

Informal Reports on the Anveshi Seminar
Development Beyond the State

19th and 20th January 2018

A SUMMARY NOTE ON THE DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR

A Suneetha

I understood the two day seminar as trying to explore the forms of political subjectivity that have developed and are developing in contemporary India, and the modes of subjectivation through which such forms emerge. These forms cannot be collapsed into or reduced to the subject of the nation-state;. Papers explored religiosity, communal life, art practices, electoral processes, educational initiatives and language as possible sites for approaching this question. Under what conditions do such new forms of political subjectivity emerge or come into being; what kind of sensibilities do they mobilize, engender and or are anchored by; the nature of acts or activity or action that they seem to call upon; the thought processes and the language that they seemed to require; the impasses that they get caught in - these questions and related ones were raised by the presenters or brought in by the discussants in the seminar.

Moid's presentation discussed how the Muslim religious and political leaders sought to recoup, heal and mend the wounds of the community which suffered deeply during Police Action violence. They made the community of Hyderabad Muslims engage with their sense of moral self and agency; provided practical tools to earn livelihood; and worked towards building networks through religious and charitable institutions. The chief mode of mobilizing the community was public oratory. The Muslim political subjectivity which was formed in the process thus had a basis in the moral community that emerged in these two decades after the police action.

This Muslim political subjectivity was formed in the context of total abandonment by the Indian nation-state where neither rehabilitation nor justice could be hoped for; where Muslims were being blamed for having brought the catastrophe on themselves.

Suneetha's presentation discussed the processes in which the subjectivity of the Muslim woman is formed in the women's madrassas of Hyderabad. Religious education was initiated in the hegemonic anti-Muslim political context that existed after the Shah Bano judgement to address the 'miserable plight of Muslim women' and equip them with egalitarian perspectives within Islam so that they could fight their battles. But these madrassas also offer state education as such an education is considered necessary for Muslim women to survive in the contemporary world. The women students and teachers, formed through the rigour, discipline, practices of piety and austerity of the madrassas develop a critical perspective about living as Muslim women in contemporary society. The

Muslim woman subjectivity formed at these locations is illiberal, seeking not to escape but to come to terms with their predicament as Muslim women.

This form of subjectivity that invests the Muslim woman is formed in the context of relative neglect and discrimination against Muslims by the Indian state where Muslim communities are blamed for their oppressive religious patriarchal practices.

Shyamala's presentation brought into focus the lives and deaths of first generation Dalit poets, female and male, who sought to live politically active and independent lives in a context where they were distanced from the cohesive and supportive rural community life, but where progressive and modern life in urban spaces did not provide the requisite friendship, sociality and connivality. The loneliness experienced by these dalit poets expressed itself in their ill health, alcoholism and suicides. The question that Shyamala's presentation asked was as much about the caste-sociality of the progressive society that did not provide the requisite social support but also about the subjectivity of these dalit poets who refused to bend themselves to fit in. Rather than private pain it was their indomitable and impossible attempt to live as dalits that damaged their health and took their life.

Ilna Sen's presentation discussed the adivasi life and collective life practices fast disappearing especially after the formation of the state of Chattisgarh. The state came into existence without any local demand and thwarted a long standing demand for Gondistan incorporating parts of neighbouring state. Very quickly the adivasis who lived a relatively autonomous life, not subjected to the authority of the nation-state lost it in the brutal processes unleashed by state-sanctioned primitive accumulation programme. In Ilna's narrative, there does not seem to be any scope or space for the autonomous political subjectivity of the adivasi in the new dispensation.

Thirumal discussed the art work of a young Mizo artist, a sculpture of one of their spirits Pheicham, made for the first time. It straddles two crucial phases of the modern history of Mizos, a pre-Christian/colonial past and the Christian present, almost skipping the Mizo nationalist phase. The sculpture 'presents' the Mizo past, but does not 'represent' it as the protocols of representation are steeped in nationalist frames that never acknowledged Mizo existence. The artist made the sculpture after a his journey outward, passing through the anti-developmental struggles of Mizoram, Nandigram and Telangana statehood. As such the sculpture seeks to capture a subjectivity that looks back at its past, present and future not through the developmental paradigm of the nation-state but a non-paradigmatic one of the one-legged and winged spirit that needed to be carried to its destination.

Madhava Prasad's presentation dealt with the politics of language in the post-colonial Indian nation-state. Rather than allowing indigenous languages to become the base for nation-building, English was chosen by the elites in the name of 'development'. Indigenous languages became subjected to bureaucratic regimes that stopped the traffic between the organic development of language in literature and other kinds of writing and the standardized form of language. In the neo-liberal era English has become the vehicle for the aspirations of the masses, neatly matching the decision that was taken decades ago by the elite to suit themselves. The development of the indigenous languages now has been left altogether by the elites.

(How does one pose the question of development more precisely in this?)

Uma's presentation discussed the context, content and the trajectory of the gender textbook that the Anveshi group put together for undergraduate students of Telangana. The initiative emerged in the political context after Nirbhaya wherein gender curriculum was proposed as an antidote to prevailing conditions of harassment. The creation of the new state of Telangana and the space that the women bureaucrats garnered in the new political context enabled the initiative. But this initiative itself could be located in the generalized incitement to gender equality and women's choice/freedom in the neoliberal era where the advertising industry has taken to advocating it in many ways. The textbook itself entered the educational system plagued by severe constraints and bureaucratic hassles. As an initiative that came from the government, it cannot strictly be inserted in the domain of development but can be seen as an enabler for self-development, perhaps to make oneself more suitable to mixed gender workplaces. What sort of self-development does it lead needs to be thought through and conceptualized.

Gender textbook as a tool for self-development in the neo-liberal era where it is in the air, so to say and one is required to make oneself aware and sensitive.

Rekha's presentation involved asking serious questions of about the ends of humanities/liberal arts education in neo-liberal times which seem to exclude the issue of employment. The 'developmental' aim of the liberal arts education emphasizes the growth of critical faculty in the students but looks down on the student seeking employment through such an education as 'instrumentalist'. What is it that prevents humanities educators to see the the larger picture, that the students seek to acquire a degree in order to find gainful employment, she wondered.

Is there a way to pose the question of the subjectivity of the liberal arts education/teacher/student in the contemporary neoliberal world? How would the idea of development in the sense used in the seminar figure?

Anand's presentation discussed the political ethics of Christian missionary work in medical education at the Christian Medical College, Vellore, that the newly standardized and homogenized ideas of medical education do not seem to have space for. The hospital draws students from and sends back students to the smaller missionary hospitals located in remote rural and adivasi areas which are supported by local churches. In this programme, the college has its autonomous process of selection of students based on a service obligation. The standardization and homogenization of entrance tests erases the possibility of autonomy in selection that is required to sustain this network of medical care. Would this not violate the rights of Christians as minorities enshrined in the Indian Constitution?

On the other hand, even within the Christian Medical College context, as Anand's Sabbatical project over the last year demonstrated, attempts to renew the curriculum through internal reflection showed a characteristic bias: there was enthusiasm for developing new curricular material so long as it wasn't towards humanities and community orientation.

What happens to forms and ethics of medical care that require autonomy and need to go against the normative notions of standards and merit? How does one think of the way in which the CMC teaching fraternity deals with the question of meaningful innovation?

Deeptha and **Santhosh** reviewed social scientists' assessments of the political developments in the state of Gujarat from the time of its formation to 2017 elections. Using this material, they traced the political trajectories of patidars, obcs, dalits and upper castes through these six decades in electoral politics and governments using the framework of land, caste and religion. As of now, they argue, caste solidarities seem to have broken down making way for class based voting in elections.

The question to be addressed is how to pose the question of a political subjectivity in the context of this paper.

Satish's presentation discussed the new sensibilities that the production of a benign police state seems to demand in the neo-liberal Kerala. Defining development as the opposite of enveloping, to reveal, clarify and allow to grow, he argues that the neo liberal Kerala has

taken into account the critiques of Kerala development model from feminist, dalit and adivasi perspectives. Through a discussion of two films, he argued how it now seeks to produce itself as a space that uses information technology, new techniques of surveillance and people's involvement to police- direct the people. The past is produced as a repressed sensibility that can be extracted through truth seeking techniques. And the unruly relics of the past are sought to be managed/regulated through new policing techniques. (Don't think I have captured what he said well)

The issue with this paper is how to take it forward.

Srivats' paper tried to find a way to describe the impasses and opportunities in contemporary Hinduism. He first started with an accepted history of Hinduism's antiquity, and sketched an argument about its historical change which follow different trajectories and countercurrents between its monotheism and polytheism. He then looked at the structure of Hinduism and tried to establish how Hinduism could be called a religion, its caste structure, its tension between monotheism and polytheism, and its ethical structure. In this structure, he pointed to the changes that come in Hinduism with Christianity and colonial rule, and the kinds of reform that come with thinkers like Vivekananda and Gandhi.

Using these reflections as a basis, Srivats explored three different aspects of the contemporary crisis in Hinduism. One, the problems that were foreseen and addressed by the Annihilation of Caste, and the implications of its proposal to make Hinduism defer to a hierarchical form of control. Two, the risks and the impasses faced by Hindutva and its agenda for unifying Hinduism today. Three, the proposals of Post Hindu India, its challenge, its vision and its possibilities. Srivats tried to develop a way of describing and critiquing Hinduism in a manner that is not rejected as external or 'secular' by Hindu thinkers.

