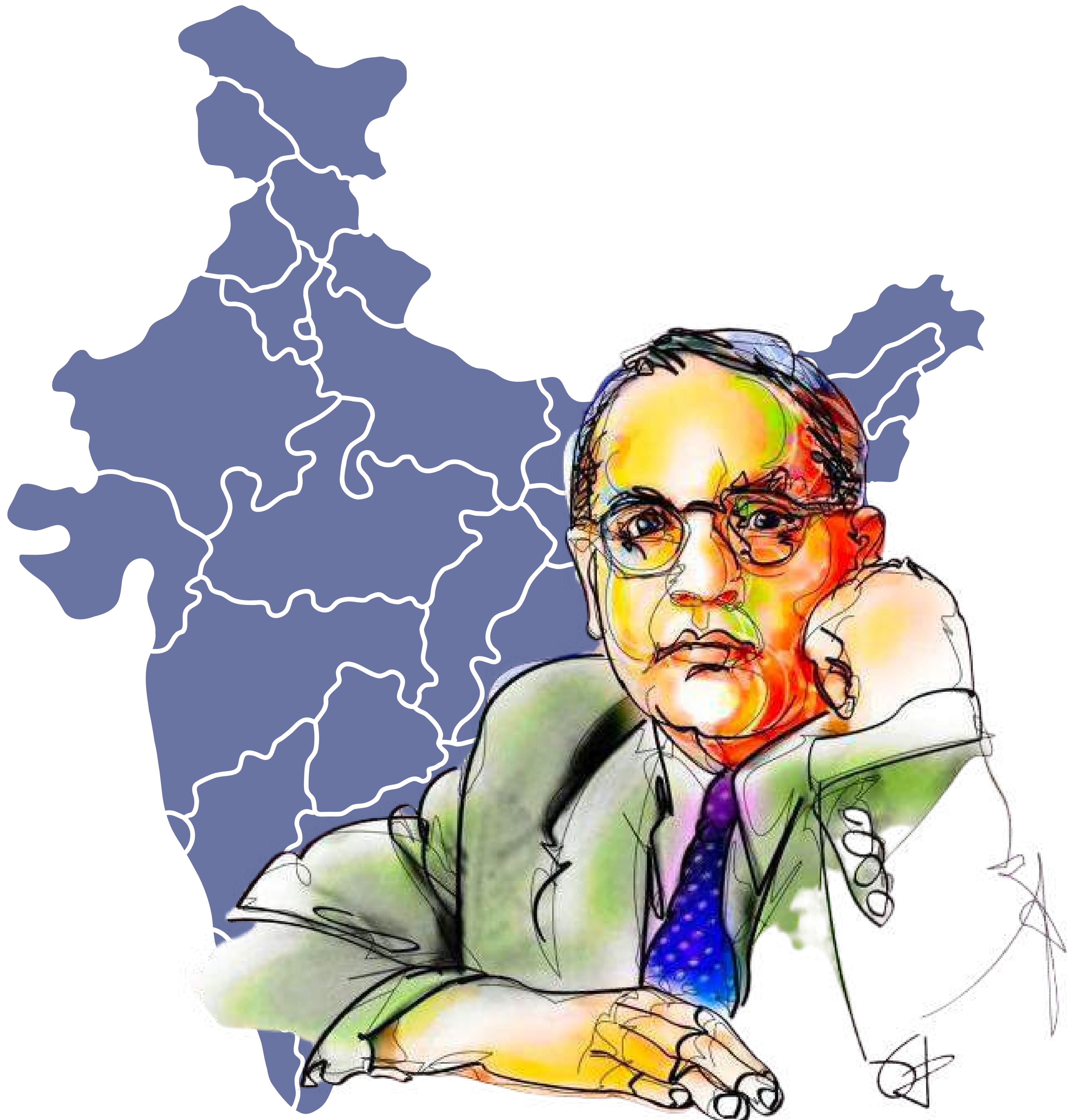


THE PROBE



THE INDIAN REPUBLIC THROUGH AMBEDKARITE LENS

In Conversation with
Mrs. Sagarika Ghose

Cover Story:
The Indian Republic through
Ambedkarite Lens

Deconstructing
Addictions

FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dear readers,

Started in November 2020, The Probe is a relic of a time in the not so distant past when students became their own teachers as “normal” education was interrupted seemingly indefinitely. Compass, the annual speaker conclave, was another such creation birthed by the necessity to bring the youth closer to powerhouses of the world when the gulf was wider than ever, making the Compass issue of The Probe a culmination of the progress for the academic year. Each year, akin to the sowing of paddy, we start with a team of young editors and designers in the month of November. The crop blossoms in April and is ready for harvest as this special issue.

We are delighted to present the special issue of The Probe for our flagship event Compass 2023. This issue celebrates seventy-four years of the Indian republic in the cover story as envisaged by its chief architect, Dr B. R. Ambedkar. The deconstruction demystifies the sensitive subject of addiction as it affects an individual on a personal level. Traversing a range of themes and topics, we also talk about issues ranging from nationalism and secession to morality and political thought. Touching upon some relevant and dynamic issues, it discusses the discovery of lithium reserves in India and the present state of the world economy.

The interview of this issue is with the renowned journalist Sagarika Ghose, who traces the trajectory of Indian journalism before and after liberalisation. The interview of this issue is

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with the renowned journalist **Sagarika Ghose**, who traces the trajectory of Indian journalism before and after liberalisation. Sharing instances from her career, Mrs Ghose speaks candidly about the current state of affairs and what the future may hold for the world of Indian journalism.

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

We greatly value your feedback. Please share your views with us on our social media or mail us at theprobe20@gmail.com.

THE PROBE

Shreya Shukla
Editor-in-chief

Siddhant Sinha
Chief Associate Editor

Shreya Mahajan
Head of Design

Gaurvi Saluja
Managing Editor

Kumar Rajneekant
Managing Editor

Shreeya Prasoon
Senior Editor

Arpit Rituraj
Senior Editor

Kenisha
Designer

Abhay Pratap Singh
Designer

Namasya Verma
Designer

Brahmadathan A
Designer



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Writers and Designers

Send us your
CV/Design Sample(s) at
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CV/Design Sample(s) at

theprobe20@gmail.com

Srishti Maurya
Designer

Nikita
Designer

Nishtha Sharma
Designer

Muskan
Designer

Dakshata Chaudhary
Designer

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CONTRIBUTORS

COVER STORY

Shreya Shukla is a third year student of B.A. Programme at Hindu College, University of Delhi.

COVER STORY

Gaurvi Saluja is a second year student of Sociology from Hindu College, University of Delhi.

COVER STORY

Siddhant Sinha is a second year student of Sociology from Hindu College, University of Delhi.

DECONSTRUCTION

Shreya Mahajan is a second year student of Philosophy at Hindu College, University of Delhi.

INTERVIEW

Nitin Vrihaspati is a second year student of Political Science at Hindu College, University of Delhi.

ARTICLE

Milind Shekhar Singh is a second year student of Political Science from Hindu College, University of Delhi.

ARTICLE

Harendra Singh is a student at Maharashtra National Law University.

ARTICLE

Aditya Tomar is a second year student of Hindi from Hindu College, University of Delhi.

ARTICLE

Pradyumna Rout is a first year student of Physics from Hindu College, University of Delhi.

ARTICLE

Arpit Rituraj is a second year student of B.A. Programme from Hindu College, University of Delhi.

ARTICLE

Divyam is a second year student of Economics from Hindu College, University of Delhi.

INTERVIEW

Shreeya Prasoon is a second year student of Economics at Hindu College, University of Delhi.

TRANSCRIPT

Rajnish Shah is a first year student of B.Com from Hindu College, University of Delhi.

TRANSCRIPT

Souvik Biswas is a third year student of History from Hindu College, University of Delhi.

TRANSCRIPT

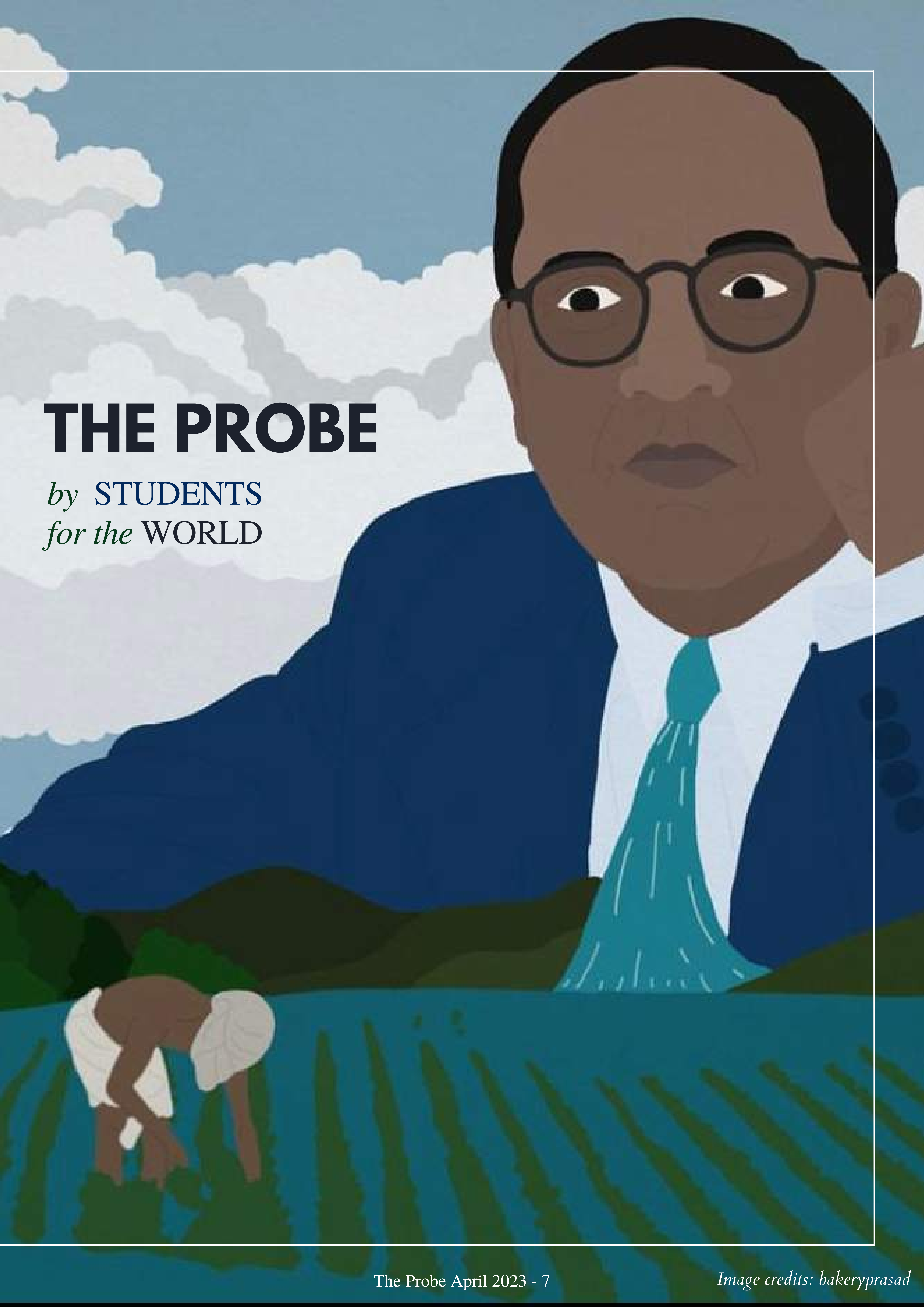
Pushkar Pandey is a first year student of History from Hindu College, University of Delhi.

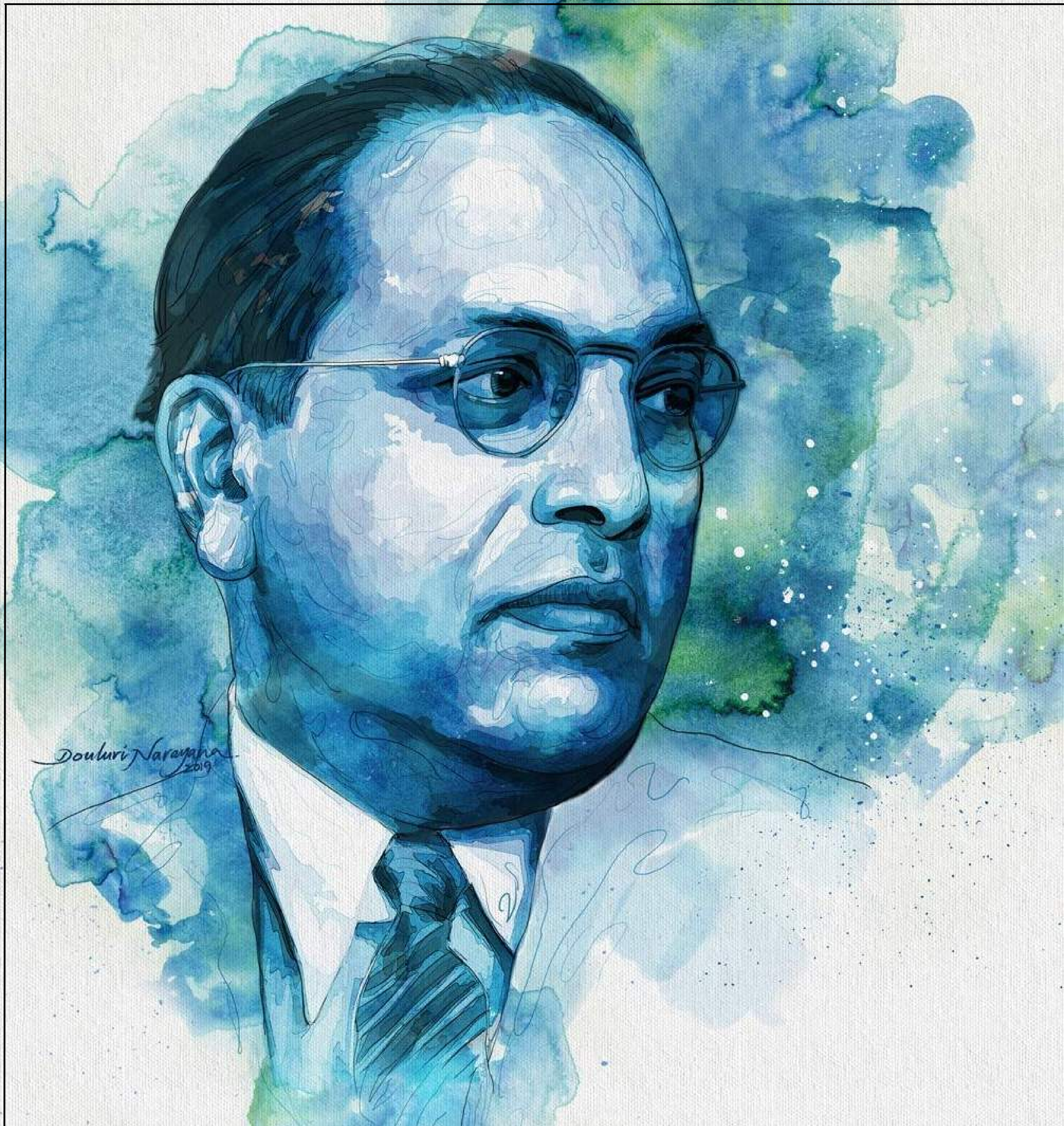
ARTICLE

Daanyal Zaidi is a second year Undergraduate student of Political science at Sri Aurobindo College, University of Delhi.

