

THE PROBE



CHALLENGES AWAITING THE WORLD ECONOMY

In Conversation with
Mr. Raju Kendre

Cover Story:
Doom and Bloom: Challenges Awaiting
the World Economy

The Modi Question: Questioning the
Response

FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Dear readers,

We are delighted to present the February issue of The Probe. This time we delve into a multitude of thought-provoking issues and attempt to provide a fresh perspective to the typical discourse. Amidst the volatility of the markets in 2023, the cover story minutely assesses the global financial landscape and attempts to gauge what lies ahead. It also raises some pertinent questions about government intervention in the recent kerfuffle around the BBC documentary. From the debate surrounding Revidis to abortion laws in India, the issue covers some very relevant concerns of our time.

The stand-out segment of this issue has to be our interaction with Mr. Raju Kendre, founder of the Eklavya Foundation, whose celebrated work in the domain of tribal education is inspiring, yet making one reflect on the nature of the Indian polity towards the marginalised. From the Vietnam War and Currency Swap Agreements to insightful takes on art and culture, the issue exemplifies diversity.

The Probe welcomes contributors- writers, photographers and designers- from diverse backgrounds to work with us. Please send in your resume for consideration.

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A magazine's brilliance is a fine combination of quality content and aesthetic appeal, made possible by a dedicated team of designers. With a trajectory of constant improvement in design with every coming issue, this time we have augmented our designing team by inducting volunteers.

With this, we aim to lay the foundation of a sophisticated design team which will help in creating an identity for The Probe in the longer run. In case you are someone who is currently pursuing or interested in learning designing, we welcome you to volunteer for the design team of The Probe. We hope to make this an enriching learning experience and a fruitful collaboration for both!

Kindly mail us at theprobe20@gmail.com.

ISSUE 17

THE PROBE

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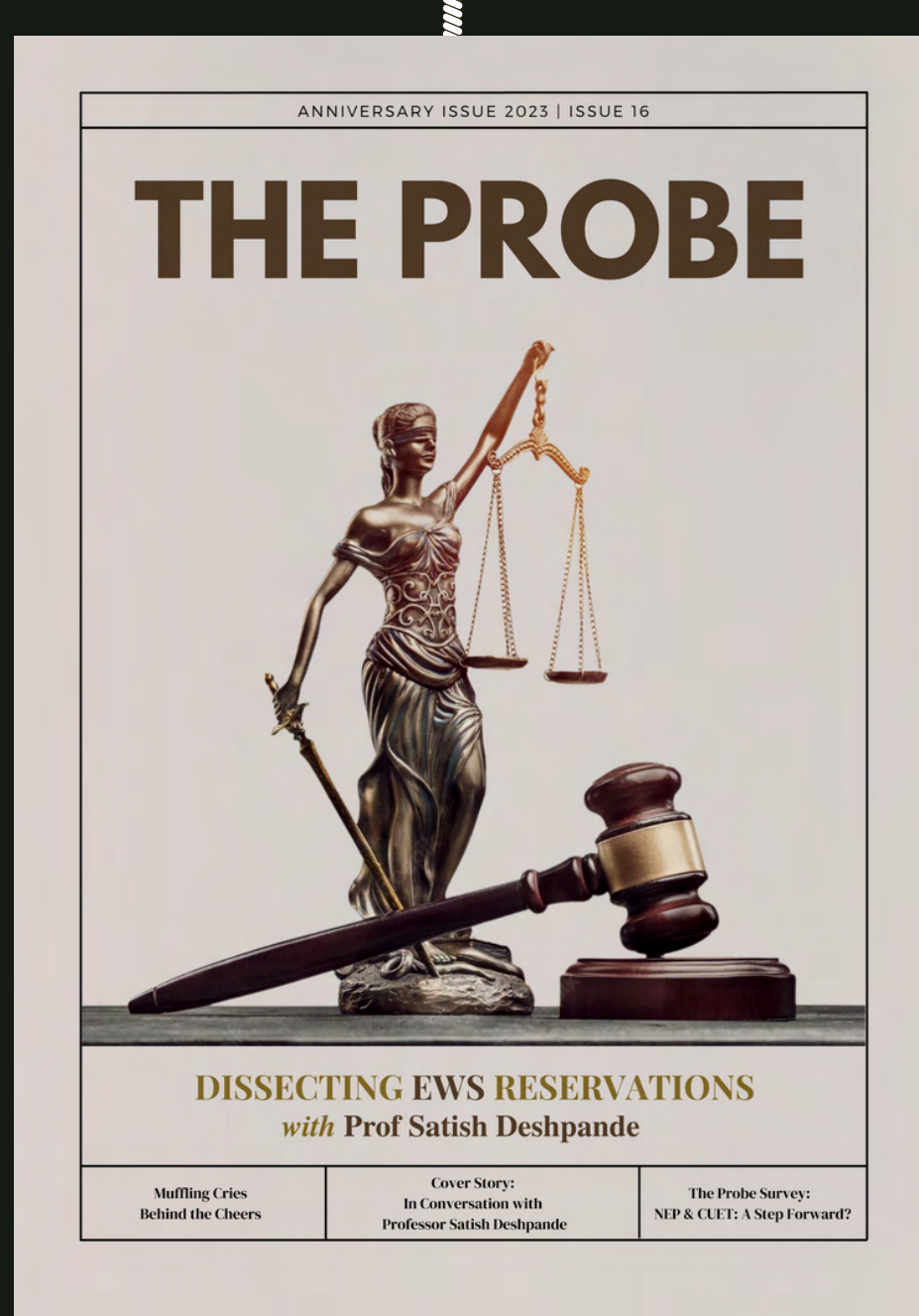
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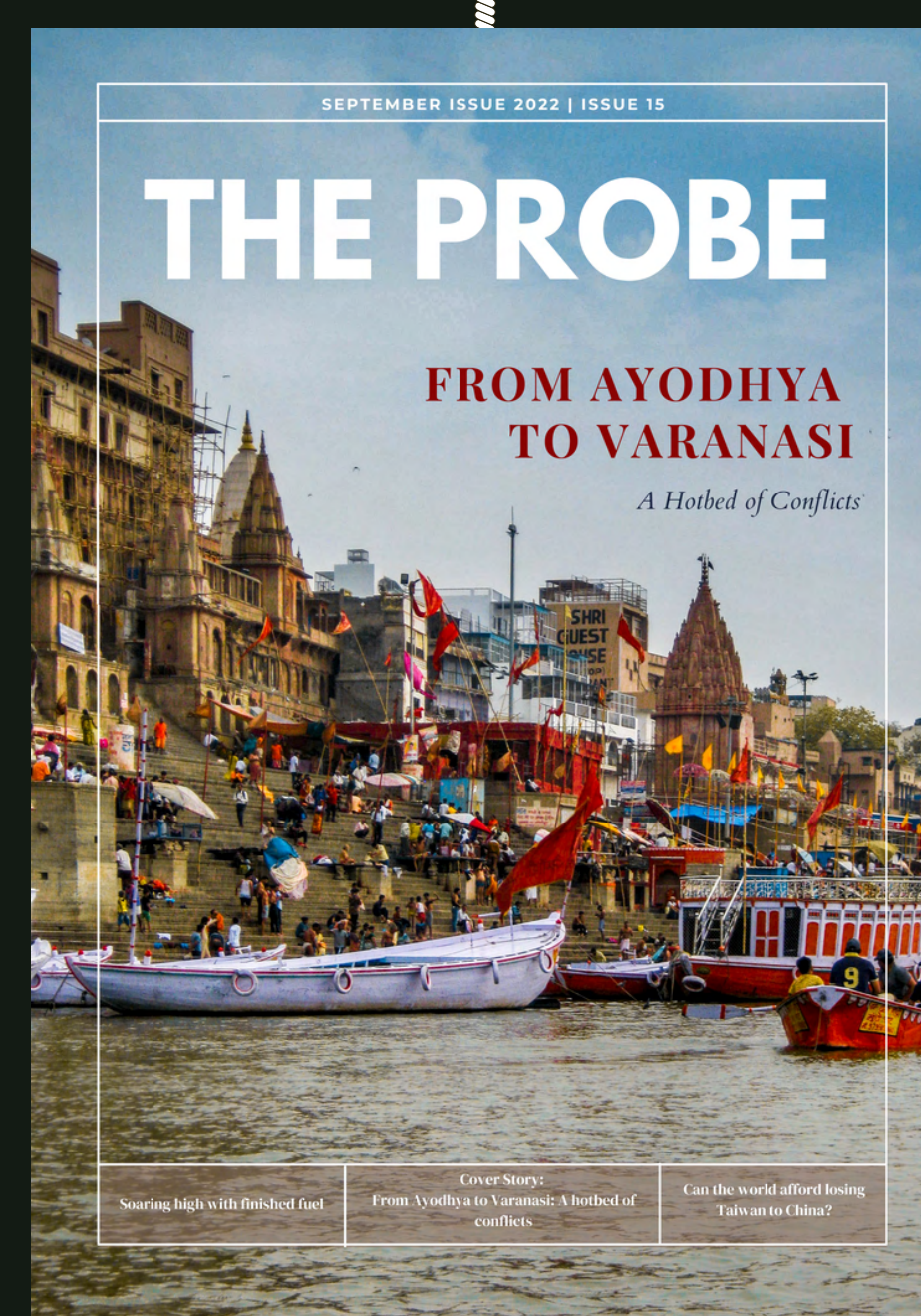
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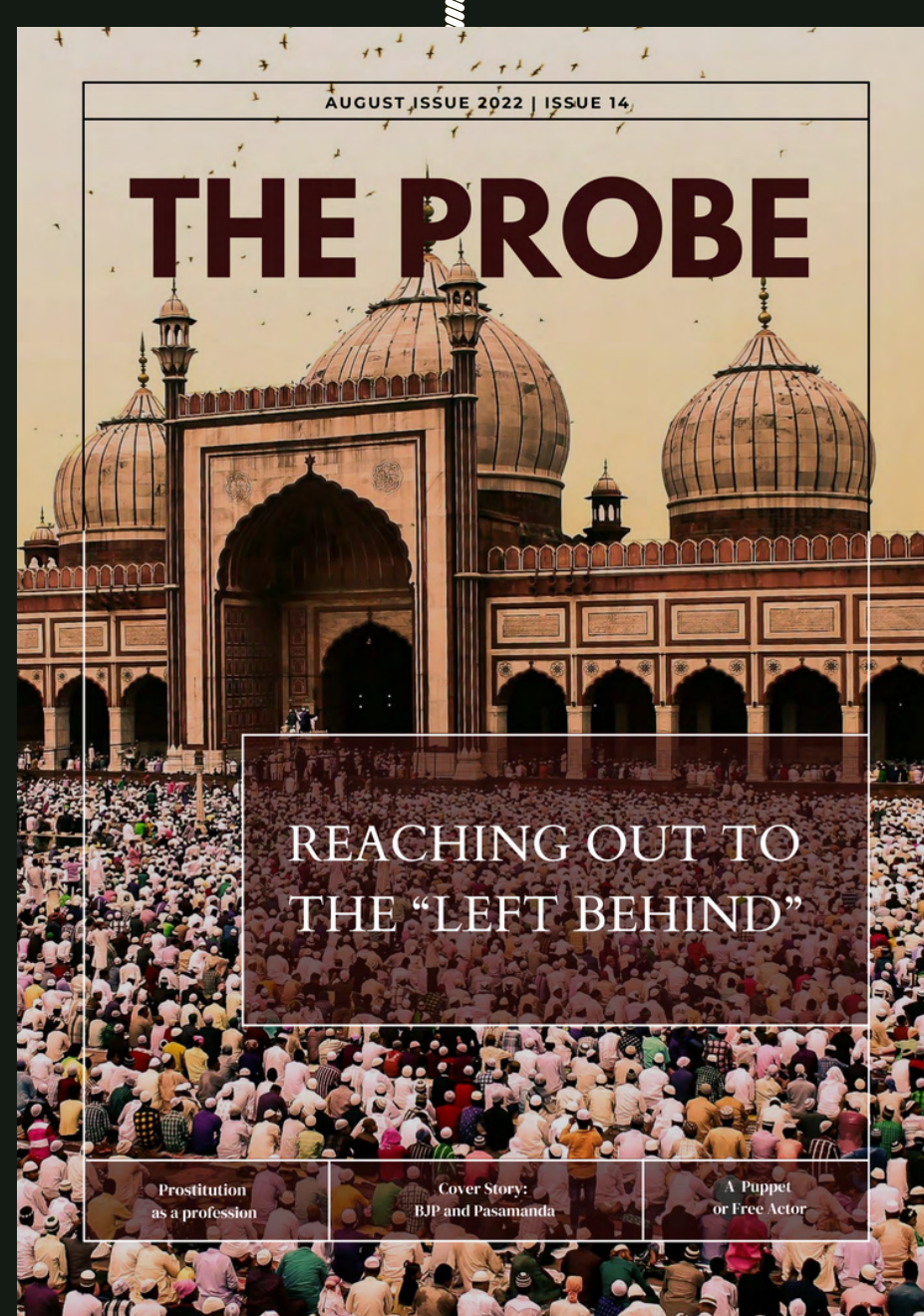
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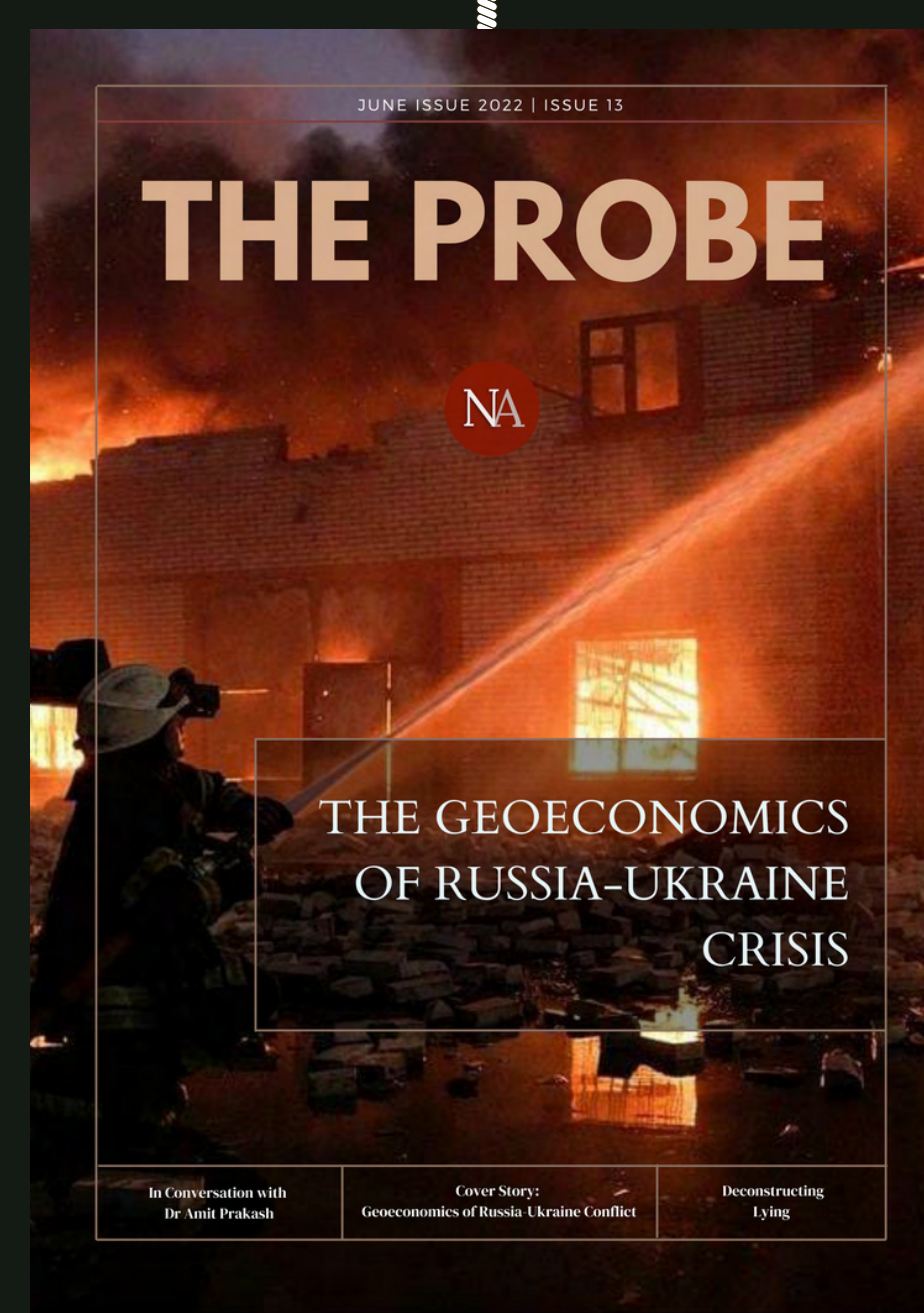
OCTOBER ISSUE



AUGUST ISSUE



JUNE ISSUE



An aerial night view of a city with a grid of financial charts overlaid. The charts include line graphs and candlestick patterns in various colors (orange, green, blue) against a dark blue background. Some data points are labeled with values and percentages, such as '286 +407%', '102 +7.51%', '34 +70%', '54 +1.13%', and '238%'.

DOOM AND BLOOM: CHALLENGES AWAITING THE WORLD ECONOMY

By Avanindra Yadav and Shreeya Prasoon

Inflation has been a key concern for the global economy in recent years, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic caused disruptions in supply chains and sent prices for goods and services soaring. However, there are several reasons for investors to be optimistic about the world economy in terms of inflation.

First, in the United States, inflation is declining, which raises hopes of a 'soft landing'. The term refers to a situation where price growth slows down without causing a recession. The Federal Reserve has been closely monitoring inflation and has expressed its intention to maintain a 2% target for inflation, which it considers to be consistent with its mandate to promote maximum employment and stable prices. Even though there are anticipations of a slight rise in unemployment, it is expected that the Fed's recent steps will prevent the massive rates of unemployment that a recession might result in. These steps include escalating the borrowing rates so that demand for manufactured goods decreases which in turn will lower the inflation rates. However, a section of economists are not in favour of the policy in the wake of the

possibility of an upcoming recession.

Europe's heavy dependence on Russia for Natural Gas resulted in an 'energy war' once Russia's invasion of Ukraine transpired. These cheap imports of Russian gas fell drastically in Europe. At the same time, the shortage of storage added to the upheaval, triggering an extreme natural gas price spike as Europe turned to the international market for its energy needs. This price peak also affected inflation and general power prices. Now, full storage, ample LNG supplies, demand reduction, and fear of an anticipated global recession have led to falling energy prices which is helping in bringing down inflation. A mild winter has resulted in lower demand for heating, which in turn has led to a drop in energy prices. This has contributed to the overall easing of inflation in the region.

Another factor contributing to the easing of inflation is the end of China's 'zero-covid' policy. This policy was designed to combat the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it also had the effect of disrupting supply chains and contributing to inflation. China is aiming for a significant shift

towards living with the virus now. With that, the notorious policy has been put to an end due to which China's economy is poised for a rebound, which could help to stabilise prices for goods and services. The prices of Chinese companies' shares have risen after the removal of the policy. The price of copper also shot up as demand from China, its biggest consumer, is expected to rise. Yet, there is still a possibility of an upcoming labour supply shortage which might be triggered by the hesitation among people to come out of their homes to resume working as less efficient vaccines and a failing healthcare system continue to remain key features of China's medical management. Even Chinese consumers might face the same trepidations. Despite all these possibilities, economists are of the opinion that the reopening of the economy will foster the smoothening of supply chains which will further help stabilise the global economy.

Challenges Galore

Despite these positive developments, there are still challenges ahead for the world economy. One of the biggest challenges is the slowdown in GDP growth. As prices fall, so does the growth in the overall economy. The logic behind the relationship between price and growth is that when prices of commodities continuously fall, consumers expect them to fall further and therefore, they wait for the perfect time to buy products at the cheapest cost possible. Due to this, economic activities plummet. Moreover, declining prices also



stimulate supply disruptions subsequently causing loss to firms and unemployment in the economy. This can be seen in the decline in retail sales and industrial production in the United States, as well as in the decrease in leading indicators of output. When these indicators drop significantly, it often signals that a recession is imminent. As a consequence, the complexity of the policies to be implemented will intensify naturally as economists tend to strike a balance between managing inflation and inhibiting resultant deceleration in GDP.

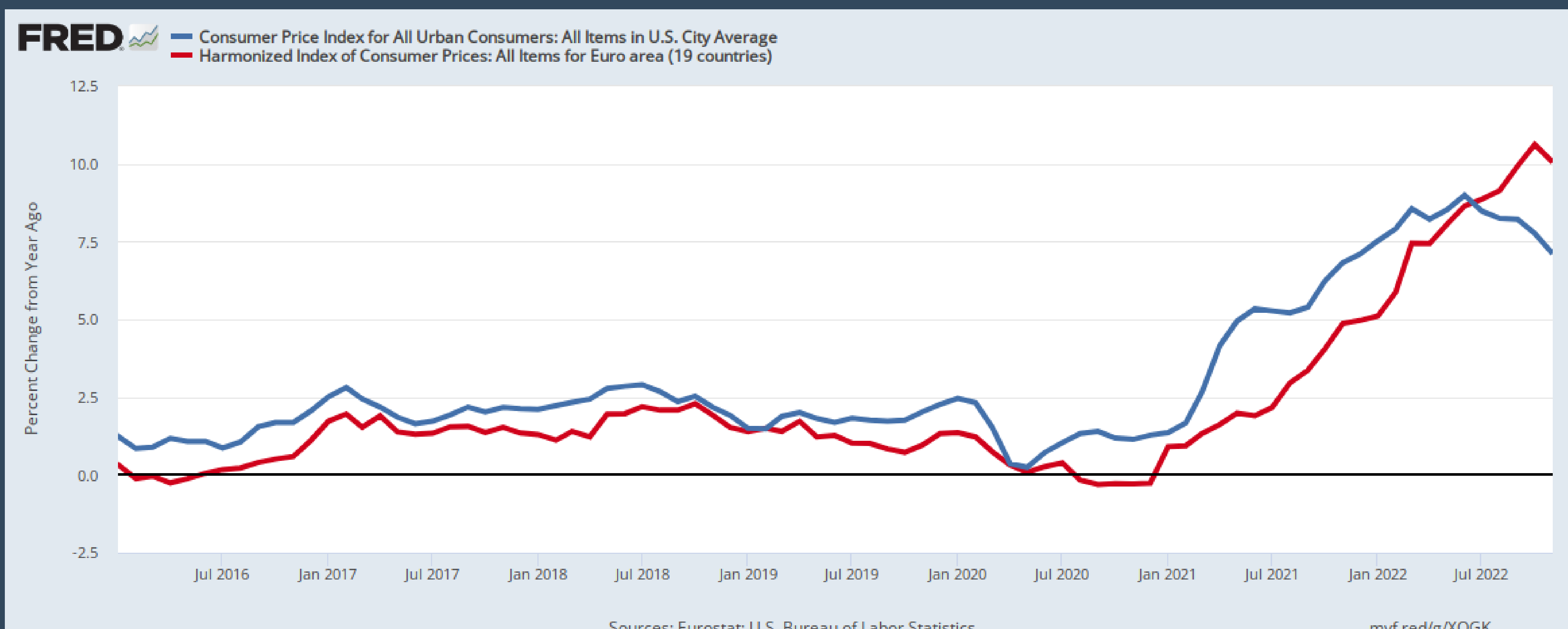
Another concern is the fast pace of growth in the labour market. The news of massive lay-offs by big-tech companies is making it to the headlines all over the globe. Recently, Google too laid off close to 12000 employees without even handing over a notice to them prior to the deed. However, despite that, the National Bureau of Economic Research's working paper shows that the unemployment rate has been significantly low at 3.5% in the United States, combined with low new claims for unemployment benefits, suggesting that the labour market is healthy. This rapid demand for workers also presents

challenges for the Federal Reserve. It makes it more difficult for the Fed to determine whether inflation really has been brought under control because of the trade-off between inflation and unemployment as mentioned before. It means that a decreasing inflation cannot coexist with a low unemployment rate. This is because, under the conditions of inflation, there is an increase in the aggregate demand that raises employment in at least monetary terms, which is to say, an increase in demand as a result of an inflationary hike seldom has a significant impact on the real output which has a direct relationship with employment. In other words, the low unemployment rate shows that the demand is high in the labour market which suggests wage growth and, rapid wage growth is another factor contributing to inflation.