Report on Concept Note

(Syamasundari)

This paper needs to be elaborated into a proper argument about the development of contemporary Hindu subjectivity and its predicament. Srivats said the notion of development is key to the image building of our country after independence. Development in India was seen in the 1950s as an extension of the constructive work of nation building. The crucial word here is “constructive”. In this worldview, the economic mode of development has acquired centre stage setting aside all the other dimensions of development. Amartya Sen’s concept of development as freedom plays an important role in understanding state led development after the 1990s. Today if we remove State as the centre around which development unfolds, how would development look like. How would our interpretation of our own practice, politics, of the world modify when we shift the perspective on development. The seminar is an exploration of how these different aspects present themselves when we remove from focus either state intervention or state withdrawal.

The session closed with the following comments from Aisha (in the capacity as the Chair). When we say we are talking about moving beyond development, the cursor directs us in multiple directions. One of them could be the return to indigenous cultures, other could be moving away from the imperialist notions of development. Another could be going beyond the Western notions of development/worldview.

The Muslim community when talking about development in the period between the 1960s-80s referred to development in a largely Western sense. However from the 90s they started moving away from the Western notion, by including new dimensions such as ensuring spiritual well-being in addition to economic growth in their conception of development.

Report on Session I of 'Development Beyond the State', January 19, 2018, 10.00 am- 12.00 pm (Shefali Jha)

Papers: 1. MA Moid: 'God and Government: Understanding development(s) in Hyderabad.'
2. A. Suneetha: 'Gendering Islamic Education: Issues at Stake.'

Chair: K. Lalitha

Both papers had to do with Hyerabadi Muslims, Moid's more historical and Suneetha's more ethnographic. As he noted, Moid's paper had to do with the aftermath of the Police Action/Operation Polo on the Hyderabad Muslim community. He considered the emergence, careers, similarities and differences between three major figures: Maulana Hamiduddin Hussami Aquil (d. 2010), Syed Khaleelullah Hussaini (d. 1992) and Abdul Wahid Owaisi (d. 1976). He showed how each of these leaders brought a different approach to restoring the confidence of the community and helping it recover from the trauma of 1948, while sharing similarities such as their religio-social backgrounds; an emphasis on order (individual and social), piety and reform; strategies of mobilization such as holding public meetings—attended by men as well as women, in the case Maulana Aquil and Wahid Owaisi— that succeeded in part through another shared characteristic: oratorical skills. Together, sometimes in conflict and at others in agreement, they addressed the question of development as one of possibility, by linking morality with political consciousness and knowledge with action.

Suneetha's paper was an account of three different women's madrasas in Hyderabad: the Jamia't'ul Mominat, the Jamia't'ul Makarim and Jamia't'ul Muslimat, each owing allegiance to a different sect (Barelwi; Ahl-e-Hadith and the Jama'at-e-Islami respectively), established at different times in the last two decades, with different activities (for instance, Mominat also runs a Dar'ul Ifta) and attracting very different kinds of students in terms of age, social background etc. The argument emphasised the history of social reform (islah-e-ma'ashra) that lay at the heart of their founding, and focused on the pragmatic approach to education (regular schools, exams, curricula were not thought to be in conflict with madrasa education) and issues of everyday life (manage homes and their authority within the family etc.) adopted by students and teachers at these madrasas. While it is unclear, Suneetha observed, what long-term implications institutions such as these were having on Hyderabad Muslim society, the uniqueness of these institutions was manifest in the emphasis on discipline to contribute towards fashioning good Muslim women who could find suitable jobs, while combating social prejudice and familial pressure of different kinds.

Discussion—

The discussion was divided into three rounds: one round soon after Moid's presentation, and two rounds of questions and responses after the conclusion of both papers. K. Lalitha, who chaired the session, threw the first round open to the floor by commending Moid's paper as one that contained fascinating material for 'at least three books'.

- Shyamasundari followed with her own approbation, and pointed out that the paper was asking us to think about how these leaders thought and acted, and how their framework was different from the model of 'development' that is familiar to us. For one, public discourse was key to all three, which is the opposite of the way development models work; there were perhaps other lines of similarity and contrast that the paper could develop more: the 'moral sentiments' attached to zakat may find a parallel in development, and the giving of zakat in Moid's account also entailed

looking critically at one's own resources. Finally, the whole question of knowledge and action could also be productively explored.

- Susie Tharu felt that these questions were important, but Moid had already opened up 'a fertile seam, giving us a sense of the richness of the discussion' rarely to be found elsewhere. She spoke about the spiritual quality of movement activism—the drive to be a better person, to live a better life, do more—that many feminists and others were inspired by in their youth, and that in the present she found this quality in young Muslim students in universities. Moid's paper has thus been very inspiring because it captured this dimension.
- Santosh Dash thought that the frame of 1948 was very productive, but wanted to know why the conceptual frame was restricted to Muslim experience—how did other, outside factors impact them? For instance, state action, Dalit politics etc.?
- Ilina Sen agreed that the paper was fascinating, but 1) wondered how Hyderabad Muslim society related with the Telangana armed struggle, which was of course the 'event that most people from outside Hyderabad, like myself, know about' 2) could he say something about the proposed alliance between the Bastar raja who was in talks with the Nizam to federate with Hyderabad state rather than join the Indian Union?
- Ramana Murthy congratulated Moid for a 'good beginning' and asked him to elaborate on the facilitating factors and limits of the kind of communitarian and co-operative institutions that he wrote about—after all, he pointed out, these were not unique and had been seen in the history of the Church in Europe as well. As for the model of zakat, it was worth asking who helps and who is in need of help; finally, the paper condensed a long history into a single trajectory, it might be good to think about other important factors that influenced these events and people.
- Susie objected that these were familiar questions and old issues that 'we know about', whereas Moid was trying to present a fresh perspective that was not about them. It would be best to pay attention to what he was trying to say in the paper.
- R. Srivatsan underlined the subtle way that Moid was mobilizing his concepts and asking questions like what is a Muslim, what is development?
- Uday Kumar observed that it might be important to focus on the question of the 'forms of action' proposed by the paper. A sewing machine is not merely aiding a skill or employment, but 'living through something'; since development is also a form of action, thinking in these terms may generate questions that may challenge that dominant paradigm.

Moid responded by noting that this was a work in progress and much more was to be done. The central question in front of the leaders was how to think about the gap between the desire of the community and what was possible. The state and civil society had 'disowned' Muslims, and in these conditions—in spite of the criticisms of 'westernized Muslims', who were ignored—these leaders went ahead with their programme of self-reliance and reform. In reply to Ilina Sen he pointed to an article he and Suneetha have already published about the political context of pre-1948 Hyderabad state.

Discussion—II

Lalitha opened the discussion by citing her own past work in a project that asked the difficult question: how to understand Muslim women's personal, social, familial position and responsibility in post-conflict scenarios? How, in the context of these papers, would we understand the moral and ethical Muslim self in these situations? Both papers try to address

these concerns broadly, though questions remain about what it means to have knowledge that leads to action in these circumstances, and to what extent are people helped by the kind of responses Moid discusses in his paper. Secondly, can these kinds of models be used with respect to other religions, say Christianity and Hinduism etc? What kind of link between morality and political consciousness, in Moid's terms, would make for a good Dalit, or the 'goodness' of a Brahmin etc?

- Following on this, Rama Melkote said she found the papers very interesting and 'educational', though there was a problem with both in that they homogenized 'the' Muslim community—according to her own friends' views, no such homogeneity existed. Therefore it was important to ask who goes to madrasas, what are the different sects we are talking about and how do attitudes towards, say, Police Action or madrasas differ according to sect?
- Satish Poduval was struck by Suneetha's differentiating between the 'Islamic' and the 'Muslim' community at one point in the paper and wanted to know whether we could think about the distinction as being one of 'theological' collective separate from the 'sovereign or social community'.
- Rekha Pappu's question to Moid was about what kind of modality of action 'zakat' was, how far it went in addressing the economic realities of the community, and whether the suspicion of non-Muslims towards discourses of self-reliance within the Muslim community figured in the discussions of zakat and other such actions. She asked if Suneetha could elaborate on specific instances where young girls have been able to act upon their own ideal of life after their education at the madrasa.

In response to the last question first, Suneetha pointed out that many of the teachers at these madrasas are old students, and for them this is in fact a mode of action, where they are part of the institution and in respected public roles. On the distinction between the 'Islamic' and the 'Muslim' community, she was referring to the discourse of social reform that is part of Islamic history and discourse (islāh-e-ma'āshara) and the more sociologically framed response to specific problems in the present. She cited the example of a senior Mufti she interviewed, who fulminated against the 'zulm' suffered by Muslim women, who would not bear it silently if they only knew their position in Islam. Another example was from the Muftia at Mominat, who told her that the Islamic practice is for pregnant women to be taken care of by their husbands, whereas it was Indian tradition for her to be cared for in her natal home; she raised this point at public meetings and in classes and it had an impact. Responding to Rama, Suneetha noted that the community is sociologically heterogeneous, but as a minority targeted by Hindutva groups and the state, they are homogenous. That said, in another sense the whole thrust of madrasa education is to 'become Muslim, to know what you are.' Ayesha Farooqui chipped in with a response, observing that Muslims are in fact a heterogeneous group, so that in recent times even the BJP has begun to identify groups that could be their allies: the Shia [in certain pockets], for example, have been so identified.