THE PROBE

by STUDENTS
for the WORLD





THE INDIAN REPUBLIC THROUGH AMBEDKARITE LENS

By Shreya Shukla, Siddhant Sinha & Gaurvi Saluja

*“The battle to me is a matter of joy.
The battle is in the fullest sense
spiritual.*

*There is nothing material or social
in it.*

*For our is a battle not for wealth or
power.*

*It is a battle for freedom. It is the
battle of reclamation of human
personality”*

-Dr. B.R.Ambedkar.

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar or Babasaheb, the chief architect of the Indian constitution, a jurist, economist, politician and social reformer is a father figure to some and revered by many. There are varieties of people who claim themselves as an Amedkarite, some are bhakts, some are emotional followers, and some worship him as a God. Today, it is through his writings and speeches, that we try to understand his thoughts which make Ambedkar synonymous with revolution and revolutions can, and often have, begun with his readings. Moreover, it is through these pages that he has emerged as a **constructive social reformer** and **legal philosopher** who in the originality of his analysis and profundity of his convictions and conceptions compels comparison with the best minds of the East and the West who continues to shape our thinking.

In Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, we not only have a crusader against the caste system, a valiant fighter for the cause of the downtrodden in India but also, an elder statesman and national leader whose contribution in the form of the Constitution of India will be cherished forever by posterity. This article will attempt to trace India's political trajectory through Ambedkarite philosophy.

It is in his magnum opus, The Annihilation of Caste, that he drew upon his own experiences as a Dalit and attempted to depict his understanding of an ideal society as a society based on liberty, equality and fraternity which should be mobile enough for conveying a change taking place in one part to other parts. He further incorporated these values in the Constitution of free India which is a living tribute to his **juristic genius and social conscience** that over the years, the High Courts and the Supreme Court have shaped the law to serve the social ends of governmental efforts for the marginalised. His perception of nationalism began with an effort to promote the **welfare of the marginal section of society and** described nationality as “consciousness of kind, awareness of the existence of that tie of kinship”, as that would enable people to come close to each other and develop a sense of fraternity. Throughout his life, he worked in diagnosing the ills of caste society and to liberate the Dalits from the social, political and economic alienation, subjugation and discrimination they become victims of. Placing high hopes in the liberating potential of democratic institutions and republican values. Though he held that democratic values themselves couldn't lead to the formation of an equal society as “Indians today are governed by two different ideologies.” The constitution affirms them equality before the law, however, their deeply embedded social identity still seeks solace in religion and denies it. Thus, radical reforms in Hindu society and the annihilation of caste are essential to move towards an equal society and until then

Dalits will remain 'citizens in the making'. He viewed law as a necessary tool to establish a rational social order where an individual's enhancement might coexist peacefully with the advancement of society.

Swabhiman before Abhiman

The intersectional nature of the Indian polity and society is epitomised in its dealing with the critical question of inclusivity with regard to both the state and the nation. This is apparent in the fact that Indian nationalism and liberal democracy, emerging as a response to colonialism, is differentially attractive to social groups (Guru 2011). Often cited as the distinct marker of South Asia, caste is central to the understanding of the nature of the Indian nation-state. Ambedkar embodied the Dalit aspiration of self-esteem and self-respect. The Dalit response to nationalism is of Swabhiman (self-respect) before Abhiman (pride) of the nation (Khairmode 2002).

As Babasaheb noted, “Democracy is only a top-dressing on an Indian soil which is essentially undemocratic”. As he emphasised, legal and constitutional equality won't suffice for real emancipation. He remarked, “...however good a Constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it, happen to be a bad lot”. Inclusivity and equality in Indian polity can only arise from the social realm and social democracy becomes paramount for the Ambedkarite vantage point. The Constituent Assembly found it tough how to deal with the question of caste too. Unlike religion, where the goal was to accommodate various faiths, caste had to, as Ambedkar notes, be

annihilated.

The Paradox of Caste

The Constituent Assembly, thus, was embroiled in a paradox. Following the ethos of liberalism and individual agency, recognition of caste groups would be an antithesis, with the threat of consolidating caste identity instead of annihilating it. Yet, Indian society was (and still is) distinctly marked on caste lines. Ignoring caste won't, in any sense, allow social democracy to flourish. The Indian state and bureaucracy is representative of the conflicting views on the same question. As scholar Gopal Guru emphasises, unlike Weberian understanding of modern bureaucracy and state as secular and rational, the Indian bureaucracy is intrinsically embedded in its social order. Scholars like Beteille believe that public institutions in India are empty of casteism, and it's the presence of large number of lower-caste groups that is the source of the institutional crisis. The empirical understanding on the part of Dalits differ though. Information about the caste identity of a Dalit officer travels faster than his transfer papers (Tulsiram 2010).

The conundrum around caste in Indian polity is further visible in another domain. The attachment to caste identity has developed differently among caste groups. As Satish Deshpande notes, while caste has essentially become invisible to the urban upper castes, for the marginalised ones, it has become all the more important. Indeed, for the lower castes, identity has become a monolith attached to caste. The Nehruvian secular development

model which vouched for an individualist merit-based social order had some lacunas which need to be discussed here. As the upper castes held the dominant position in society in terms of education, wealth and power, the individualist nature of the state sector wasn't that merit-oriented after all. With generations of privilege, they were able to take advantage of the expansion of the benefits of the Indian republic to the point that they do not need their caste identity now after 3 generations (Deshpande 2003). Thus, as a group which has grown on the back of state expansion, they now stand for increased liberalisation and less governmental influence, precisely because they do not need it anymore. The Dalit experience, on the other hand, has been quite the opposite. While it is true that Dalits have made several tangible achievements in postcolonial India, the large swathe remains devoid of the fruits of the Indian republic. Even the Dalit members of parliament have remained mostly silent and raised their voices only to the level permissible by the paternal liberalism (Gawarguru 1986).

Babasaheb believed in the emancipation of the individual. It was reflected by his conversion to Buddhism in addition to his great work '**The Buddha and his Dhamma**'. He, thus, argued that reservations must be "confined to a minority of seats". Any proposal with this regard needs to be seen with the Ambedkarite lens then. The imperative question to be asked is whether the individual could be emancipated and hold individual agency. The Indian republic, however, has moved on a different trajectory. As scholar Sudipta Kaviraj notes, we have moved **from a framework that recognized equality beyond caste to one where equality-based claims are made through caste**. The teleology of the state action was to move beyond caste. However, the empirical experience has been different, with the clubbing together of groups with varying histories of discrimination and indifference to the rationales for different treatment making the aspirations of the Constitution go adrift.

Ambedkar had a clear and uncompromising vision for India's future, which he articulated in his



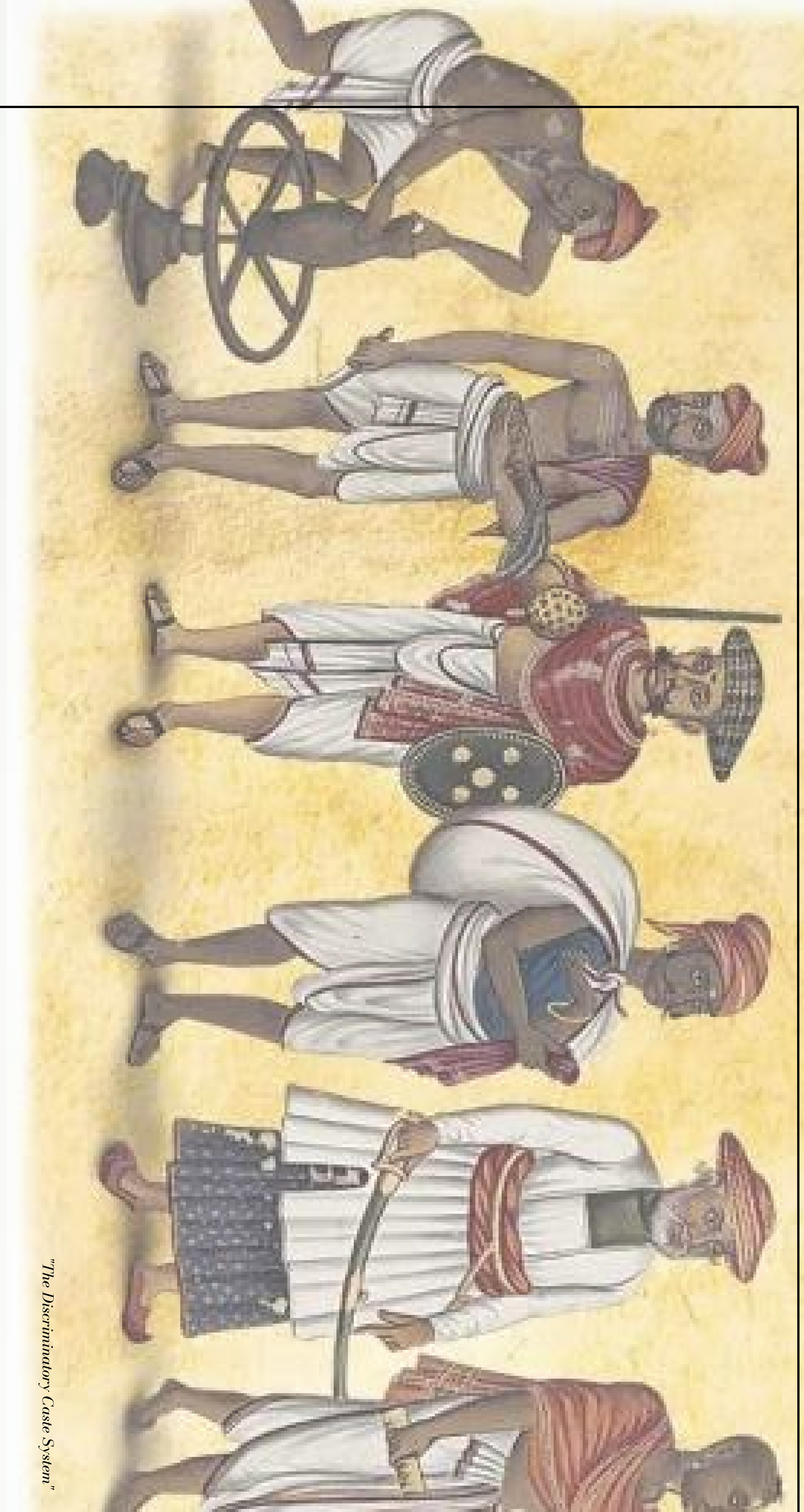
The Buddha

speeches and writings. His vision was shaped by his commitment to social justice, equality and the elimination of caste-based discrimination.

Being deeply influenced by the women's suffrage movement while attending Columbia University, he drew inspiration from the feminist works of authors such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Olive Schreiner and Virginia Woolf. He also witnessed first-hand the struggle of women in the United States for the right to vote. He argued that the women's oppression in the West was similar to that of Dalit's in India.

Ambedkar's contributions to the Indian republic beyond caste is often ignored, but he has been a source of many ensuing fights for justice. His role was especially instrumental in coming up with the Hindu Code Bill in early 1950s. While it is true that the bill did not result in absolute emancipation of the Hindu woman, it would be unfair to expect a single law to do so too. It did, however, lay ground for further work. From equal rights in property, to expansion of right to divorce and promotion of intercaste marriages, the bill had many notable features for the burgeoning of women's rights in India.

He considered the caste system to be the biggest obstacle to India's growth and development. He saw caste as a system of social stratification that prevented social mobility and perpetuated inequality. Thus, it was imperative to weed out caste-based, both in letter and spirit, if India aspires to become a true democratic nation. Ambedkar's vision for India's future is also a reflection of his internationalism. He believed that



India had a role to play in promoting social justice and equality globally. He argued that India should take the lead in the fight against colonialism and imperialism and should strive to promote international peace and cooperation.

Tyranny of the Majority

Ambedkar proposed a social democracy to address these problems by giving all citizens equal opportunities and rights, regardless of caste or social standing. He thought that an

effective democracy may help in removing barriers between various castes and promote social justice. Ambedkar argued that democracy should defend the rights of minorities against the rule of majority. He saw that democracy, if left unchecked, could soon devolve into mob rule, in which the majority forces its will on the minority through coercion or force. Ambedkar stated in his magnum opus, "Annihilation of Caste," that "the real tyranny of democracy is not what the majority does to the minority, but what the majority does to itself."

Caste in Contemporary India

Ambedkar asserted that the caste system denied fundamental human rights and dignity to millions of Indians, especially those who belonged to the Dalit community, as it was a form of social hierarchy that was based on birth rather than merit or achievement. Ambedkar's own lived experience as a Dalit who faced discrimination and exclusion was the prelude to his struggle against this oppressive system.