Despite some measures showing a decline in annual wage growth, it remains around 5%. This fast pace of wage growth, combined with slow growth in workers' productivity which stood at 0.8% and 1.4% in the second and third quarters respectively (as per the

data by the U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics, Labour Department), could lead to higher prices for goods and services. This conclusion is drawn from the economic theory which suggests that wages increase when output per worker increases, so, the only justifiable reason behind wage growth coupled with low worker productivity is the rise in prices. Some policymakers hope that companies, whose profits surged in 2021, will be able to absorb the fast wage growth without having to raise prices further. However, this is not guaranteed as Wall Street is expecting disappointing earnings for the fourth quarter of 2022. According to data from Credit Suisse, the estimated earnings per share has dipped below zero. Forecasts for the S&P 500 index have been revised several times by analysts and corrected by 6.5% for the fourth quarter earnings.

The markets expect the Fed to start cutting interest rates within a year as growth slows. However, if the Fed wants to reduce inflation to 2% and maintain it at that level, it may need to keep interest rates high until wage growth slows, even if this leads to a recession.





Another challenge facing the world economy is the situation in Europe. Despite the falling energy prices, the eurozone still has an underlying inflation problem, which is evident in the increasing wage growth. The head of the European Central Bank, Christine Lagarde, has warned that interest rates will have to rise significantly, which is contrary to the expectations of investors. A stronger dollar, which is likely if the Fed keeps raising interest rates (higher interest rates attract investment capital from investors abroad for higher return, leading to higher demand for the dollar) and investors become concerned, would increase imported inflation. In other words, a stronger dollar points towards depreciation in Euro which will make imports quite expensive in Europe. Therefore, inflation in Europe is being driven far more by the United States. This is making it even more difficult for the ECB to bring inflation under control. It might also be true that the war is only a trigger and that sooner or later, the high inflation in Europe

would have anyway panned out due to the lax monetary policy being followed by the European Central Bank for the past decade. Notably, it is speculated that inflation might not reduce even during a recession.

The end of China's zero-covid policy has reduced the risk of supply chain disruptions, but its rebound may not be an entirely good news for the rest of the world. The extra imports from China imply an increase in demand for many commodities worldwide, which may add to the overheated economies, exacerbating the inflation problem. Europe's gas storage is high due to reduced demand for LNG from China in 2022. Now, demand is expected to recover, potentially causing price spikes next winter. The world economy will not fully recover until it overcomes the challenges of overheated labour markets and the energy crisis.

Not all economies, however, are facing collapse. The

economies of the Gulf are booming due to high energy prices. India will be another bright spot for whom the current state of affairs might rather be an opportunity. Boosted by discounted Russian oil, growing domestic investment and rising interest from foreigners who are keen to diversify their supply chains away from China, the nation is expected to benefit. Broadly, emerging economies will fare relatively better.

The geopolitical tensions coupled with troublesome economic affairs are worrisome. Yet, hopes have been propped up by the easing inflation trend which has gained momentum recently. Indeed, it is for us to only wait and watch if a “permacrisis” is going to unfold in 2023. ■





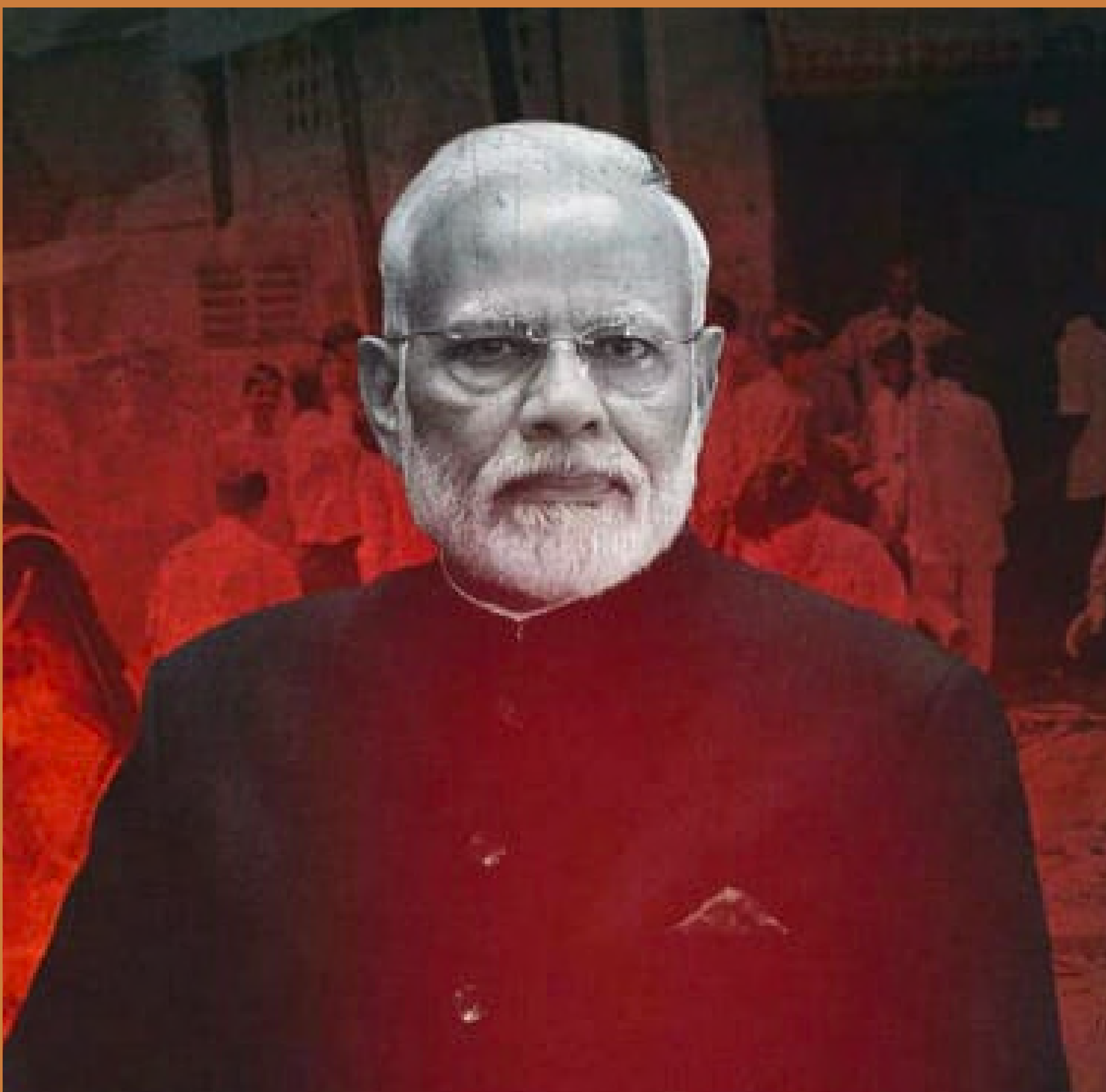
IF YOU TELL A
LIE OFTEN ENOUGH,
IT BECOMES TRUTH

FOUL



THE BBC DOCUMENTARY MAY GET IT WRONG, BUT A BAN IS FURTHEST FROM RIGHT

By Tejas Nageshwaran



*This article highlights the polarisation in the discourse on the BBC documentary. It makes the central argument that the **documentary** lacks objectivity, context and nuance. Yet, it must be **allowed to air**. In blocking it, the government has done more harm to its own case.*

On 17th January this year, the BBC aired the first of its two-part documentary “India: The Modi Question”. Two days later, the Narendra Modi-led Indian government issued its first response to it, with the Ministry of External Affairs

rejecting the piece as a work of “propaganda”, reflective of colonial bias. Things only escalated from thereon.

On January 21st, the Government invoked its emergency powers under the contentious 2021 IT Rules Act, blocking links to clips of the documentary on social media.

Suddenly, this one hour documentary - made for the English, by the English was making national headlines in India - where the BBC had not meant to broadcast it to begin with.

On January 21st, the Government invoked its emergency powers under the contentious 2021 IT Rules

Act, blocking links to clips of the documentary on social media. Suddenly, this one-hour documentary - made for the English, by the English was making national headlines in India - where the BBC had not meant to broadcast it to begin with.

Following the ban, the reaction was electric - at least in the limited space of college campuses, parliament offices, and social media echo chambers.

Opposition MP's began sharing links to the documentary on social media, and student collectives organised screenings in defiance of government censorship. The state proceeded to crackdown on screenings in college

campuses, detaining students and snapping electricity connections. Supporters of the government passionately argued for the documentary to be taken down - even going to the Supreme Court to demand that the BBC be banned from operating in India altogether.

In this visceral outburst however, both sides have conflated two very important, but very separate issues - the censorship of the documentary on the one hand, and what the documentary itself says on the other.

To disagree with the content of the documentary while opposing a ban on its broadcast is a valid position - one that few seem to take in the polarised discourse.

The creators have a right to free speech, and Indians have the right to access information. This is not mutually exclusive of disagreeing with the content of the

documentary itself. The two are in fact easily reconcilable.

Government censorship is not only undemocratic, but also unsustainable in the age of information. Regardless of what the piece of media may say - good, bad or ugly, it must air.

The 2021 IT rules used to block links to the documentary hark back ominously to Section 66A of the IT Act, 2000, which made it a punishable offence to send "offensive information" using an electronic device.

Ironically, 66A was scrapped by this very government in the recently introduced Jan Vishwas Bill.

Government action on the matter only fits further into the dangerous trend of clampdowns on dissent and contrarian expression.

In the broader scheme of things, the knee-jerk reaction of the government was uncalled for. Within the country, the documentary was irrelevant for more reasons than one.

Neither was it screened by the BBC in India, nor did it say anything Indians did not already know.

Internationally, it was shrugged off by multiple governments - led by the UK and the United States. In reacting with the insecurity it showed, the Modi Government put the spotlight on what was a passing cloud - inviting more condemnation for its crackdown.

The boom in links, screenings and conversation were a reaction to the ban, not vice versa.

The first part of the series documents Narendra Modi's rise, the nature of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Gujarat riots of 2002.

Cushioned in a bundle of information already in the public domain, it throws in a smattering of unseen UK Government documents from the time.

They reveal the "great deal of alarm" the riots created in the UK. The British government of the time launched investigations into the "proactive part" Modi himself played in fuelling communal fires and impeding police action, the documents claim.

This is neither unimaginable, nor particularly scandalising - certainly not when seen alongside the reaction of other foreign countries to the riots.

The United States, for instance, imposed a Visa ban on Narendra Modi for nine long years in the aftermath.

That a Western government should hold him culpable in the riots is, at best, unsurprising.

This is precisely what the documentary, and the general criticism of Modi for 2002 lacks - context. Both the immediate context of Gujarat in the 2000's, and the larger context of India's history with communal violence are sacrificed at the altar of lampooning Modi as a "mass murder".

Forgotten are the massacres at Nellie in 1983, Bhagalpur in 1989 and Bombay in 1993 - with higher death tolls, wider destruction and

more obvious government inaction, complacency, and collusion, even. Recent incidents of comparable horror - Muzaffarnagar in 2013, for instance, have also failed to stay alive in the narrative the way 2002 has.

Apologists for Narendra Modi often recall that he was a new chief minister in a fractured polity and failing state - only recently ravaged by a devastating earthquake.

It was hardly five months into his tenure that Godhra happened, and violence followed.

This is a flimsy argument. But it is also a familiar one.

Not long ago, the same argument was advanced to shield a young Rajiv Gandhi from the blame of what was perhaps the worst instance of communal violence in Indian history - Delhi's 1984 Anti-Sikh Riots.

In '84, the government was actively a perpetrator of violence.

In his book on Narasimha Rao, Vinay Sitapati writes how Rao, Home Minister at the time, was ordered to stand down and allow the new Prime Minister to "handle" the issue.

The Home Ministry was effectively rendered defunct for the four days violence ravaged Delhi, while Congress party men ran amok - many of whom have yet to be brought to justice.

Rajiv Gandhi would proceed to famously justify the violence, "whenever a mighty tree falls, it is only natural that the earth around it does shake a little".

That year, the Congress went on to win the largest electoral mandate in Indian history, piggybacking unabashedly on communal hate.

Tavleen Singh recounts how newspaper adverts for the party carried black-and-white photographs of Sikhs, with captions like "Can you trust your taxi driver?".

Critics of the Gujarat government's handling often miss that the military was called into Gujarat and deployed on the very day riots broke out - February 28th.

Contrast this with several other

instances of violence, where the army is summoned only several days in.

In 1984 Delhi, the army was deployed in the national capital only on November 3rd, after four days of violence.

It is argued that Gujarat must be remembered, for its perpetrators wield power today.

However, so do those directly accused in '84. While Modi has been acquitted by multiple commissions, even during the Congress regime, several cases from 1984 remain untried.



Engaging in what-aboutery is meaningless. However, to see 2002 in the context of a larger history is important to lend objectivity to one's case.

Godhra was not India's first riot, not its most brutal, and certainly not its last. Yet, why does it feature in public discourse and international imagination more prominently than any other?

I believe there may be two reasons for this. Firstly, Gujarat was India's first widely televised riot.

As Mehta argues, the conventions of riot coverage for Indian

newspapers had long been established but there were none for live television at the time.

The images that came out immortalized 2002 in a way riots had not been before in modern India.

Secondly, the riot fits a narrative better than several others. Other political parties - Congress

included, may have indulged in anti-minority violence.

None, however, are (as) Hindu Nationalist in the popular imagination.

To lay emphasis on communal violence in a BJP-ruled state simply makes intuitive sense, and therefore, a good news story - the same way anti-cow slaughter laws enacted by the Congress government often go under the radar while those introduced by the BJP make headlines.

Gujarat 2002 is fraught with unresloved conflict even today -

the release of Bilkis Bano's rapists being the most striking example.

The trouble is, the documentary does not delve into much of this - giving precedence to wishy-washy broad-stroke narratives that lose nuance and lack objectivity.

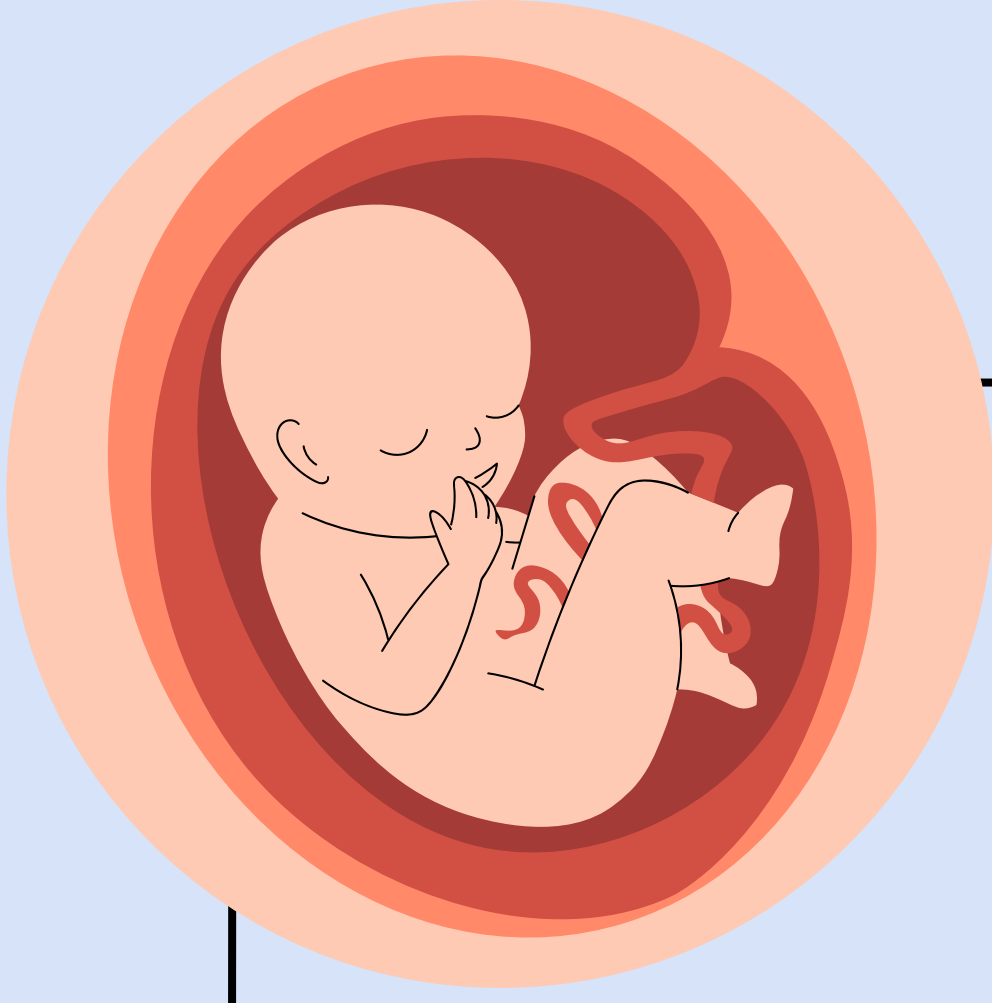
The documentary can be critiqued.

But for that, it must be seen. Inaccuracy or lack of objectivity is not reason enough, or reason at all, to impose a ban.

In reacting the way it has, the Government has only revived old ghosts and invited fresh criticism. ■

INDIA

The Modi Question



“भारत में गर्भपात कानून”

By Rahul Kumar

पष्ठभूमि- 1960 के दशक तक भारतीय दंड संहिता 1860 की धारा 312 के तहत भारत में गर्भपात गैरकानूनी था। "एक महिला का गर्भपात करना" एक दंडनीय अपराध था जिसमें 3 साल की कैद और/या जुर्माना था। 1960 के दशक के मध्य में, सरकार ने गर्भपात के मुद्दे को देखने और यह पता लगाने की क्या देश को गर्भपात के संबंध में कानून बनाने की आवश्यकता है? एक मेडिकल प्रोफेशनल डॉक्टर शांति लाल शाह के नेतृत्व में शांति लाल शाह समिति का गठन किया गया।

शांतिलाल शाह समिति की भूमिका-

डॉक्टर शांतिलाल शाह के नेतृत्व में समिति ने भारत में गर्भपात के चिकित्सा, कानूनी और सामाजिक सांस्कृतिक पहलुओं की समीक्षा की और 1964 में व्यापक गर्भपात देखभाल पर एक कानून के साथ कानूनी गर्भपात की सिफारिश की। सिफारिशें असुरक्षित गर्भपात और मातृ मृत्यु दर को कम करने पर आधारित थीं। शांतिलाल शाह समिति की रिपोर्ट के आधार पर लोकसभा और राज्यसभा में "मेडिकल टर्मिनेशन ऑफ़ प्रेग्नेंसी" (MTP) एक्ट पेश किया गया था। मेडिकल टर्मिनेशन ऑफ़ प्रेग्नेंसी" एक्ट 1971, जम्मू कश्मीर को छोड़कर 1 अप्रैल 1972 को पूरे भारत में लागू हुआ।

मेडिकल टर्मिनेशन ऑफ़ प्रेग्नेंसी" (MTP) एक्ट के प्रावधान -

MTP एक्ट ने कुछ शर्तों के साथ गर्भपात की अनुमति दी। MTP एक्ट "पंजीकृत चिकित्सक" द्वारा ही गर्भपात की अनुमति प्रदान करता है। यह अधिनियम गर्भपात से संबंधित चिकित्सा पद्धतियों और संस्थानों को नियमित करने का प्रयास करना है, इसके परिणामस्वरूप चिकित्सा अपराधीकरण का स्थान चिकित्सा उदारीकरण को देने की बात करता है।

इस अधिनियम के अनुसार निम्नलिखित परिस्थितियों में एक पंजीकृत चिकित्सक की सलाह द्वारा महिला गर्भपात करवा सकती हैं -क) जहां गर्भावस्था की अवधि 12 सप्ताह से न हो।

ख) जहां गर्भावस्था की अवधि 12 सप्ताह से अधिक हैं लेकिन 20 सप्ताह से अधिक नहीं हैं तो इस स्थिति में 2 मेडिकल प्रोफेशनल की सलाह पर गर्भपात किया जा सकता है।

ग) जहां गर्भावस्था को लंबा खींचना एक महिला के लिए महत्वपूर्ण जोखिम पैदा कर सकता है तो डॉक्टर सलाह पर गर्भपात कराया जा सकता है।

घ) जब इस बात के आशंका हो की इस गर्भावस्था से पैदा शिशु का स्वास्थ्य संवेदनशील या शारीरिक रूप से अक्षम होगा तो डॉक्टर की सलाह पर गर्भपात करवाया जा सकता है। इस अधिनियम में गर्भपात की अनुमति मात्र शादीशुदा महिला को है।

कुछ अन्य परिस्थितियां जैसे- अधिनियम गर्भपात की अनुमति देता है यदि " गर्भवती महिला द्वारा रेप के कारण प्रेग्नेंट होने का आरोप लगाया गया हो"। और जहां गर्भावस्था किसी विवाहित महिला या उसके पति द्वारा बच्चों की संख्या को सीमित करने के उद्देश्य से किसी उपकरण या विधि की विफलता के कारण गर्भधारण हुआ हो। इस अधिनियम में कहा गया है कि महिला की सहमति के बिना गर्भपात नहीं किया जा सकता है।