Responding to Lalitha, Moid said that elections, for instance, were urged as a religious and moral responsibility on the Hyderabad Muslim electorate—all the speeches claimed it was a religious duty. Replying to Rekha's question, he confirmed that zakat was a form of action and a very important one at that.

This inaugurated a discussion on **zakat**, which began by Rekha asking if it was institutionalized, to which Ayesha and Moid replied by confirming that it was partially so, in bodies such as the Hyderabad Zakat and Charitable Trust run by (Ghiyasuddin) Babukhan,

which undertakes a range of activities for the welfare of poor Muslims. However, it is largely individual and scattered; much of it goes to madrasas, which Suneetha confirmed run on zakat thus received.

- Rekha further wanted to know if there were figures available, and whether there were parallels with development models. Moid stated that exact figures were not available—after all, zakat is also not meant to be disclosed or bragged about—but he had heard from a maulana who traveled all over frequently to collect zakat, that Hyderabadis are especially generous.
- Shyama observed that it was very important to take up Rekha's question in relation to the question about homogeneity; one aim of development was to homogenize, could it be that zakat works towards this as well? Is it also possible that after initial indifference the state was now becoming more of an actor in this field?
- Following on this, Deeptha Achar asked if the circulation of zakat re-articulates the demands that the community makes from the state. Are there negotiations between the 'zakat' and 'development' frames with respect to, for example, healthcare, provision of schooling etc.?
- Lalitha asked if—drawing on Moid's brief mention of this possible trajectory—there was a difference of principle on the basis of which the Bait'ul Mal functioned then and the Darussalam Bank, also started by the Owaisi family, functions now.
- Usha Seethalakshmi asked if the money was accounted for, and if so, to whom were the accounts presented?
- Rekha condensed her questions into: given the dominance of the development paradigm, would Moid agree that zakat has a developmental aspect, or are they completely different?

In his response, Moid began by emphasising that thinking about zakat as a phenomenon had not 'developed this far'; as a practice it is scattered, as he had noted before, among individuals as well as institutions though the process of centralisation was very much in process. As for the accounting, all the bodies that collect or distribute zakat are registered and their audit reports are public. Individually, of course, zakat is supposed to be kept secret [as a practice of charity enjoined as a duty, it must not be an occasion for pride in one's own generosity or capacity to give]. Suneetha observed that the two most contentious topics of debate in Indian Muslim public forums were precisely, the (lack of) optimum utilisation of zakat and of revenue from Waqf properties for the well-being of the community. Platforms like the *Milli Gazette* and TwoCircles.net regularly published articles, views and counter-views on these.

- Srivatsan suggested, thinking with Lalitha's 'post-conflict scenario' and Moid's mention of 'trauma' that one might want to think about the relevance of PTSD—not as a medicalized condition, but perhaps as a suggestive field to unpack—in the context of the condition of Hyderabad Muslims after Police Action in 1948.
- Santosh was excited to note that moral action and ethics, in relation to gender, community and politics, were being discussed in the opening session of a seminar on development. The question was, was this language adequate to these questions? His own instinct was to say it was definitely possible, as these papers had demonstrated. He found the argument in both papers significant, and attentive to heterogeneity and difference.

- P. Thirumal drew on his own work in Mizoram to observe that after two decades of armed insurgency, a new kind of Christian self had emerged, which was very different from the colonial formation. Was there, similarly, a pre-1948 Muslim self in Hyderabad that was different from the post-Police Action self Moid was discussing?
- Susie complained that while new epistemological ground had been broken in the papers, the discussion we were all engaged in ‘pulling it back into familiar channels’. Zakat, for instance, was a specific thing in Moid’s paper—a way to put the community back together etc.—which was telling us something new that we did not already know about it. Just as we don’t know what ‘religion’ means; it does not mean the same thing that it meant in the 16th century. More, religion and piety were not the same, and Christian piety and Islamic piety were again two different things. The question to ask is, what are we learning about piety in this context? And this requires ‘a leap away from our familiar understandings’ of these phenomena.
- Shamuel Tharu asked Suneetha what constituted failure in a madrasa, and what happens to the girls who fail? Also, what did she mean by referring to the ‘rationalizing of the syllabus’ especially for girls?
- Uma Bhugubanda commended Moid’s method of using the three figures he had in order to talk about Muslims in post-Police Action Hyderabad, recalling previous discussions of the ethics of interviews or obtaining personal narratives about an event that most people preferred to remain silent about. She asked Suneetha if there was any conflict or disagreements between the two systems of education among madrasa students—what kind of negotiations does movement between the two involve?

Suneetha responded to Shamuel by saying that teachers did not say a girl ‘failed’, but simply that she could not cope and her parents should think about sending her to the ‘regular’ school. About rationalizing, she gave the example of the ‘alim course, which takes the boys ten years but was much shorter for the girls. In response to Uma’s question, she said that nobody spoke to her about conflict, but there were mentions of how madrasa education helps them survive in the world. An example she cited was of a woman who was the only Muslim in her B.Sc class on Agricultural Sciences, and who told her how being in the madrasa helped her think about her situation and deal with it.

Moid replied to Thirumal’s question by saying that Muslim mobilization in Hyderabad had begun in the 1930s; sectarian affiliations were overcome in the interests of a larger unity around this time, especially as the demand for responsible government in Hyderabad state grew, connected with the demand of ‘one man, one vote’. The question was one of political interests; after 1948, the moral sense was added to this, in order to arrest the ‘internal decline’ of the community and focus on self-reform and internal strength. Responding to Susie’s comments, Moid noted that in the Urdu literature of the time the question of the purpose of Islam in the world was much-discussed and appeared to inspire much of this activism. There was concern to refuse the status of ‘the proletariat of the West’; Islamic concepts were needed instead to think about their place in the world.

Lalitha concluded the discussion by requesting Moid to write more about the time before Police Action—especially for people who know very little about it. She asked if there were Sharia’ courts in princely Hyderabad, and how was access to the law affected with the switch to English in the courts soon after 1948? However, these were questions to be discussed in the break; the session came to an end with Lalitha proposing that

perhaps 'spiritual' would be a better term to use where 'religion' was used, but there was always the question of how to understand the nuances.

These were thought-provoking papers and therefore generated a lot of interesting questions of all kinds; the quality of the discussion was much like a conversation, and each question was able to bring out different aspects of the papers that perhaps made Moid and Suneetha also think about their observations and arguments in a productive way. In longer, more detailed papers they would have to consider much more deeply the concepts that must be used in order to discuss their respective subjects—and whether an overdetermined concept like 'development' (as was apparent from the discussion) is really helpful in thinking about the relevant questions here. The sense of the discussion seemed to be that this was a small invitation to approaching a tangle of really complex issues, and both Moid and Suneetha need to help us out a lot more with some scaffolding as well as detail. This was definitely as rousing a start to the seminar as anyone could have wished.

National Seminar “ Development Beyond the State” (Sheela Prasad)

19th January 2018

Session Papers :

1. Threats to the Indigenous Life world -- Ilina Sen

2. Mizo Sensibility, history, poetics --- P.Thirumal

Chair --- Rama Melkote

The above session had two presentations, with **Ilina Sen**'s paper 'Threats to the Indigenous Life World' the first. The paper is a work in progress and is based on the author's over 35 years of living with Adivasis in Chhattisgarh. Ilina mapped the lived experiences of the Adivasis and drew attention to the threats to them from the combined forces of globalization, Hindutva and the militarised state in India. The Adivasi state of Chhattisgarh rich in mineral resources and agro diversity, is now a major focus of mining by both national and international corporates. This history of resource exploitation has seen the adivasis alienated from their land, forests, economy and culture. As adivasis are territorial communities, this displacement from their homeland has serious implications for their future. The possibilities of resistance to these processes though limited, are the only way to counter these threats.

Discussion :

Rama brought in the example of how the Project Tiger was linked to the displacement of the Chenchus in the Nallamalai forests, and emphasised how the State facilitates the displacement of Adivasis. Rama was also curious to know how the Maoists see development in these regions. Ramana questioned whether the adivasis of Chhattisgarh own private property and have pattas. Srivats made a point about how both the academic GS Ghurye and the Maoists stereotype adivasis as sexually permissive as their sexual traditions are more liberal and different from that of non-tribals. Usha talked about her work with adivasis of North A.P. where she

found that there were conflicting visions of development among them. The adivasi youth were willing to move out and seek employment in the urban centres and did not see the State as an adversary. To them development was an opportunity to seek a better future. Suneetha was bothered by the fact that if capitalist development was inevitable and difficult to challenge, what resources and strategies do the adivasis have for resisting and fighting the State.

In her response Ilina explained that there is not much difference in the vision of development between the State and Maoists. For their own survival, the Maoists need the corporate and private companies as they are their sources of funding. Ilina felt that a coming together of various Adivasi groups in Central India under a single state of Gondwana may not help the cause, unless the vision of a collective future is different from mainstream development. Responding to the growing crisis in India's Adivasi heartland, Ilina concluded on a note of optimism " *I am a storyteller and can think of alternatives*".

The second presentation by **P. Thirumal** brought into focus the much neglected Northeast, popularly imagined as a region of political instability and low development. Thirumal's engagement with the Northeast grew out of a course that he taught on 'History of Media'. As part of teaching this course Thirumal realised that very little was known about the Northeast as a cultural category -- its cultures were seen as representable and not 'presentable'. A central question in Thirumal's presentation is on the nature of encounter between Mizo culture and developmental understanding. Can there be a nuanced narrative of this engagement that can privilege regional/local cultures?