Caste-based discrimination and exclusion still exist in India today despite constitutional and legal protections for equality. Over 45,000 incidents of crimes against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were registered in India in 2019, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. These crimes range from physical assault to social exclusion, and economic discrimination. The caste system continues to manifest in different spheres of Indian life, including

politics, work, and education.

Ambedkar believed that access to quality education opens a gateway to social and economic mobility that had been gatekept for hundreds of years by the structures of caste-based discrimination and exclusion. This mobility is crucial for the empowerment of the Dalits and other marginalised groups of society. However, many Dalits still struggle to get access to school, especially those who live in rural areas. Only 15% of Dalit households in rural areas, compared to 38% of non-Dalit households, have a member who has completed secondary education, according to the India Human Development Survey.

Another area where caste-based discrimination still exists is the workplace. Due to its highly stratified labour market along caste lines, Dalits and other marginalised groups of society often find themselves relegated to low-paying and menial professions in India. The National Sample Survey Office reports that the unemployment rate for Dalits was nearly twice as high as the overall rate in 2017–18. In the private sector, where there is a lack of diversity in high management positions, caste-based discrimination in employment persists.

Despite the fact that the Indian Constitution promises political representation for Dalits and other socially and economically disadvantaged groups, dominant castes nevertheless hold the majority of political power.

Only 22% of the candidates fielded

by the major political parties in the 2019 general elections were Dalits or members of other socially and economically marginalised groups, according to a report by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies.

This underrepresentation of Dalits and other marginalised groups in politics eclipses the realisation of social justice and democracy in India.

Ambedkarite movements and organisations have become a potent force for social and political transformation in modern India in response to the aforementioned challenges. These movements and organisations work to encourage better access to opportunities for all citizens, regardless of caste or social background, and to fight the systems of caste-based discrimination and exclusion.

Ambedkar emphasised the need to have an ethical moral approach over legal to the Dalit question (Ambedkar 2005). He believed that ethics as a normative resource creates much more harmony in society than the legal recourse. It would, therefore, create stable social conditions required for effectively dealing with annihilation of caste.

Ambedkar's staunch advocacy of the values of democracy, social justice, and equality is just as important today as they were back in his day. Millions of Indians still live under the shadow of the caste system, which highlights the need for continual attempts to combat and end caste-based exclusion and discrimination for good. ■



“...however good a Constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it, happen to be a bad lot.”

-Dr. Ambedkar

DECONSTRUCTION: ADDICTIONS

By Shreya Mahajan



When one talks about addictions, we shall be mindful not to take the word lightly. Addictions aren't a choice or a self-conscious decision. It is a series of patterned behaviours usually associated with a sense of dependence on a substance for feelings of gratification and joy.

Addiction, as defined in psychology, is a state of psychological and physical dependence on the use of certain substances. They have the power to influence the course of an individual's life, mostly for the worse.

Levine, the first scholar to successfully discover the concept of addiction in 1978, viewed it as a social construct more than a psychological loss of control or free will. He argued how these constructions were shaped and influenced by historical, cultural and even political circumstances. He defined addictions as a central problem in drug use and outlined it as disease-like. Those holding strong views around the nature of alcohol believed that the only way to cure an alcohol addiction was complete abstinence. However, such ideas came to be seen as dogmatic in the late 1970's. The idea that drugs are addictive was first applied to alcohol consumption and only then was it extended to other substances.

While addictions are often seen in light of such substances, this deconstruction follows a more philosophically and emotionally driven approach. Rather than focusing on the substance, we shall focus on the emotions it induces. It

goes unsaid that one consumes said substances for pleasure and to seek that momentary happiness. What often goes unnoticed is the initial state of mind that drives the person to act in such a manner. Reiterating the fact that addictions are not a self-conscious choice, it is important to acknowledge that the actor often doesn't realise the path they're headed into until it's too late.

Are drugs and alcohol the only thing you can get addicted to? A simple answer is no. Time and again we see people building emotional dependence upon their loved ones, friends and peers. Without conscious realisation of this dependence, this craving for their presence turns into an emotional addiction to that person. Emotional addictions are arguably the worst kind of addictions one can have. It often poses a risk for anxious attachment styles, uncontrollable insecurities and a sense of helplessness when separated from that person. Simply put, an addictive relationship is one in which the individual becomes dependent on the other person for their emotional and physical needs. This type of relationship can often lead to feelings of guilt and shame, as well as a sense of discomfort in their absence.

While some people are more prone to such relationship dynamics, emotional addiction to another individual is something that can happen to anyone. In such a scenario, it becomes beyond imperative for us to acknowledge and understand the concept of such addictions, to decode and to critically demystify any and all misconceptions associated with it.

Individuals who suffer from mental health issues such as anxiety or depression are more likely to develop such an unhealthy attachment to someone else. Individuals may use the relationship as a form of self-medication to such an extent that they find themselves unable to cope without their partner. Given the complexity and severity of this, one may question how we can identify such behaviour patterns and, in turn, avoid or improve them. Addictive relationships follow a similar track as drug use. The relationship offers happiness, comfort and support, but at the same time, possesses the capacity to annihilate an individual emotionally if and when such support is withdrawn. The individual often finds themselves in a state of denial followed by a state of confusion for most people find it hard to even acknowledge that such relationship dynamics are possible. Under the veil of emotional presence and support, a relationship could foster an unhealthy dependence and reliance for gratification.

In such cases of addictions, the individual often relies on the approval of that "someone" and makes it the basis for their self-image and self-confidence. When this happens, it seems close to impossible for the individual to think that there is a way out or that things could get better. But it goes unsaid that time is indeed the greatest healer. With time and ability and willingness to become very self aware, one can overcome such addictive behaviour patterns.

One of the most frequently used self-defence mechanisms in such scenarios is rationalisation,

wherein the person attempts to assign logical reasoning to unconscious and instinctive behaviours. The first step towards recovering from addictive relations is to stop rationalising one's unhealthy emotional attachment. It's important to distance yourself from the situation to get a broader, more open-minded understanding of what one is going through. This is accompanied by asking questions, uncomfortable yet essential ones, that can help you develop a better idea. Questions such as "Does this feel the same as it has many other times?", "Am I still repeating a pattern?" and so on. Addictions, while enigmatic, are often associated with patterned behaviours and thus, can be

identified by signs that indicate circularity and repetition.

Addictions aren't easy to deal with and shall be treated with utmost vigilance and sincerity. One must be assured that while things appear difficult at the moment, with time, they get better. With a conscious effort to improve oneself and continuous motivation, one can rid themselves of addictive attachment styles and experience healthy relationships. The lesson is to be mindful, self-aware and true to one's own self. So long as someone does their level best to practise this, they shall see a positive change in their life on an individual as well as a social level.■

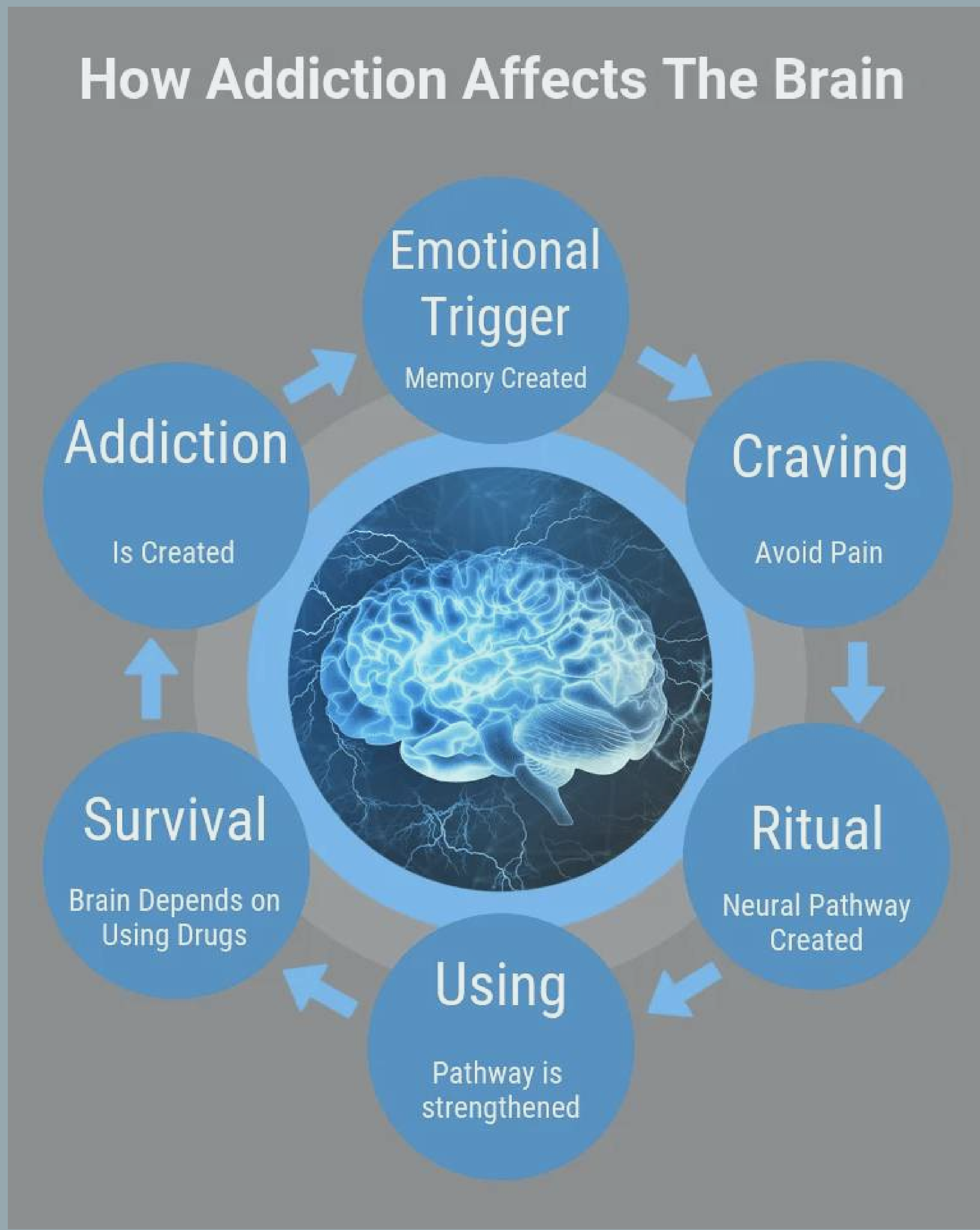
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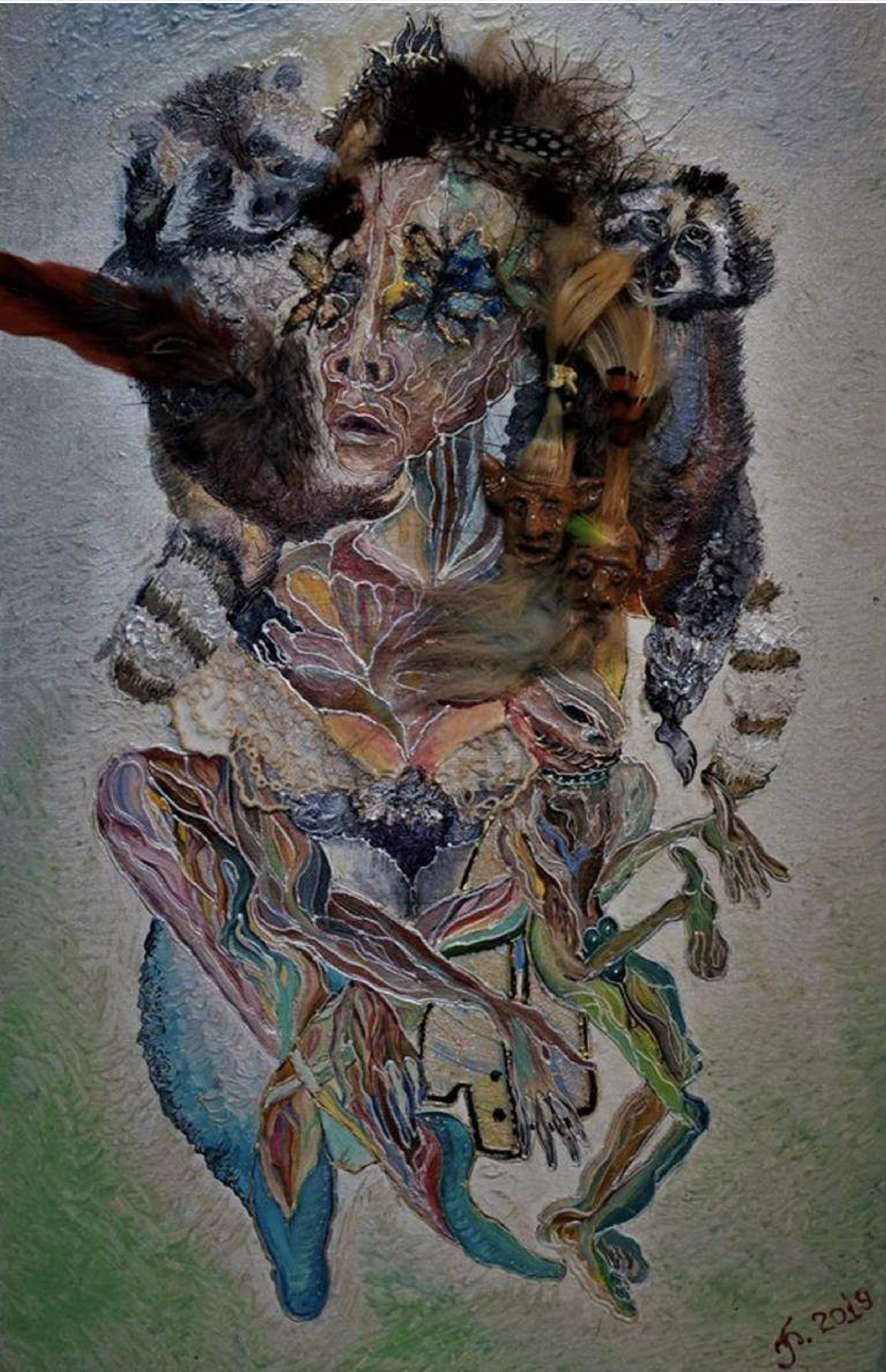
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CHANGING PERSPECTIVE IN INDIAN JOURNALISM

With Mrs. Sagarika Ghose

Interviewed by Gaurvi, Siddhant, Shreeya & Nitin

Siddhant- You have been in this field for the last three decades and are a highly experienced personality to discuss this topic with. You must be aware of its dynamics, how it is internally structured and what its lacunae are. As the theme for this interaction is Changing perspectives in Indian Journalism, we would be really fortunate if you can give us a brief description of the trajectory of Indian journalism, particularly in the last thirty to forty years and what, according to you, have been the major points of inflection.

