacrifice our lives to fight in the revolution... why can't the NUG manage healthcare for injured PDFs?" he asked.

Filling the healthcare gap are hundreds of CDM healthcare workers.

When one of Eubank's rangers was shot in the spleen in Kayah State, he was certain he would die. "He would be dead if a Burman surgeon who fled Rangoon hadn't been there," he said, claiming the doctor conducted "advanced surgery" in the field, which is usually impossible. Eubank estimated there are 160 CDM doctors and nurses working in Kayah State alone.

The leader of the White Elephant Battalion, Lieutenant Sa Lone, said they built a hospital with the help of donors in a "liberated area", a term used to describe territory outside of the junta's control.

The White Elephant Battalion split from the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army after the coup, which has controversially continued to observe a ceasefire with the military.

"Our hospital is named the White Elephant Battalion Specialist Clinic, and CDM doctors are providing treatment. The clinic was opened on July 30th," he said, adding that they mostly provide basic care at this time.

An NUG media official, who spent weeks embedded with the Karen National Defense Organization, an armed wing of the KNU, said he often witnessed CDM healthcare workers treating injured soldiers in the field. But he said there is another issue plaguing the ranks of the resistance --- disease.

"The hospitals need malaria medicine. A lot of the PDF soldiers are suffering from malaria," he said.

The KNU also has its own clinics that have been operating for decades, as the group has been fighting for political autonomy since the 1950s, but it is now also cooperating with CDM healthcare workers.

"The KNU has been revolutionising for many years, so there is a strong process regarding medical supply," said KNU spokesperson Saw Taw Nee. But he added that even the KNU often sends severely wounded fighters to Thailand.

Taw Nee said the newfound cooperation with CDM healthcare workers has been a major "advantage" to the revolution. "Their participation has been very helpful for both the local ethnic armed groups and the PDF," he said, describing them as "eager" and "enthusiastic".

Many of the CDM healthcare workers and PDF fighters traveled across the country to join the resistance in ethnic areas.

*Ko Htet Wai is a 32-year-old ethnic Karen tattoo artist from Ayeyarwady Region, who began training with the KNU in May 2021 before joining the affiliated Cobra Column PDF.

In March 2022, his unit clashed with the military on the Myawaddy-Waw Lay Road. Htet Wai said as the junta started to be overrun, it turned to artillery strikes, one of which left him blind in his right eye and seriously injured his knee.

"I have been injured for more than four months but it still hasn't healed. When the mornings are cold, my leg is numb, and I can't walk properly," he told *Frontier*. Initially, he thought his eyesight would recover, but instead it has only gotten worse.

"My right eye was still able to see a little at the beginning of the injury, but after that it gradually disappeared and I could no longer see at all," he said, trying to take a sip of water but misjudging and spilling it. "I can't even drink water in a cup anymore."

Htet Wai said he hasn't told his family about his injuries. "I haven't contacted them since I left. If I contact my family, I'm worried that they will be in danger," he said. "When I was suffering, I missed my mother so much."

Htet Wai said due to his blindness, he can't properly aim or shoot a gun anymore, but still hopes to return to the frontlines to help any way he can. "No matter what, even if I have to cook rice," he said.

"Even those who have lost their legs and arms are still fighting on the battlefield. I will go back to the war as soon as my knee is able to walk properly."

*Denotes use of pseudonym upon request for safety reasons

Courtesy: www.frontiermyanmar.net

THE ORGANISATION OF THE ARTS

By **CHRISTOPHER CAUDWELL**



....Continued from previous issue

THE plastic arts are static. A visual art moving in time is provided in the dance, the drama and (finally) the film. The dance is primitive story – quality separating itself from the womb of rhythm. In the dance, rhythm gradually ceases to be physiological and begins to unfold in time and spare the qualitative movement of reality, in which things happen.

Painting shares with poetry the quality of having affects organised by the projective structure of the symbols. (A black oblong, not a coffin.) But directly the visual arts move in time this spatial or pseudo-grammatical organisation is no longer possible and therefore it must take place as in the story – the affective organisation is an organisation of the real object symbolised by the visual representation. (The real coffin.) The courtship of the dance, the murder on the stage, the riot on the films are the material which is affectively organised, and not the linked forms, prostrate figure, or scattered crowd, considered as a projective structure, as would be the case if they were frozen into a static tableau. This confusion between the projective organisation of the static arts and the real organisation of the temporal arts leads to all kinds of special expressionistic and scenic theories of drama

– for example those of Edward Gordon Craig. The development of the ballet, the drama and the film is the equivalent of the development of harmony, of the counterpoint of individuals whose life-experiences criss-cross against a changing background of Nature because the division of labour has wrought a similar differentiation and individuation within the crystal of the collective tribe. Tragedy appears in the rapid evolution of Greek classes out of the Greek gens and blossoms again with the rise of bourgeois productivity in the drama of the Elizabethan stage. In both, poetry still soaks it because the drama is a transitional stage in class society. It is the product of a society passing from collectivity to individuality.