Through a reading of a sculpture 'Pheichamm' by a young Mizo artist, Thirumal critiques neo-liberal development by proposing a category he calls Mizo sensibility. How can myth and legends claim a contemporary presence against the modern juggernaut of statist development in Mizoram?

Discussion :

Rama was interested to know in what ways were younger Mizos different from their elders and was there a sense of shared history that they subscribed to. Also, were there any other such sculptures of myths and legends in Mizoram that could provide

a comparative frame for analysis. As Christianity came early to Mizoram, the people have a long history of being modern and may now feel a need to reconnect with their past. Ilina wanted to know about the small community of Jewish Mizos or the Bnei Menashe. The sculpture itself was the centre of much discussion. Srivats felt the sprite or 'Peichamm' symbolised a sense of uprootment or loss for the Mizos - where do we go. For Madhav, the sculpture that had wings suggested agency and was a testimony of the Mizo people. For Satish the 'Peichamm' represented a siege of the Mizo identity in present times. Deeptha was curious about the scale of the sculpture.

Thirumal responded by drawing attention to the high out migration of youth from Mizoram to mainland India that has seen a demographic change in the state population of 1.09 million. This has resulted in a reclaiming of the past by the younger Mizos to assert their identity and different history from the rest of the Northeast and India. While the Army is a strong continued presence in Mizoram, Thirumal drew attention to the need for concern about the rising conflicts among the various ethnic groups in Mizoram.

Summing Up

The two presentations had a similar subject - the Adivasis - one in mainland India and the other in Northeast India. Both the regions of study have seen insurgency, political violence and authoritarian control by state forces to suppress dissent. While in Mizoram, Christianity introduced modernity among the Mizos, in Chhattisgarh it was the private mining lobby and the Maoists. These encounters with modernity have complicated the contemporary life world of both the Adivasis of Chhattisgarh and the Mizos. The two narratives by Ilina and Thirumal open up the narrow space of discussion and provide a different understanding of the complexities Adivasis across India face today.

Vasanta's notes on the discussion around Madhava Prasad's paper

Language Development and Freedom: A Review of Indian Debates
19-1-2018 (4:30 – 5:30 PM) session with Aditi Mukherjee as Chairperson

The author of this paper presented a brief history of the role played by language policies in both colonial state and in Independent India in determining dominant discourses about 'development' of the nation. Specifically, he argued that the dominant (policy / planning/ expert centered) discourses have ignored or undermined the political dimension. This was evident in the then prevailing assumption that Indian languages must coexist with English in order to 'recover the nation' although it is never clear how that is possible. He pointed out that Gandhi was opposed to the idea of academicians deciding on language policies. He cited Gandhi's statement: "I would have the language of the law courts to be language of the province where the court is situated. He then moved on to the post independent period when the dominant discourse was that no Indian language is developed enough to be a medium of instruction (since most of them lack sufficient scientific and technical terminology). His argument centered on the divide between the views of political class and professional class on the question of language and development on the one hand, and freedom and aspirations at the regional / local levels on the other hand.

Aditi Mukherjee endorsed some of the views expressed by the author by discussing a couple of examples: (1) In Independent India, many states have attempted to introduce English right from class-I without paying attention to the lack of infrastructure or human resources, (2) the debates around the issue of how one can generate knowledge by 'developing' Indian languages. She commented that Indian languages can be used for knowledge generation provided one is willing to borrow terminology from English or other Indian languages. However, there is opposition to this idea from the State which constitutes bodies such as Committee for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT, New Delhi) that offers 'Pan-Indian' Sanskrit terms for translation of technical terms. Their argument is that since Sanskrit has a good morphological paradigm, we can use Sanskrit terms. This view completely ignores the fact that meanings of 'words' / concepts in any language are never fixed, they constantly undergo semantic expansion (e.g. *alochana* that has very different meanings across different Indian languages). She also stated that many idioms are developed organically from below, and yet, State refuses to take cognizance of such facts as evident in CSTT taking NCERT textbook writers / translators to court for not adopting the terminology prescribed by CSTT.

Madhav commented that one of the reasons for this problem is, common people's language never enters dictionaries.

Srivats commented that the relationship between policy and politics is dialectical, never frozen and that a shift is occurring so that today the 'language of development' is shaken due partly to operation of BPO centers and Medical transcription practices etc.

Madhav concurred with this observation by saying that lot of change is taking place, but it is not getting registered in the apparatus of the State. There is more demand for functioning in local languages. Capitalism is one of the reasons for such change although no one wants to endorse it.

Manohar said that Gandhi had different (ambiguous) views depending on whether he was speaking in the Northern part of India or the South. The debates on modernization of Indian languages were not 'technology centered' in the 20th C unlike at the present time. Aditi added that this is true in relation to the debates on Hindi vs. Hindustani.

Uday talked about language planning at the state level with respect to what is going on in Kerala – something in which media and internet are playing major roles. He pointed out that in films and newspapers, greater foregrounding of regional languages has happened in Kerala.

Satish commented that Partha Chatterjee's writings (which have been cited by Madhav) pertained to earlier times, the 90's; the policy vs. politics divide is currently undergoing a major transformation, especially during the last two decades...perhaps due to the role of European Union.

Madhav talked about the Russian model and the need to pay attention to the dialectical model to make sense of discourses connected to university autonomy.

Rekha wanted to know whether we need to take a relook at Kothari commission report and the 3-language formula recommendation in theorizing the issue of policy vs. politics divide.

Madhav responded by stating that the content of a report is not important and that the 'national policy' is itself an insulated development process....this is so in spite of the fact that education is on the concurrent list; the idea that education (and language policies) should be left to the purview of the State alone is something that should worry all of us as human beings.

Susie said that we need to examine the question of caste in relation to language policies, since in the recent decades the caste composition of faculty members is changing in language-related departments (more Dalit teachers now) which could have had an impact on the content of the curriculum.

Santosh said that neither the politics nor the policies reflect the aspirational India or the changing India...it is the market which is deciding the changes, which he thinks is a very dangerous trend.

Madhav: The collective was dissolved

Uday: Brahminical conception of language is taken over by non-Brahminical castes, not just by the faculty members, even the media is involved. Official versions are getting loosened. In Kerala they don't use the word Dalit anymore. The new word is *pattika jaati*which is not in the dictionaries.

Jomo: Machine translation might take over

Manohar: Dalit teachers do bring new languages, but they do not use them consistently

Responding to Susie, Aditi said, the change is not just because of new faculty members alone. In relation to Bangla, she said many movements took place in favor of using local varieties.

Report on Uma Bhrugubanda's "Incitement to Equality: Producing a Gender Textbook in the New Millennium."

Asma Rasheed and Madhumeeta Sinha

Uma Maheshwari Bhrugubanda's presentation was a reflection on the process of writing *Towards a World of Equals: A Bilingual Textbook of Gender* (henceforth, Textbook) along with a team of other authors. She started by giving a blueprint of her paper which would have three sections: first, the problematic space which the textbook inhabited; second, the framework for rethinking gender; and third, the textbook and its reach. She began by giving the background of the Textbook. The conversations on this bilingual Textbook came about as the Telangana government's concern about safety and security of women in the state after the "sensational Nirbhaya rape case." Though the group of authors comprises of Anveshi members, many people were involved in making it possible. There was, in particular, a woman IAS officer who was the then in-charge Vice-Chancellor of JNTU/Technical Education who realized the potential efficacy of a gender textbook in creating a gender just society in a sustained manner and asked for the book to be put together in four months. Behind this commissioning there was a huge amount of tactical negotiation involved with various government bodies, meetings with bureaucrats and education administrators to convince and get the proposal accepted. The need was to get the Textbook accepted for a mandatory course along with courses such as Ethics and Human Values, and Environment Science. It was a matter of packaging and selling the course to people who did not care too much about gender issues with the hope that some positive outcomes might nevertheless emerge once the Textbook is used in the class.

Once this first hurdle was crossed there were several challenges for the authors. One of the first was to get away from the question of violence and safety to broaden the scope of discussion on gender since the entire backdrop was shadowed by the rape case. Then the authors also wanted to resist using the term "feminism" often in the textbook and made class and caste the major conceptual tropes to explain the complexity of issues of gender in today's context. The other difficulty was to keep talking back to the discourses of neo-liberalism, *Hindutva* and of a certain kind of "market feminism." They also wanted to make the textbook attractive and accessible by locating it in the everyday world of students so the readings drew on popular culture, cinema, biography, stories, poems, etc. The authors deliberately chose to not address the question of homosexuality in a frontal manner, although there is a discussion on sex-gender in a chapter on "Gender Spectrum" and on transgenders. The idea was to avoid any unnecessary controversy that would detract attention from issues tackled in the Textbook. And there are two short films which were commissioned for the textbook that discuss questions on gender. In short, these pedagogic moves were to capture the contemporary moment of gender.

Uma spoke of Maitrayee Chowdhuri's theorization of transformed public space, citing "promotion of freedom as a means of self realization..." which brings the thought of invoking gender in a nuanced way so that it does not just remain a mode of freedom but works as a concept that interlocks with caste and class. The idea was that when it reached JNTU (Hyderabad) and its affiliated colleges, it ought not to remain as yet another course but also

work as a mode of self development; it ought to help develop a sensibility for understanding social relations. The idea was to transform the classroom as a space to raise questions and to think of development not only as a going forward but as an organic process for change.