महिलाओं के लिए कोई स्वायत्तता नहीं-

शांतिलाल शाह समिति ने महिलाओं के लिए जो व्यापक गर्भपात देखभाल का प्रस्ताव किया था वह 1971 के MTP

एक्ट में काफी हद तक अनुपस्थित हैं। शोनोत्रा कुमार (रिसर्च फैलो विद न्याय, दी प्रिन्ट) कहते हैं " MTP एक्ट के अधिकांश खंड भारतीय दंड संहिता से शुरू होते हैं जो स्पष्ट रूप से दर्शाती हैं कि यह महिलाओं के लिए व्यापक गर्भपात देखभाल की तुलना गर्भपात करने वाले डॉक्टर के लिए अधिक सुरक्षा थी। इनके लेख में महिलाओं के लिए स्वायत्तता की कमी की ओर इशारा करते हुए कहते हैं की " इस अधिनियम में गर्भपात से गुजरने का निर्णय पूरी तरह से डॉक्टर की सलाह पर निर्भर करता है"।

गर्भपात और कोर्ट केस -

MTP एक्ट के बावजूद, अदालतों ने अक्सर महिलाओं के अधिकारों की रक्षा के लिए हस्तक्षेप किया है। सुचिता श्रीवास्तव बनाम चंडीगढ़ प्रशासन में, एक महिला के साथ कथित रूप से बलात्कार किया गया था जब वह एक सरकारी कल्याण संस्थान में थी और गर्भवती हो गई थी। उच्च न्यायालय ने आदेश दिया कि उसकी गर्भावस्था को समाप्त कर दिया जाए लेकिन वह बच्चा चाहती थी। द इंडियन एक्सप्रेस की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, SC ने उन्हें अपनी पसंद का प्रयोग करने की अनुमति दी क्योंकि "एक महिला की निजता, गरिमा और शारीरिक अखंडता के अधिकार का सम्मान किया जाना चाहिए"।

2015 में, गुजरात उच्च न्यायालय ने 14 वर्षीय बलात्कार पीड़िता की गर्भावस्था को समाप्त करने की मांग वाली एक याचिका को खारिज कर दिया, जो उसकी गर्भावस्था के 24 वें सप्ताह में थी। एमटीपी अधिनियम, 1971 ने केवल 20 सप्ताह तक गर्भावस्था को समाप्त करने की अनुमति दी।

मामले को सुप्रीम कोर्ट में ले जाया गया, जिसने HC के आदेश को खारिज कर दिया और किशोरी को गर्भावस्था को समाप्त करने के लिए सर्जरी के लिए जाने की अनुमति दी, जब वह लगभग 26 सप्ताह की गर्भवती थी।

फरवरी 2022 में, एक ऐतिहासिक फैसले में, उत्तराखंड उच्च न्यायालय ने एक बलात्कार पीड़िता को 28 सप्ताह के भ्रूण को समाप्त करने का आदेश दिया।

MTP एक्ट में संशोधन -

पांच दशकों से अधिक समय तक, देश में गर्भपात के फैसले 1971 के अधिनियम द्वारा शासित थे। 2002 में गर्भपात कानून में कुछ समय के लिए संशोधन किया गया था ताकि तत्कालीन नई चिकित्सा गर्भपात गोलियों, मिफेप्रिस्टोन और मिसोप्रोस्टोल के उपयोग की अनुमति मिल सके।

2021 में, एमटीपी अधिनियम, 1971 को अंततः संशोधित किया गया। राज्यसभा ने 16 मार्च 2021 को मेडिकल टर्मिनेशन ऑफ प्रेग्नेंसी (संशोधन) विधेयक, 2021 को मंजूरी दी, जिसे राष्ट्रपति की मंजूरी मिली। 17 मार्च 2020 को लोकसभा में विधेयक को मंजूरी दी गई थी। इस संशोधन से अब गर्भवती महिलाएं गर्भ की आयु के 24 सप्ताह तक गर्भपात करा सकती हैं। 24 सप्ताह तक गर्भावस्था को समाप्त करने के लिए आधार:-

दो पंजीकृत चिकित्सकों की राय लेने के बाद, गर्भावस्था को नीचे दी गई शर्तों के तहत 24 सप्ताह की गर्भकालीन आयु तक समाप्त किया जा सकता है:

- 1) यदि महिला या तो यौन हमले या बलात्कार या अनाचार की उत्तरजीवी है;
- 2) अगर वह नाबालिग है;
- 3) यदि चल रही गर्भावस्था (विधवा या तलाक) के दौरान उसकी वैवाहिक स्थिति में कोई परिवर्तन होता है;
- 4) यदि वह बड़ी शारीरिक अक्षमता से ग्रस्त है या वह मानसिक रूप से बीमार है;
- 5) जीवन के साथ असंगत भ्रूण की विकृति या गंभीर रूप से विकलांग बच्चे के जन्म की संभावना के आधार पर गर्भावस्था की समाप्ति;
- 6) यदि महिला मानवीय स्थिति या आपदा में स्थित है या सरकार द्वारा घोषित आपातकाल में फंस गई है।



गर्भधारण के बाद का समय
12 सप्ताह तक
12 से 20 हफ्त
20 से 24 सप्ताह

24 सप्ताह के बाद

MTP अधिनियम, 1971
एक डॉक्टर की सलाह
दो डॉक्टर की सलाह
सिर्फ प्रेग्नेंट महिला की
जान बचाने के लिए

सिर्फ प्रेग्नेंट महिला की
जान बचाने के लिए

MTP संशोधन अधिनियम, 2021
एक डॉक्टर की सलाह
एक डॉक्टर की सलाह
प्रेग्नेंसी पर दो डॉक्टरों की सलाह
पर प्रेग्नेंट महिलाओं की मात्र
कुछ श्रेणी के लिए

मेडिकल बोर्ड का अनुमोदन, और
केवल यदि पर्याप्त भ्रूण
"असामान्यता" है

सुप्रीम कोर्ट का गर्भपात पर ऐतिहासिक फैसला-

न्यायमूर्ति डी वाई चंद्रचूड़,
न्यायमूर्ति, ए एस बोपन्ना
और न्यायमूर्ति जेबी
पारदीवाला की तीन



सदस्यीय पीठ ने मेडिकल टर्मिनेशन ऑफ प्रेग्नेंसी रूल्स, 2003 के नियम 3बी की व्याख्या तैयार की, जिसके अनुसार केवल कुछ श्रेणियों की महिलाओं को 20 के बीच गर्भावस्था को समाप्त करने की अनुमति है- कुछ असाधारण परिस्थितियों में 24 सप्ताह। प्रावधान को चुनौती जुलाई में एक 25 वर्षीय अविवाहित महिला द्वारा की गई थी, जिसने दिल्ली उच्च न्यायालय द्वारा उसकी याचिका को अस्वीकार करने के बाद गर्भपात की मांग करते हुए अदालत का रुख किया था। महिला का मामला यह था कि वह अपनी गर्भावस्था को समाप्त करना चाहती थी क्योंकि "उसके साथी ने अंतिम चरण में उससे शादी करने से इनकार कर दिया था।" उसने यह भी तर्क दिया कि गर्भावस्था को जारी रखने से उसके मानसिक स्वास्थ्य को गंभीर और भारी चोट का खतरा होगा। हालाँकि, कानून ने केवल "वैवाहिक" संबंधों के लिए परिस्थितियों में इस तरह के बदलाव की अनुमति दी।

सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने यह मानते हुए कि कानून को एक उद्देश्यपूर्ण व्याख्या दी जानी चाहिए, याचिकाकर्ता को अंतरिम आदेश में अपनी गर्भावस्था को समाप्त करने की अनुमति दी थी। हालाँकि, कानून की बड़ी चुनौती, जिससे अन्य महिलाओं को भी लाभ होगा, को लंबित रखा गया था। 29 सितंबर को, सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने फैसला सुनाया कि 20 से 24 सप्ताह के बीच गर्भधारण वाली एकल और अविवाहित महिलाएं विवाहित महिलाओं की तरह ही सुरक्षित और कानूनी गर्भपात देखभाल की हकदार हैं। मेडिकल टर्मिनेशन

ऑफ प्रेग्नेंसी (एमटीपी) एक्ट, 1971 के तहत बनाए गए नियमों की व्याख्या करते हुए जस्टिस डी.वाई. चंद्रचूड़ ने कहा, "प्रजनन स्वायत्तता, गरिमा और निजता के अधिकार एक अविवाहित महिला को पसंद का अधिकार देते हैं कि वह एक विवाहित महिला के समान बच्चे को जन्म दे या नहीं।" वैवाहिक बलात्कार की एक अन्य न्यायिक मान्यता में, जिसे भारतीय दंड संहिता के तहत अपराध के रूप में मान्यता नहीं दी गई है, न्यायालय ने यह भी कहा कि एक पुरुष द्वारा अपनी पत्नी पर जबरदस्ती सेक्स बलात्कार माना जा सकता है और पत्नी को गर्भपात का अधिकार होगा।

भारत में गर्भपात के आंकड़े:-

1) भारत में सालाना होने वाली 48.5 मिलियन गर्भधारण में से 44% अनचाही हैं। इन अनचाही गर्भधारण में से लगभग 16 मिलियन (77%) का परिणाम गर्भपात होता है भारत में हर साल 800,000 असुरक्षित गर्भपात होते हैं। भारत में 10% असुरक्षित गर्भपात मातृ मृत्यु का कारण है। 2) भारत में कोविड-19 महामारी के दौरान जनवरी से जून 2020 के बीच, अनुमानित 1 मिलियन अतिरिक्त असुरक्षित गर्भपात, 650,000 अतिरिक्त अनचाहे गर्भ, और 2,600 मातृ मृत्यु होने की संभावना थी। 3) ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में लड़कियां और महिलाएं जो गरीब और अनपढ़ हैं, हाशिए की जातियों और धर्मों से हैं, वह उच्च जोखिम स्तर पर हैं 4) प्रतिबंधात्मक गर्भपात से गर्भपात की दर कम नहीं होती है। इसके बजाय, वे मातृ मृत्यु दर और रुग्णता वृद्धि करते हैं।

निष्कर्ष:- अब एक मैरिड महिला के साथ अनमैरिड महिला चिकित्सक की सलाह पर गर्भपात करवा सकती हैं। ■

DEMOCRATISING HIGHER EDUCATION & ENABLING GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP

With Mr. Raju Kendre

Interviewed by Siddhant Sinha and Kumar Rajneekant

While researching the issue, we got to know that the Eklavya Foundation came into existence, in part, due to your own life experiences. Can you please elaborate on how you had to struggle, how you came up with the idea of the foundation and how do you think Eklavya would help in this cause?

I am a first-generational learner with a tribal identity and hailing from an agricultural family. My education has completely been in vernacular language and neither of my parents was even primarily educated. I come from Vidarbha in Maharashtra which is a very backward region in human development. Even though it's a part of Maharashtra, which is considered a more developed and financially stronger state, the state of affairs in regions like ours might be as bad as those in Bihar, Jharkhand or Chhattisgarh concerning development parameters. In the last 2-3 decades, agricultural distress and farmer suicides have been prominent issues too. So that's my background.

My first-hand lived experience, especially in education, certainly led to the establishment of the Eklavya Foundation. In 2011, I went to pursue my graduation from Pune University, about 400 km away from my village and I was completely unaware of opportunities. I didn't know about Ferguson College. I just wanted to become an IAS officer. I had no connections or networks there in Pune. I had taken admitted to a tier-2 college even though I had a good score just because I wasn't aware of the opportunities at my disposal. But, I had to leave even that in about 4-5 months because of troubled financial conditions. In our country, humanities are still not seen with the same respect as seen in other prominent countries. I then pursued distance education in a state university, not even IGNOU (Indira Gandhi National Open University). So I had to compromise a lot academically in those 3 years. I was working in a tribal region called Melghat in Amravati. In our work, we interacted with the Korku community there which

had no graduates in 2012 across 15 villages. Due to the distance course, I was working on the ground a lot in activism, from the Right to Information to the Right to Education. I learnt a lot in that period.

Then I went to the Tata Institute of Social Sciences for a Masters in Social Work. Representation of marginalised communities like the tribals, Scheduled Castes, OBCs etc was missing even there. First-generation learners were not represented. After that, I decided to work in Vidarbha itself due to my knowledge and experience of the region. So we started a pilot there and we used to contact students on call and help them. We started with around 5-7 students but with time, we have grown to a level that about 700 students have been admitted through us till now. This year alone, we are working with around 600-700 students. That has been the journey of Eklavya in the last 6 years. We also have our Global Scholar Programme in which we focus on admissions to global universities and we can discuss that. Basically we started the

foundation because of our lived experiences. The co-founders of Eklavya, like Prashant Chauhan, Smita Tatewar and Akash, all come from marginalised communities and all three are first-generation learners. So we are trying to have a leadership who is from the same background so that we remain empathetic and take forward this movement.

Sir, you are a first-generation learner yourself and you work for people with similar struggles. In that context, what are some of the challenges and difficulties that specifically first-generation learner faces in their pursuit of education?

While moving to a mega city like Delhi or Mumbai, first-generation learners face a range of cultural and language barriers. There remains a lot of inferiority complex in them while being in the campus spaces. From clothing and accommodation to your accent and social skills, you are judged on several parameters. Further, in institutions like the TISS, you need to write assignments and projects in English. From writing to speaking, the medium of communication is entirely English. Therefore, a stark disparity gets formed on the language front. You might have some first-generation learners around you. So you might be aware of all difficulties they face in such circumstances and have to struggle accordingly. We still see how our students face such challenges and struggle once they enter institutes of higher learning.

Our entire system is based on 'merit' and 'Meritocracy' doesn't consider such disparities. It doesn't consider that while it's my first

generation that is receiving education, it might be my third or fourth. So naturally, you develop and enjoy that advantage and I will then have to compete against this skewed advantage, against people who have had the generational privilege. It's natural for us then to not believe in the term 'meritocracy' in the first place. The entire education system is based on marks and certain skillset, but our lived experiences and background find no space in such a curriculum.

As you mentioned, our system is a meritocracy which takes into account the so-called merit alone. In such a structure, what role does social capital play when certain communities enjoy inter-generational advantages over others?

One important aspect of the issue is the technological disparity and digital divide. There's limited access to technology in rural and tribal areas. Our students go to institutes like the TISS for masters, but they don't have laptops or other such devices. Institutes like Azim Premji University and some others too do provide devices to such students. But the fact remains that there is a stark disparity in access to technology. People with socio-economic capital might have a laptop right from primary education, while our students remain devoid of it. During the pandemic and online learning, I witnessed many such cases where students had to drop out because of the lack of access to technology. There's not even proper network coverage in tribal areas like Yavatmal.

If you look at reports from Nature (a leading science journal), representation from marginalised communities is abysmal. There's no professor across 12 IIMs from the Adivasi community. Many IITs do not even have 5 per cent representation from such communities. So there's a huge role being played by sociocultural capital in this context. Those with no previous generation are educated, how can you expect them to be on an equal footing with others? So they need to be given access to research and quality education.

For instance, someone from this generation will study Hindu or Miranda, they will then consolidate their economic position. Only then can the next generation think about going abroad or any further development. Quite a few people from privilege go on to research this issue and the irony is that even there, there's hardly any representation of the marginalised groups.

Central Universities like JNU, DU, AMU and others are publicly funded and might be relatively accessible to marginalised communities. But what about the new private universities? The socio-economic capital then plays the most important part there. If you can't get into it, you have the option of going to Ashoka, O.P. Jindal or even abroad. But those coming from the tribal community, whose income remains as low as 4 or 5 thousand rupees a month, what will they invest in education?

The policymakers themselves come from a position of privilege. So the policies thus formed have their own lacunae. I have my own lived experience and have gone through

the struggles of the system. Thankfully, I'm doing fine in my field. I'll complete my PhD soon too. This model of leadership can be there in any sector, whether it's art & culture or economics. The only thing required is opportunity. So, I personally believe that education, particularly quality higher education, is the best capital for marginalised communities.

Even in my family, my parents didn't have even primary education. So my generation grew up with its repercussions. When we were small, I remember that even our nearby village, where weekly markets were organised, used to feel like Delhi or Mumbai. Then a few years later, the block seemed like the 'big thing' when we went there for competitions, then the district and so on. Now, I've been to London, so it doesn't feel like anything special. But I had to wait for 18 years to visit the district headquarters and that felt like something. Now, my 6-year-old niece says that her uncle has brought gifts for her from London, the same uncle for whom the block or the district seemed to be the world. How did this transformation take place? Because of education.

Education need not be about the economic fruits alone. It also develops critical thinking and critical consciousness. The pedagogy in our training centres also inculcates these attributes. The training centres at Yavatmal, Nagpur and Aurangabad run inclusive syllabus in that regard.

Sir, as we are celebrating 75 years of independence, you mentioned that still, our marginalised communities have not been able to

develop and grow to their potential, what do you think are the lacunas in the Government policies and how do you think we can change them for making it more suitable for inclusive growth?

Recently, the govt. published the budget, just look at the percentage of the total spending dedicated to the education sector, a major chunk of the budget is spent on defence. A lot of economists and social reformers like Baba sahab Phule have talked about humanity, you can even think on the global level, countries like the UK, and the US, they've compromised on their education, research or science and tech. We need to simply increase our meagre budget on education, and invest properly in higher education. We have used sarva shiksha Abhiyan or Right to education and we have got access to education up to a certain level. However, when you go to villages you'll find schools and children of age 14-16 enrolled there, but when it comes to marginalised communities pursuing graduation, you won't find a lot of them with degrees.

We have many communities in our area, like Koriko, where there are no graduates. But, today with the intervention of Eklavya, there are 20-25 students who have enrolled in Pune University or TISS for graduate degrees. However this intervention has to come from the government, like Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, we need to have good higher education facilities in every district. Although the number of private colleges and universities has been spared up to 10 times, at the same time, there has been no investment in public institutions except IITs, IIMs or reputed central universities. So, it should come directly from the central government that there'll be no compromise when it comes to the education or health sector as these sectors ensure human development which is the base for national development. The more you invest, the more you shall reap.

We're not even investing in sports, if we harness the potential of central or tribal areas, we can compete for the neck to neck with countries like china.



Raju Kendre

We should open sports facilities in every block which provide them with good nutrition and training. This is a matter of great willpower and visionary leadership and it should be understood by the leaders and bureaucrats. So I feel that there's a lacuna in policy-making itself, until we don't create good spaces where empirical marginalised communities can perform, we can't say we have done something concrete in these sectors.

This is where the Eklavya foundation comes into play, we need to have thousands of publicly funded organisations like these in all the parts of India like Bihar, Jharkhand, North East, Jammu and Kashmir etc. A publicly funded organisation can educate and improve lakhs of students while we're struggling for a few employees' salaries.

Sir, you explained about Eklavya and how it helped more than 700 students in pursuing higher education, so, how do you select the students for the programme and how do you work with them?

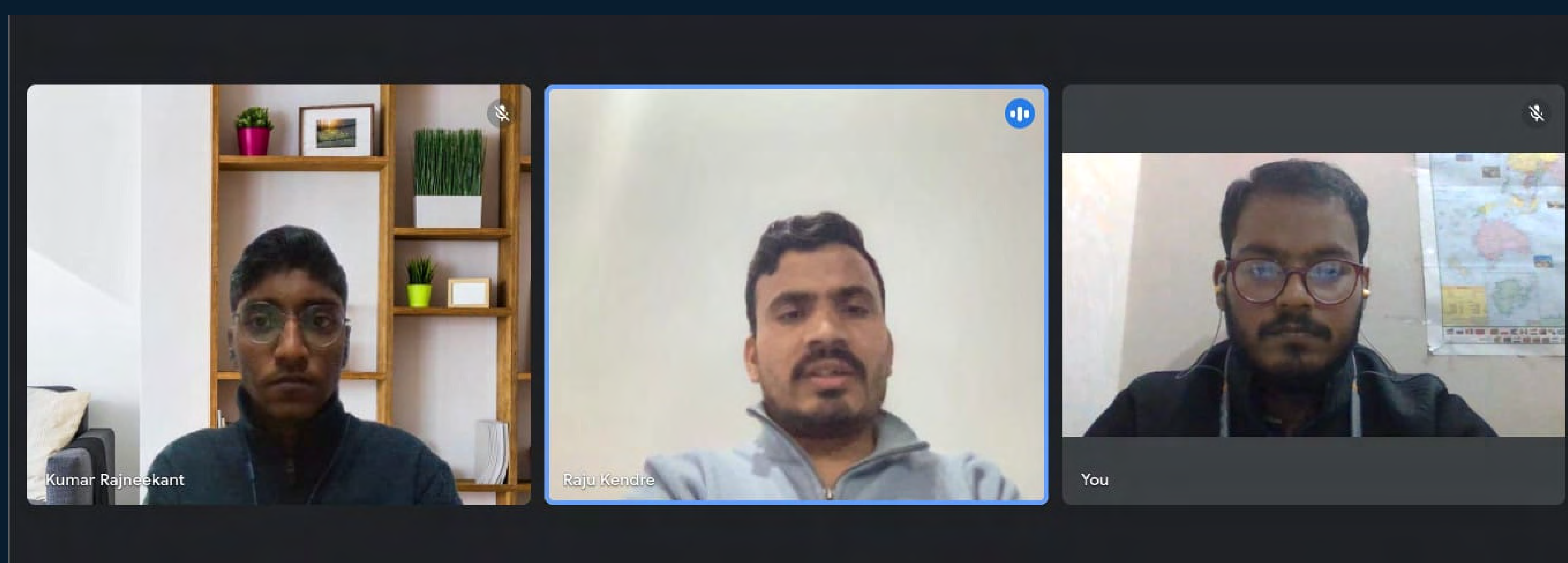
Now we have a good ground coverage, with our social media platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook or Instagram we have around 8-10K connections. So, we have a few criteria which we check while selecting the students like his social background, social capital, whether he is a first-generation learner, whether he has studied in vernacular medium, etc. we don't check marks, we check willpower, whether he or she has clarity and determination to move forward and do something good in the sector or not.

We also wanted to know the structure of the Eklavya programme like the structure of the training programme, what you include in the training programme, and who are the mentors.

We do one-day workshops, with the students of 12th and graduate students in rural and tribal areas and we try to get the students introduced to technology. Our students face a lot of problems with technology so we do it in person to break the socio-emotional lacuna.

We have had more than 170 workshops last year and more than 100 this year i.e we connect to almost 12-15 K students directly. 3-4 volunteers of Eklavya go to every college and Orient the students to the opportunities for higher education after 12th or graduation along with the availability of courses and scholarships in various subjects ranging from law to filmmaking with the help of PowerPoint presentations etc. Our 1-day workshops are almost 3-4 hours. Then comes our 2-3 day residential workshops, mentors from various fields explaining their own sectors.