The dance, the drama and the film are mixed or counterpointed in their technique as compared to the affective organisations of language and music. Just as music's sounds are the objects of external reality and not symbols of such objects, so the dancing or acting human being or the scenery around him is the real object. Admittedly, the dancing or acting human being also refers to another object (the courting or dying human he mimics). But he is also an object of external reality in himself – a gracefully- or attractively-moving human being. Hence acting and dancing have a musical “non-symbolical component,” but they also have the other component, the characteristic of referring to objects of external reality.

There is a double organisation – the thing mimicked and the person mimicking. This double organisation has a certain danger, and gives rise to a quarrel between actor and author, cast and producer, which can to-day only be overcome in the film, where the mechanical flexibility of the camera makes the cast wax in a good producer's hands. However in an era of bourgeois individualism this feature of the film cannot be fully explored, and the film remains a "starring" vehicle, except in Soviet Russia.

The dancer or actor as himself, as an object of contemplation, is static, like the poetic word. The reality symbolised is like the reality of story's objects – in movement. Hence there is a tension in a play or film between the static close-up or actor's instant and the moving action or author's organisation – this resembles the tension in an epic between the poetic instant and the narrative movement.

The individual passages in epic or play that we conceive of as particularly poetic or histrionic – Homer's description of the stars of heaven opening out, or the great moment of a Duse – are almost like music: the affects are attached to the words or actions and only released by the meaning, as if a dam had burst. The play or epic halts. There is a poetic instant and as time vanishes, space enters; the horizon expands and becomes boundless. The art reveals itself as double. The things described in turn have their own affects which are organised by the action of the story or the play in time. It is this that makes us think of the Iliad and the Odyssey as substantial and spacious worlds, stretching back as far as the eye can reach. In the great Shakespearean plays we feel this double organisation as a world of vast cloudy significance, not only looming vaguely behind the action but in the poetic passages actually casting lights on it from underneath, so that the action

itself is subtly modified and glows with unexpected fluorescence. Hence the difficulty of acting poetic plays. Action and poetry go together because they live in different structures. But poetry and acting – the "I" of the poet and the "I" of the actor, are in the same structure and blot each other out. Irving's "Hamlet," or Shakespeare's – we have to choose. In a play which is read, poetry can take the place of acting, hence the satisfaction from reading Shakespeare's plays not to be paralleled by reading Ibsen's. Of course in Shakespeare's time the actor was less dominating, as is shown by the use of boys to take women's parts.

The same characteristic and good mixture of the real and symbolised objects which is to be found in dance and drama is to be distinguished from the same mixture occasionally found in music – the bastard kind of music in which nightingales sing, monastery bells toll, and locomotives whistle. These real objects, mimicked or symbolised by sound, disturb the logical self-consistent structure of music's world, and are therefore here impermissible.

In Palaeolithic Art the individual is only self-conscious and is still anchored in the perception of the object, giving rise to an atomic naturalism of exactly-portrayed, unorganised percept-things. So in the dance of hunting primitives, the natural object – the animal – is mimicked unaltered because it is only sought by man, not changed. The object draws the ego out of man in accurate perception. It is gained in co-operation and so becomes conscious, a fact which differentiates its qualities from those it possesses in brute perception, but it is sought, not created.

In Neolithic Art, when hunting or food-gathering man becomes a crop-raising or cattle-rearing tribe, the object is not merely sought by society but changed by it.

The man realises himself in the percept as social man, as the tribe changing the object according to conventions and forms rooted in the means of communication. The dance becomes the formal hieratic movement of chorus and incipient tragedy. The hunting or food-gathering primitive's dance is violently naturalistic and mimicking; the food-raising or cattle-rearing dance has the formality of a religious rite and reveals the impress of the tribe's soul on Nature. It emphasises the magical and world-governing power of the gesture. The circling sun obeys the circling dancer; the crop lifts with the leaping of young men; life quickens with the dizzy motion. The tribe draws Nature into its bosom.