Sagarika Ghose- Sure. You know, in the past India has justifiably prided itself on a free press.

We have had more or less a free press for several decades after independence. There was a practice of senior editors and senior journalists becoming advisors and even taking up Raja Sabha seminars we saw Kuldeep Nayar was advisor to Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. George Verghese, a veteran journalist, was also an advisor; H.K. Dua became press advisor to Vajpayee. So, there was an ongoing syndrome by which senior journalists took up

positions in government or became advisors to politicians. I think that was a slightly unhealthy kind of a syndrome, because we're paying the price for that.

Of course, the big inflection point in the free press, as you know, was the emergency of 1975 when around 263 journalists were literally jailed, and they were jailed. So the journalists were in the middle of summer in a jail house made up of tin roof and they were literally sort of baking inside.

Today, we have very frankly an undeclared emergency, the press is facing a crisis. And it's a crisis in many ways of its own making.

There are the three C's of crisis that I talk about- the crisis of compromising, the crisis of commercialism and the crisis of co-option journalism. Journalists have co-opted into the power structure. They have been led down by their pursuit of commerce, and have compromised on the ideas of the free press. So while we have had a free press and a vigorous press that has exposed a lot of corruption over the years. In the Bofors scam, the cement scandal there have been many investigative journalists in India who have done terrific work. But while that has happened, the press has also been complicit in its own downfall in a way.



The Probe team with Mrs. Ghose

I think today we're looking at a situation which is LK Advani, once said of journalists in the emergency that you were asked to bend and you crawled. Today journalists are being asked to bend, crawl or lie prostrate. TV media, I believe, is doomed. Because I think the business model of television is frankly broken. You cannot have free journalism, which is reliant on advertising. See, the minute you are reliant on advertising as your source of financial support for journalism, you can't be free because you will always be answerable to the advertiser. Now, who is the advertiser? The advertiser is the big corporate house, the government, and various vested interests. So the issue facing TV media in India is that the business model is broken, the business model is shattered.

And therefore, I believe for the television media, those days are over. Print media is a little more isolated and insulated from these pressures, because print is older and more established. But it is also amenable to pressures.

You know, in India, we are a fragile democracy, our institutions are fragile, we have not had many years of democracy, we've been a democracy for 70 years only, that's actually very little. And our institutions are unable to push back against a highly powerful executive, when there is a very powerful executive or an overwhelmingly powerful mandate, whether it's of any party, whether it was the Indira Gandhi years, or the Rajiv Gandhi years, or what we have today, institutions, democratic institutions are not able to stand up.

They say that, in the 1930s, the enemy of democracy was communism, in the 1940s, the enemy of democracy was fascism.

Today, the enemy of democracy is democracy,

because you have leaders who are coming out of the democratic system, elected to power but are turning their backs on what makes democracy democracy. It's the institutions, the norms, rules and procedures of institutional functioning, that hold up what we call the sovereignty of the people and a country democratic. So, it is the functioning legislature, the judiciary, the press, the cabinet system and the parliamentary system, all of them together in a balance that hold up or safeguard the sovereignty of the citizens and the sovereignty of the people, because the people are supposed to rule in a democracy. But if the institutions don't work, then the people can't rule, because then the institutions are taken over by the executive. Now, today, the executive is running roughshod over various institutions, judiciary, Parliament, governance system, and equally over the press.

So, the press is very vulnerable. Because I don't know if any of you have seen a movie called 'The Post', where Katherine Graham, the proprietor of the Washington Post, backs her reporters in an expose, now you see, the proprietor has to stand up, because the proprietor ultimately owns the outlet.

If the proprietor does not stand up to the government, or to the executive, then the journalist who's employed in the organisation has no chance. Today, we who are working in, say, Delhi, who are the mainstream media, we're really safer. I mean, think of the stringers in the small towns and the local journalists who are working in terrifying circumstances exposing mafias, local corruption, what protection do they have? What protection does the journalist have?



We just have our pens, and keyboard, we are not armed. "

We are not capable of protecting ourselves against the state or against vested interests, we rely on the institutional protection of the media and the press. Now, if that institutional protection is taken away from us, then we are completely vulnerable, we have nowhere to go. And the realisation has not dawned on the political executive, that we are mandated to ask questions.

Journalists have to ask questions. That's our job. That's our trade. It's not as if we're asking questions, because we don't like you or we have a personal issue with you.

We're just asking questions, because that's our job. But politicians today will not tolerate questions. They will not tolerate open questions. It's sad to say that we have a prime minister today, who has not taken a single open press conference. And I think this is a tragedy in a democracy that a prime minister does not take a press conference. So, I think that today, India's free press, which for many decades was free, but shot through with compromise because the old journalists also compromised with the power structure. Today, we're in a situation where the press is in a crisis. The earlier example of this was the emergency today we're facing a crisis whereby there is tremendous executive pressure on every arm of the press.

Gaurvi- You have extensive experience in the world of television media and have worked with multiple organisations. Yet, you do not associate with them anymore. What were the reasons behind this drift and divide between you and TV journalism? Moreover, what views do you have about the industry?

Sagarika Ghose- I was part of a channel, CNN Ibn I was an anchor person over there. And that channel, you may know this, was taken over by the Reliance group. And it became clear that there was a certain kind of line that was expected. And as a journalist, you know, it's about any line, I'm not here to propagate the cause of any politician, I don't care which politician it is, no politician is worth my loyalty.



My loyalty is to the truth and my loyalty is to the pen."

You know, the journalist is the perpetual outsider, we are the cockroach in the room. I mean, the difficulty is journalists themselves got co-opted into the system and began to think that the cockroach in the room should become a butterfly, you know, should become a celebrity, you should buzz around important people, whereas we're not that we're always the ugly gorilla, who nobody wants to meet. That's our role. But, the politicians need to be accountable, need to answer our questions and face our questions, not because we're on a personal campaign, but because we function as the eyes and ears of the citizens.

Today, if we don't ask the questions, if we don't bring out the information, how will the citizens know anything? How will the citizens know what's going on? So, it is our duty to be transmitters of information, ideas and tell the citizens what is going on in the government, which they pay for. It's the taxpayer, which is paying for the entire regime that rules over us and has the right to know.

And this right to know is served by the journalist is served by the media, that is our institutional function. If we are not able to perform this institutional function, if politicians are not able to come on the show, or come on TV, and openly answer our questions, they have a duty to do that, if they're not going to do that. How can you do journalism? What are you going to remember, news is something that nobody likes, everything else is public relations. So, we can't give out factual reports unless we get them straight from the horse's mouth and politicians have a duty to talk to us and be truthful about their actions and what they're doing in government. We as a citizen have a right to know what's happening on the China border. Nobody knows. It's all shrouded in mystery.

So, information is power and information is a right and so that information is what we provide, and that is no longer being provided. So which is why I left in 2014, because I simply wasn't able to do the kind of journalism I wanted to do.

Nitin- So now from this, we can deduce that at least to a certain extent, that institutional journalism is in crisis and there are certain parties which are trying to control the narrative. So ma'am, as a journalist who has stood up for the free press and for the rights of the journalist. What is your outlook of a non partisan media or non partisan journalism? And what is the pressing need for investigative journalism in today's context?

Sagarika Ghose- There is a pressing need for investigative journalism, but the issue is which outlet is going to carry it. If the BBC can be raided by the income tax, then the others can also be raided by the income tax. If outlets can be shut down and taken over, then, what does an individual journalist do? I mean, these are very, very powerful. You see, no citizen can stand up to the state, the state is armed with a monopoly of weaponry. It has the instruments of state power.

So, if instruments of state power are going to be deployed against the media, it will be impossible for the media to stand up to the instruments of state. But I think there is hope. Because there are a lot of digital outlets that are now doing a lot of quality journalism. I think we also have to look beyond the boundaries of India and look internationally. There are international outlets that are interested in India and are doing a lot of investigative stories on India. So, I think today's journalists have to be platform agnostic.

If you want to be a journalist today, you have to transcend platforms. In our time, you were either a print journalist or a television journalist. Today, you have to write the story and broadcast it, it can be a Facebook story, an Instagram story, there are multiple platforms to disseminate your story. So I think in that sense, there are multiple channels available digitally for you to transmit the story and transmit the news and people are doing it.

There are many outlets that are doing it with the mainstream media, whether or not it is any more free to do investigative journalism? I don't think so. In television, certainly not in print, the space is shrinking simply because the blowback and the pressures and the executive power that is facing you is just way too great.

Shreeya- Ma'am can you shed light on the history of journalism from how it started off as a philanthropic activity and became more corporate centric?

Sagarika Ghose- See, let me just give you a quick sketch. I joined journalism in 1991. You know, in those days, we used to make pages on Bromide, we didn't even have computers, there were typewriters. And pages used to be made manually on bromide, and they were to be cut and pasted on pages. And we used to take out those pages and fix them manually on newspapers. Since then, it's been a 360 degree turn now we have journalism on the phone. So I'm very fortunate that I got to see this 360 degree transformation. I think that with the rise of the liberalisation of the economy in 1991, a lot of corporate players got into the media. Satellite television became a reality for the first time when new privately owned satellite channel cable networks. And these cable networks, relied on advertising you know, now advertising it because you know, there's no license fee; we don't pay for the news.

You know, as I always say that if you pay peanuts, you will get monkeys so we actually pay very little. We pay only one rupee for a newspaper and we don't pay anything for the TV news. So it is absolutely free. But to run a television channel costs a lot of money. Now, from where can we get the money to mount these programs and its equipment- the cameras, the mics, the infrastructure that is needed, it's got from advertisers, right. And that's why we go for ad breaks, because we give the advertiser, but once you have the advertiser, you have corporatization and you have commercialization now then the advertiser wants higher, higher and higher visibility. And that means race for the TRPs. So, commercialization has had its negative impact, as well as its positive impact.

I think the positive impact has been that, since I joined in 1991, I see change in the way women journalists are able to operate. You know, in my time women journalists were very much consigned to the so called softer subjects, like health and education, and these are very important subjects, but they were considered sort of softer subjects and the man did the politics, the defence, but now, women Journalists are really coming to their own and they're going into the field and they're doing a tremendous job. And I think that, you know, the rise of the woman journalist has been one of the features of the evolution of Indian journalism.

Now, there has been an attempt to go out there and do citizen journalism. For example, during the pandemic times, I think, the press did a terrific job, highlighting what was missing and what was going on. So I think a lot of citizen journalism, citizens' concerns have come out. So this has been one of the positive impacts of the rise of commercial media. There's been a lot of innovative programming. You can see the rise of documentaries on particular politicians. When I was in CNN Ibn, I was very proud to actually start a series called India Positive, where we looked at positive stories from India, we also did many, many special features, for example, the rise of the sacred feminine, we looked at the generation gap, mixed marriages, even more darker issues like the female foeticide and all that.

And the fifth impact, I think, I would say is the Justice Campaigns, justice for Nirbhaya, justice for Jessica Lal, justice for Priyadarshini Mattu. I myself was very much part of the justice for Jessica Lal campaign, played a tremendous role and literally galvanised people to come out on the street. These have been the five positive impacts of television news. Ultimately, journalism is about finding the truth and telling the truth. But that is now increasingly becoming difficult, as we discussed, but as I said, those are the negative aspects of it. But this is not to say that there have not been many, many positive aspects of the rise of what I call media.

You know, I can say that with the rise of satellite television you had, you know, we said goodbye journalism, hello, media. But, I am a fan of slow journalism. I am a partisan of the slow, you know, because in my time when we started, we would write a story, it would go to the news editor, or the news editor would say it would go to another news editor or only when it had been vetted three or four times would it be fit for publication. Today, you just see something, put it up and you click and it's just gone there. And, what we often have is sensationalism and clickbait, sort of fast journalism.



So in this era of fast journalism, I remain a partisan of the slow."

Nitin- So ma'am, you just talked about the evolution of journalism from being slow-paced to its 24/7 avatar. So, what are your views on the relevance of print media in this age of digitalisation?

Sagarika Ghose- Yeah, that's a very good question. Today, you're seeing news in real time. An accident happens and immediately you know it.

So, where does this lead print media to, which comes out a day later? Well, I think I beg to differ from the conventional wisdom that print is out of the window. I think a lot of people increasingly rely on print; it's the medium of record. It is still a place where you need to check and cross check as it goes into the page after being checked by editors and sub editors. And I also think that it gives you perspective.

TV will give you one story all day. A newspaper will give you the full news.

It gives you a perspective on what's happening in different sectors. What's happening in the economy, what's happening in politics, what's happening in the city. The newspaper gives you ideas to chew on, it gives you the op-ed pages where I write. So I think that that is valuable because it gives readers ideas and information to debate with or to engage with.

The death of newspapers has been predicted hundreds of times, but the newspapers never die. So the rumours of my death are exaggerated, as they say, about the newspaper. I think the newspaper will stay on and will be relevant, but, perhaps, for less and less people in your generation.

Siddhant- Ma'am, you mentioned that the current state of affairs is an undeclared emergency, which is evident from the fact that our press freedom index has seen a continuous fall.

It currently stands at 150. The attacks on dissidents have been sharp and visible. But we have also seen that the previous dispensations weren't that pious or unblemished too. So, what is the differentiating factor in this political regime that makes it even more regressive?

Sagarika Ghose- I think the difference is of the massive degree. The scale at which journalists are being muzzled, repressed. For example, Kappan Siddique was jailed for two years. What was his crime? He was going to Hathras to cover a story, but because he had a particular name and hailed from a particular state or a particular religion, he was immediately considered a threat and was put in jail and charged under terror laws. Today, journalists are not allowed into Central Hall in the Parliament, are not allowed into the Ministry of Finance, no one-on-one interviews are given by the Prime Minister.