The entire exercise of visualizing and conceptualizing the Textbook was also a hands-on experience of working with the State machinery, and allows for reflection on how the State reacts and works. The involvement of several women administrators at a senior level—in the State Council of Higher Education and the Commission for Collegiate Education, as the Special Secretary for Higher Education (Telangana) and the-then in-Charge Vice Chancellor of JNTU-H—are indicative of how bureaucratic entanglements complicate the unpredictability of introducing and carrying through a course.

Discussion

The discussion started with the Chairperson for the session, R. Srivats noting that one can argue development is not necessarily a going or move forward. It can also be about a crystallization of thoughts about being and about organic transformation. The various factors in the making of the Textbook, and actors—before the State acted and beyond the State—provide glimpses of how we can think through the question of development,

Shyama commented on the presence of a woman IAS officer, Shailaja Ramaiyer, which helped in this particular instance in the conceptualization of the Gender Textbook as the negotiation with the state became different and that is important to keep in mind. Then she asked about the training with teachers, particularly male. While agreeing with her comment, Uma responded by saying that largely the younger faculty were receptive but there were always one or two who were, at least initially, resistant to the idea of teaching the book. Women faculty was far surer that they had been able to address the class.

Rama Melkote began by commenting that the link between gender and development has been established now in the last forty years and women have considered the best managers of poverty. The question of gender policies is at the background of women's movement and it brings a clear break from the women's question as raised by the nationalist movement. She also pointed out the "Saksham Report" was a part of the framing of this textbook and went on to say that gender is not only about women or only about violence and rights and that this book has kept this in mind while bringing in the dimensions of caste and class.

Srivats cited the example of an NGO where the presence of two women was referred to as "two genders" being there!

Vijendra asked whether the authors regarded the severe limitations a textbook has as a lot of learning takes outside the classroom. Rama responded to him by saying that it is not true that nothing happens in a classroom.

Shamuel Tharu asked in relation to the rationale of textbook and in relation to the idea of the transforming public that Uma had invoked: Is there freedom outside of capital, since capitalism also appears as driving us towards freedom? What are the ways in which capitalism is working here? He also mentioned having used the textbook in his class and felt that this was a textbook attuned to men; the dynamics of an all-male student and teacher classroom allowed everyone to talk aloud in order to understand. This was not to negate the experiences of the girls; rather, to point out the dynamics as different from in a mixed class.

Manohar Reddy spoke of a different experience with the textbook in his classes: the women would participate more actively and argue with the men while reading the chapters. He also found the bilingual aspect of the book very useful in explaining concepts and for various contexts. He particularly mentioned the chapter on socialization which generated much discussion in his class.

K. Lalita while thinking about Anveshi's earlier approach pointed out that for a long time "training" was a bad word and Anveshi always resisted it. What we did see as a changed context was that, post Nirbhaya, most of the courses and training are still referred to as gender sensitization courses. She also noted that the Textbook does gender sensitization in that it articulates issues as structural issues.

A. Suneetha spoke about how there were fights, and then male teachers reconciled to the fact of teaching this course and agreed to studying the textbook with more material given by them.

Madhumeeta Sinha raised the question of masculinity as an absent issue in Uma's presentation to which Uma responded by saying that the group is already working on another version of the book where two chapters on masculinity are being added with active thinking on the topic and there is a discussion on Article 377 as well. She also referred to the two films on gender relations which were exclusively made to accompany the book.

Our response

The presentation and the discussion highlighted the appropriateness of the Textbook and of its need in today's context. Its use not only for learners but also for teachers was endorsed by several members of the audience. We feel that the presentation would have been further enriched if it reflected some more on the issue of masculinities, including the fact that in our context there is still a great deal of silence when speaking, leave alone teaching, about it. This is also to acknowledge that there are not enough conversations—written or otherwise—among us over the close imbrications of feminisms with masculinity studies. It is in from this perspective that our reflective processes perhaps need to deliberate further on the feminist epistemology that frames the pedagogic intervention of the Textbook.

We would also like to pick up a point from the Abstract about a "generalized incitement to gender equality" today, and suggest that the issue is further complicated by what we would term, for now, as "interruptions" to such generalized provocations. Moreover, these interruptions—be it from locations of community, caste, class or gender—are complicating easy understandings of gender equality, even those inflected by market feminisms.

The pedagogic enterprise of putting together a textbook with or without state support is a project where the implications go far beyond the constraints of a classroom. Hence, a reflection on the composition and choices for the making of the textbook, and the responses of teachers during training workshops may prove helpful in thinking more about the concepts as we understand them today.

Report on Rekha Pappu's “‘What does employment have to do with it?’ Reconfiguring Approaches to Education.”

Rekha Pappu's presentation took off from her experiences during placements for students at the TISS, Hyderabad, where teachers were asked to help students prepare for interviews, etc. She spoke of a sense of unease among the Faculty over talk of employment, pay packages, career opportunities outside the classroom and so on. Picking up from that discomfort of liberal thought with the economic aims of education, Rekha noted that the traditional idea of education was a preparation for a life of leisure, of engagement with or contemplation of social issues and debates. Christopher Winch, she recalled, has defended (in the context of vocational education in the United Kingdom) the economic aims of education to be as legitimate as any other aim.

In the context of institutions of higher education in India, particularly following Rohith Vemula's suicide, Rekha argued that the traditional mandate of a university—to produce knowledge and make it accessible—was under scrutiny. We are now seized with questions such as what is knowledge, what are universities producing and how do we make this accessible to those who are currently entering such institutions. Rekha drew on Sanjay Seth's discussion in his *Subject Lessons* of the debates and discussions in the public sphere about “modern” education and the assumptions regarding education by Indians during the colonial period. She focused in particular on two aspects: one, the lament and anguish of the colonizers (the British) over rote learning and two, the idea of English as an instrumental language among the colonized Indians that would enable them to get employment.

Nonetheless, this idea of *arthkari vidya* did not mean Indians did not have other goals. One such formulation, to avoid being stuck in a mercenary notion of education, was that of *deen* and *duniya*: books of faith or spirituality on the one hand and that of labour that men pursue on the other to survive in this world. In contemporary contexts, Rekha pointed out that students come to universities to obtain some sort of certification or credentials. State policies seem to be in tune with student demands, whereas teachers seem to continue to think in terms of knowledge production. The need, she pointed out, was to take the aspirations and expectations of students more seriously as a newer population enters educational spaces. What, she asked, are we as teachers and thinkers, doing about these aspirations?

Drawing on Anirudh Krishna's work on social mobility that indicated college education is now believed (by students and parents) to provide employment, Rekha talked of how higher income may not necessarily mean one could get entry into colleges. While Krishna's study did not extend to whether college graduates succeeded in getting employment, it did note for instance that those who were successful were more so because of their cultural capital and soft skills. Therefore, Rekha called for a different conception of university particularly in terms of the shifts in demographics and aspirations from education and universities in India.

Discussion

In the discussion that followed, several interesting points were raised about contemporary demands and expectations of education by various stakeholders. R. Srivats laid out the shifts in thinking about education: an earlier guild-based mode of education was in terms of training for work; the Enlightenment goal of education to move out from earlier occupations; the industrial manpower generation framework—Nehruvian, in India—that resolutely saw a scientific basis for education; and a shift from a Marxist-liberal framework in neoliberal times. Srivats mentioned Carole Pateman's work which pointed to education as a means of

acquiring tools to respond and participate (*Participation and Democratic Theory*). He also recalled Kalyan Sanyal's work on capitalist development, where Sanyal talks of how the dispossessed are denied entry into the space of capital and simultaneously reintegrated into the economy in the space of development. Such people, marooned like one of the passengers of Foucault's "ship of fools," are excluded from society but at same time reunited with it culturally/spiritually through the idea of salvation—neither deserted nor included. Similarly, they are today denied access to jobs while cited in visions of development and the future. An example of this could be, he remarked, the students at Osmania University facing the crises of unemployment.

Rama Melkote recalled that as far as shifts in state policies were concerned—from the Kothari Commission to the Yashpal Commission—there were lots of differences, in terms of the importance given by the latter to primary and secondary education, the emphasis in improving our own institutions and ruling out foreign institutions entering the Indian scene. Such shifts impacted what kinds of students moved into higher education, and would eventually show up in terms of the questions that arose subsequently. Today, Rama remarked, the emphases is on science and technology, with undergraduate programmes in Arts and Commerce practically non-existent. An increasing gap between students in terms of access to resources, between students from vernacular and English medium education and the diminishing attention to primary and secondary education have all cost and impacted education in general.

Madhava Prasad disagreed with the demarcation of *deen* and *duniya*; he also noted that if *deen* served as an education for the spirit, the humanities in general had replaced such a function. There were conditions that prevailed in India with various structures of modernity during colonial times, he argued; for instance, families no longer served to provide spiritual nurturance and the public spaces of the modern nation-state came to serve as a replacement. He suggested that we need to recall how India came into being with suppressed nationalities, and in the current context, humanities is now not being allowed to serve its function (of engagement and discussion). Today, public spaces are spaces of employment and families see an education in humanities as contributing to a conflict of interests. Pointing to the increasing corporatization of education and recent reports of student stress, Madhava Prasad claimed that these profit-making corporate institutions of education are in a nexus with parents against the interests of students.