We check the background of the students and based on our criteria we check their willpower and select the students for our programme. Then we have a proper 3-month training which includes various entrances like CUET or TISS entrance exams and then we mentor them until their admission. We have a community of around 300 mentors who give mentorship to various students in their specialised fields. Mentors are our backbone. We conduct the 3-month



training which includes various entrances like CUET or TISS entrance exams and then we mentor them until their admission. We have a community of around 300 mentors who give mentorship to various students in their specialised fields. Mentors are our backbone. We conduct the 3-month program in both online and offline mediums. Currently, we have our courses going on in Nagpur, Aurangabad and Yavatmal for post-graduation and the graduation courses will be started after the boards.

We are also conducting a pilot programme on Global scholarship schemes and we'll launch it on a larger scale on Baba Saheb Ambedkar Jayanti which will include more than 150-200 students. We don't have even 5% representation in global scholarships, it is negligible. We don't have good national-level scholarships as well. Students are not aware and not trained enough to get global-level scholarships which cover the complete cost of education. Some people are into gatekeeping and don't inform the students of marginalised communities about these schemes. Even when I faced them in my starting years, they didn't guide me. That's why we kept the name of the programme as Eklavya foundation taking inspiration from Eklavya. It is my dream to send around 2000 global scholars from marginalised communities. We have more than 100 mentors from renowned Universities like Oxford University or Cambridge who are helping the students with the same.

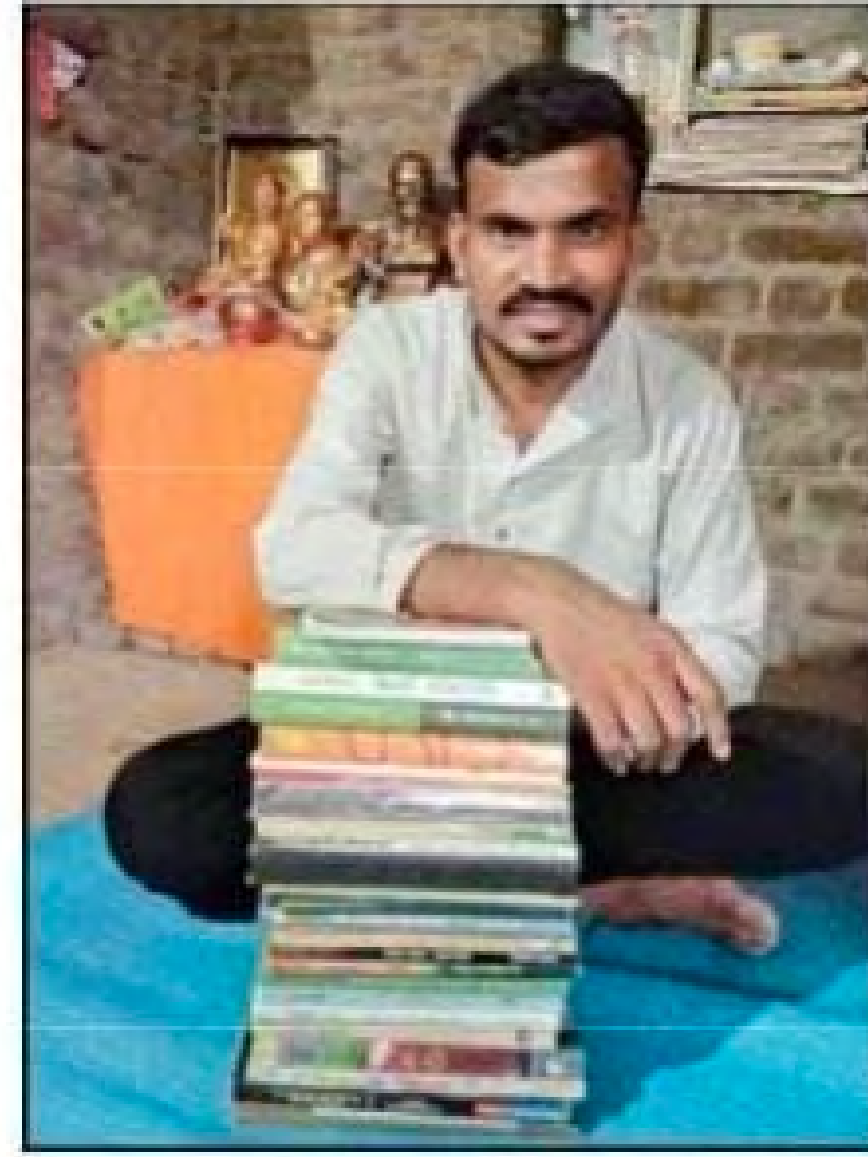
Poor farmer's son wins Chevening scholarship

■ District Correspondent
YAVATMAL, July 1

IT IS said that there is no obstacle too big for a determined mind. The saying has again been proved right by a very determined Raju Kendre, who has won the prestigious Chevening Scholarship of the British Government under its international education programme.

Hailing from the Nomadic Tribes, Raju's parents - Atmaram and Jijabai - didn't even receive primary education and earned their livelihood as farmers through a minor land holding. Raju originally comes from Pimpri Khandare village of Lonar taluka in Buldana district. Without any background promoting education, it was Raju Kendre's determination for learning and opening doors for so many like him that saw him shine at various levels of education.

After receiving school education in Marathi from Zilla Parishad School, he graduated from open university and completed post graduation from Tata Institute of Social Sciences. While taking education, he continued rendering social services in dif-



Raju Kendre at his home

ferent ways. He participated in works of Chief Minister Fellowship, Melghat. Later, he

starting teaching at Jotirao Social Works College, Yavatmal. During this period, through his Eklavya movement, he started a books collection drive for children of backward communities and collected 30,000 books for libraries in 30 villages of the district. Under the movement he also opened doors of higher education for more and more students who could not afford it due to financial limitations. The Eklavya Academy that he has been running for last three years has seen more than 500 of its students take up education in world-renowned educational institutions.

Working his way through educating himself while rendering social work, Raju cultivated a dream of further educating himself in foreign lands. Though he was selected in 19 universities that figured in the list top 200 in global ranking, he could not afford their fees without scholarship.

Without losing hope, Raju started efforts for the distinguished Chevening Scholarship. The scholarship is meant for youths with leadership qualities from 160 countries of the world. Out of the 63,000
(Contd on page 4)



Everywhere marginalised communities feel a sense of inequality, we should keep this in mind instead of playing on merit and blocking their chances.

Sir, you have worked on the grassroots level and you talked about your lived experience, so can you please share some problems specifically faced by the tribal population which generally are unknown to people in mainstream society?

People in the mainstream society should understand that they have a socioeconomic cultural capital of 8-10 generations, for many it is their 1st or 2nd generation to get the opportunity to study, so the mainstream society should create space for the tribal society instead of gatekeeping and blocking the space. Keeping in mind global diversity inclusion we should give them representation so that they can raise their voice and bring their problems into the mainstream. We have a meagre representation in fields like law, media, research, film etc. Everywhere marginalised communities feel a sense of inequality, we should keep this in mind instead of playing on merit and blocking their chances. ■

CHECK OUT OUR PREVIOUS INTERVIEWS!



Dr Lekha Chakraborty on Budget 2022 and Indian Economy
Interviewed by Arnab Anand Gupta and Mudita Mishra

(Q). Ma'am, recently finance minister Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman tabled the budget for FY 2023 in the Lok Sabha and there seems to have been a greater push towards economic growth by increasing the capital expenditure, but several criticisms have come up that this increase in capital expenditure was at the cost of equity and welfare budget. How do you consider this situation since the government seems to have been banking on the conclusion found in BS that growth continues to be one of the most important factors in India to increase the living standard of the people?

That's a very intelligent but at the same time humane question because you have understood that the overall emphasis of this budget is on economic recovery through capex. The emphasis was on public investment in capital infrastructure and we think that it will crowd in private corporate investments. But as you rightly pointed out, the humanitarian crisis, you know, tackling these elements regarding financing of human development, and we have concerns that the recovery is uneven, that's a significant concern. Growth recovery is there but it is quite uneven. But when you look into the budget, you know, financing human development aspects related to employment, food security, social security, all these elements, we have seen a reduction in revenue spending, that's an area of concern.

But my hope is that over the years or within this one year, outside the purview of the budget announcement, there will be some relief, because the budget is not everything. So, we are expecting that a kind of fiscal stimulus package, that announcement will be there soon to tackle these elements related to a humanitarian crisis.

Because, you know, if you look at last year's budget then political economy was focusing on welfare models. We were supporting poor people and last mile connectivity was one of the focused issues. One of the flagships programmes was Ujjwala, that is providing clean fuel to low income households women but it is surprising to hear that the programme of energy infrastructure was rolled up in September 2020.

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Dr Lekha Chakraborty on Budget 2022 and Indian Economy

ISSUE 11

Ambassador Mukhopadhyaya on Decoding Afghanistan & Taliban

ISSUE 12



Ambassador Mukhopadhyaya on Decoding Afghanistan & Taliban
Interviewed by Aaryan Gadhiok & Soham Agarwal

Soham Agarwal: So to start with the situation in Afghanistan. My first question is that recently, the world has marked the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. Unfortunately, the tale has completed a whole circle from attacking the Taliban from driving them out of power by the USA to leaving the country with a Taliban government 2.0. Sir, how do you perceive these 20 years of the USA in Afghanistan?

Gautam Mukhopadhyaya: So, I will answer your question in two parts, you know, the good part and the bad part. I today it's actually quite conventional.

almost fashionable to conventional derived, the 20-year period of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan as a bit of a failure. But if you take actually many of the metrics- metrics of social development, metrics of freedom. Let's say one, I think, very telling metrics- metrics of education, metrics of girls education. But I want our defining metric, which I think says it all is just the pattern of migration in and out of Afghanistan. In the previous 20 years, starting with the Soviet intervention, you had massive outward migration to Pakistan, Iran, and many other countries of the world, some even to India. But in these 20 years that we've had from 2001 to 2021, in fact, until the final takeover of the Taliban in Afghanistan, in August, you actually had a net return of expatriates and refugees from the rest of the world into Afghanistan. Of course, substantial numbers remain because they have been settled for 20 years in different countries. And in fact, there's been hardly any outward migration out of Pakistan. So if you take that metric you know in fact you have to acknowledge a large number of successes of the Islamic Republic in spite of handicaps and of course severe failures and even when we talk about failures I think we have to talk about failures not just in terms of the Afghan government of the time. They were serious limitations that they had and they were failures on their

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DEMYSTIFYING THE TRIBAL QUESTION WITH DR AMIT PRAKASH
Interviewed by Shreeya Praseon and Arpit Rituraj



Image credits - Vidhika

The Probe, quests for the answers surrounding the tribes of the country, in an interactive session with JNU Professor, Dr. Amit Prakash.

Dr. Amit Prakash is a professor at the Centre for the study of Law & Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Dr. Prakash holds a PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. His areas of research includes politics of development and identity, governance studies, conflicts and state, democratic political process in India and global governance, etc.

SP: There is a lot of confusion during the primordial times. The reason why Orans and Mundas in Jharkhand are termed as tribals is the continuity of origin of Tribal Communities. Sir, communities into indigenous and migrants in order to trace back the development of these loose origins becomes a contested matter which further occupies political conversations.

Nevertheless, it's quite doubtful to identify who is indigenous and matters regarding the point, the point is the characterisation of tribals has been to understand who can be called solely based upon the presumption tribal. If a certain section of people lives since time immemorial. This demonstrates a continuity of not the truth as these tribal uniqueness of culture and heritage, settled there, communities were the major artisan separate and different from class supplying the peasants with various essential services

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Dr Amit Prakash on the Tribal Question

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Prof Satish Deshpande on EWS Reservations

ISSUE 16

DISSECTING EWS RESERVATIONS
with Prof Satish Deshpande
Interviewed by Gaurvi Saluja & Siddhant Sinha



Sir, discussing an issue as complex and pertinent as reservations might require some background context to be first laid down to better understand the contemporary question. Can you provide us with a history of the reservation policy in India and its underlying principles?

Initially, the first reservations were discussed in a general way. Of course, as you all probably know, reservations were born with the Poona Pact, which itself was born out of Gandhi's decision to go for a fast unto death, in opposition to the separate electorates that were awarded to the depressed classes in 1931.

So as a result of the 1932 Poona Pact, the Government of India Act of 1935 was formed which made the schedules of castes and tribes, and then the Constitution adopted them almost verbatim. That's the prehistory in a sense.

When resolutions were first talked about in the Constituent Assembly, it's interesting, they were talked about in the context of protection for various kinds of minorities.

In the draft constitution of 1948, the same reservation provisions were there for the Muslims, the Christians, the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. Then, due to various reasons including the partition and the influence of the Hindu right, although not at the forefront but in the background, Hindu members of the Constituent Assembly, argued very vociferously against special rights for minorities like Muslims and Christians. The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, thus, became the residual part of which it was agreed that reservation is needed.

So, the explicit grounds discussed in the Constituent Assembly are based clearly on discrimination. There is no doubt that reservation for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes is about their guaranteed representation in the legislature

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ECONOMY





CURRENCY SWAP AGREEMENTS

Currency Swap: Mitigating a Crisis?

By Pulkit Middha

With global economic conditions tumultuous, what significance does expanding currency swap networks hold to help developing countries fight the financial crisis?

The year 2022 was indeed a year of uncertainties. The year started with the distressing omicron variant and soon entered into the Russia-Ukraine war which resulted into a major geopolitical disruption. Thanks to coronavirus, most of the economies had a loose monetary policy for two years which skyrocketed the market demands and led to high inflation in the major economies of the world. Sanctions imposed by the west on Russia ultimately resulted in an energy crisis in the region which had a cascading effect on the already soaring inflation, especially on food.

Then came the cherry on the cake - Fed's interest rate hikes and the rising US dollar. The impact of the Fed's aggressive monetary policy on the world was economic. Investors were attracted to the US markets and took out their money from the emerging economies which depreciated their currencies'

value. A weaker currency means that it costs more for a country to import food, energy, etc and a crunch in the forex reserves of an economy. For instance, with an annual drop of 11.3% which was the sharpest drop since 2013, the Indian Rupee was the worst performing Asian currency.

CURRENCY SWAP

A currency swap is a foreign exchange agreement between two institutions wherein certain elements of a loan (such as principle and/or interest payments) in one currency are exchanged for comparable elements of a loan in another currency with a similar net present value.

A currency swap should be distinguished from a central bank liquidity swap.

In addition, India's foreign exchange reserves fell by roughly \$70 billion.

Further predictions from the World Bank indicate that the global economy would expand by 1.7% in 2023 and 2.7% in 2024.

A full percentage point less than the average for the period between 2010 and 2019 is predicted for per-capita income growth in emerging markets and developing economies over the ensuing two years, which will average 2.8%. It is anticipated that growth in per capita income in Sub-Saharan Africa, which is home to nearly 60% of the world's extreme poor, will average just 1.2% from 2023 to 2024. At this rate, poverty rates may increase rather than decline. Scary circumstances exist. And the ongoing situation needs to be addressed in some way.

One of those ideas that can aid in the world's quick recovery is currency swap agreements. The necessity of expanding currency swap networks will be discussed in detail in this article, as well as how India may advance the idea while holding the G20 chair.

How can currency swaps help ?

The World Bank introduced the agreement to obtain German marks and Swiss francs in 1981, which is when currency swaps got their start. A currency swap is a contract between two central banks to exchange a cash flow in one currency for a cash flow in

another currency under preset terms and circumstances. While the lending central bank of a swap has access to the foreign currency liquidity line, it can lend it to institutions and agents inside its own territory that are experiencing a shortage of the appropriate foreign currency.

Swap agreements are made to protect both participating central banks from losses brought on by currency fluctuation. The swap facilities have been crucial in the previous ten years in reducing the systemic liquidity disruptions, maintaining financial stability, and preventing market tension from negatively influencing the real economy. The central banks can then utilise the US dollars they have acquired to continue lending to the institutions under their control, therefore reducing the lack of US dollar liquidity in these jurisdictions.

For instance, swap lines were extended by the Fed to ten advanced economies during the

financial crisis of 2007-08. This helped the central banks of those economies to fund the growing demands for USD of their local banks. The borrowing under the lines peaked in mid-December 2008 at more than \$580 billion. To note, these countries agreed to leave the swap lines in place as a backstop indefinitely in 2013.

Since March 2020, with the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, currency swap arrangements between central banks have again been used. In June 2020, Indonesia also entered into a currency swap agreement with South Korea worth \$10 billion to help support its economy and stabilise its exchange rate in the face of the pandemic.

Through this tool, central banks can give local banks access to foreign currency liquidity, particularly when the funding market is struggling. Swap agreements benefit the economy and lower the danger of financial crisis by assisting in the stabilisation of overseas markets and preventing bank collapses.



Why is there a need for expanding the swap network?

Only a few emerging economies have received swap lines from central banks of industrialised economies since 2007. The Fed has been much more careful when extending swap lines to emerging nations than it has done with other established economies because of the risks involved. The only emerging economies to receive swap lines from the Fed in October 2008 were Brazil, Mexico, South Korea, and Singapore. The swap lines were a logical addition to the \$2.5 billion in loans that Nordic nations gave Iceland during the financial crisis.

The dollar has a global role to play. Logically, thus, the US has a responsibility to support other economies at times of upheaval. This happened to some extent in March 2020. Responding to the initial pandemic shock, the US F



ederal Reserve Board extended currency swap lines to nine economies: Australia, Brazil, Denmark, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, South Korea, and Sweden.

But the poor part of the globe facing acute food shortages and a forex crisis is still far away from benefiting from such agreements.

With food and energy accounting for half of household consumption in sub-Saharan Africa, living costs across the region have spiralled. Public debt has reached about 60 percent of GDP, leaving the region with debt levels last seen in the early 2000s.

Though Asia remains a relative bright spot in an increasingly dimming global economy, the outlook remains challenging in high-debt economies such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Maldives, Lao P.D.R., and Papua New Guinea. Inflation now exceeds central bank targets in most Asian economies, driven by a mix of global food and energy prices, currencies falling against the US dollar. Continuous depreciation of currencies have increased the stress of countries' borrowings denominated in USD. Sri Lanka has given a crystal clear picture of the scenario.

When countries like Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Uganda started monetary policy tightening, they faced an inevitable dilemma as increasing interest rates to tackle inflation will risk choking off credit for investment, depressing economic

activity, and reducing incomes. Their ability to control the pace of interest-rate increases is constrained by their currency arrangement.

Although developing countries are in need of support, they are progressively more cautious of countries like China, which has been quite liberal in having swap arrangements. Holding around 38% of the world's USD reserves, China is trying to enhance its regional strategic importance, which can be a serious threat to the world. China, with its dominance through the Belt and Road Initiative, has already put several Asian economies into a debt trap.

To mitigate the currency risks involved, repurchase agreements, in which bonds rather than currency can be held as collateral.

Tim Geithner, former U.S. Treasury Secretary, during the Committee's deliberation on the emerging-market swap line proposal noted: "The privilege of being the reserve currency of the world comes with some burdens. Not that we have an obligation in this sense, but we have an interest in helping these

The Fed has been much more careful when extending swap lines to emerging nations than it has done with other established economies because of the risks involved.

guys mitigate the problems that they face... We have the same basic interest that led us to be responsive to the European need in some cases.”

Where does India stand?

India, with its ongoing G20 Presidency, can justify its picture as a global leader. World Bank’s flagship publication, India Development Update, has pointed out that the Indian economy has demonstrated resilience despite a challenging external environment.

India has often been involved in helping out its neighbours by providing currency swap lines in tough times. For instance, RBI signed a swap agreement with the Central Bank of Sri Lanka up to USD 400 million in 2020.

With its aim to further financial stability and economic cooperation, India has provided swap facilities to the SAARC countries. India also renewed its \$75 billion bilateral swap agreement with Japan to deepen financial cooperation and for forex stability. Most recently, India has entered into a swap agreement of up to \$200 Million with the Maldives Monetary Authority.

But, it is notable that India has a limited balance sheet and is itself a “Trade-Deficit” country. It is not feasible for India to meet the growing demand for foreign reserves by different countries. Therefore, India should emphasise on the necessity for the G20 countries’ central banks to



broaden their swap networks and make temporary arrangements permanent. The Fed can extend swaps to additional central banks without assuming balance-sheet risk, since many potential recipients have other, sometimes illiquid assets to offer as collateral. ■



India may now make an effort to strengthen not only its own economy but also the sluggish global economy through its G20 Presidency.

GOING BEYOND THE REVDI DEBATE

By Dev Ishaan Agarwal

Have you ever had Revdi in your life? Most, at least in North India, must have tasted it, especially during winters. Some like the 'coin-shaped treat' whereas some do not. Same is the case with the other "Revdi", the recent colloquial name for freebies. Even after 75 glorious years since India attained independence with recently entering into the 25 years of Amrit Kal, we have not been able to distinguish between good and bad Revdis. The truth is that it's quite subjective to understand this newly-coined phrase Revdi Culture despite the fact that this practice is going on for many years and we are just revolving around this futile debate with no end.

Understanding the Impact of Revdi

So, before coming to the source that has triggered this debate and what can be the future of it, what do we actually mean by Revdi? Freebies could be defined as 'non-merit based subsidies' provided by any form of government, which are simply expenditures that cannot be retrieved back in the form of

money, i.e. they essentially become foregone revenues. On carefully analysis, one may easily conclude by saying that freebies are injurious for the healthy growth of our economy. But, we all need to keep this in mind that freebies cannot be defined as easily as it looks. What's mentioned above is merely a simple definition but the term is very difficult to comprehend in terms of its definition. Moreover, legally and constitutionally a government is empowered to spend in any form it wants. The Indian Constitution does not define freebies for the government in legal terms.

Some of its grave implications on the economy include: **Huge Macroeconomic Instability.** This

framework is undermined by subsidies because they have an effect on the state's finances, most of which are not in good health to begin with. States will lose money if they spend on political gains. Even though the states have the freedom to spend their money however they see fit, they can only do so in exceptional cases when they go over budgetary caps. When a state borrows more money than the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act (FRBM Act) stipulates, those conditions apply.

Second implication that is most often talked about is freebies are **opposed to free and fair elections**". It is against the concept



of free and fair elections to promise irrational, if not outrageous, freebies from public funds. Some analysts contend that offering freebies is comparable to offering bribes to one's own electorate, raising ethical concerns.

And last comes the **negative effect on the manufacturing industry**. It is quite surprising yet somehow obvious to say that by hindering the efficient and competitive infrastructure that enables high-factor efficiencies in the manufacturing sector, freebies reduce the quality and competitiveness of the sector. This proves the remark of the famous political analyst NK Singh, *"Freebies are a passport to fiscal disaster"*.

The Trigger for the Debate

The debate began to hit the headlines across the country when the Reserve Bank of India published a report on state finances in April 2022 which was followed by Prime Minister Modi's critical remarks on the alleged misuse of such freebies by a few state governments. Consequently, the issue has blown up to the extent that the Supreme Court had to intervene and call on the states to improve their fiscal stability and restrict such freebies. That's not where the story ends. The Supreme Court of India, in its judgement, directed the Election Commission of India to frame guidelines with regard to content in the manifestos of political parties in consultation with the recognised parties so that it should not influence the voters and distort the roots of

free and fair elections..