Media houses have actively been taken over. This didn't happen in the previous dispensation. The previous dispensation gave press conferences and free interviews. They were being attacked night and day! I mean, there was a certain anchor who was going for the UPA night and day, let's not go into who he is. We were also attacking the 2G, CWG, scams of various kinds. We were attacking the Manmohan Singh government, literally 24/7.

To that extent, yes, the government at that time gave a pushback. There was a journalist actually in Bombay, I think a cartoonist (Aseem Trivedi), who was charged under sedition.

But beyond that, the number of sedition and criminal defamation cases against journalists were far less. The scale is unbelievable. I mean, you have to just see what's going on. I remember covering the previous BJP dispensation, which was Mr. Vajpayee's, and there also, we were attacking Vajpayee night and day. He did have one inflection point when he ordered the raids on Tehelka and it was shut down. But beyond that, even in his rule, we were attacking the government all the time, and it was not as if we're 'attacking the government'. The press is not there to weaken the government, but we have to ask questions.

We're asking questions on behalf of the citizen. The government has to be accountable, because it is existing on the taxpayer's money, the taxpayer has to know what is happening to the government? What is it doing on China? What is it doing to the economy. What is it doing on unemployment? What is doing with Pakistan? So that is what we're doing. This is a basic function which we are not being allowed to perform. The sheer scale is massive, except when we talk about the emergency, but that was a declared emergency. When journalists are rounded up and put in jail, there is an emergency.

Shreeya- As you mentioned about Atal Bihari Vajpayee, I read your book on him. Can you comment on the conclusion that you could have from his complex ideologies?

Because he says that he's a Hindu nationalist, but also believes in constitutional democracy. He was against the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, but went ahead with it because of power. So if you could just summarise what you could take out from this.

Sagarika Ghose- That's very well said. The best way to summarise Vajpayee is that he was a bridge builder. He was a reconciler. And I think in today's India, when we're so polarised between this camp and that camp, and we're cutting off ties on WhatsApp, unfriending people on Facebook because of various political differences, Vajpayee is relevant. He did not believe in the polarities of political life, he reached out across the aisle and made friends with the opposite side. And this is because essentially, he was a creature of Parliament. He was located and rooted in Parliament. He contested elections in 1955 and was still contesting elections in 2004. So that's half a century and remember, he was a politician when Congress was very dominant. So, those experiences formed him. Parliament is the house of the opposition. The Lok Sabha is where the opposition lives.

In a parliamentary democracy, the opposition has no executive power, its only power is to question the government on the floor of the House, and so he did that very vigorously throughout the Nehru years.

We might have to give credit to Nehruvian parliamentary democracy for that. Nehruvian parliamentary democracy made possible the rise of Nehru's greatest opponents. And, and they flourished in that scenario, in that parliamentary democracy, so he owed a deep allegiance to parliamentary democracy.

Vajpayee was a parliamentary democrat and he had problems with the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, but he went along with it because he was also a politician, and he was very ambitious. Just like Indira Gandhi, he was a very ambitious politician. So although the Ram Janmabhoomi movement made him deeply uncomfortable, he saw that it could lead him to power. And the Jan Sangh-BJP had never had power. They were thirsting for power. This was a way they felt that could carry them to government. So I think that Vajpayee was reconciler, a bridge builder. He was a man who rejected polarities. He was a parliamentary Democrat.

Remember in Vajpayee's time a government fell by one vote in 1999. Can you imagine any government falling by one vote today? It's unthinkable. So he was a parliamentary Democrat, but he was also a very ambitious politician and he was determined to become Prime Minister one day. So was Indira Gandhi, you know, she always said politics is not for her, and she's not into politics. But she loved politics. Indira Gandhi was a woman who loved what she didn't like. She was very much in love with Feroze Gandhi, but she didn't quite like him. She loved the idea of democracy.

She didn't like democracy. She loved the idea of the free press. She didn't like the free press. She loved the idea of politics, but didn't like it. Indira Gandhi, I would say, was very much a feudal kind of a politician and she wasn't very much of a Democrat. Vajpayee was paradoxically more of a Democrat than her. But I think he made a moral compromise with his own ideas when he went along with the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. But he did that because he was ambitious and wanted to come to power and because he was a lifelong RSS man.

Nitin- Ma'am, you talked about parliamentary democracy, journalism, and free press. So, in today's context, is it viable to have a career in institutional journalism?

Sagarika Ghose- In mainstream journalism, I wouldn't advise it, not today. I would say if you want to get into journalism, explore the digital options, explore the world of the websites. I would not advise television media, but print media, you can try it. It is a very good training experience, you get to cover a beat. And you get to see what it is to cover a beat, how to handle a story, how to write a story. You learn from very senior people. I would say there are a lot of opportunities in media in terms of the opportunities available in so many of the digital outlets. Now there's so many of them Scroll, Wire, Print, News Laundry and so many of them

So mainstream media is in an existential crisis, but I think Phir Subah Hogi (it'll be bright again). And I think the hope is that people are still writing. So I think there is hope. But I would say at the moment, there is certainly a crisis. But you know, a crisis only means that we're learning from it, and we're going to come out of it, because a crisis is always a learning experience. I think many more people will now appreciate the values of democracy, why it's such a precious inheritance and why we need to hang on to it and that's why I wrote my book Why I am a Liberal because, I believe, we need to understand what individual liberties are. In a democracy, the state must protect the liberties of the individual, it's not that the individual exists to serve the state. You want to go to liberal democracy. And yes, there are problems with how liberal democracy has been practised over the years, but we need to realise how precious it is and safeguard it.

Gaurvi- In one of the interviews, you mentioned that you are neither a nationalist, nor an activist but a journalist. Can you elaborate on that?

Sagarika Ghose- Yeah, I'm a journalist. That's the thing about the labelling and the caricaturing today, right? I mean, you're called all kinds of names if you ask a question or advance a certain view, I mean, you're anti national, you're urban naxal gang or you are Khan market gang or you are this gang or that gang or you are a beef eater.

Somebody called me a jihadist, beef eater in a bikini. O God, if I was a jihadist why would I be in a bikini? I mean, all these kinds of labels that they throw at you, the fact is, you're none of all these things. I mean, all we're doing is trying to do journalism as people do the world over and just ask questions from the powerful, whether that powerful is party x, or party y or z. So, as I say, I'm neither nationalist nor activist, I'm only a journalist.

Siddhant- Ma'am, according to a report by Oxfam and Newslaundry, 90% of all major positions in mainstream news media is occupied by upper caste. As someone who has been in this profession for years, what do you think is the experience of people from marginalised communities in this field?

Sagarika Ghose- Yeah, I think that's a very important aspect of the media. I think that for a long time English language media particularly, was dominated by English speaking people from a certain background, and simply because they were proficient in English. And there were certain schools and certain colleges that were producing English speaking people. Hindi language journalism, I think, was equally Brahminical. So I think the professional journalism was dominated by the socially privileged at one point, but I think all that is changing now.

Because increasingly, opportunities are much more democratised. There are many more communities with access to English language or with access to Hindi language, because the technology helps you.

Do I believe in any kind of reservations or affirmative action in journalism? I don't, because I have a liberal view on quotas or reservations. I believe they will create a backlash, and I believe that they function as a sort of divisive instrument so that we can move to a whole different debate. But so I don't think there should be any kind of statutory affirmative action law that needs to be brought in. But I do think that journalism as a profession, needs to increasingly go out and diversify into different communities. And that is increasingly happening, because voices from communities that we hadn't heard of before, are themselves now doing their own journalism. And there's incredible work coming out of Chattisgarh, Bihar, out of places where mainstream media doesn't reach.

Nitin- Ma'am, as a liberal, you're aware of the fact that there is excessive attacks on liberals, and as you talked about the stigma against liberals.

And this is done by not just the extreme right, but also the extreme left. As a liberal, how do you stand your ground on the fact that you're to defend liberal values in the face of such extremes?

Sagarika Ghose- Yeah, there are many like libtards and anti national and librandus things like that. It's difficult and liberals have not done themselves any great favours. I think liberals have gotten imprisoned in an elitist ivory tower. They only talk to each other.

They've not spoken, gone out there and communicated their message, which is why I wrote this book. You know, for example, Hillary Clinton in 2016, said, Oh, these Trump supporters are a basket of deplorables, The basket of deplorables is winning the election and ruling over you though. So I think this basket of deplorable's attitude is very wrong. I think liberals have to have the capacity to listen, to engage, and to form links with society. You know, to me, the greatest liberal is Gandhi.



**Gandhi's, to me,
the father of
Indian
liberalism."**

So it's not as if God is true. But truth is God. Telling the truth is God and that means that you will achieve God by always telling the truth and by always being true to yourself. Gandhi looked on the state with intense suspicion. We're enduring a crushing state power. The government has become omnipresent. Pradhan mantri this Pradhan Mantri that, politicians on billboards all over the place, politicians cutting ribbons, politicians doing X politicians doing Y.

We need to push back the state. As a liberal, I believe the government needs to retreat from the economy.

I believe the government needs to retreat from religion. I believe the government needs to retreat from writing textbooks. I believe the government needs to retreat from disseminating information, you have to shut down the ministry of information and broadcasting. Government power must lessen, because the more government we have, the more the individual is suffocated. Y V Reddy, the former Reserve Bank Governor, has actually written a paper showing that the periods of maximum growth in India are actually during the coalition governments, the coalition governments of Vajpayee, the coalition governments of Narsimha Rao. The coalition governments are messy, they don't have much power, there are checks and balances within so they don't have the power to actually intrude on individual freedom.



Sagarika Ghose at an event

What they do do is they retreat because they simply don't have that much power. And as a result, the economy actually does well. So I think coalition governments are actually beneficial for India. Because if you see the governments with massive majorities are always tending towards dictatorial and not being able to produce that kind of economic growth, whether it was the government of Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi or the present dispensation.

Gaurvi- In one of your interviews, you mentioned how bravery is the infrastructure of journalism. In your journey in journalism, you must have had instances where you felt accomplished after doing something really brave and challenging. So, could you tell us about any one of those instances?

Sagarika Ghose- You have to be very brave as you have to resist a lot of pressure. You may not be popular with what you write, you have to resist a lot of ostracism from the powers that be and you can actually come across some dangerous situations. You know, I've been in the field a lot.

I was once in Jaffna in Sri Lanka, my editor in The Times of India said go into stories of happy marketplaces in Sri Lanka. I went there and I did a story on Jaffna and while I was coming back on the train, I was subjected to a kind of interrogation on the train which left me very scared.

I went there and I did a story on Jaffna and while I was coming back on the train, I was subjected to a kind of interrogation on the train which left me very scared.

But my scariest moment I think was in Bihar in 1999 or 2000. I had gone to Bihar on a story on Bettiah where Gandhi did the Champaran Satyagraha, and I was driving from Patna to Bettiah. And in those days, the roads in Bihar were really really bad. We got late leaving from Patna, so by the time we were getting to Bettiah, it was getting really dark, and there were no lights. It was just me, the camera person and the driver, travelling along this really bad road. Suddenly, the driver said Peeche koi aa raha hai (someone's following).

I was like that's the end. I turned around, and this scene is emblazoned in my mind. I saw these three guys on horseback with their faces muzzled.

They were like bandits and they were just riding fast towards us and they were illuminated by the cars taillights. I thought okay, this is it, this is the end, and the camera person being the male camera person said, Madam aap udhar jao, aap unse jaake baat karo (madam, you go and talk to them) and I was like you must be out of your mind. Anyway, they were getting closer and closer. So then there was no option, we had to stop. We stopped the car.

It was nothing actually, they were just three village guys who just passed by and said Ram Ram and there I was quaking and shivering and sweating and introspecting about my own urban upbringing

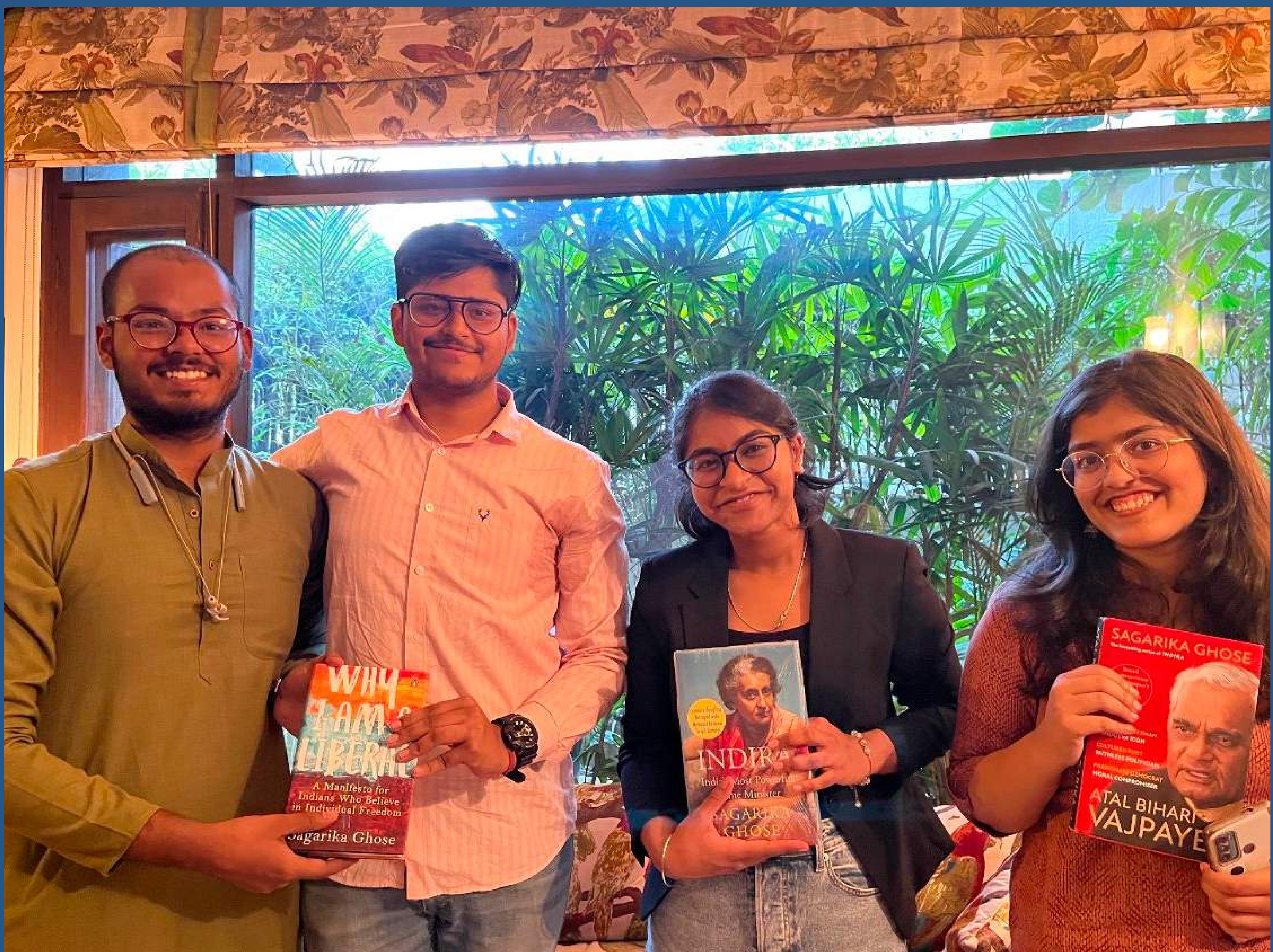
which had led me create a great fantastic fantasm of being attacked in the middle of the road by three men on horseback and I realised it was much more my mind and what I had conjured up than anything real. Actually to tell you the truth, all the years I've travelled and been out on the field, the field is where you are safe, it is Delhi where the problem arises.