Santosh Kumar Dash noted that we need to think of the attention on skill-development and social mobility as only through employment in terms of a menace. Uma Bhrugubanda wondered whether, as teachers it was such a bad idea to keep education distant from employment; it would be a failure if the present clamping down critical thinking in university spaces was not countered and questioned. A. Suneetha pointed out that the link between education and employment had continued until around the 1970s; it was the state withdrawal that began around the 1990s which had led to a complete breakdown by now. It is a gap that is today being filled by the ubiquitous coaching institutions.

Rekha Pappu contended that there is a changed scenario of employment: earlier, there was a bureaucratic paradigm whereas there is today a flexible paradigm of employment. The humanities need to rethink modes of teaching: we continue to teach for social transformation, she felt, not equipping our students for the corporate sector. We are not, she felt, reflecting enough over what our teaching is leading towards.

Uday Kumar suggested that knowledge production is one idea of education; it is also a space of not just imbibing modern thought but of critical thinking as well, which would not be against such stated national agendas, such as education against superstition. The answers are not merely in terms of market spaces, he felt. Rekha was not sure of this, pointing out that oppositional critical thinking may need to be adapted to the employment market.

K. Lalita, on the other hand, felt that there is no general value to critical thinking any more, except perhaps among some minorities. Earlier, the government was not interested in primary education and today, it is not interested in higher education's continued success in producing critical thinking. Instead, such thinking is being increasingly termed "anti-national." The thrust today, Lalita argued, is in terms of pragmatic issues, such as "brand." Vocational training initiatives of earlier times, such as SETWIN in Hyderabad, she pointed out had failed and the lower middle classes are no longer interested.

Jhumur pointed out that a new kind of thinking in science and technology today is oriented in terms of "innovative thinking" for production and consumption. Shyama noted that Rekha's presentation was restricted to liberal education; perhaps the need is to ask students themselves about why they would want liberal education at this moment, do they see the need for any agenda of transformation? Rekha noted that student voices were missing from the discussion. Shamuel Tharu commented that the discussion was collapsing school and college education, vocational and professional education. He pointed out that the European classicist system of grammar school education for enlightened citizens was very different in purpose from the public school aim of good citizens. India, however, does not have any such different pedagogical aims, and this one curriculum for all purposes did not translate well: was today's education about sending everyone to a university, or something else?

Our response

The presentation and the discussion that followed pointed to shifts in the paradigms and aims of education, shifts that are clearly perceived and understood differently by all the stakeholders. On the one hand, the state and the students and institutions have steered towards a more market-oriented notion of education. On the other hand, teachers appear to be struggling between a perception of their (inherited) roles as knowledge producers and the changing demographics and aspirations of their student populations.

This, we feel, is a nodal point in the conundrum of a capitalist-consumerist model of flexible education-employment: higher educational institutions are not only spaces that produce knowledge; they are spaces that continue to reproduce difference along with "non-synchronic forms of discrimination."¹ The "affective economy" of our institutions is such that, instead of "recognition" based solely in terms of "acquired learning," differences based on modern rational principles are "blurred" with or onto differences based on a pre-modern caste system. It is here that, we think, we must pause over the elision of inherited or continuing forms of discrimination into capitalist-consumerist developmental paradigms. While we share the anguish of having to "teach" at the frontlines of job *melas* and employment markets even as

¹ Thirumal, P. and Carmel Christy, "Why Indian Universities Are Places Where Savarnas Get Affection and Dalit-Bahujans Experience Distance," *Economic and Political Weekly* 53.5 (03 Feb, 2018). Accessed on <http://www.epw.in/engage/article/why-indian-universities-are-places-where-savarnas-get-affection-and-dalit-bahujans> on 05 February 2018.

we “teach” critical thinking, we also feel we need to return to that “missing student” Rekha mentioned in passing.

—Asma Rasheed and Madhumeeta Sinha

Note on Anand Zachariah's paper on 2nd day of 'Development beyond the State'. (Mithun Som)

Non- State medical education: the challenges of developing a contextual medical education: the experience of Christian Medical College

Chair – Binayak Sen

Through the example of Christian Medical College, Anand would be examining the role of the Christian medical education and health in the current evolving scenario and what is the Christian identity that can help to respond to the challenges in the present circumstances.

The paper is in two parts. In the first part, the Anand takes us through the initiation and development of the Christian Medical College (CMC) Vellore and in the second, he talks about the medical education of the country.

The CMC tale:

Started in 1918 by Dr. Ida Scudder, the institution responded to the different challenges by bringing in innovations and developed its own unique character over the years. CMC developed the philosophy of developing tertiary specialised care and primary care, referred to as 'both and' philosophy in the 70s. Three unique model of community care was developed which brought in a balance to the tertiary care in the hospital. Another feature is the student selection which is a unique process where the students come from CMC's 50 churches network spread across the country. These students are sponsored and later they go back to work in mission hospitals in their area. Post 1990s, there has been newer challenges with a rapid growth of patients coming in. The hospital responded with increased its services, departments and specialisations. The hospital has also shifted from its earlier social liberal to now more evangelical position.

The biggest challenge now is NEET which brought in a common exam for all medical colleges. This adversely effects the selection process of CMC and infringes on the minority rights of CMC. In summary, CMC has provided a tale of development of a contextual model of medical education relevant to the social context. The challenge now is to retain its autonomy, and maintain its character and content of its education.

Tale of medical education in India:

Anand started this tale with Bhore committee who had talked about primary care. After the 80s, the field of medical education saw privatisation. The medical college curricula that is promoted is very standardised leaving little room for innovation or trying to be relevant to health needs of the country. There are only a handful or institutes who are going against the grain and are trying to innovate. The Medical council of India which governs the medical education of the country have its own set of problems including charges of corruption. NEET was introduced to have a single exam for the whole country so it is easier for aspirants and some of the donations and profiteering can be checked and also to emphasise on merit as the only criteria. But this 'one size fits all' is not in tune for smaller innovations.

CMC's stand on NEET has been to say that as a minority institution, CMC has a right to selection, merit is not only assessed through marks and exam. CMC's selection process and the sponsorship has helped hospitals and human resources.

Summarising his presentation, Anand concluded that the question before CMC is how to respond to the problems of health care and education in the country. And how should it look at itself with relation to its christian identity and its role in the development in the country in a diminishing democratic space.

There are two ways to interpret Christian identity of providing health care, one is conservative approach and other is secular and plural. In the first one we try to preserve what we have and in the second, we try to reinterpret Christian identity within health care. But what do we do to preserve the Christian identity. If we are constrained by circumstances, then what is the essence of identity and work. Based on CMC's work, one can look at four features of Christian identity - compassionate and holistic health care, addressing neglected health problems, community health models of providing health care and education to develop change agents within society.

Other than preserve institutional structure, one should try to conserve the Christian identity as a means of renewal. If we think and act creatively based on such a renewed Christian identity, then inspite of the threats faced, we can still work towards teaching and healing towards the development of the country.

Discussions:

One of the main theme of discussion was to the posing as a minority institution by the CMC. One of the concerns of the participants was why is CMC making its case a minority institution. Satish said that considering their unique selection process, and way it address the health needs of the country, one has solid grounds to oppose NEET even without a minority status.

Parallels were also drawn to the scuffling of autonomous spaces of central university by both Satish and Illina. There is an increasing trend of homogenising institutions notwithstanding the unique character that these institutions have developed over the years. The objective to pitch it as a plural thing and not just as a mission hospital was to gain wide support from other institutions. There is an effort to overall homogenise the system but CMC can be shown as a unique character and this homogenisation will destroy the uniqueness. There are larger chances of gaining support this way.

The other view on this issue by Srivats was that posing of CMC as a minority right is a political approach which is well thought out. Shamuel argued that the problems of CMC cannot be collapsed with central university as they both have very different problems. The room however seems to be uncomfortable with CMC looking itself as Christian organisation. Shamuel also added later that others are not so worried about merit line. But CMC has merit line plus something more. So it is a different kind of argument and the concerns are different. For other minorities, it is any Christian boy but for CMC it is Christian plus from Jharkhand plus one who will go back. So there is a conceptual division of why minority and why different.

Another thread of discussion was the support that CMC was getting in this fight. Aisha wanted to know about the other Christian medical colleges in India and if CMC is posing an alliance with them or other minority institutions. Anand responded that there is no formal alliance but there are informal consultations with other institutions like St. Johns catholic college or CMC Ludhiana who have followed NEET for their admissions this year. Illina suggested that one should also look at the Muslim medical care and training and see what kinds of problems they are facing. Manohar was interested to know the response of other majoritarian medical professionals. Anand responded that this was covered in the front page of 'the hindu'. In other informal chats one gets the idea that there is a healthy respect for CMC. But there has been no serious criticism.

Ramana wondered if the problem is to get the accreditation from MCI, then is there another way out like getting accreditation from some other body like WHO etc. In this case, CMC won't have to follow the NEET selection process and then let people decide what they want to chose.

Binayak, as the chair and also being a CMC alumini raised his concern that CMC has its unique advantage as it is making full utilisation of its reach across the country in the selection process. And this will be jeopardised by NEET. He added later that CMC also has another unique feature where going to every level depends on fulfilling a condition. Example one needs to work for two years before going to another level. These innovations and diversity will be de-throttled. Some medical colleges are not working well but under NEET all are homogenised.

Anand also reiterated in the discussions that there is a social purpose for education and higher medical education. Christian higher education is to service these hospital. The model is developed as these students service a set of hospitals. The Christian community in different locations play an important part as it is so important to select students who will go back. With NEET, the criteria will be just exams and and students may not want to go back. This is not just for the two year service that is mandatory but important for the larger run as it creates a pool of committed doctors. In most of the Christian hospitals, the senior position is occupied today by the doctors trained in CMC Vellore or Ludhiana.