Thus, this brings us to some very serious questions: Has the Revdi Culture Debate become such a national issue that two of the apex institutions had to intervene? More importantly, are only the state governments to be blamed for their financial instability? As per the 15th Finance Commission, states carry 62% economic burden of their expenditure responsibilities and are given only 37% of their revenue raising power to maintain the fiscal instability and that of the Central government is 38% and 62% respectively. There are quite a few questions which need to be asked from the Central Government regarding freebies as well, as the Centre itself doesn't seem to be clear on its stand whether freebies are impediment for the overall growth or not. Some of the Central Government's schemes have come under critical scrutiny in recent times and one such scheme is the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY).

Despite serving 80 crore people with subsidised food grains almost successfully to fill their stomachs, there have been serious underlying issues in front of this welfare scheme. The government has to pay a lot of money to keep it going, and it makes it more important to have a lot of cheap grains. India had to limit its exports of wheat



and rice in 2022 because of the unpredictable weather, which hurt the harvest, raised food prices, and rattled global agricultural markets. It could jeopardise the government's goal of bringing the fiscal deficit down to 6.4 percent of GDP. Inflation may also be affected by the program choice. Due to lower production amid a heatwave and patchy monsoon, the prices of rice and wheat, which make up about 10% of India's retail inflation, are rising.

Analysing Punjab

One of the most prominent example of the economic sufferer from providing freebies according to various political and economic experts is the border state of Punjab. Experts claim that it would be difficult to provide each woman with Rs 1,000 per month and 300 free units of electricity given the state's current debt burden of Rs 2.82 lakh crore, yet the Punjab government has carried on the footsteps of their election manifesto. Experts predict that it will increase the subsidy bill by at least Rs 5,000 crore, even according to the most conservative estimates. According to reports, Punjab has approximately 73 lakh residential customers, 14 lakh agricultural customers, 11.50 lakh commercial customers, and 1.50 lakh industrial customers of electricity. The state's power subsidy bill for the 2021-22 fiscal year was reportedly Rs 10,668 crore, with Rs 7,180 crore going to farmers and Rs 1,627 crore to SC, BC, and BPL households as beneficiaries. Additionally, the State Exchequer is anticipated to be burdened by an additional Rs 15,600 crore from monthly financial assistance of Rs 1,000 for

each woman in the state who is at least 18 years old. In this regard, it is important to note that, according to newspaper reports, in his first meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi since being sworn in, the Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann requested Rs. 50,000 crore financial package for Punjab to improve the state's finances. This speaks volumes regarding the detrimental effects of the culture of freebies announced by political parties prior to elections, which, as the case of Punjab demonstrates, can spell doom for a state's economy. In the case of Punjab, a sensitive border state, this is especially risky.

Conclusion

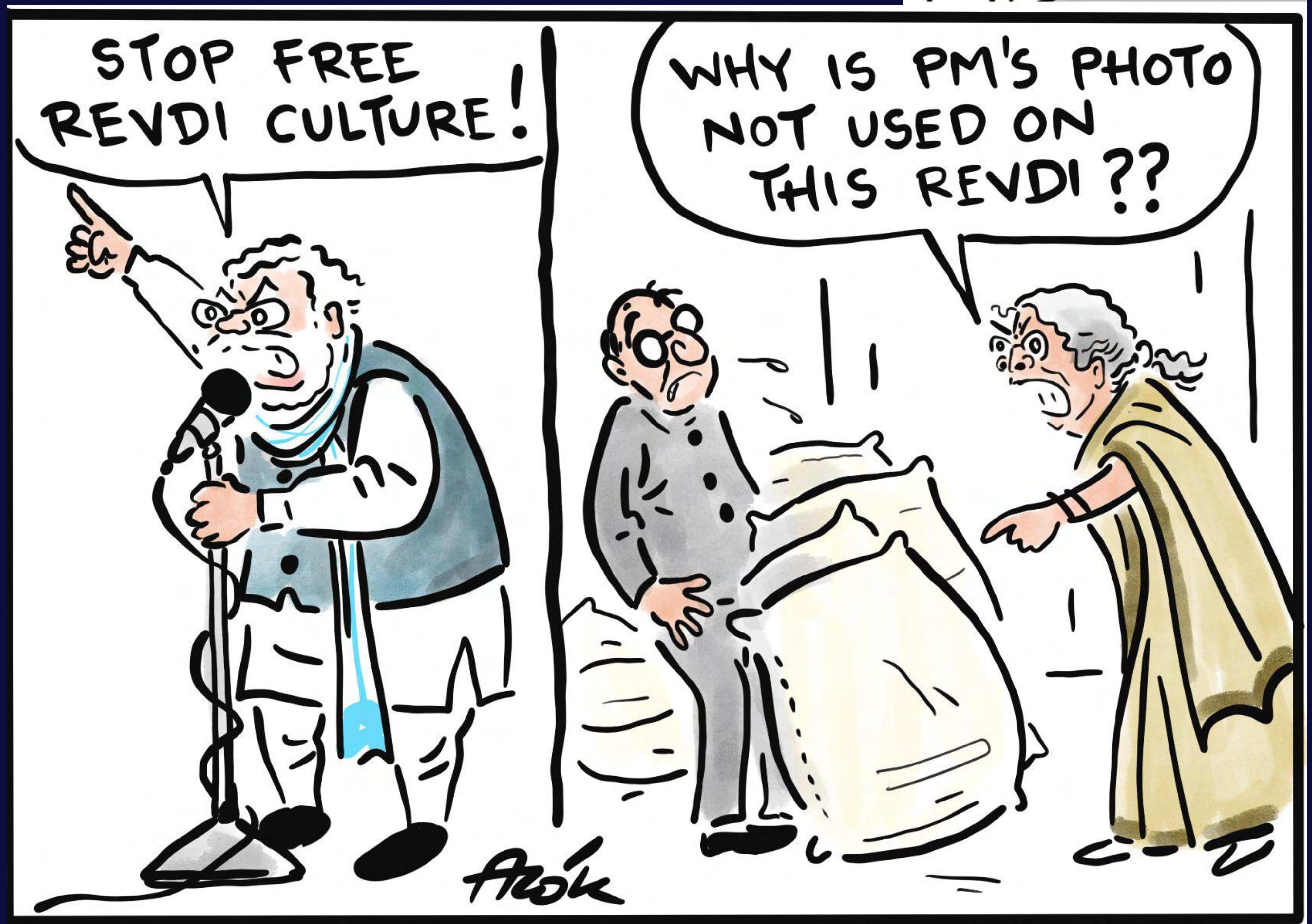
The bitter reality of the nation, however, remains that there exists a humongous mountain of socio-

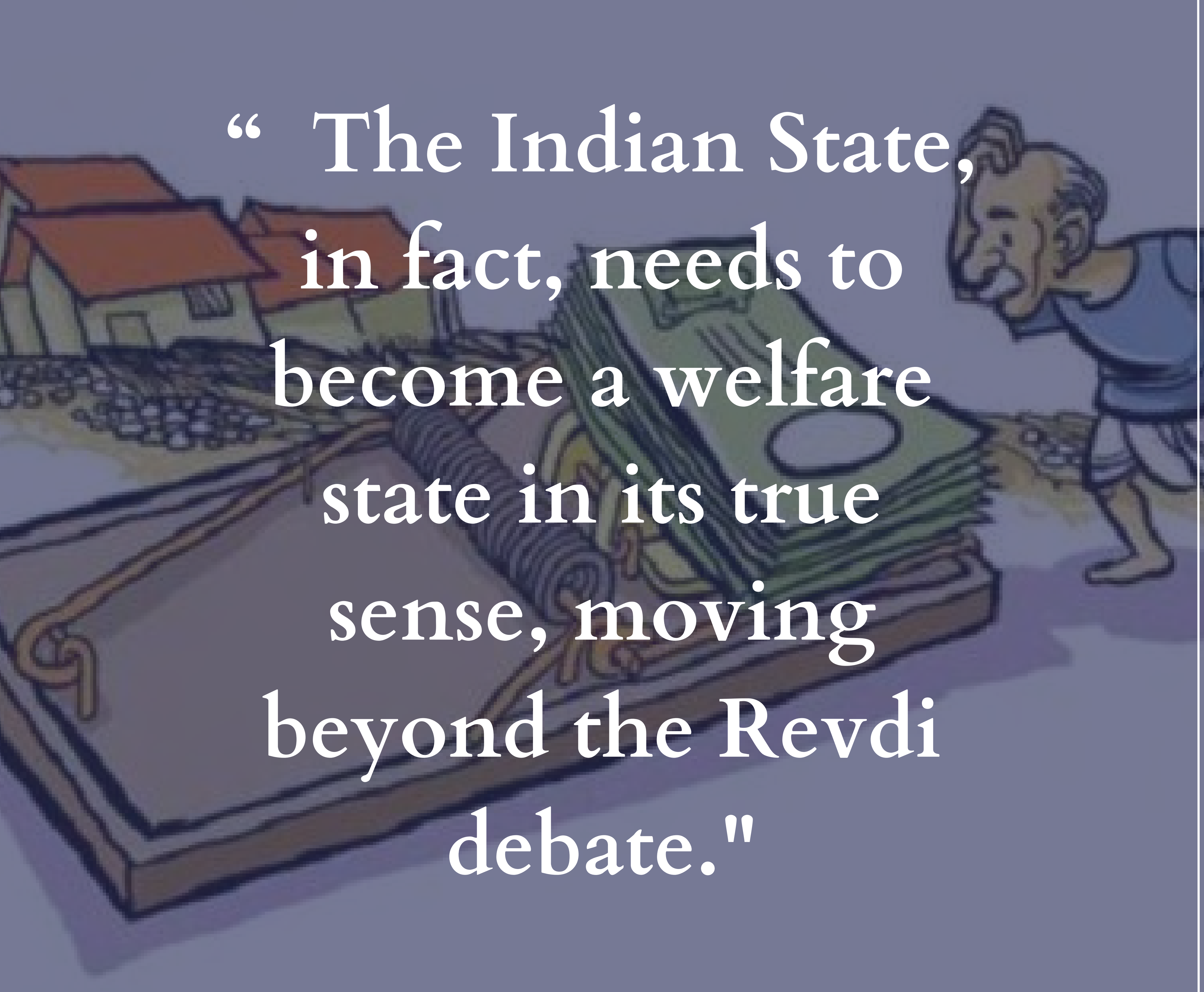
economic issues like inequality, poverty, illiteracy, inadequate health facilities which have actually become very much significant to conquer for any government to truly become a welfare state.

So, what should be done? Should a government duck these bouncers which are in the form of the issues mentioned above to preserve their identity of not being a 'Freebie Supplier' or should they shed off their identity and try to create and maintain a balance of their financial stability by giving the public required facilities to improve their standard of living and in turn raise their aggregate demand to fill the pockets of the state treasury? The latter one sounds pleasing to our ears.

We need to go beyond the futile

discussion of Freebies and stop giving Freebies a negative connotation because the role of the government is that of a welfare state. At the same time there should be some restraint on freebies directly impacting the Treasury of the Government. Thus, a constitutional commission must be set up by the Parliament to have a detailed discussion on it and come with a blueprint which can distinguish between which what's necessary and what is not. ■





“ The Indian State,
in fact, needs to
become a welfare
state in its true
sense, moving
beyond the Revdi
debate.”

SCIENCE







NATIONAL GEO-SPATIAL POLICY

By Saif

The article discusses Geospatial technology, the New National Geospatial Policy 2022, it aims to highlight how the industry is a multi-disciplinary one and how its success depends on the growth of the other sectors. The article also talks about the challenges to GIS in the new policy and leaves room for discussion.

Introduction to Geospatial Information Technology

Consider if there has been a covid outbreak in a certain locality that subsequently spreads across certain parts of the state or country. In this case, the government can use a sort of database to keep track of the status of such localities in real-time. Profiling of confirmed cases based on location and temporality and then visualizing them effectively coupled with behavioural and critical geographic variables such

as mobility patterns, demographic data, and population density enhance the predictive analytics of controlling the spread of the outbreak.

Geospatial data typically combines location information (earth coordinates) and the characteristics of the object concerned with temporal information. The location provided may be static in the short term (for example, the location of a statue) or dynamic (for example, a moving car). Pretty much any map that is used to show data on it, is a GIS map. In simple terms, a GIS is a computer application that allows you to capture, store, search, manipulate, relate and manage maps and information about them.

The New National Geospatial Policy

The new policy will replace the National Map Policy, of 2005. It aims to strengthen the industry to

support the service economy. It follows guidelines for acquiring and producing geospatial data and related services including maps, issued by the Department of Science and Technology in February 2021, as its foundation.

The government aims to employ geospatial technology and data toward achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The policy prioritizes the value of locally available and relevant maps and geospatial data. It seeks to create long-term, sustainable geospatial information management through capacity development and education programs.

The policy is structured to contribute towards the democratization of data — Survey of India (SoI) topographic data and other geospatial data produced using public funds would be treated as common goods and made easily available. While the Survey of India will play the lead role in maintaining high resolution/high spatial accuracy

orthoimage (geometrically corrected image to remove geographical and optical distortion), the actual collection of data will be increasingly done with private sector participation.

Liberalization in the field is a sort of symbolic support to the central government's ease of doing business policy. The private sector hopes to serve the geospatial/location data-related needs and requirements of consumers. It will also play a pivotal role in the creation and maintenance of geospatial and mapping infrastructures.

Interdependency with other sectors

With the success of the private sector in the aerospace industry, one can expect the geospatial field to perform better as the aerospace sector is highly intertwined with the latter.

Moreover, with drone technology improving every successive year, GIS mapping drones provide a significant boon to the realm of geospatial information systems. These devices offer professionals a cost-effective, efficient, and highly accessible method of collecting geospatial data for various applications. The Union government has started to make geospatial technology and drones to map over 6 lakh villages and 100 cities in India. Space Minister Dr Jitendra Singh said that the government would make pan-India three-dimensional maps.

A post covid tourism and hospitality industry can additionally favour the growth of the geospatial industry. Moreover, a growing scene of medicinal data

analysis and modelling can be a bane for the industry as well. The reverse is also true, that the Geospatial industry can have hindered growth if the corresponding sectors don't perform very well.

An interesting point to make is that India plans to develop a quantum computer with about 50 qubits by 2026, while smaller-scale devices such as quantum simulators and sensors are expected much sooner. Experts believe sectors such as manufacturing, high-tech, banking, and defense will lead quantum technologies for critical and large-scale use cases in India. In such a scenario, Quantum technology will bring the ability to analyze data on a global scale, solving problems that are currently out of reach by getting insights on a global scale using Quantum Computing as a Service (QCaaS), much, in the same way, we currently do with local authority data. With Quantum technologies could potentially add US\$310b to the Indian economy by 2030, the applications for this are immense. It could revolutionize how we work with geospatial data, from rendering large point clouds to analyzing big geospatial data or

even analyzing on a GIS. The biggest application is thought to be AI and GeoAI, where quantum computing can solve uncertainty models efficiently.

Challenges to the Industry

However, there are multiple challenges that the industry must overcome before the citizens can reap its benefits. Smaller businesses and agencies are still not aware of the benefits of GIS and still have the preconceived notion that GIS is an expensive tool to invest in and is predominantly out of their reach. They're mainly worried about the hardware costs, not to mention the GIS software itself. Due to the complex interconnection of the various components that make up a GIS system, the price of the GIS system increases. Besides the hardware and software costs, there is a need to have fully trained human personnel which is expensive to train and acquire. It only makes sense that the government should set up training centers to train the workers.

Image source: servicemax.com



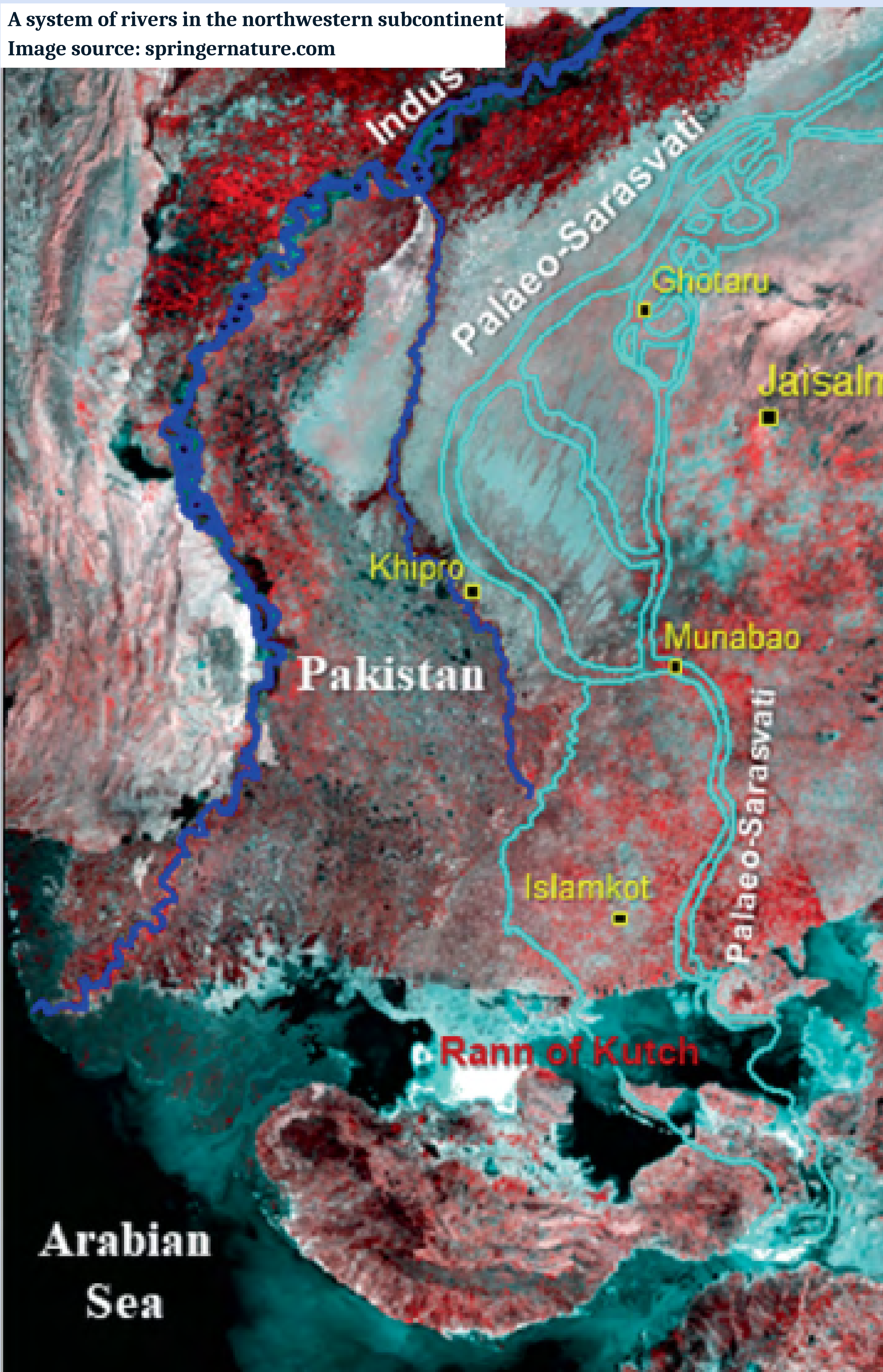
There also seems to be no heterogeneity between datasets and the resulting maps, which was exacerbated by the eventual evolution and development of new GIS systems. Some standardization issues include loose colour conventions for geographic information as well as variations in how elements are represented on a map. Different GIS systems use different icons for the same features causing issues with data handling and increases the chance of dealing with bad data.

To put it in layman's words, the lack of a standardized system leads to inconsistent data to work with. One way to understand this is how the UPI or the Unified Payments Interface made a standard system where all banks could be on the same platform and it decreased the amount of inconsistent bank data, whilst offering an amazing service to the citizens.

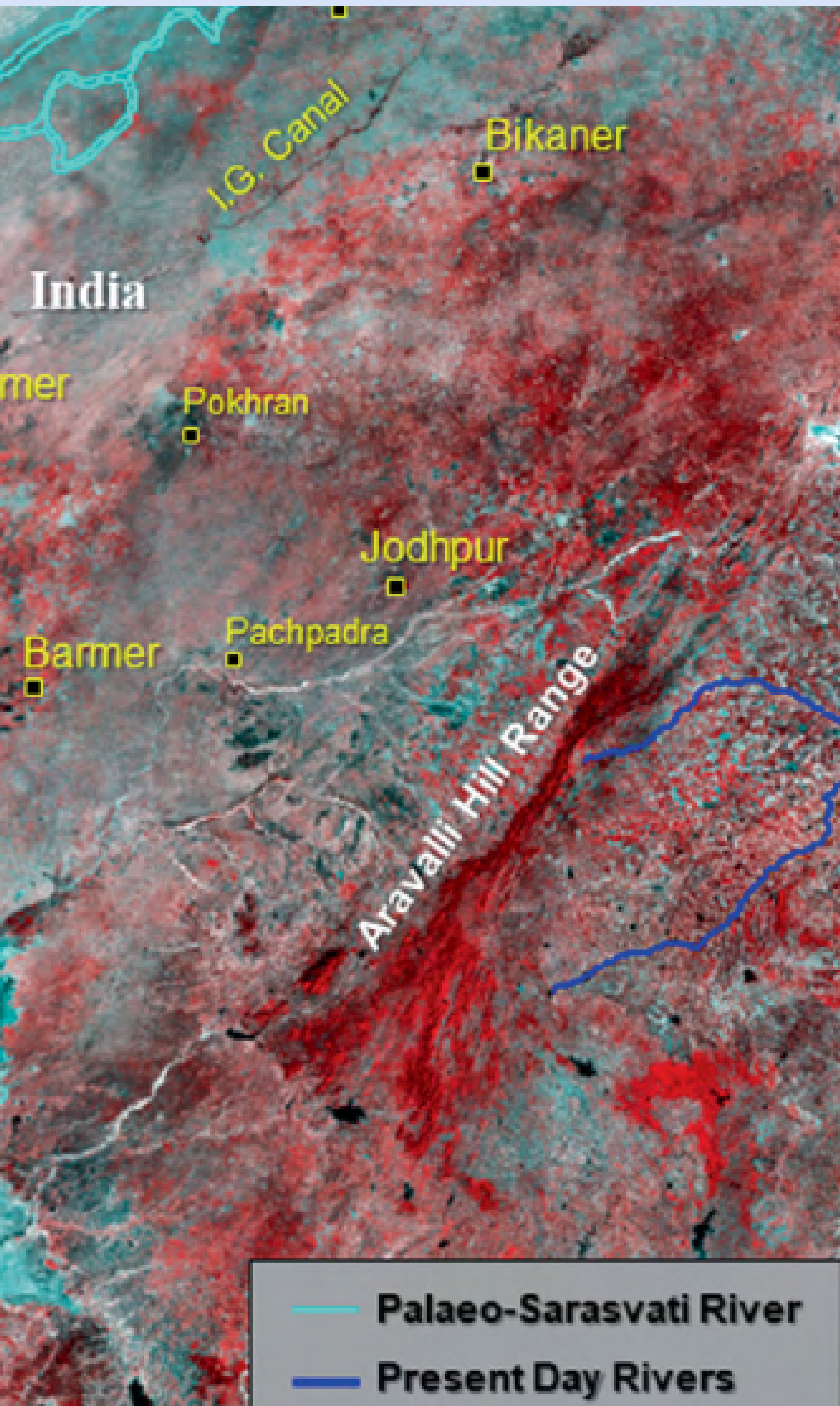
It would be hard to ignore the fact that when the industry opens more, i.e., liberalizes, the question of the safety of public data would arise. Firstly, even if the government outsources the project building the required infrastructure, who will ensure that there is no sort of breach of the privacy of the citizens? Secondly, would a regulatory body oversee the infrastructure building as GIS data, unlike transactions, are more sensitive?