you are out on the field, covering elections and covering any story and it is the biggest thrill in the world and I love it to death, having your pen and your notepad, Doing election rallies, covering Vajpayee was so hilarious because he was such a funny speaker and I've covered many

election rallies of Mamata and Mayawati and Jayalalitha and it has always been a terrific and rewarding experience. So for me, it's always been terrific being in the field, it's been very safe except for this one experience which was really me and my mind and what I had built up, but the real dangers are all in Delhi.

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I'm neither a nationalist nor an activist. I'm a journalist."

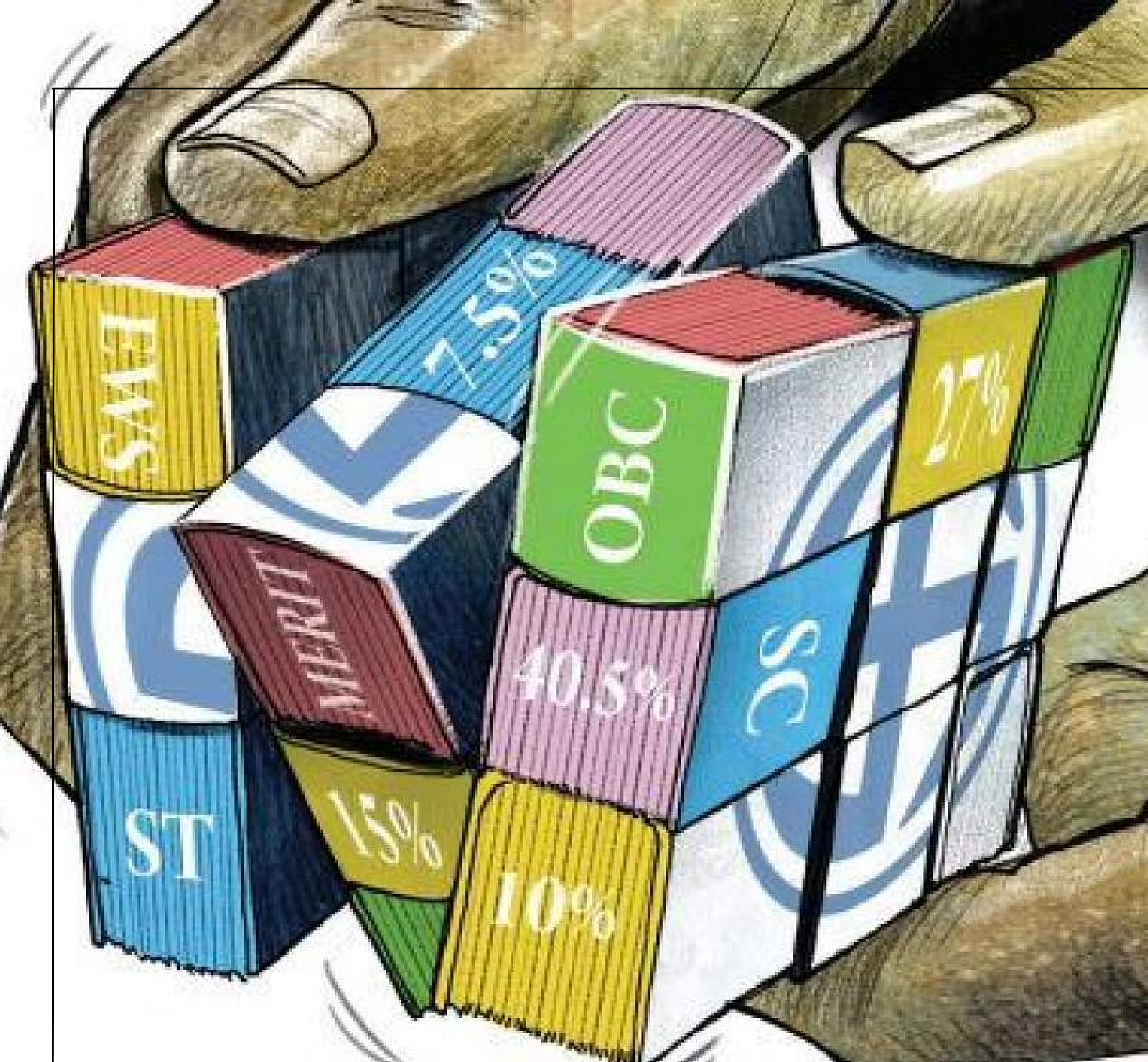


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CASTE CENSUS: NEED OF THE HOUR OR A TOOL FOR APPEASEMENT?

By Milind Shekhar Singh

The great leader of backward castes, Babu Jagdev Prasad Kushwaha said - 90 out of 100 are exploited and 90% belong to us (backward castes). It goes without saying that the backward castes have been and are still exploited under the inhumane caste system, but to provide a remedy, it is pertinent that we have a figure of what part of the society is suffering the brunt of exploitation. For that, there has to be a precise estimation of what percentage of the population is 'backward'. The caste-based census is one such exercise which will provide a precise figure of the number of people who belong to backward or oppressed castes.

Introduction

The demand for a caste census has been raised time and again by people from several walks of life. From the political parties and eminent scholars to the members of the Parliament, a broad spectrum of the populace is vouching for a caste census to be conducted at the earliest. But at the same time, the government has shown hesitancy in holding a caste-based census stating the fear that the country would be divided and also pointing to the inaccuracy of the data collected in the socio-economic and caste census 2011. What explains this anxiety of the state? Is there really a need for a caste census or is it just a way to appease the backward castes and garner political fame? To fetch answers to these questions and to understand the intricacies of the issue let us delve into the issue of caste census.

Census Vs Caste Census

In lucid terms, a census is a comprehensive count of a population or group of people at a point in time based on a set of specific characteristics. It includes details regarding the demographics of the population like age, sex, occupation and so on. In India, the exercise of census started during the colonial regime in 1872 under Viceroy Lord Mayo and the first full-fledged census was conducted in 1881. Census has been used by the government, policymakers and academicians to capture the dynamics of the population, analyse social changes, conduct delimitation exercises and so on. In India, the census has been a decennial exercise i.e. conducted after every 10 years, it has been conducted 15 times till 2011 by the Registrar General and the Census Commissioner under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. The next census was to be conducted in 2021 but it was postponed due to the covid pandemic. A caste census is being demanded in order to provide a breakdown of the Indian population in terms of numbers and percentages that would include all castes in addition to the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

2011 Socio-Economic Caste Census

The 2011 Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) conducted under the UPA government was the first to produce detailed data on households in both rural and urban areas. There were some things which made the SECC 2011 a

noteworthy exercise. It was carried out in 640 districts using handheld electronic devices and was India's first paperless census. India's 1931 census was the last caste-based count before 2011 and data on manual scavenging and the number of transgender people in India were gathered.

The Union government denied conducting a Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) in an affidavit submitted to the Supreme Court on September 23. The affidavit claimed that a caste census, with the exception of those traditionally conducted for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, was impossible and "administratively difficult and cumbersome." The affidavit was submitted in response to a writ case filed by the Maharashtra government asking the Union government to give instructions on how to gather information during the 2021 census on the Backward Class of Citizens (BCC) of rural India. It is important to note that the data collected during the SECC 2011 has not been released yet. According to the SECC-2011, there are 46 lakh distinct castes. The government claims that the census is faulty and the entire data set is flawed, making it useless for making reservations or setting policy because the overall number cannot be exponentially high to this level. For these reasons, it has refused to provide even the SECC-2011's raw caste data.

Need for a Caste Census

Amidst the growing clamour and contestations over the issue of the caste census, it is pertinent to ponder whether a caste census is

really needed. Is it something which is the need of the hour? Will it do any good to the public and the policymakers? Or is it just a tool to appease the backward castes and a way for the opposition parties to pressurise the government?

Well, there are plenty of opinions on this issue but in my opinion, conducting a caste census is really important and it should be conducted at the earliest. A caste census is not only required to know the figures of different castes but it will also address many pertinent issues. A caste census would help to address the problem pertaining to the lack of data on backward castes because, without the data, India's social equality programmes cannot be successful. The OBC population was pegged by the Mandal Commission at 52%, but other sources have estimated the OBC population from 36 to 65 percent. The census would yield a wealth of demographic information (sex ratio, mortality rate, life expectancy), educational data (male and female literacy, ratio of school-going population, number of graduates), and policy-relevant information about economic conditions (house type, assets, occupation) of the OBCs in addition to resolving the mystery about the size of the OBC population.

The Rohini Commission, which was established to consider how to fairly redistribute the 27% OBC quota, found that there are approximately 2,633 castes that are covered by the OBC reservation. A second category of 'Extremely Backward Castes', who are even more marginalised, exists among the OBCs. But the Centre's 1992 reservation policy ignores this fact. A caste census will have political

and social ramifications since caste has an emotional component.

Caste counting has raised questions about whether it contributes to hardening social identities. Due to these effects, nearly ten years after the SECC 2011, a substantial portion of the data is still unavailable or has only been made partially available. Although a caste census may not be in line with the idea of a casteless society, it might be used to rectify social injustices. Caste data will allow for impartial research on the question of who needs affirmative action and who does not, as well as the efficacy of this policy. The greatest caste-based affirmative benefit scheme in the world is administered by India. Caste identities are used to grant reservations in educational institutions and government positions. Caste and tribal identities are the basis for the Scheduled Castes (SCs), also known as Dalits, whose quota is 15%, and the Scheduled Tribes (STs), whose quota is 7.5%. The B. P. Mandal Commission determined the Other Backward Classes' (OBCs') backwardness on the basis of caste, hence the greatest reservation mandate for OBCs - 27% is caste-based. The reservation for OBCs is not based on their proportion of India's population, unlike the quotas for Dalits and STs, which are proportionate to their populations as determined by censuses held every ten years.

Akhilesh Yadav, President of the Samajwadi Party, and other leaders demanded - "*jiski jitni sankhya bhari, uski utni hissedari*" (every caste group should get representation proportionate to their share in the population). Caste information was gathered in the last census conducted by the British colonial authority in 1941, but the results were not made public. Following independence, the government only gathered and released SC and ST caste data for the 1951 Census. The first independent Indian government, led by Jawaharlal Nehru, reportedly overturned the caste census programme in 1951, according to the government's testimony before the court. In their affidavit, the government claims that "a caste-wise enumeration in the Census has been given up as a matter of policy from 1951 onwards, so, castes other than scheduled castes and scheduled tribes have not been enumerated in any of the Census since 1951 until now." However, the Manmohan Singh administration chose to collect caste information as part of the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) in 2011, although the information was never made public. Since there is no current caste census data, the 2021 welfare policy formulation will be based on the caste estimations from 1931. A caste census is likely to present policymakers with new and updated data.

Amidst the growing clamour and contestations over the issue of the caste census, it is pertinent to ponder whether a caste census is really needed. Is it something which is the need of the hour? Will it do any good to the public and the policymakers? Or is it just a tool to appease the backward castes and a way for the opposition parties to pressurise the government?



Bihar CM Nitish Kumar addressing a press conference at Samvad Hall in Patna on June 1, 2022. RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav also seen.
Image source: PTI

In their affidavit, the administration stated that it was unable to perform a caste census due to technical issues. The Centre's position before the Supreme Court was in response to a plea by the Maharashtra government requesting that data on the Backward Class of Citizens (BCC) be collected for the Census 2021. Since then, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) have resurrected calls for a caste census to be conducted concurrently with Census 2021. The Centre claimed in an affidavit dated September 2021 that conducting a caste census would be challenging in practice and emphasised that the population census is not the "perfect instrument" for gathering information on caste. There must be more than one caste for the caste system to exist. There must be other castes for one to engage in caste practices. Caste is always already taken into account in this "practising of caste," and this action causes a person to locate the other in relation to one's caste. According to Babasaheb Ambedkar, "ascending order of reverence and descending order of disdain" is how one would locate themselves in the caste system using this

numbering. For instance, one would need to know the surname in order to determine someone's whole name. Surnames are a good indicator of caste. Most Indians alter their behaviour or attitude when they learn about a person's caste location. This change in behaviour can either be encouraging or demeaning to a person.