Shyam Sundari said, the way the institution is structured, people from remote areas can go back and work. Now the situation in the country is that there are no doctors in the rural areas. There is no solution by the government to address this problem either, they are thinking of ways like Telangana government is thinking of compulsory posting. However, CMC has got this structurally addressed, the system is inbuilt in it. But not many of use know about it.

To sum up:

Anand's paper brings out the complexities of the challenge faced by CMC by examining the history of both the CMC and the medical education in India within the changing economic and political scenario. In the given political climate, how does CMC preserve its Christian identity and also work towards the health of the nation. CMC is posited at a critical juncture right now and whatever step it takes and the way this

thing turns out to be, this will effect not just the CMC but the health care system of the country.

A Report on the Paper Presented by Satish Poduval and the Ensued Discussion

(Sherin BS)

The paper opens with the axiomatic statement: “development beyond the state inevitably leads to, but is also led by, a state beyond development.” It identifies a shift in the conceptual transitivity in the notion of ‘development beyond state’—a shift from thinking about the state as the purveyor of material improvement, to thinking about how the human subjects experience, and act in the world. The ‘state beyond development,’ true to the axiom, necessitates a reconceptualization of the state as a stabilizing force field rather than an instrument of rule.

Further, the paper surveys the emergence of the term ‘development’ in social sciences and policy initiatives. It briefly looks at the etymology of the term ‘develop’ in contrast to ‘envelop’ in an attempt to reveal its innate ambivalence (an inorganic process with an external agent and an organic process with a self-realizing agent)—an ambivalence that was at work when the social and economic field of development studies emerged in the context of decolonization during the mid-twentieth century. The paper uses this insight to look at how ‘development’ is seen and experienced dialectically in the case of Kerala—a state in which foreign remittances flow into particular sectors with little left for its developmental commitments.

Kerala faces a unique phase of tension between a prevailing model of development and an emergent model of post-development statecraft. The paper recognizes the emergence of a new public that rises in response to the changed situation of opportunities and constraints that are remaking the society. It intends to supplement the studies made by social scientists who analyze this transformation based purely on empirical economic data. It looks to Malayalam popular culture/cinema to describe what it feels like to be a subject of this change.

The paper charts the growth of the ICT industry to demonstrate how the state machinery, along with Non-Resident Keralites invest both capital and a new vision of Kerala that is poised to transcend into an uncharted yet promising future through entrepreneurial innovation and social discipline. These, the paper observes, come together to form a digital regime of development, and find expression in Malayalam cinema. This is indicated by blockbusters, where narrative brings into alignment the aspirations anchored in the new entrepreneurial individuals and a modernized policing system, in a society that is remapped and energized

through rapidly proliferating ICT networks. The emergent zone of development beyond the state un-clasps the individual from a restrictive role, as a socially-concerned and committed citizen, and revalorizes her in term of the pursuit of personal desire and wealth—through which society also benefits. The role of the policing in this new narrative arc is to recognize the value of such private enterprise and to facilitate it by deploying sovereign and governmental modes of power. Policing depends not on the inchoate and messy networks of streets, fields and forests on the ground, but on the more easily regulated networks of digital communication and deep surveillance. The most productive aspect of the new digital regime of development appears to be a new dialectic between privacy (of the desiring, enterprising self) and transparency (of the citizen to the state, of the criminal/deviant to the police, of the consumer to the market). This new dialectic, is made possible and is unfolding precisely through the “social media” and communication networks named as as “technologies of truth” that are in the process of elaborating a space that is strictly speaking neither personal nor public in terms of interests they promote or the affects they put into circulation, . The paper further proceeds to elaborate this phenomenon using two popular Malayalam movies of the New generation – genre, *Mumbai Police* and *Traffic* .

In the discussion that followed the Chair Uday Kumar presented the discrepancy between the projected Kerala Model and the Malayali Consciousness, which stands for astute co ordination of policing. He also referred to Tobby Miller’s idea of “Technologies of Truth “ as a preoccupation with the extraction of suppressed dimensions of the individual. It deals with the value of truth, where media determined images influence how the society conceptualizes citizenship, nation etc. Unlike this, the contemporary phenomenon moves away from the idea of truth or its extraction concealed in a field. Uday Kumar begins the discussion with the 1990s, where in Malayalam movie exhibited a penchant for exploring the psychological world of the individual. Movies like *Manichithrathaazhu*, deal with such psychological explorations. The anxiety over regulating or policing female sexuality never leaves Malayalam cinema. Blessey’s *Palunku* or the perfect alibi in *Dhrishyam* are engagements with truth. At the same time policing is quite visible in a network of frames. The shift of the police from the old notion of the repository of sovereign violence to the facilitator’s role is not all that visible as in the contexts of brutal attacks on transgender individuals and other recent episodes of violence against the marginalized people. This proves that a seemingly transparent network of surveillance exists. It is also important to note that CPM is the largest employer in the state. A systematic and organized parallel policing exists, enabling one to say “ police beyond the state.”

Srivatsan raised the question whether an internal sense of value – an internality- can be treated as an indelible marker of development. Development tends to assume an internality and this manifests in documentary cinema and realistic cinema in different ways. Specific questions related to the narratives of the movies chosen for illustration also came up. The questions were directed towards the treatment of minority in one of the movies. Questions on Gender parity in Kerala also evoked discussions on the discrepancies between the development integers and ground reality. The tension between neo liberalism and the persistence of older Kerala model development is visibly seen in programs like *Kudumbasree*, a women empowerment and poverty eradication program. Madhava Prasad added that even when neoliberalism is not reflected on the ground, neoliberal idealism penetrates into Indian psyche in more and more ways. As a new spirit, sufficient number of Indians are buying into that idea.

Report: Santosh Dash and Deeptha Achar, Reading Social Science Research

(Shamuel Tharu)

The authors make three main contentions in their paper. Firstly, that early social science research into the political economy of Gujarat was not based on “simple monolithic” constructions of community, but on more nuanced interest-based articulations of political aggregation. This contention is supported by work done on the 4 different types of Patels and their specific interests in the decades preceding and following State formation.

Their next contention is that in the three decades following the 1960s, social science research focused on the prioritization of growth against that of redistribution in Gujarat’s political economy. The focus of research was the presentation of the domination of the landholding and industrial classes and castes and how “Gujarat’s professional, agricultural, commercial and industrial elites followed this growth agenda with gusto”. The fall-out of this focus and power distribution meant strong backlashes against reservations and land reforms. This macro discourse continues into the new millennium, with the deployment of the Hindutva experiment in the Gujarat “laboratory”, represented by social scientists as stifling dissent. It also works to consecrate the “State’s marriage to a market economy” benefitting “continuously ... the same dominant castes and classes”.

The final contention that the authors make is that the 2017 State elections in Gujarat brought to the fore a new constellation of resistances to this dominant monolithic development/Hindutva paradigm that has been used to understand Gujarat for the last four decades. Speaking of the emergence of Hardik Patel, Alpesh Thakore and Jignesh Mewani, the authors see them as signs of movements that transcend caste formations in their articulation of larger political imaginaries. “The nature of reflections in the social sciences as

well as literature in Gujarat clearly point to the presence of forces internal to the social and economic structures of the society which pose a challenge to the triumphal logic of development, on the one hand and to the dominance of Hindutva, on the other.”

The presentation ended with the authors asking “where are the Muslims now”? One possibility proposed was that the new formulations represent Muslim interests in their policies, but for various reasons chose to do so “silently”.

Discussion Summary

The Chair (Prof. Udaya Kumar) appreciated the authors for trying to make the present intelligible through the past. Drawing on the idea of interest aggregation raised in the paper, he suggested that caste mobilization were closely linked to land issues. Juxtaposing the way in which the Kerala land reform (conducted by the CPM but now remembered, especially in Dalit narratives, as an Ezhava agitation) occupies political memory, Prof. Kumar asks: What does caste in Gujarat allow us to see viz. land and its relations?

Another interesting strand of engagement that Prof. Kumar opened up was around the conditions which make a caste mobilizable (or immobile). What makes certain articulations and aggregations “sayable” or presentable at a particular conjunction? What are the conditions of social science research that create/allow access such mobilizations? What are the mediating institutions that allow for the mobilization of caste(s)? What is the history of caste organizations, or the role of charismatic individual leaders in such movements?

He also brought attention to the (in) visiblization of the Muslim question and what it means to be represented silently.

His final observation was that the paper was trying to do two things. It was both a history of the present as well as an agenda for future action. He suggested the articulation of each more distinctly.

Dr. Dash responded by reiterating his point that caste mobilizations were rarely monolithic and unitary. Speaking of the Swatantra Party, he showed how although perceived as a feudal party, it was able to gain a certain acceptance following the Navnirman movement. According to Dr. Dash, the mobilization in Gujarat has been along two axes, feudal interests (Swatantra Party) and communal aggregation (Jan Sangh's Hindutva line). The only formation that treated caste as unitary and monolithic (KHAM-Kshatriya/Harijan/Adivasi/Mussalman) failed miserably.