A system of rivers in the northwestern subcontinent

Image source: springernature.com



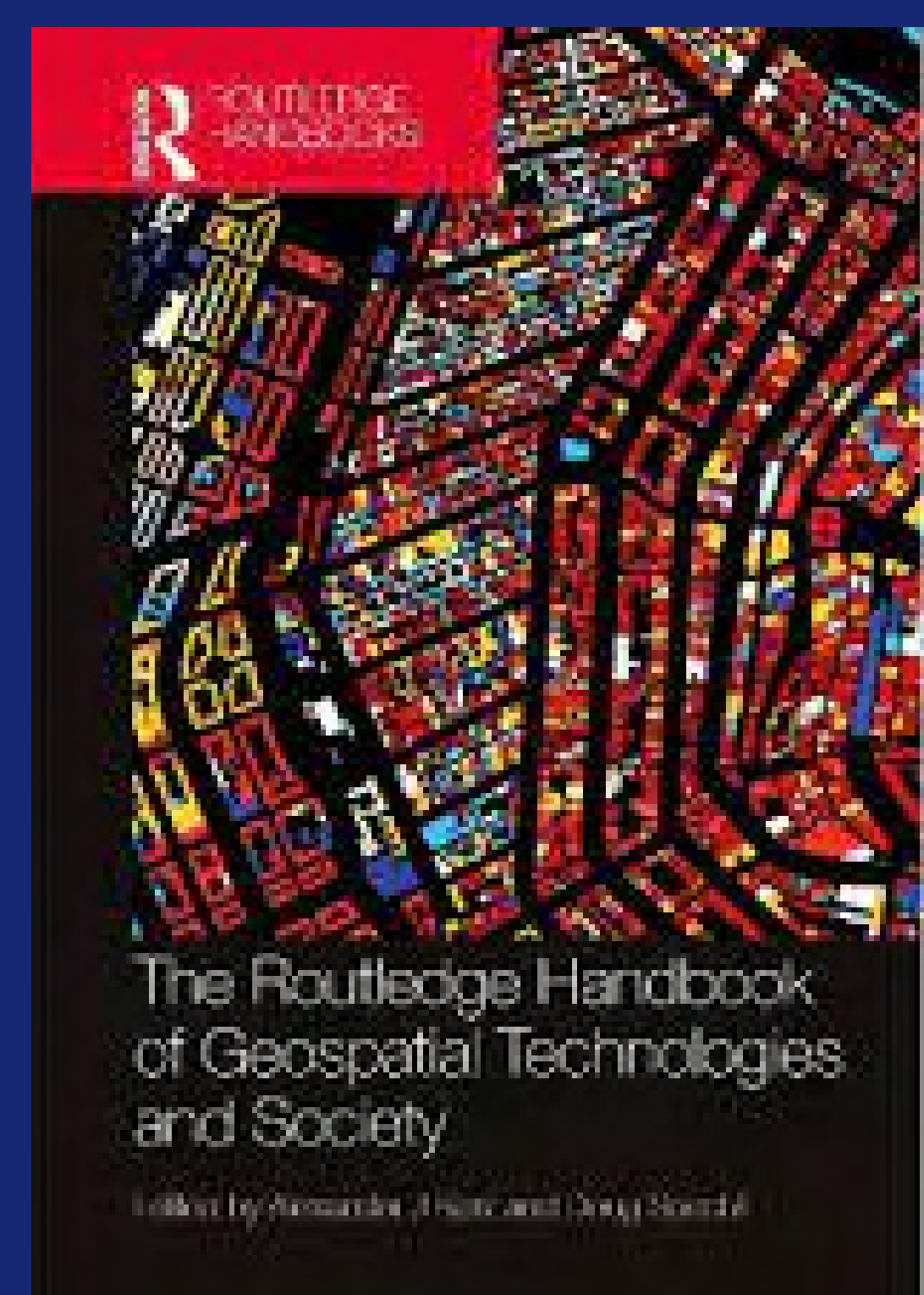
“ India showed the world how UPI could be achieved, and work on a scale of 1.4 billion people.”



Conclusion

To sum up, the new policy has been welcomed by critics even when they acknowledge that there is a long way to go. India showed the world how UPI could be achieved and work on a scale of 1.4 billion they acknowledge that there is a long way to go. India showed the world how UPI could be achieved and work on a scale of 1.4 billion people. Another aspect is that we are vulnerable to natural disasters in many ways, and India's almost all infrastructure, highways, and railroads are old. So, they need to be strengthened for necessary resilience. That's why monitoring and the control of the infrastructure is a big task, and we must best utilize space technologies in this regard. Global warming is quite an urgent subject for us which needs to be addressed so that it ensures the protection of wildlife. ■

Wish to read more?

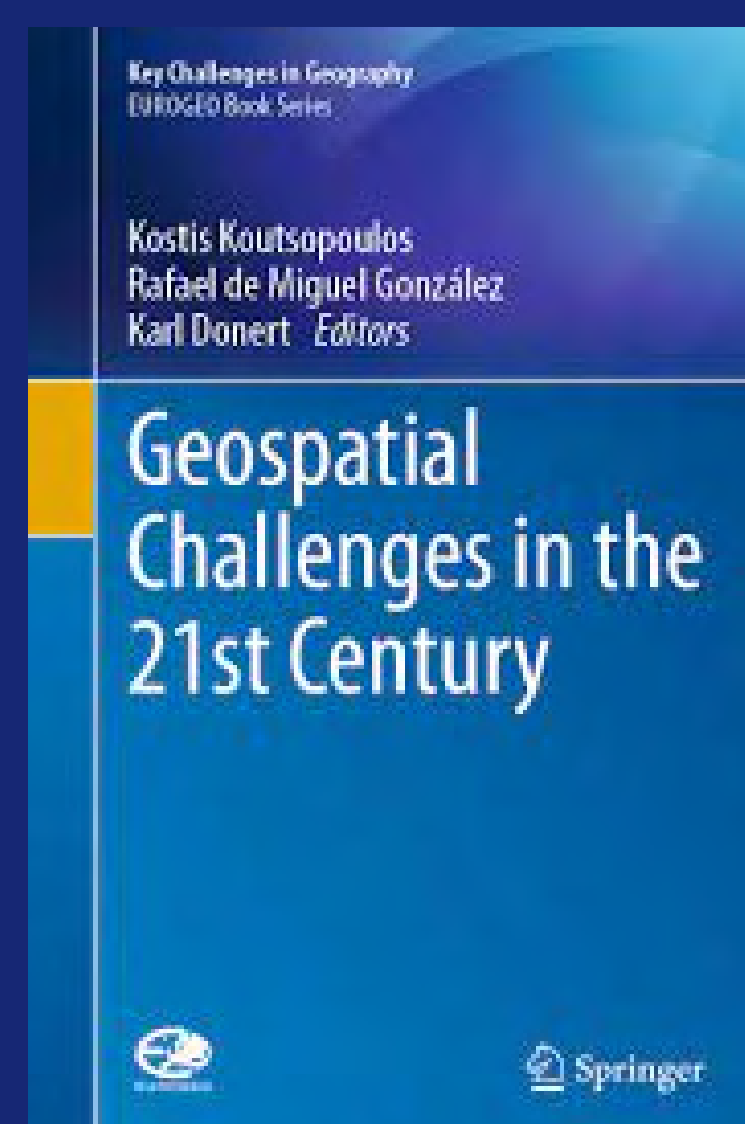


The Routledge Handbook of Geospatial Technologies and Society

Edited by Alexander J. Kent & Dough Specht

Geospatial Challenges in the 21st Century

By Professor Kostis Koutsopoulos, Professor Dr, Rafael de Miguel Gonzalez and Dr. Karl Doner



HISTORY

A photograph of an ancient stone structure, possibly a temple or a well, featuring intricate carvings and a central doorway. The structure is illuminated from the side, highlighting the textures and details of the stone. The background is dark, making the illuminated parts stand out. The word "HISTORY" is overlaid in large, white, serif capital letters at the top left.



Book Review

BLOOD IN THE HILLS:

THE STORY OF KHE SANH, THE MOST SAVAGE FIGHT OF THE VIETNAM WAR

By Souvik Biswas

The genre of Anti War literature has constituted dominant theme post Second World War.

The Vietnam War, also known as the Second Indo-China War, or in Vietnam, the Resistance War against America, came to an end on 30 April 1975 with the Fall of Saigon, capital of South Vietnam. It was a war that raged on in 3 different countries- Vietnam, Laos & Cambodia. The real life experiences and the horrors of the Vietnam war are coherently manifested in the work "Blood In the Hills: The Story of Khe Sanh the Most Savage Fight of the Vietnam War" by Robert Maras and Charles W. Sasser. The book is basically the culmination of his experiences as a relative military greenhorn, and the altered perceptions regarding war, nationality and humanity in general.

The Vietnam War was a world order-defining event which apart from the loss of life brought forth

a number of ideas under global contestation including the ideas of national identity, US Unilateralism under the garb of safeguarding democracies and a greater focus on the arbitrary role of the United Nations and other post colonial states in the continuing conflict between opposing ideologies and super powers. These ideologies are exhibited at the micro level of understanding through common soldiers which, as a realistic understanding of war literature would suggest, serve as impersonal objects and cannon fodder instead of active shareholders.

The book forms a riveting account of Khe Sanh's Hill Fights of 1967- as experienced by co-author Bobby Maras and told in this hour-by-hour, day-by-day account of carnage on the ground, much of it hand-to-hand fighting in the dark. Thanks to the brave Marines of the 9th and 3rd, Khe Sanh survived the first concentrated attack by the North Vietnamese to invade the South. After the Hill Fights,

American forces pulled back and held out against constant enemy shelling and frequent attacks until the siege was broken. Combining Maras' personal experiences with the war's bigger picture, Blood in the Hills honours the heroic actions of soldiers and shows how Khe Sanh was microcosm of the entire Vietnam War.

We might take into account not that trajectory of proper character formulation that forms a segment of conventional reviews of fictional pieces but an actual understanding of prevalent societal conditions and sentiments running rife in a battlefield and accordingly form a holistic understanding of the perceptions of the work.

The book begins in hind sight with the symbolic value and ideational attributes of war visible in "The Wall" at Washington D.C. inscribed with the names of fellow KIA's and MIA's, that had formed a part of

the author's regiment and the role of the position as a tourist attraction, posit of memories with sentimental items to honour and exhibit attachment, from a Harley Davidson with "hero board" to simple teddy bears. The memorial itself looked like the shape of a healing wound and home to the unique ritual of rubbing wherein scribblings of the inscribed names of lost loved ones were reproduced as a memento and memory.

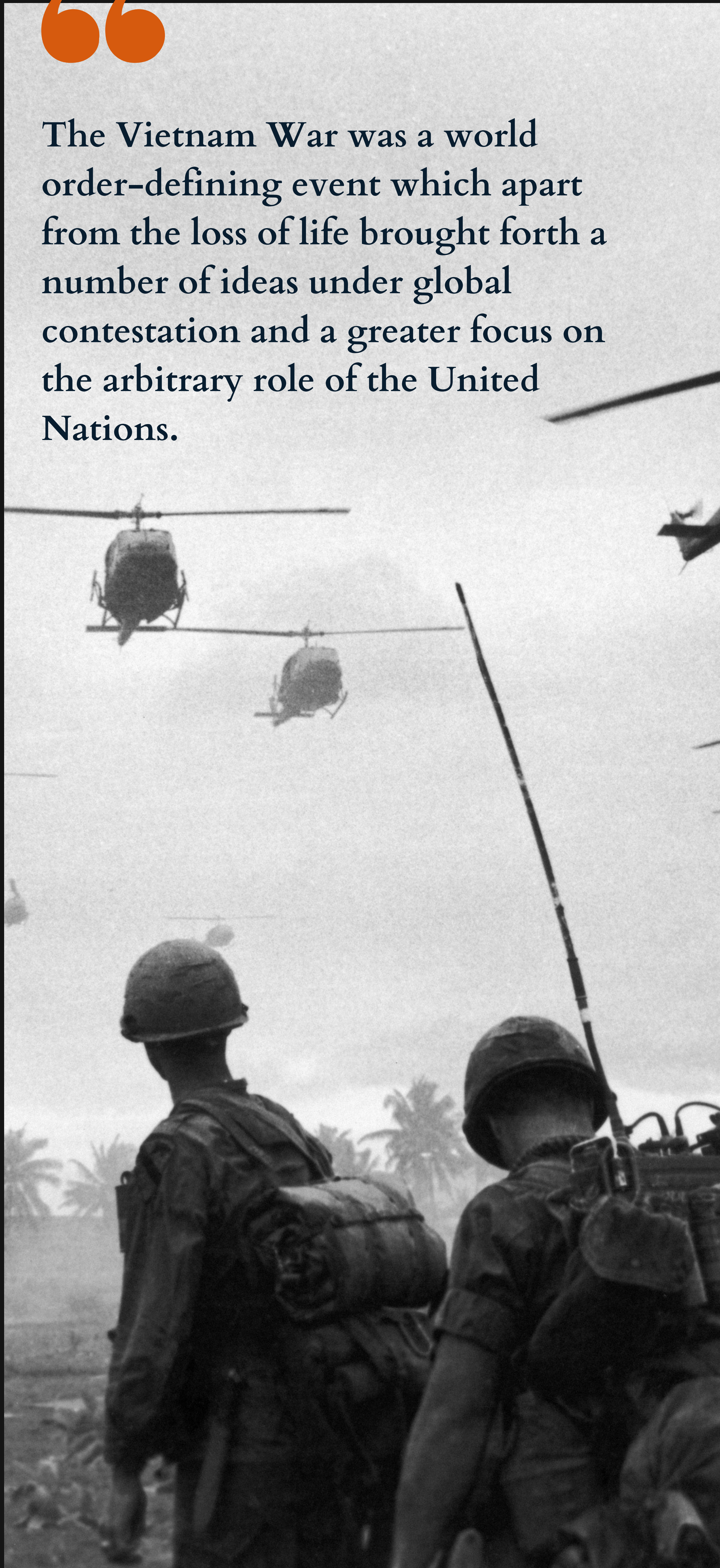
One of the first major themes we encounter is the geo-social conditions prevalent at the time. At the same time there was the raging issue of civil rights but one orchestrated by unique microcosm of social harmony among the marines, evident through a collective identity among a diverse set.

"A short distance away, larger-than-life bronzes of three soldiers in full combat kit prepare to defend. Visitors pause before them. They demonstrate America's diversity in war. One soldier is European American, one African American, and the third Hispanic American. In the Marines, there is only one colour, and that colour is Marine Green."

The second theme depicts the common perceptions of war from



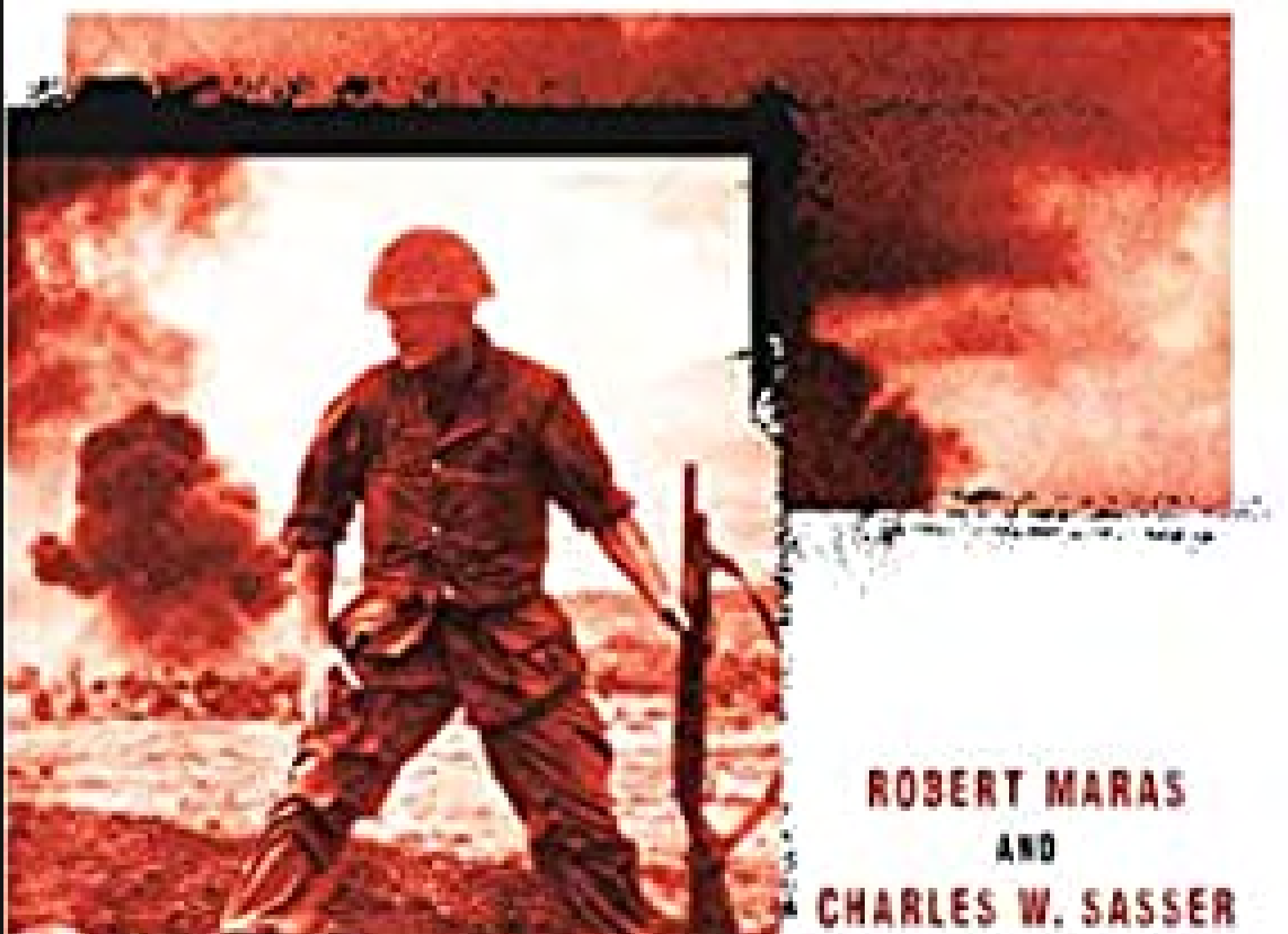
The Vietnam War was a world order-defining event which apart from the loss of life brought forth a number of ideas under global contestation and a greater focus on the arbitrary role of the United Nations.



BLOOD IN THE HILLS

THE STORY OF KHE SANH,

THE MOST SAVAGE FIGHT OF THE VIETNAM WAR



the perspective of a combatant who is subjected not to the propaganda but the situation on-ground, the dilemma finding resonance in the sarcastic approach to the kind of youthful, almost juvenile spirit for adventure he previously had, detached from the reality. His focus before experiencing the horrors of war was on the chivalry of John Wayne movies, and the gallantry of marines in events at San Juan, Okinawa and other such island battles since the Island Hopping of WWII and the Korean War. The author's regiment was engaged as a part of Operation Beacon Star.

"You dug that kind of stuff when you were nineteen and had never been shot at."

"We charged off the armoured boats like 1,300 John Wayne impersonators prepared to combat evil and save the world."

"I was nineteen years old. A few of the other Marines were even younger. Not many though, since you had to be at least eighteen to be sent to Vietnam. So far, before reality set in, everything was a great adventure. We were an impatient lot, champing at the bit:

Hurry up and let us loose in the war. It's going to be over by Christmas when we get there and the enemy sees what we can do."

The author's words also speak of the idea of the United States and the apparent motive behind unilateralism to make the world "safe for democracy". The author expresses about the White Man's burden that is to make the colonised people progressive and at par with the Western civilisation. This might be an indirect sarcastic take by the author.

"We were on our way to make the world safe for democracy. Like Marines had done in the Battle of Belleau Wood in France during World War I, on Tarawa a generation later in World War II, and at Inchon in Korea."

The book presents a vivid account of the Viet Cong policy of the oppression of villagers. The Communists moved from villages to villages torturing the people. The village elders, if they protest, were hung in the village square which to send a potential warning for those who wanted to oppose. The book is quite exemplary in terms of acknowledging the first contact with the poverty stricken third world as against the American capitalist society characterised by wealth and comfort as evident in the elaborate description of mudhouses, a burdened peasantry

and naked children, quite contrary to Western ideals of luxury and self sufficiency.

The third theme shows the pitiable condition of the local people. The people just wanted to live their lives in peace and not succumb to the alluring call of either Marxian oriented land reclamation and redistribution or the western promise of material wealth and democracy. The people emphasised repeatedly on the feeling of being "not wanted" as US soldiers against the initial idea of being welcomed as liberators. The people just wanted to be left alone in their daily life and the western military alike would just not let them be. There was even pitiable condition of existence like shortage of drinking water and supplies. It was a struggle between dependency and hope. The pond became the burial place of three mutilated corpses.

The book also presents an account of the role of the media in the context of conflict reporting, especially in raising general awareness about the role of the American forces. It sheds light on the fact that they were not welcomed, and the huge spectrum of differences that existed in the class based American society wherein the decision making was in the hands of the upper class characterised by President Linden Johnson and the common soldiers just engaging themselves in the war because they have to.

The work symbolises an essential element in view of war psychology, enemy configuration and subjection of hatred to even the extent of dehumanising the enemy to an absolute status that renders them almost non human and, therefore, easy to kill.