Hindu castes or upper castes are overrepresented in contemporary institutions. Castes that are marginalised have a social existence similar to death. Such castes hardly ever appear in contemporary institutions. The anti-caste movement, which included Ambedkar's call to 'Educate', the Dalit Panthers, Dalit Sangharsh Samiti, Dalit Mahasabha, the Mandal agitation, and several more undocumented efforts, have ensured their existence by instilling the value of education in the underprivileged people. The purpose of the caste census is not to determine a caste's numerical strength. Instead, the caste census tells us where distinct castes are located in social and modern organisations. The caste census reveals the illusion of the national imagination or the

perceived community of the country. In the social, political, and economic institutions of the country, are all castes on the same page? Census data exposes nation-building myths, particularly those relating to the politics of economic and social progress. We can see from the census how each caste is progressing. Are the marginalised castes receiving their legally mandated part in the national institutions? What effects do the government's plans and programmes have on disadvantaged populations? The listing of castes will reveal the answers to questions of this nature.

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Samajwadi Party (SP) were accused by the BJP of focusing their campaigns solely on Jatavs and Yadavs while disregarding the rest of the Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes during the 2014 Lok Sabha and 2017 assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh. This line of reasoning was also emphasised by the electronic media, which directly aided the BJP's campaign. Let's imagine that the Jatavs and Yadavs of UP have been entirely uplifted by the politics of the BSP

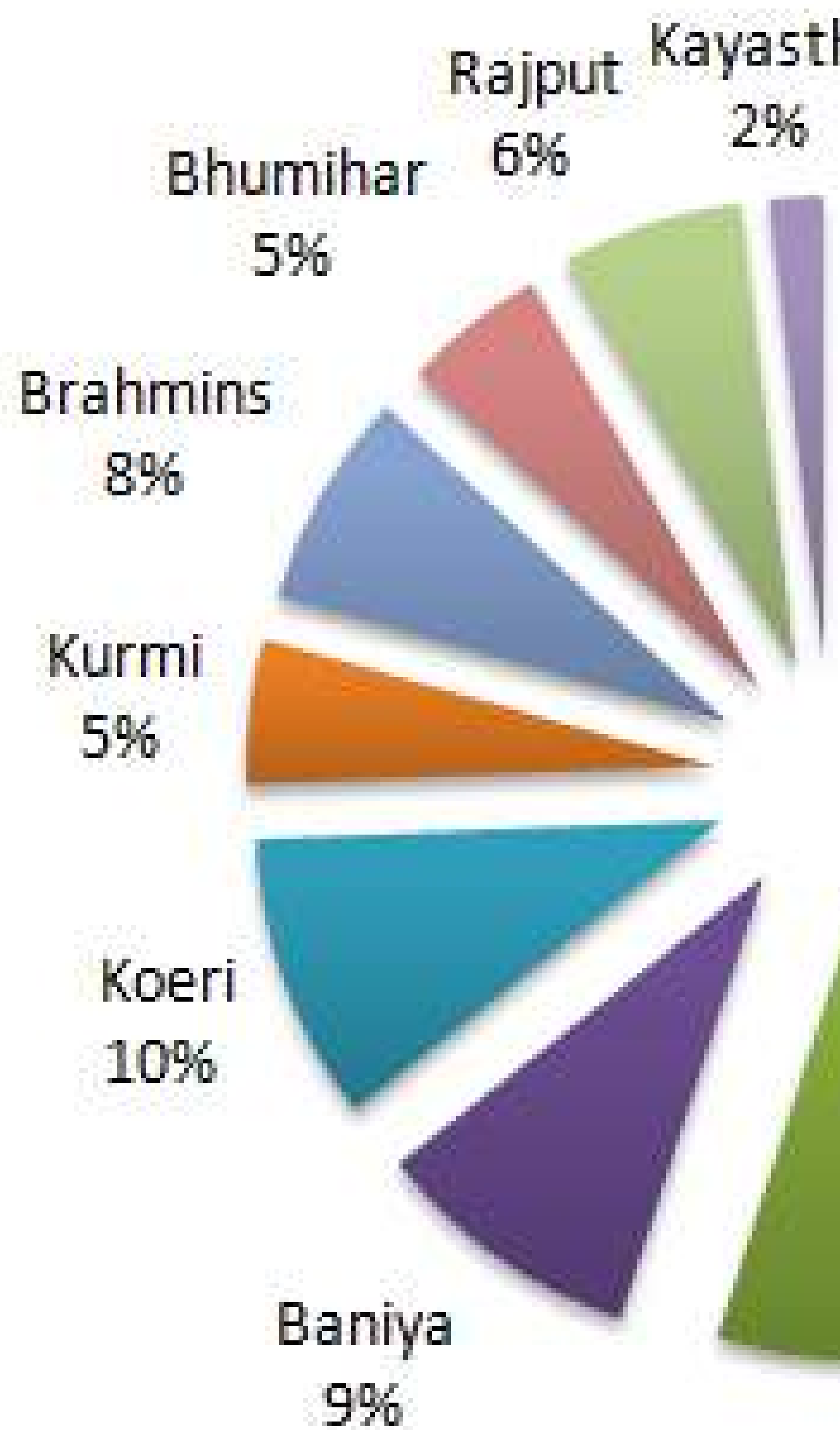
and SP respectively. This implies that none of them should have any social or economic backwardness. However, a random study in the state would show that while the Jatavs and Yadavs may have improved in terms of political consciousness or mobility respectively, there has been little progress in terms of social and economic mobility.

The decline of tigers and certain other species in the Indian jungles worries the government, which keeps track of the tiger population, preventing particular creatures from being extinct. The government is concerned that tigers must survive. There are numerous mobile and satellite castes, such as the nomadic Dakkali. In many states, their population wouldn't exceed a few thousand. Since the majority of them lack any identification, they are not state recipients. By counting them and making sure they receive social benefits, the government can demonstrate its concern for these satellite castes. If there is no caste census, castes such as the Dakkali would vanish. Understanding caste social mobility in India is the goal of caste census. It also serves as a register for the amount of influence Brahmanism and Manu's laws have on castes in India. Additionally, it would demonstrate the extent to which the Constitution or a constitutional statement applies to various castes as well as the degree to which societal and governmental institutions have adopted constitutional mandates. In other words, it illustrates how castes situate themselves in relation to contemporary nation-states. Not conducting a caste census means

maintaining inequality through systems like caste. Similar findings were highlighted by studies conducted collaboratively by Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), and the Indian Institute of Dalit Studies. "Wealth ownership and inequality in India: A socio-religious analysis", a study presented in a paper published in 2018, found that "Of the total national assets, the highest 41% is owned by upper caste Hindus followed by 31% by OBC groups, whereas the lowest among STs and SCs, each owning 3.7% and 7.6% of the total assets, respectively." It clearly reflects that in India, the hierarchy of the caste system is reflected in the way wealth is distributed. We need precise statistics on the population of different caste groups and their socio-economic situation in order to address these concerns, which are essential for the general and holistic prosperity of our country, as the wealth of the country is distributed along caste lines.

A detailed examination of SECC surveys reveals that they suffer from unclear data variables, poor data capture (especially with regard to the caste variable) design, and a lack of organisation. It should come as no surprise that the data is still not available for public use or review. The call for caste-based headcounts (or the inclusion of a caste column) in India's decennial census is growing louder every day in the absence of SECC 2011 or any other alternative data. A caste column in the census might be an excellent place to start, but in its current form, it might not provide enough information to meet the data requirements for inclusive social policymaking. In

fact, it offers thorough information on a few factors, like caste and household assets (common consumer goods) and education (currently for SC and ST groups only). However, especially in the context of OBCs, it would not be sufficient to answer all of the unanswerable problems about backwardness and representation. The statistics will continue to contain many gaps regarding contentious topics like income, wealth, representation in elite positions, involvement in caste-based occupations, etc. and the country would still be ignorant of the socio-economic backwardness of people who are born into particular social groups. The point being made here is that the Census of India in its current form, with a



Caste Equati
Source: Two

caste column added, will be of only limited use and fall short of answering the majority of the important questions that the caste-census proponents hope it will. The only option is a full-fledged caste census along the lines of SECC 2011, which needs to be carefully planned, meticulously designed, and thorough in terms of socio-economic characteristics.

The Narendra Modi administration at the centre, according to Nitish Kumar, should rethink its demand to forgo conducting a caste census. Tejashwi Yadav, the RJD leader, has published a piece in a major publication expressing his opinion. He has also sent letters to non-BJP parties pleading for their backing for the caste census. MK Stalin, the

Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, has also backed a caste census, and both his party and the DMK have written to the government and allies to support it. In Uttar Pradesh, the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) both reaffirmed their call for a caste census.

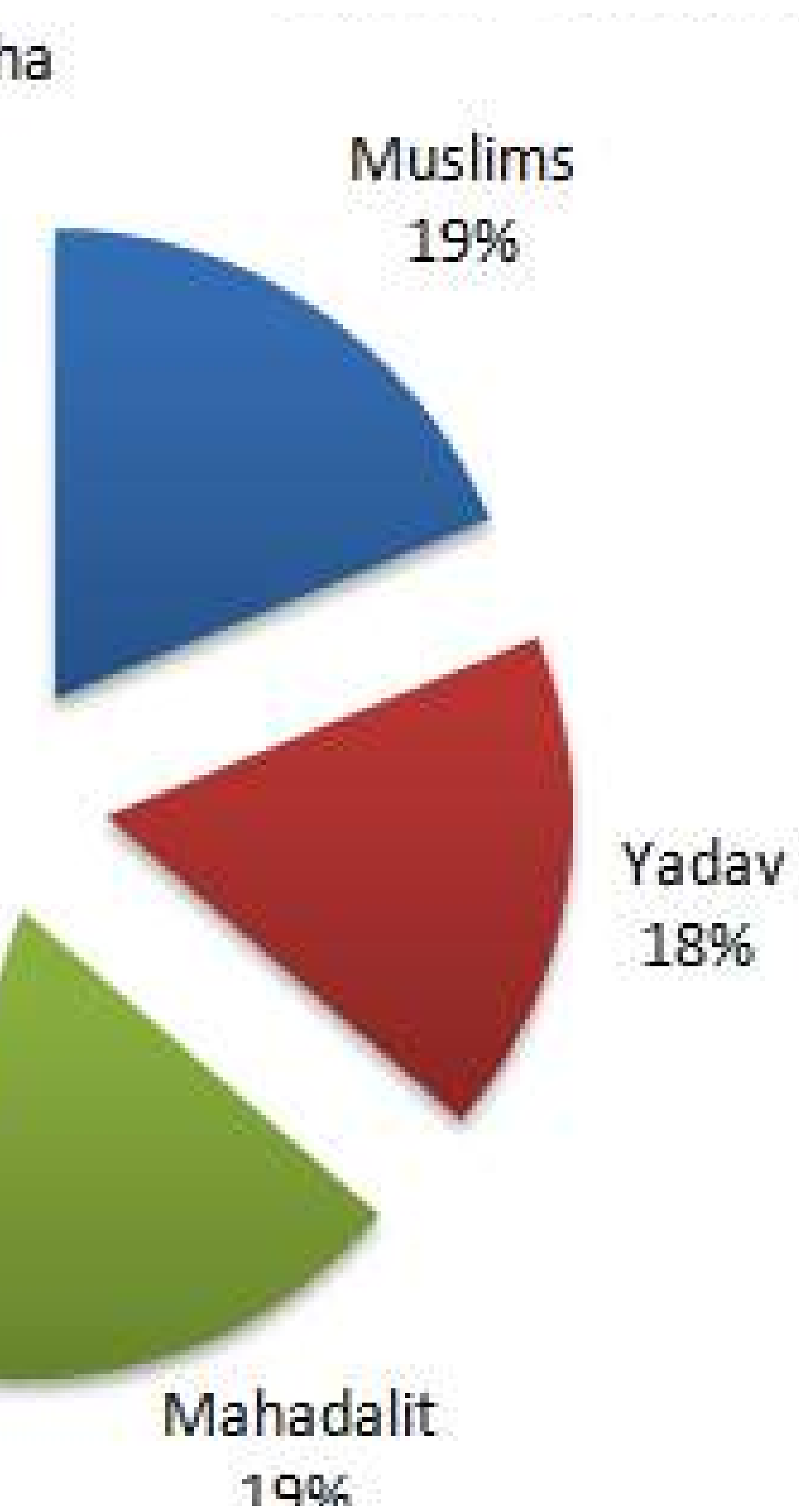
Fears Against a Caste Census - Are They Real?

There have been various fears which have been raised against a caste-based census. The first is directly tied to the reality that upper-caste people have benefited most from government initiatives on education, the economy, and development. A caste-based census will expose this fact, posing a danger to the hegemony of the Brahminical ruling class. The hard-core Hindus view a caste-based census as a danger to their much-cherished vision of "Hindu unity" since it will reveal its Brahminical foundation. A caste-based census is seen in the Hindutva worldview as a plot to undermine "Hindu society", akin to their opposition to a separate electorate during the colonial era. The caste-based census will disprove the assertion made by many neo-liberal proponents that capitalism and its variants are the greatest potential systems for eradicating caste. The wealth difference between upper-caste groups and other caste groups has, if anything, only widened over the past 30 years of economic liberalisation, according to the studies conducted. Will the caste census ultimately support caste and deepen divisions in an already fractured society? The simple response to this fear is that

caste has existed prior to the census and the census gathers information on sex disparity and illiteracy rates, among other things. This does not imply that the census gives them legitimacy, caste counting only serves to track society's perception of caste identity; it does not undermine the goal of making our country caste-free.