Prof. Ramana Murthy spoke of the similarities of the experience in Telangana where the OBCs, like the Patels in Gujarat, managed to stake effective claim on lands following state formation. In the Zamindari system, where land was in the hands of the upper castes, they fought for land reform via the Land Ceiling Act and profited from the lands freed up; and in Ryotwari areas they agitated for imposition of the Tenancy Act, consolidating their hold on the land. In both cases the OBCs rallied the SC and STs but finally emerged the largest beneficiaries of reformist political action. He also brought up the question of the nature of impact of trade and enterprise on caste fortunes given the opportunities that a growing economy like Gujarat had offered for the last forty years.

In response, Dr. Dash said that in the undivided state the Brahmins, Baniyas and Patels (BBP) were the major benefiteres of state largess, but in the new Gujarat State, the BBP combine started losing to the other OBCs, the SCs and the Muslims. He went on to stress that these beneficiaries were not all Muslims or all Dalits, further underlining his claim that one cannot

think of caste as unitary. He reiterated that it was important to see political movement through the alliances that were being made and not simply through caste mobilizations.

Agreeing with this to a certain extent, Prof. M. Madhava Prasad, observed that in addition to Gujarat, there is a more widely-visible phenomenon that could be called “the class polarization in caste societies”. However, he cautioned against making a linear narrative of alliances, even if one was identifying class solidarities across castes, saying that such engagements still need to be articulated in a language of caste (for two possible reasons, either because it is the only language that can make the field intelligible, or that no other language maybe as appealing as needed to present the present). He drew parallels with the Maratha-Dalit antagonisms which have now been reimagined into *Maratha-Buddha* solidarities. Dr. Dash remained unconvinced.

Dr. A. Suneeta asked what led to the decline of Patidar dominance that finally resulted in the demand for reservations? Dr. Dash, saw the rise of educated, articulate and government-employed Dalits and increased OBC reservation in the 1980s as the cause. Dr. Achar added that the manner in which anti-caste riots transformed into anti-Muslim riots, marked a period of the consolidation of Hindutva that culminated in the development discourse working for some groups of Dalits and not for other groups of Patidars.

Echoing Prof. Murthy’s interest, Dr. R. Srivatsan asked what the role of industrialised capital was in these reformulations, to which Dr. Dash replied that the authors did not want the narrative of capital to overawe the direction in which the political movements were pulling the narrative.

Report on Srivats paper 'Scattered notes on the impasses around contemporary Hinduism'

(MA Moid)

The paper focuses on understanding the nature of crisis faced by contemporary Hinduism and offers a tentative sketch of a framework of analysis. It is done through three sections.

The first section looks at the historiography of Hinduism in the 3600 years of its existence. Muslim expressed their views then the British, followed by people like Max Muller and Wendy Doniger recently who viewed Hinduism in their own ways. In this section various such views were discussed briefly. Also through the writings of Romila Thapar, Asish Nandy the internal dynamics of Hinduism, its tensions, trends and movements were looked at. The work of Chabbis is also used as an example. The second section is about the structural frame of exploration in which the nature of Hinduism is discussed in relation to beliefs, practices, sects, 'polytheism in theory and practices', system of ethics, dharma etc and then goes on to high light the impact of Christianity because of which 'new norm of judgment and a new dimension of Hinduism is born'. It also shows how it is different from Hinduism. It mentions Ambedkar's observations too. He explains certain aspects of Hinduism in terms of governmentality etc.

In the third section these were used to explore three crises in contemporary Hinduism through a) annihilation of caste, b) Hindutva and c) post Hindu India. All these three aspects try to address Hinduism's structure.

In Annihilation of Caste Ambedkar says 'that Hindu Caste ethic was fundamentally undemocratic, corporative, ruthless and most importantly, destructive of the possibility of the modern national community an India on the verge of freedom was striving to imagine' and then deals with Ambedkar's idea of how reform in Hinduism is possible.

The author commented that Hinduism is no more the same at it was in the days when Annihilation.. was written. It has changed in its structures also.

In relation to Hindutva, Ashis Nandy observation is used that the restructuring of Hinduism as planned by Hindutva forces will harm Hinduism itself. He then discussed what Hindutva project is trying to do and what could be its implication. He then gave counter examples that it is not able to do it.

Commenting on Hindutva the author criticizes the inability of the secular left and left secular's inability to deal with the issue of religion because of which we are not able to 'see these complexities and engage positively with the forces that work from within...'.

K. Ilaiah's Post Hindu India is about the possibilities to think of India after Hinduism had died'. Commenting on it the author wonder if that will be ever possible and thinks that it is a 'futile utopia'. Are the authors who are saying such things understand Hinduism in a proper sense? Then he suggests the alternate view that the meaning

of post is not the demise or death of Hinduism but its transformation so that 'more democratic and even republican forms of Hinduism' is possible. The rebels of Hinduism 'are simply looking at less oppressive, more benign forms of government that they would be happy to subject themselves to in search of greater freedom in actual life'.

Discussion on the paper

Uma opened the discussion by saying that the thoughts in Srivats paper cover a long history. It especially covers post colonial scholars from 90s onwards in which there are many writings on Hinduism and public debates about it. But broadly a refusal of Hinduism is there in the left intelligentsia who dismisses it. When Illaihs book came out there was an enthusiasm that now we have a critique but it turned out that it did not have answers and answer to why low caste groups are attracted to Hindutva. In the Secularism debate Partha Chatterjee in his 'Secularism and Tolerance' mentions about long history of reform and engagement with the law that led to bringing law in to Hinduism and so the Hindu Code Bill.

She raises the question that how to think about the law in the present context is important. She also mentioned about modern Hinduism which is celebrating traditional Hindu customs in a big way and there is no opposition to KCR against using the use of states money for it. It is clear the government is encouraging particular cultures through grand celebrations. She said how to think about it along side with the strident forms of Hinduism is important these days.

Madhav Prasad responded saying that Hindutva is not a form of religion but a rationalist idea. Hindutva's goal is the larger version of these festivals. It is not religious though it is anti Muslim. It is unifying a wide variety of practices under some umbrella of nationalism. In that sense unified Hinduism itself is a representation. Monotheism is also problematic. Indian religions are not polytheistic but are polyeist. Religious scholars are assuming the unity in order to make a difference between religions but not understanding it in depth. It is highly complicated. Our way of thinking about Hindutva is in terms of polytheism.

He also added that the Hindutva is not monotheistic. It assumes plurality. Here the distinction you make for the political purposes is important.

Uma commenting on Madhav said that Hindu is a residual category. If you are not a Muslim then you are a Hindu. Hinduism is a broad field. It is also a reason for having many myths. In law also Hindu is loosely defined and in such a way that all can be accommodated.

Agreeing with Uma, Jhumur added that while looking at the history of religion in Bengal as an insider she feels it is very enriching. A whole range of communities that are region specific are found in Bengal among Hindus. Durga Puja is not religious but a social festival.

Alina Sen commenting on Jhumur said that Mamata in Bengal understand the religious pulse of the people and is supporting all the religions and that is how she is able to fight Hindutva well. According to her, Hindutva categorizes separation, it is hierarchical and unilinear, exclusionary and the other in the form of Muslim has to be

there for its project. In Bengal syncretic traditions are very much alive that's why it is not possible to push Hindutva there.

Madhav on the point of Post Hindu India said that Nepal is post Hindu country and India cannot be post Hindu because it is not a nation i.e with a people of unified beliefs.

Jomo commented saying that earlier the situation was conflict between Buddhism v/s Hinduism, now it has become Islam v/s Hinduism. But what is a Hindu? The idea of the residual category is deliberately not defined. It was not incidental but kept it open so that it can include others. It is better to call it Brahmanism.

Sherin said that Hindutva is a political ideology that's why it was not able to accept the conversion of Hadiya to Islam which was a theological conversion.

Santosh commented saying that proper study of Hindutva is needed which is not so old. What is not happening are the debates that it is provoking even though everybody is dealing with it. For us to understand it we need tools. The idea of Post Hindu India is possible and could be a tool. The post Hindu India can be articulated which came from the struggles of Dalits. He also added that the debates on Hindutva were there when India was not independent. We need to revive these debates now.

Rekha intervened and addressing Srivats said, you are emphasizing monotheism rather than polytheism. Monotheism allows plurality. To argue against Hindutva you are supporting pluralism. Is it correct?

Srivats agreed that in fact this is the project.

Uday commented that Srivats project is that of understanding and critique. You are trying to get out of the problem of Hindutva but the left itself is problematic. It has to have a language different from the left. The problem is with us also because most of us are non believers. So it is difficult to articulate a believer's perspective for them. You can't think on behalf of a believer.

Satish disagreeing with Uday said that even Savarkar was non believer yet he tried to think about the believers and their religion. Even in Kerala the left government is putting ads in the press on yoga saying that it is scientific.

Responding to the comments Srivats said that we have to think about the Hindu Code Bill. It is an example of nationalist ideology but separating it with religion is difficult. It is a parasitic relationship... There seems to be a tendency not to be arrogant and liberal they don't want to be where this is coming from... and it is target... Relationship of this need to be understood... If today we must talk about the language itself...

I am sticking to the religion not practices. Hindutva themselves say that Hinduism is religion not practices. My point is not to understand Hindutva from the left point of view. Brahmanism is a Great Tradition (as opposed to the Little Traditions of local worship). I agree with Uday that you must not look at Hindutva and Hinduism as granite wall. Hinduism is dynamic and contradictory and constantly alters itself.

Uma in the closing comments said that collapsing the political Hindutva with the religion of Hinduism is worrying. It is presented as same and without any contradiction.

Srivats added in the last that Zizek pointed that there will be no second coming after the fall. The anxiety and tension will not go away. We should learn to live with it.