The work foresees a culmination of the macabre reality of Khe Sanh retold from the perspective of a disillusioned veteran and the wider divide between the cliched war aims and the basic underpinnings of human personality. Extremely factual and laden with rich accounts of military history yet striking a discordant note with the almost pristine purity of the human soul, a military historian, one probing the horrors of Vietnam war and one who seeks the raw human emotions of resilience and hope can ill-afford to ignore the work in the annals of historical reality. ■



SOCIETY & CULTURE





OF TRAUMA THAT TRAVERSES THROUGH TIME:

Analogizing Toni Morrison's Beloved and Caleb Azumah Nelson's Open Water

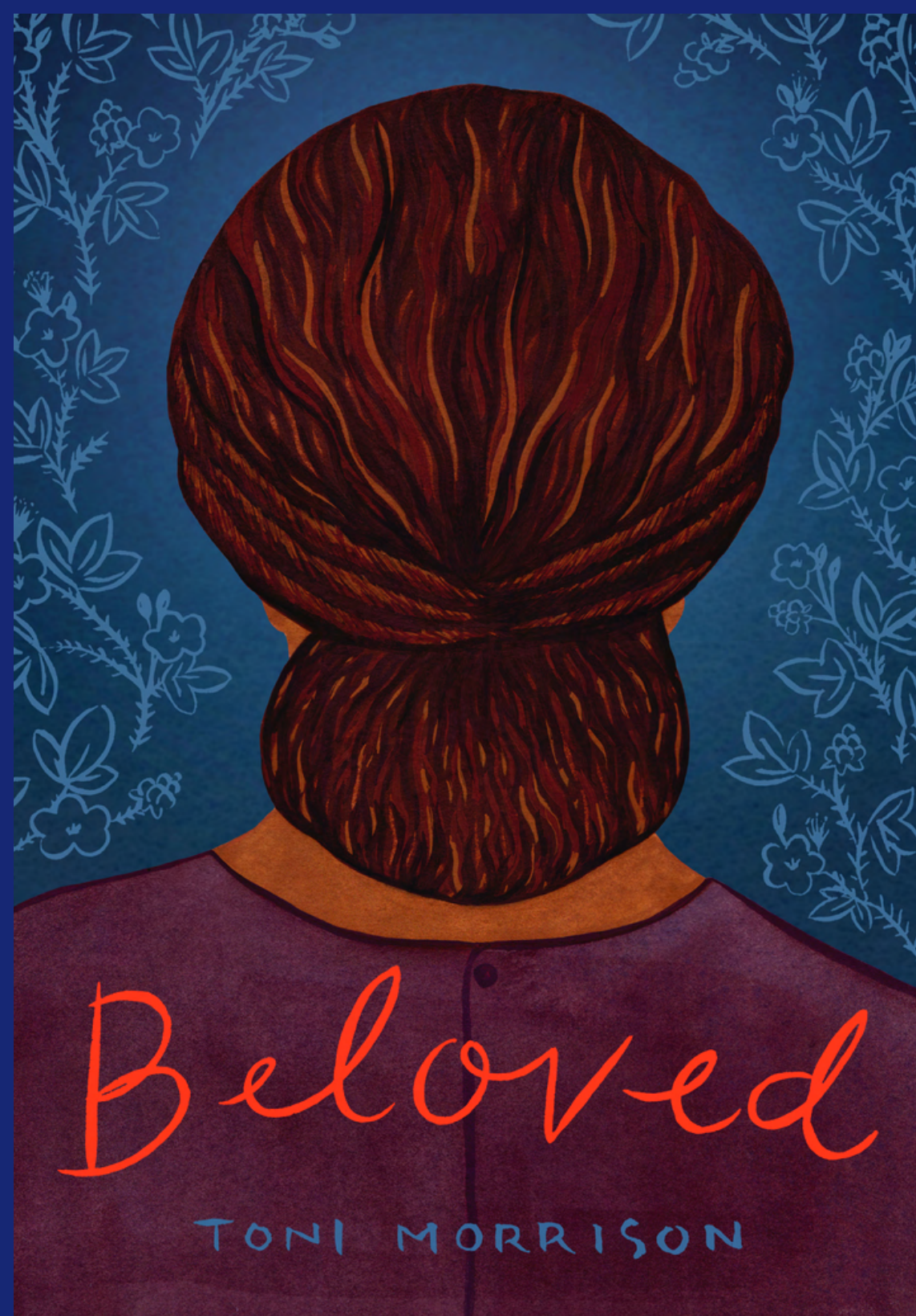
By Vidhi Sharma

"**F**or to be free is not merely to

cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others." - Nelson Mandela

Rendering Black experiences on the paper has never been a venture of ease. So much of transgenerational trauma consumes the lives of African Americans and Black people elsewhere in the world today that language inevitably remains inadequate at all times. However, if there is one author who has exceedingly championed the cause of Black people and exposed to the world the grave encounters that are so terrific to recall let alone talk of, it is undeniably Toni Morrison. Morrison, with an oeuvre that encompasses popular literary works such as *Beloved*, *The Bluest Eye*, *Song of Solomon* and many more, has brought forth a revitalised form of storytelling that finds its backdrop in historically set experiences of Black people's slave past and presents it to the contemporary readers with an objective to "never forget".

Morrison's *Beloved* is a story of a slave plantation worker who kills her own child so as to save her from the bonds of slavery.



While *Beloved* is set in the 1870s at the time of slavery, it was actually published relatively recently in 1987 and is deemed as a historical fiction. It is with respect to this popular novel that we mention a far newer work, that of Caleb Azumah Nelson, a British-Ghanaian writer who came up with his debut novel *Open Water* in 2021. *Open Water* is set in the current world where two young Black British people fall in love, but not without apprehensions and a tinge of violence that their life is so coloured with in this so-called

progressed world that never fails to remind them of the cost of their lives which seems to be so little.

There's more to these two novels than the nature of their characters' history that makes them analogous to each other. Even after their settings being centuries apart, so much of what surrounds the lives of the characters is emotionally alike, if not so much physically. While the plantation owner remains the symbolism of violence in the former, it is the crude violence at the hands of the police that haunts the protagonist in the latter. The depiction of police brutality and a first hand experience of the same by the protagonist of *Open Water* is a current day manifestation of the violence meted out to the slaves by their white owners.

The psychological intent of both of these books extends above and beyond by tapping into the emotional psyche of how certain instances impact the characters and their behaviour. Just like Paul D finds himself emotionally overwhelmed as a result of his grave experiences in *Beloved*, so does the protagonist in *Open Waters*. Both of them are able to find a safe haven with the woman

who is a “friend” of “their mind” and with whom they can be emotionally vulnerable and find respite and a safe space. There are many such thematic confluences between *Beloved* and *Open Water*. For example, when Paul D talks about “loving small” so as to not get hurt “when they broke its back.” Similar words are spoken by the unnamed protagonist of *Open Water* who talks about “living small, lest someone makes you smaller, lest someone break you.”

Grief as an emotion is insurmountable in both the accounts, and comes in tides and waves to all who are touched by it. It follows them throughout their life, on busy streets and empty ones, the latter one also instilling fear in them. The transgenerational trauma that is so felt by the characters in *Open Water* is one brought onto them by the experiences of their people in the time when *Beloved* is set.

Nelson at a juncture in his book also talks about the power structure that the society continues to operate within, one that equates Blackness to savagery and forges a falsehood used to mask the hate uncalled for when he talks about:

“Rendering the Black body as a species body, encouraging a Blackness, which is defined as abject, threatening, servile, dangerous, dependent, irrational and infectious, finding yourself being constrained in a way you did not ask for, in a way which could not possibly contain all that you are, all that you could be, could want to be.”



(Photo: Joe Morse) Image Source: i.pining.com

There’s another instance where Nelson says, “Remember that your body has memory. Scars do not always blemish.” And this is something that can directly be linked to the scars of that of Sethe and Paul D in *Beloved*, which act as cruel reminders of their unruly past in the Sweet Home Plantation. While talking about being permanently wounded, Nelson also talks of how “There was no blood” and that “Death is not always physical.” That death is sometimes also psychological, death of your sense of being, and death of your autonomy over yourself. Such a kind of death was experienced by Sethe in *Beloved* who even as she

came out alive out of Sweet Home, had been rid of her dignity and self when she was harassed and her milk was stolen.

“Being seen” is another facet that both the novels tap into. When Morrison says, “And to be looked at by her, however briefly, kept her grateful for the rest of the time when she was merely the looker” talking about Denver and when Nelson says, “It’s one thing to be looked at, and another to be seen.” Being seen in this way has been shown to be an act that holds a lot of gravitas for these people who have more often than not been left out, out of sight as well as history.

Interestingly, both the novels converge on the idea of how language shall forever stand short in front of all that the Black people have come to endure. It is evident when Nelson says, "Language fails us" that "Language is flimsy" and evident again when Morrison declares how "To render enslavement as a personal experience, language must get out of the way."

Both the novels also touch down on the consciousness of "freedom". Just like how when Baby Suggs is bought out of slavery by her son Halle in *Beloved*, Morrison says,

"And when she stepped foot on free ground she could not believe that Halle knew what she didn't; that Halle, who had never drawn one free breath, knew that there was nothing like it in this world."

Nelson too talks about freedom and its nature when he says,

"You wondered if you're wrong, if freedom isn't as full as you imagine - no, if freedom is not an absolute - no, try again - if freedom is something one could always feel. Or if you are destined to feel it in small mom and there,"

Such a sense of freedom coupled with the ambiguity speaks well of how it works differently based on what's your identity and place in the society.

The technique of free indirect discourse is used to narrate the story in both *Beloved* and *Open Water* by its respective authors. Such is the way in which the narration digs into the consciousness of the characters and presents them in a raw manner. Water is used as a significant metaphor of the existential crisis experienced by the characters in both the novels, who find themselves in a sea of emotions that engulf them from time to time.

In the end of both *Open Water* and *Beloved*, a similar revelation takes place in the minds of the characters. In the former, it is realised through Nelson's words that "you are more than the sum of your traumas", which is something that Paul D tries to make Sethe realise in *Beloved* too, when he tells Sethe "You, your best thing" and says that they need "some kind of tomorrow" after having endured so heavy a yesterday.

The 'claim' to that freedom to life is also something heavily spoken of in *Open Water* as well as *Beloved*. When Morrison talks about *Beloved* and says, "she has claim, but she is not claimed" and when Nelson says, "Rising to the surface, oil swimming in water; you want to lay claim to this life you lead." Both of these make the readers contemplate the kind of agency that is available to certain privileged sections of the society and one kept away from the other discriminated ones.

One thing that perhaps both Nelson and Morrison have tried to bring out to readers is not the

absence of trauma, but the absence of its acknowledgement. It's evident when Morrison talks about the dead child and says how "in the end, they forget her too" because "remembering seemed unwise" and it's evident when Nelson quotes Zadie Smith talking of how "the happy ending is never universal. Someone is always left behind. And in the London I get up in - as it is today - that someone is more often than not a young Black man."



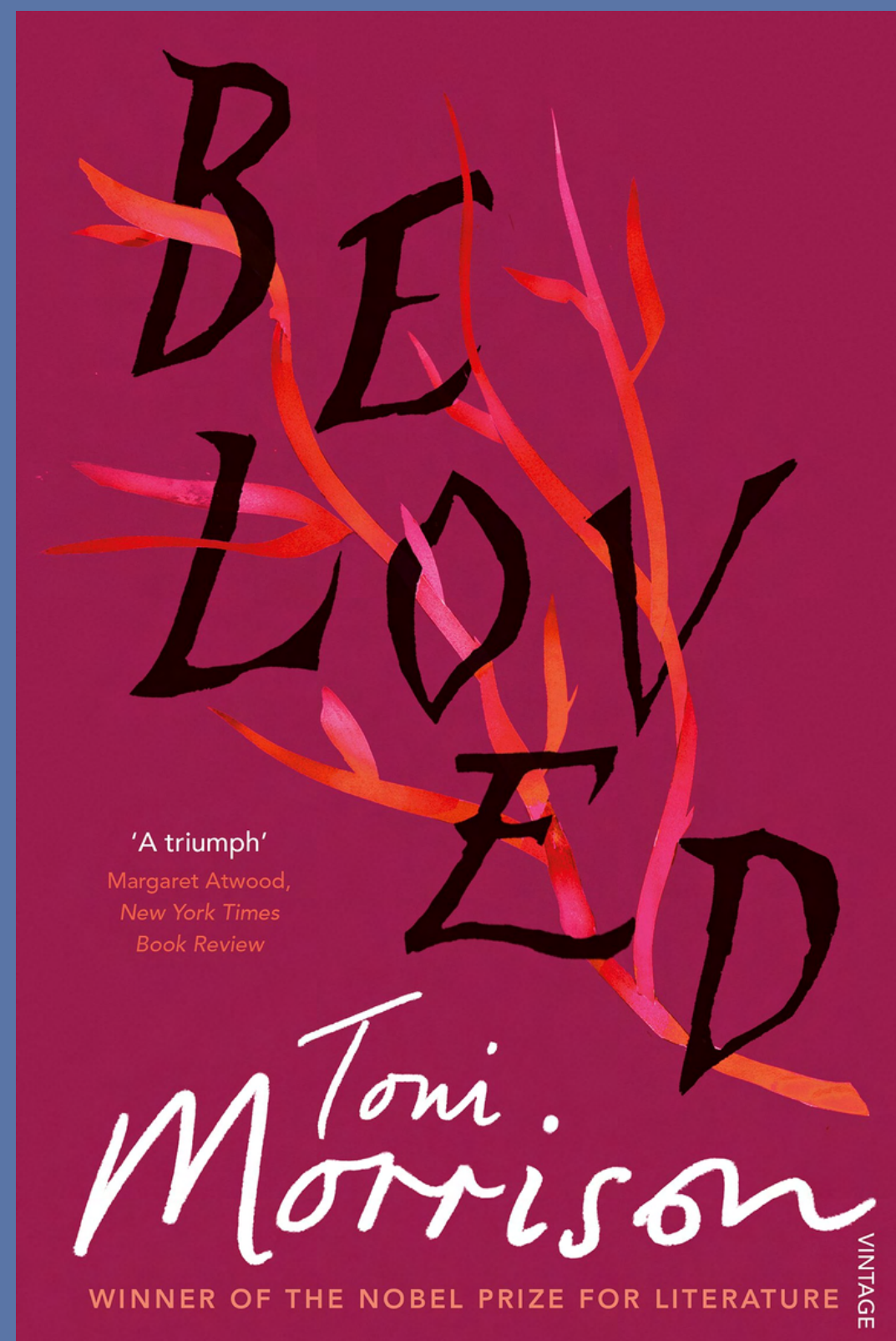
Conclusively, we as readers come to view the confluence of Black experiences from both the 17th century and the 21st by looking at Morrison's *Beloved* and Nelson's *Open Water* in reference to each other. So much progress and yet just at face value. So much seems to have changed and yet it hasn't. . So much of easy remembrance and tough forgetfulness. As Nelson puts it, "You're not without joy, but the pain is much, often.

“ It's important to see that pain, to understand that trauma, and to acknowledge all that it comes with.

The suppressions, the heavy breathing, the racing heart. Slavery may be in the past, but the memory remains, the trauma continues, the fear lingers on. And even as Morrison says "this is not a story to pass on", it is more than crucial that it must. And so it is. ■

ABOUT THE BOOKS

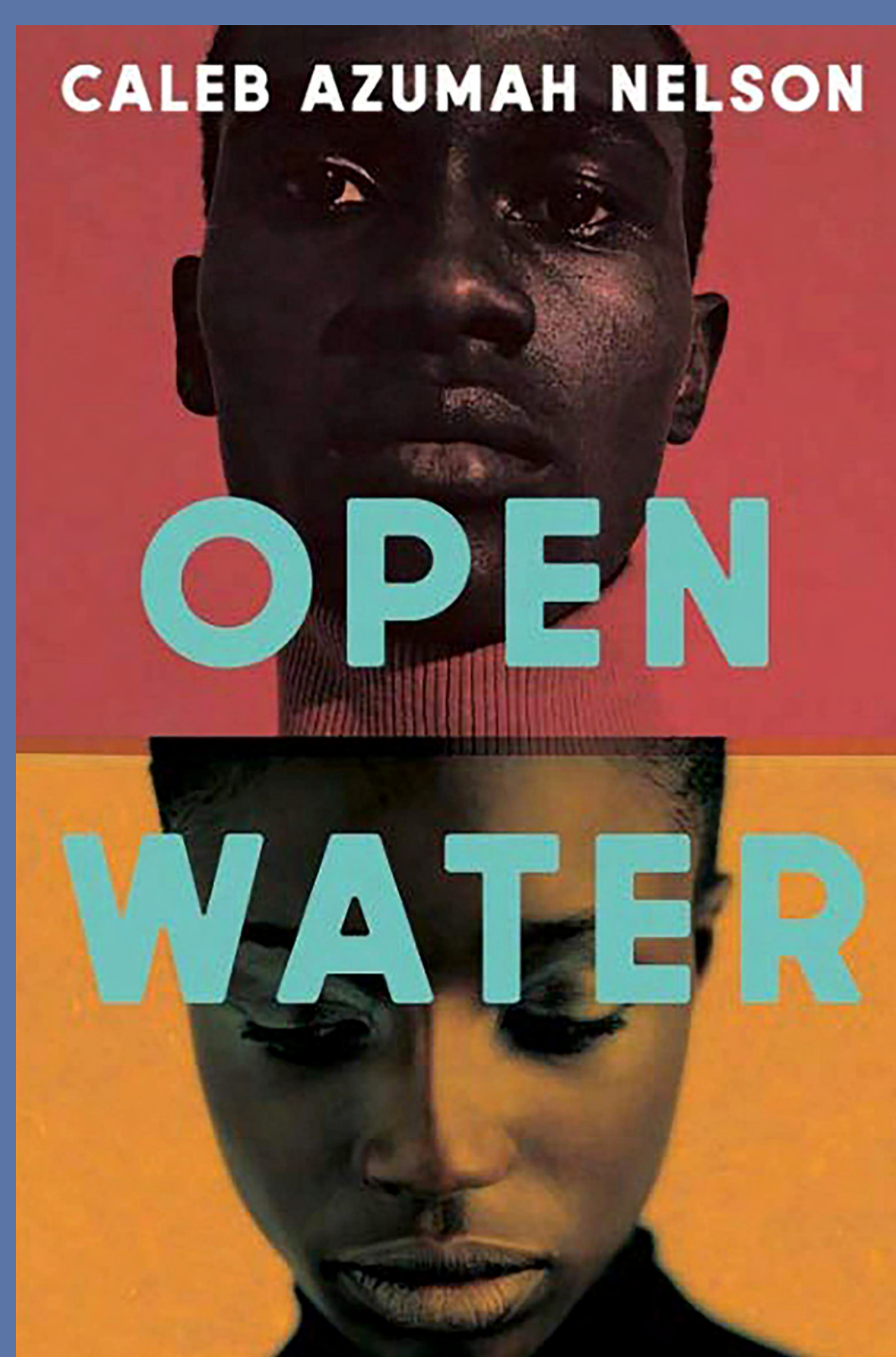
BELOVED



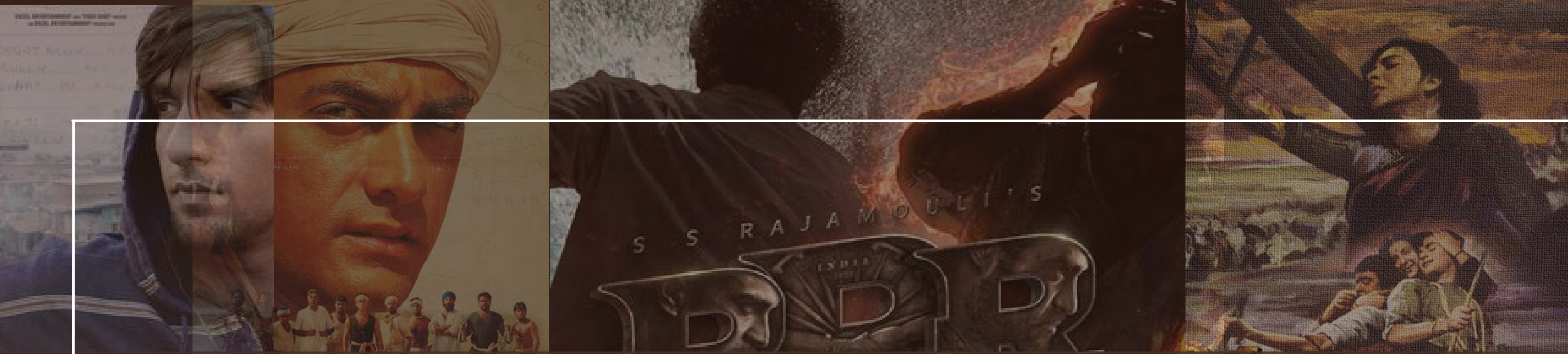
Beloved is a novel by Toni Morrison, published in 1987 and went on to win the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for literature. It is an intense yet beautifully written book that examines the legacy of slavery through the life of a Black woman named Sethe. It is inspired by the life of a Black slave woman, Margaret Garner, who in 1856 escaped from a plantation with her family and sought refuge in Ohio, but their owner soon caught them.

Before their recapture, Margaret killed her young daughter to prevent her return to slavery. In the novel, Sethe lives the life of Margaret. A cinematic adaptation of the book was made in 1998 starring Oprah Winfrey.

OPEN WATER



Caleb Azumah Nelson's debut novel, *Open Waters* is set in 2017-18. Nelson weaves the tale around two young people, a female dancer and a male photographer who fall in love when perhaps they shouldn't. It is an exploration of intimacy and vulnerability between two young artists learning to be soft with each other in a world that hardens against Black people. *Open Water* has its unique rhythm thanks to the author's sensual but carefully timed words, exquisite refrains, and motifs.