The elaboration of class-society causes the dance to develop into a story, into a play. The intricacies of the chorus loosen sufficiently to permit the emergence of individual players. Individuation, produced by the division of labour in a class society, is reflected in the tragedy. A god, a hero, a priest-king, people, great men, detach themselves from the chorus and appear on the stage, giving birth simultaneously to the static acting and the moving action which were inseparably one in the danced chorus, just as were the static poem and the moving story one in the ritual chant, where the word is poetically world-creating and yet

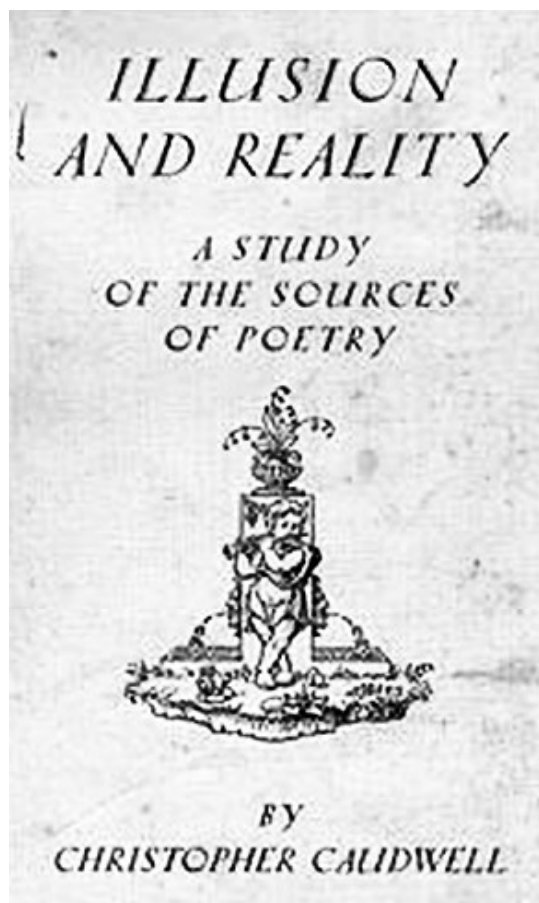
also relates a mythical story.

Of course the decay and rigidity of a class society is at any moment reflected in a stiffening and typification of the "characters." The individuation is not rooted in the class but in the division of labour. The class cleavage at first makes this division possible but at a certain moment denies its further development and becomes a brake, a source of academic ossification, a corset which society must break or be stifled.

We said that the cathedrals were bourgeois and not feudal, that they were already Protestant heresies in the heart of Catholicism, the bourgeois town developing in the feudal country. Hence the bourgeois play begins in the cathedrals as the mystery play frowned on by the Church authorities. When the monarchy allies itself with the

bourgeois class, the mystery moves to court and becomes the Elizabethan tragedy. Here the individual is realised once again naturalistically as the prince, as the social will incarnate in the free desires of the hero.

Because of the special development of bourgeois individuality, after Shakespeare the mimed action falls a victim to the static actor. In Greek tragedy the actor is swaddled in the trappings of cothurni and mask; he is the pure vehicle of poetry and action. In the Elizabethan play the actor's personality is still stifled, and



because the actor is subordinate to the mimed action the play is still poetic. In our day the actor's instant conflicts with the poets; in Shakespeare's the boy-woman, muffled

in the collective representations of the feudal court, was still a hollowness which gave room for the poetry of Cleopatra to come forward and expand. The incursion of woman on to the stage marks the rise of acting in the drama, and the death of narrative and poetry. The personal individual actor or actress becomes primary; his social relations with others or with the social ego – which constitute the story or poetry of the play – become secondary. The play, because of the collective basis of its technique, is injured by the individualism of bourgeois culture.

The play, like painting, becomes increasingly realistic and then moves over to commodity-fetishism – the abstract structure of Expressionism in which the conventions or social forms are hypostatized, and the content or "story" is expelled, so that the play aspires towards the impossibility of becoming the pure social ego. And the play finally makes a bid to cut itself off both from social ego and external reality according to the mechanism of *surréaliste* dream-work.

This same basic movement is only what we have already analysed in poetry. For the cry, reproducing the authentic image (the bird call or animal cry) in the dance of the hunting primitive, becomes

the elaborate chant or choral hymn, with strophe, antistrophe and epode, in the crop-raising or pastoral society which has sucked Nature into its undifferentiated bosom. The rise of class society and its individuation, based on a division of labour, is reflected in the emergence of the bard, with his epic poetry, glorifying the deeds of heroes, stories in which he does not speak for himself but for a general class, and so his own personal instant does not conflict with a poetic instant which is only given in the acts of heroes. But the further individuation of society, due to still greater division of labour, gives rise to the poet, with his lyrical verse – amatory, epistolary and personal – in which the poetic instant coincides with the personal instant, in which the collective "I" (formerly general and heroic) has become personal and individual. With this goes a naturalism and "pathos" of the kind for which Euripides was reproached by his contemporaries and which seems to bourgeois culture so appealing and right.

The poet finds his full individuation in bourgeois poetry, where chanted lyrical poetry becomes written study poetry, and the social ego of poetry is identified with the free individual. Here too there is movement through naturalism to escape from the external world (symbolism) and escape also from the social ego (*surréalisme*).

to be continued...

Courtesy : Illusion and Reality

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