THE OSCAR DREAM

By Adarsh Anand

"It's an extraordinary experience for me to be here tonight to receive this magnificent award, certainly the best achievement of my moviemaking career," Satyajit Ray said from his hospital bed in Kolkata, receiving an honorary Oscar at the 64th academy award in 1992. Oscars have been the most prestigious award in the film community since its inception in 1927. As of now, only five Indians have been able to grab this eminent prize, the first one being Bhanu Athaiya in 1983 for best costume design. The movies for which Indians have won Oscars are primarily foreign films based in India and are directed by foreign directors, namely Gandhi and Slumdog Millionaire. This time, the hopes are high as SS Rajamouli's RRR, a Telugu drama set during India's struggle for independence has set its bar high by winning Critics Choice Award for best foreign language film 2023 and the Honorary Satellite Award 2023. Its song 'Naatu Naatu' composed by M M Keeravani and performed by Rahul Sipligunj and Kaala Bhairava, beat out tracks by singers Taylor Swift, Rihanna, Lady Gaga and French music

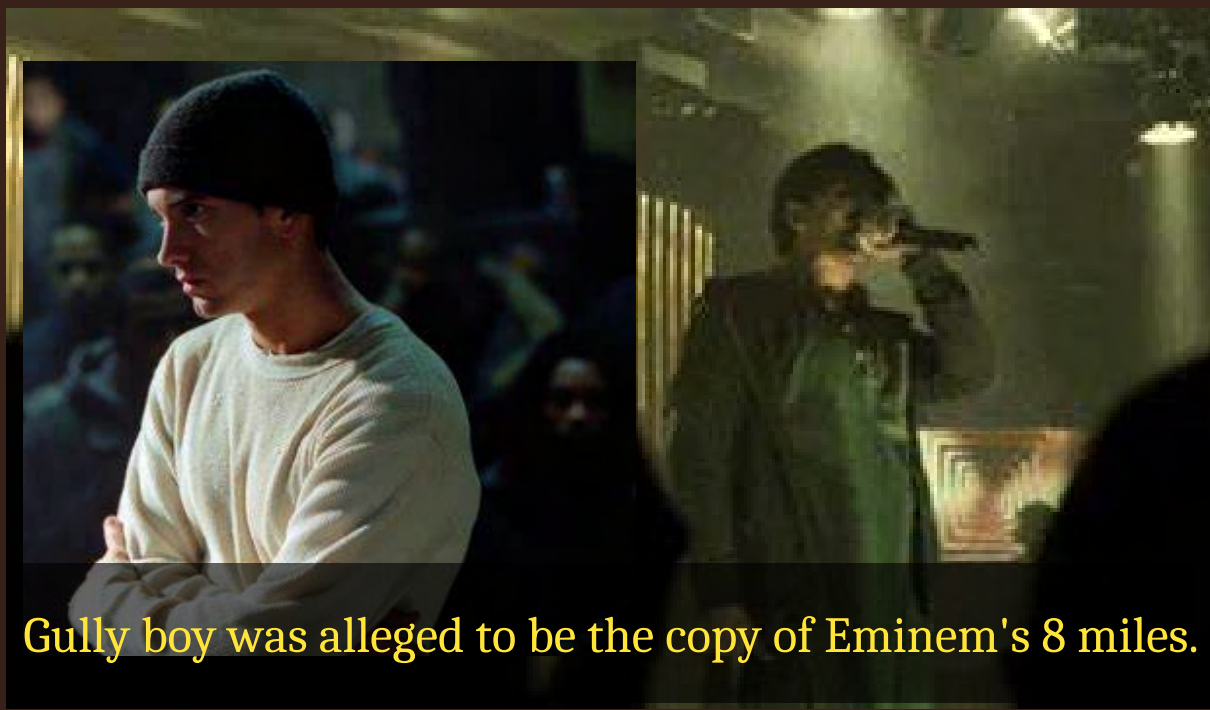
composer Alexandre Desplat to win the Golden Globe awards in the best original song category and became the first Indian song to do so. The song also made it to the Oscars shortlist which was released in December last year by the academy. The shortlist comprised 10 categories in which 4 Indian films have made it to the list this year. These exuberant films are 'All that breathes' in the documentary feature film category, the Tamil film 'The Elephant Whisperers' in the short documentary category, RRR's song 'Naatu Naatu' in the best original song category and Pan Nalin's Gujarati film 'Chhello Show' in the best international feature film category.

The Film Federation of India (FFI) appoints a committee to choose one film among those released that year to be submitted as India's official entry to the academy for a nomination in best international feature film category. The chosen films, along with their English subtitles, are sent to the academy, where they are screened for the jury. Till now only 3 Indian films **Mother India** in 1957, **Salaam Bombay** in 1988 and **Lagaan** in 2002 have made it to the Oscar nominations in this category but sadly none of them won. The FFI has always been surrounded by

controversies as it is permitted to submit only one film in this category. This year the small-scale Gujarati film, Chhello Show, set in a village, edged out major players like RRR. "It was the Indianness of Chhello Show that appealed to the jury. It was a unanimous decision.

The film's idea has universal appeal and is applicable to any child anywhere in the world" said filmmaker TS Nagabharana, who chaired the selection committee for India's official entry to the Oscars in a recent interview. In 2019 when Gully Boy was promoted as India's official entry, it faced the wrath of netizens who alleged the movie to be a copy of the Eminem-starring '8 Mile' while it could not even make it to the shortlists.





There remains a misconception among the general audience regarding Oscar submissions, shortlists and reminder lists. Not all categories at the Oscars have shortlists like the best film category. Nominations for Best Actor, for instance, were directly announced on January 24, 2023. All the entries that meet the criteria of submission are eligible or are up for consideration in these categories and they all comprise the 'Reminder List'. This year RRR, Kantara, Gangubai Kathiawadi, The Kashmir Files, Marathi titles Me Vasant Rao and Tuzhya Sathi Kahi Hi, R Madhavan's Rocketry: The Nambi Effect, Iravin Nizhal (Tamil), and Vikrant Rona (Kannada) feature on the Oscar Reminder List. Etching your name, however, doesn't guarantee an Oscar as the last year list's Tamil films Jai Bhim and Soorarai Pottru return back home suggest. The hype around RRR for Oscar nomination is just immeasurable among pan Indian audiences. It even has its chances at the Oscars for it has been named as one of the year's ten best films by New York's National Board of Review. Earlier this year, the academy released a list of 301 feature films eligible for voting by its members. This list included 6 Indian films from which RRR was a big contender. The director has also been on a promotional tour for the past few weeks, hoping to consolidate votes.

Does this massive rise in power of the South Indian film industry indicate the downfall of Bollywood?

People still remember the golden age of Hindi film industry in the 1940s and 50s where actors like Guru Dutt, Raj Kapoor, Nargis were auspicious figures for audiences. According to the masses, the films of that era used to inspire, educate and mesmerise people with their vintage charm. The audiences in the last 2-3 decades have been disappointed with the quality and structure of movies which Bollywood has presented and critics on social media like Deeksha Sharma and Sucharita Tyagi have acted as a catalyst in arousing the same. The same stories have been put up on the screen with just different packaging and it has continuously been visible that Bollywood has struggled with original ideas. For instance, between 2000 and 2019 one in every three successful Bollywood films has been a remake. Blockbusters like Ghajini, Kabir Singh and Drishyam are almost scene to scene copies of South Indian movies.

Moreover, the 'Boycott Bollywood' trend, which has been taking a toll on the box office in the last few years, has worsened the situation. While a number of factors play a role in this, some of the most imperative ones can be the combination of right wing politics and 'anti-nepotism sentiment'. The death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput in 2020 has further aggravated the situation.

The 3 Khans, considered to be the backbone of this industry, have also suffered a relative lull due to this trend.

The Aamir Khan starrer **Laal Singh Chhadha** and Salman Khan's **Godfather** which released last year failed terribly at the box office. It would be essential, however, to note that the recently released Shah Rukh Khan starrer **Pathaan** defied all the odds and became the widest Hindi release of all time in India and highest grossing first day for a non-holiday release.

The reasons for the unlikely widespread success of Pathaan includes the stardom of the lead casts, the return of SRK after four long years, its widespread release on the global front,



Image source: hollywoodreporter.com

illustrious cameos, its original story and grand entry into the YRF spy universe which the previously mentioned movies lacked. Even the negative publicity around the film has helped it to get boosted. Still, the pattern of decline of Hindi films remains.

On the other hand, as people have restricted going to theatres for Bollywood films, South Indian films have an even greater share now. According to the Confederation of Indian Industry, **62 percent of the overall box office collections in 2021 came from South Indian films.** For instance, the Hindi dubbed version of KGF: Chapter 2 raked in 435 crores as overall box office collections. In the list of highest grossing Indian films globally, most are South Indian films. The quality and production of South Indian movies are evident with their budget, illustrious sets, powerful acting, mesmerising music, an aura of their own and most importantly quality content which Bollywood has failed to deliver in the recent years. Out of the most expensive Indian films of all time, 4 are from

the South Indian industries where RRR is the most expensive Indian film ever with a budget of 550 crores. This shows that the lack of originality, good scripts and continuous remakes have been a reason for the downfall. This is utterly evident as in the last 10 years, only 4 Hindi films have been able to feature in India's official entry to the Oscars for the Best International Feature Film, that too with many controversies.

For being in the Oscar nominations, however, a movie doesn't need to be big budget and illustrious necessarily. The previous Best Picture winners CODA, Parasite, Green Book etc

proof that. All it requires is a heartfelt script, stupendous cinematography and just real pure cinema displaying all the present emotions perfectly.

After looking at most of the aspects now, let us arrive at the most important question 'Are the Oscars really important for India or they're just a platform for validation from the West?' Some experts like the eminent Indian journalist Aarti Takoo even go on to claim it to be a feature of colonial mindset, as the feeling of

being colonized is etched in our minds. The West always seems to be an idol for us and an inferiority complex might always be in the air.

This applies to the Oscars as well. This doesn't, however, mean that we should be disconnected from the rest of the world. Instead, we should foster a greater film appreciation culture and even host international film festivals

for filmmakers around the world to participate.

Another section, on the other hand, believes that awards like the Oscars are an outstanding platform to represent a country's culture at the international front as literally the world watches and appreciates films under them.

The people who are involved in the making get global fame and recognition boosts their career exorbitantly.

Whichever side you find yourself on, it is a really proud moment for all to have scored 3 nominations this year which includes Indian documentary films- **All That Breathes** and **The Elephant Whisperers**. In the best original song category, we have 'Naatu Naatu' from SS Rajamouli's RRR. The FFI's choice 'Chello Show', unfortunately, could not make it to the final nominations list.

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The awards gala will be held on March 12 at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood. ■

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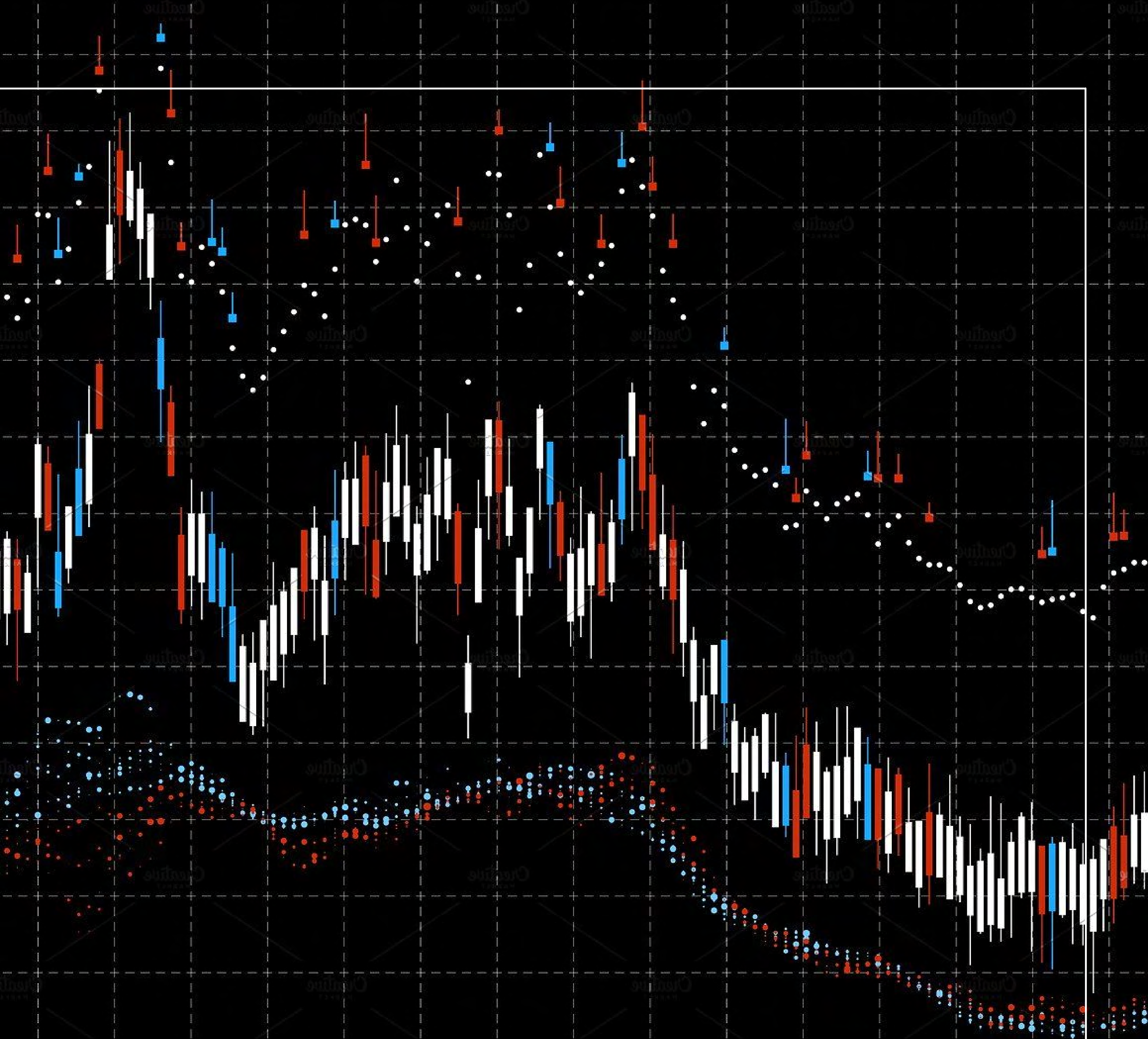




DECODING ENTERTAINMENT:

How Netflix Is Rewriting The Script Of Global Entertainment

By Talha Sarfraz



Gone are the days when tedious and monotonous shows and soap operas used to enjoy the undivided attention of the audiences. As time became more valuable people started preferring stories over the so-called stars and fun content over frivolous, never-ending drama. All of these have triggered the rise of OTT (Over The Top) content and platforms like Netflix, as they tend to meet the entertainment needs of te audience in much better ways.

This article attempts to comment on how Netflix is shaping the entertainment world while exploring the possible threat that the television industry might be grappling with. "TV time means family time," You must have heard this quite some time in your life; at least, that was the idea a few years ago. Television acted as a social glue for some families, it was the center of attention and part of the dinner table conversation. No matter what families used to sit and watch it together. A show

that people couldn't stop talking about or cheering on their favourite sports team all these had a deeper meaning, apart from providing entertainment. In addition to this, it also built on the luxury of quality time with family, catered to everyone's needs from young to old, and helped bring different individuals in the family together and build up solidarity. However, with the rise of OTT platforms and streaming services like Netflix, the very idea of entertainment has undergone a change.

It's now driven by preference and individual choices, as a result of which the course of collective fun has met some kind of disturbance, which interestingly also highlights how our social behaviour is getting more individualised day by day. However, it becomes exhilarating to see how Netflix and other platforms have generously pitched what an alternative could be while trying to fit into the shoes.

The rise and rise of Netflix

Netflix started as a website in 1997 that allowed people to rent DVDs online. Where the DVDs were delivered to the customer by mail and were supposed to be returned similarly. From the beginning, it competed with the networks and cable for people's entertainment time. However, the tables turned as the internet became popular and widespread, it captured the entertainment grounds and Netflix came out with its streaming services, and it hasn't looked back since then. For the first time, customers could watch a TV show or movie on a computer, TV screen, tablet, phone, or gaming appliance, and this was a turning point for the content industry as from here it embarked on a journey that witnessed no recession.

The production of its original content further exacerbated the problem for TV networks and video rental businesses. It began producing its own shows in 2013 at a time when people were tired and looking for fresh content. Over the years, it has plausibly managed to create its own loyal fan base that enjoyed its shows and series which were not only new in their approach but were also driven by the flavours of redefined entertainment values. It went back

to the drawing board to iron out the flaws in the commercial setup before launching its brand-new **binge-watching** concept. Thus, binge-watching trends combined with original content pulled the wonder strings of the entertainment industry. It has been a key source of its success and appreciation of its commercial brand value that hauled and haunted the business of the cable industry.

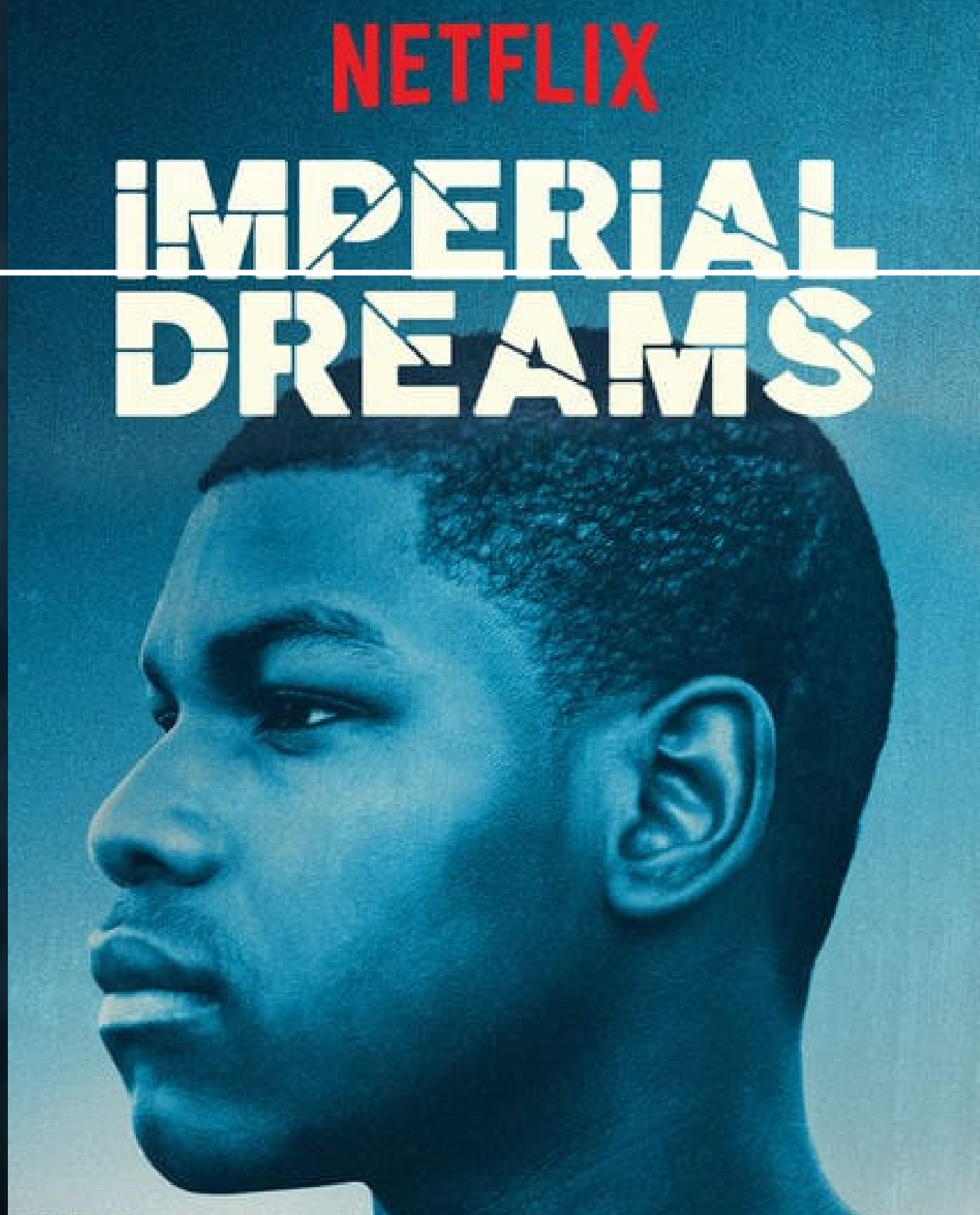
Television: The Second Screen?

With the ever-evolving and rapidly changing world our tastes and the type of content we consume have also undergone a change, this stands true for entertainment services as well. The television is already the **second screen** now, there's an explosion of content around us, and somewhere down the line, Netflix has managed to encapsulate it. With its varied range and dynamic content, it has brought a revolution in the content industry and disturbed the cable model by allowing people to consume content in ways they prefer, at any time, anywhere, and on any appliance. All of these features help it stand out from the TV and make inroads into the consumer market. It has taken the top spot and is likely to grow more with the birth of binge-watching. Television, on the other hand, has struggled in the past few decades to retain its viewers, and more and more people have switched to platforms like Netflix to enjoy the best available entertainment and infotainment sources.

With the rise of OTT platforms, it is anticipated that the future of the entertainment industry rests with such platforms. Because it is no longer free of competition, there is



there is a strong possibility that an increasing number of companies and businesses will take a leap of faith and try their luck as they enter this market. As these firms gauge the pulse of the audience the commercialization of the content world is expected to rise, making it more difficult for TV corporations to make a comeback unless they choose to reimagine the idea of entertainment at an affordable rate with some innovation so that it can fill up the void in the market for a certain section of people.



What is the way out?

Netflix has reshaped the market for content and transformed its business in the process. **It is rewriting the script of global entertainment, and its impact on the same is undeniable. It has a humongous customer base of around 214 million paying subscribers and is likely to grow more. The market technique and methods**

employed by the firm have resulted in its grand success; however, it is significant to note that it came at the expense of the upheaval of the TV model. For example:

"According to the Outlook, total global consumer spending on traditional television and home video has fallen for the past two years, and will decline for each of the next five — at a modest 0.66 percent CAGR."

Then, what is the way out for cable corporations? Companies need to

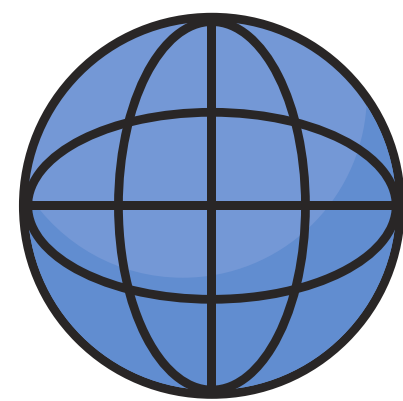
think outside the box and act on it. Perhaps, going back to square one and improvising their market strategies with respect to different pockets of the world can help them ameliorate their business. Embracing what is to come across all areas of operations is the strategic imperative for major national television networks and production companies. For instance, Jonathan Thompson, CEO of Digital UK, believes, "National TV networks need to radically reconsider their breadth of content, relationships with audiences, and partnerships."

Keeping this in mind that there's absolutely no point in playing second fiddle to streaming services, may act as an impetus to take forward their vested economic interests and help them establish a more sustainable business model. To sum up everything that has been started so far, Netflix has emerged as a potential threat to the long-preferred and admired television industry, and as Darwin's idea of survival of the fittest rubs on, we know which tech giant is likely to outgrow others in this fierce competition until and unless the cable industry adheres to some transformative reforms that could help them regrow their status quo network and viewership. The cable industry is left with no recourse except that it attempts to match the pace of this fast-growing industry and come up with some innovative ideas to settle on a kind of arrangement that makes people revisit the idea of entertainment not only commercially, but also as a means of renewing connections. ■

Number of Pages- 62

Published on 10 March 2023

Circulated on 10 March 2023



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Published by Caucus - The Probe February 2023