Conclusion

A caste-based census is a need of the hour and should be conducted at the earliest. It will, not only, provide a precise enumeration of various castes, especially the OBCs, but will also serve as a credible database for the formulation of policies directed at social empowerment. Census is a potent instrument for reducing socio-economic inequality. Hence, understanding the crucial role that the census plays in democracy is essential. It is more than just a tiresome data collection task done every ten years, it offers the statistical framework through which the State can develop its social goal for the ensuing decade. The response of the government in its detailed affidavit citing 'technical difficulties' and 'inauthenticity of the 2011 SECC data' as the reasons for not conducting a caste-based census seems to be a deliberate attempt to delay this much-needed and pertinent exercise. The growing clamour by various political parties including some allies of the NDA government is a positive trend but it remains to be seen whether a caste-based census would be conducted or will remain an unfulfilled demand. ■



Circles.net

FREEBIES



FREEBIES

By Divyam and Aditya Tomar

It is no secret that political parties in the contemporary era try to lure voters by providing freebies. Also, there is an ongoing debate about what makes a scheme a freebie or a social security welfare measure. Difference between the two lies in how the funds are spent and the benefit associated with it. Freebies reflect personal benefits associated with private spending with little or no social benefit. On the other hand, social security welfare measures exhibit public goods that have positive social benefits. Between the two lie goods that can't be sufficiently produced by the market and require state aid but are civic necessities known as 'merit' goods and is another contested region between freebies and welfare measures. The difference between merit goods and public goods is that merit goods like public education, healthcare, etc. are rivalrous and excludable i.e. usage by one affects the availability for others whereas public goods like public law and order, governance, and defence are not excludable and rivalrous. According to the world inequality report 2022, India is among one of the most inequitable nations in the world with the bottom 50% of the population wielding a 13% share and the top 10% holding a 57% share of national income. With such massive inequality and demography, the government must undertake welfare



policy measures like free education and health care for the poor and these can't be categorized as freebies. Winning these gifts is nothing new. If we look at the mentality of the majority, they are not inclined towards long-term beneficial schemes.

In such a situation, we have explained the social welfare scheme and freebies above, yet due to a lack of consensus in the public, political parties keep associating gifts with social welfare to serve their interests. Delhi government provides 200 units of electricity free of cost on every domestic connection. But does every resident of Delhi get the same salary? The answer is negative. According to 2012 figures, about 85 lakh people in Delhi are above the poverty line, such families are from the upper general category and are taking benefit of this scheme. If we think about providing free electricity to the upper-income group, can social welfare be maintained on a sustainable basis? It is important to note that the Delhi government also came

up with VSS(Voluntary Subsidy Scheme) in 2022 where it is mandatory to apply for a subsidy once a year if one wants to opt for a subsidy as it gives the citizens a choice to perceive themselves fit to claim the subsidy or not. But the downside here again is that even if the person is well off, they can opt for a subsidy. And to what extent is the state's welfare justified by giving colour TV to a family who cannot even afford one time's bread?

Data from other countries has shown that countries that provide free education and health care have a better standard of living. Electricity and water though should be provided free ideally, but have not just economic costs involved but the environmental concern of non-judicious use, therefore, well-targeted schemes of free or subsidised electricity and water for the poor up to a limit depending upon family size can be a much better step than just giving free electricity and water as it can promote staying within the limit or pay the full amount. Needless to mention, it should be

supplemented with other projects aimed at the renewal of water resources and the transition to green energy sources. The other category includes schemes providing free cycles, grinders, mixies, TV sets, gold, scooty, cash transfer, loan waivers, etc. It varies with the case of individuals whether the scheme is a welfare social security measure like a cycle for a girl child that has decreased drop out ratio of girls in schools where the scheme was implemented or a freebie, likewise, government spending which can enhance citizen's productivity and happiness like spending on constructing parks can't just be a freebie. But giving benefits that come with no social benefits or impart skills or are a necessity and are rather luxury goods i.e. for personal consumption are truly freebies like TV, scooty, mixies, grinders, free gold, etc. Cash transfer like in Dalitha Bandhu scheme (in Telangana), the country's biggest promised cash transfer scheme which aims to provide 10 lakhs to poor dalit families for launching viable

businesses and source of income is another kind of freebie, as direct payment transfer is meant to enhance personal consumption and income and don't reflect any common social good.

The matter was first taken to the judiciary in the S. Balaji vs the State of Tamil Nadu case in 2011 where the plaintiff requested court intervention to the free goodies distributed by DMK, AIADMK that were a huge economic burden on the state exchequer, and accused of bribing the voters. The Supreme Court gave the verdict that it can't be considered bribery since the Directive Principles of State Policy asks for such welfare measures by the state. However, there are ongoing panel formations, deliberations on the fiscal responsibility of the state in the Supreme Court, and ways to distinguish freebies from social welfare measures. In addition, the court has concluded that if the candidate of any political party promises free gifts, then he/she too has been representing that party.

There are many downsides of such freebies, primarily increasing revenue expenditure in the state budget leading to rising state debt to GSDP ratio (Gross State Domestic Product) along with the interest payment (Punjab has the highest debt to GSDP ratio, along with that Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh have more than 40% debt to GSDP ratio as well). Every rupee spent on freebies could have been spent on infrastructure projects including but not limited to roads, dams, bridges, etc., which will not only generate employment but ensure better economic returns in the long

run where subsequent private investment generates more prosperity for the nation as a whole. It also dents the image of a democratic country and distorts the idea of fair elections where non-transparent measures of funding of political parties distort the decision-making of well-informed individuals. If the case of Sri Lanka is taken into consideration, it is undergoing the worst economic crisis since its independence. It owes its condition to a lot of factors that include populist policy measures and freebies of the previous leadership under the Rajapaksa brothers like tax cuts, always spending more than 19% of income on welfare measures (which is significant given its relatively low revenues), and a host of other unvisionary decisions.

In the last assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh in 2018, the then-ruling BJP government waived electricity bills for families whose electricity bills were due less than 1 lakh. Electricity bill waiver also happened in the speculations of return to power. In March 2022, the Madhya Pradesh government once again waived Rs 6400 crore of 88 lakh electricity consumers. By 2023, Madhya Pradesh's total debt stands at 3.25 lakh crore which translates to Rs 41,000 per capita. In 2003-04, this debt was 20 thousand crore rupees. Despite all this, the government cannot spend on health and education. This is not just a one-party story. In the recently held Himachal Pradesh elections, the Congress party in its manifesto has promised 300 units of free electricity and 1500 rupees per month to every woman of the state, while Bharatiya Janata Party has

given it a unique name called Revdi culture which has sparked public debate. But upon considering schemes like for instance the 2022 Gujarat election, BJP has offered two LPG cylinders and subsidized edible oil for households in its manifesto, also, the party has promised bicycles and scooters for girl students, financial aid of Rs 25,000 to all pregnant women before the Vidhan Sabha elections in Himachal Pradesh, it is evident that BJP has also distributed a lot of revdies. Also, the Election Commission should actively intervene and change the model code of conduct and make it mandatory to show the financial viability of various programs offered. For instance, the Election Commission in 2022 asked parties for their opinion on changing the model code of conduct to make it mandatory for all the parties to mention the viability of the proposed financial proposals laid by any party like mentioning the source of funds to fulfil the scheme, new tax to be levied or any previous scheme to come to an end. The move was undoubtedly justified and a must as here lies the truth brought out to the masses to help voters take a better decision and make the decision-making more transparent as required of the Election Commission. But the EC has only put forward a proposal, real responsibility lies on the consensus of the political parties to bring it into effect as it lies outside the domain of the powers of the Election Commission. Often the parties use these gimmicks to come to power and in an attempt to fulfil these promises by getting power, they curb

other development projects. A report by NITI Aayog mentioned that the centre has put 116 projects on the list of hold, terminate, bound for foreclosure which has a sunk cost of more than 20000 crores due to host of reasons including state defaulting on the cost-sharing mechanism reflecting fiscal constraint issues arising of poor budget management and spending on freebies undertaken to fulfil the election promises.

At the same time, such distribution of benefits in form of goodies serve as a redistribution of income and make society more equitable which is one of the objectives of a government. Many others can help develop skill and earn a livelihood, provide free vaccine, public distribution system for food security and other to fulfil its task of undertaking measures to improve the conditions of a citizen of state as suggested in DPSP of the constitution. But it should be provided responsibly by the state so as not to hamper the growth of the economy itself with good management of budget and not excessive debt undertaking just to lure in the voters. The fiscal responsibility and Budget Management Panel, 2017 has recommended not to exceed the debt to GDP ratio by 38.4% for the central government and 20% for state governments. States should provide such a scheme prioritising one that imparts skill first, common social benefit, and then other goodies if required only within fiscal constraints available to it unless there is a recession that requires more direct spending to avert such a crisis situation.

PROBES



THE BALOCH QUESTION

By Danyal Zaidi



“

Balochistan, a province in Pakistan, has been an achilles heel for the nation-state for long. Marred with continued alienation and hostility, the article attempts to find the answer to the Baloch question.

A sad Durrani, the former head of ISI said that Balochistan “may be a ruler's nightmare but a geo strategist's dream”. Balochistan is a Province of Pakistan, overrun by a violent cycle of state oppression and insurgency, profound ethnic cleavages and caught in a crossfire of conflicting international interests. It is Pakistan's largest province, yet it's the most deprived of them all, its literacy rate is less than half the overall literacy rate of the country, and its poverty rate is more than double the national poverty rate. On the other hand, Balochistan provides 40% to the country's energy needs and 36% of mineral and gas production but 46.6% of households in Balochistan do not have access to electricity. The disparity and discrimination

faced by the province raises a number of questions and this article aims to answer some of them.

The Baloch question has always been there in Pakistan since its independence and its accession itself to the Pakistani republic was under deceitful circumstances, the hostility between the Baloch people and the Pakistani state is as old as the republic itself. There have been 5 insurgency surges in Balochistan since 1948, but the latest one of 2005 is different in its scope and methods. While the earlier uprisings were restricted to certain districts and its combatant limited to certain tribes, Kavita Khory opines that the latest upsurge has three major characteristics which makes it different from the last four. Firstly, the Insurgency covers a larger geographical area than before extending into major cities

outside of Balochistan. The Baloch Liberation Army has claimed responsibility for the attack on the Pakistan Stock Exchange and the attack against the Chinese Consulate. Secondly, most of the Baloch Fighters belong to a new generation and contains young cohorts from the middle class who don't have any tribal allegiances and were radicalised in universities and colleges. Lastly, the attacks carried by BLA alternate between high profile targets and sporadic attacks against state personnel and military installations.

This new wave of Insurgency might have a larger scope but it has a serious deficit in leadership and coordination. Francesca Marino propounds, “The fathers of the Baloch revolution are dead and there are no ideologies or ideologists to succeed them.”. The

attack on the Chinese consulate in 2018 shows the lack of coordination and planning on behalf of the insurgents. The attack in itself was a dismal failure and the attackers were gunned down by the security forces before they could use the munition they had brought along, anticipating a drawn out siege. Most of the Prominent militant leaders in Balochistan have either left the country or have been killed by the security forces. The Pakistani state claims that Hyrbyair Marri, son of erstwhile rebel leader Khair Bakhsh Marri is leading the BLA, but he stated that he does not have connection to the BLA.

We cannot explain a rebellion or secessionist movement without discussing the collective identity of the people involved. The Baloch nationalist identity is derived from shared culture, history and languages. The linguistic aspect is especially intriguing to a secondary observer as both Brahui and Balochi speakers are considered as Baloch. The strand of Baloch activists who want change within the confines of the state as opposed to the militants, have stressed the symbolic and cultural aspect of Baloch identity like lobbying for the inclusion of the Balochi language in school curriculum. Baloch identity is also attached to the idea of a Baloch homeland or a 'Greater Balochistan' which will include Baloch territories in Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan even though this idea has not gained much traction in popular discourse. Baloch nationalism is also fraught with exclusionary tendencies and xenophobia. There is a fear that people who are not Balochis, and settlers like Punjabis, Chinese workers and Afghan refugees are considered as



The strand of Baloch activists who want change within the confines of the state as opposed to the militants, have stressed the symbolic and cultural aspect of Baloch identity like lobbying for the inclusion of the Balochi language in school curriculum."



Sardar Ibrahim Sanjrani, Iranian Baloch Chiefs

outsiders and encroachers. There is also an insecurity that there will be a demographic takeover of Balochistan by the said “encroachers”. The corrupt practices of the government further fuel these insecurities. In 2020 there were protests against the issuing of fake domicile certificates to non-Balochs who then used these certificates to get federal jobs and scholarships reserved for Baloch people.

The siphoning off of natural resources found in Balochistan to other provinces is also a factor which stokes the nationalist movement in Balochistan. In 1995 Balochistan produced 56% of the country's natural gas but its consumption was at the lower end of the spectrum with only 14 towns out of the 36 districts of Balochistan have access to natural gas. Even the town of Sui, where Pakistan's first gas Field was discovered in 1953, does not have access to natural gas while on the other hand, its resources are being pumped away to the provinces of Sindh and Punjab. Other industrial projects by the Pakistani state like the Saindak Copper Gold Project, the Chinese Project of the Gwadar Port and licensing of natural resources to foreign investors further contribute to the sense of exploitation faced by the Balochi People.

“

The fathers of the Baloch revolution are dead and there are no ideologies or ideologists to succeed them.”

The fact that Balochistan's resources are being exploited for profit and Baloch people are getting minimum royalties, exacerbates the civil unrest even more. Balochistan's resources and its location make it an important Geo-Strategic asset, so as a matter of course many international players have put forward their stakes in the province. China's interests in the port of Gwadar and development of the CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor) remain indifferent despite anti CPEC protests and militant attacks. Iran also has a stake in the region as it fears that the insurgency will spill over its own border and create unrest on its side of the border and both the Iranian Government and the Pakistani state accuse each other of providing support to the insurgents. The Taliban are also a player in the arena of Balochistan as they were allowed to regroup in Quetta in during the Afghan war, by the Pakistani State.

Many Balochis believe that the Taliban were introduced in the region deliberately to invalidate the secular nature of the Baloch struggle. The Baloch question does not seem to have a comprehensive solution in the coming future and this observation is attributed to a number of factors. There seems to be no reparation for the Human Rights excesses by the security forces, the constant alienation of the Baloch people by the Pakistani State and the weak democratic structure in Pakistan will only prolong the conflict. The Baloch secessionist movement will continue to move forward if the Garrison state in Pakistan persists and treats Balochistan as a security issue and not as a social issue.

Balochistan's resources and its location makes it an important Geo-Strategic asset, so as a matter of course many international players have put forward their stakes in the province.





WHITE GOLD: DEBUNKING LITHIUM

*The most important
resource of the 21st
century*

By Pradyumna Rout

*With the recent **discovery of rich reserves of Lithium** in Jammu & Kashmir, the excitement is high for a valuable element in today's digital world. The article tries to scrape the fervour to **explore the discovery pragmatically**.*

On the 9th of February 2023, The Geological Survey of India reported a discovery of 5.9 million tonnes of lithium (G3) in the Salal-Haimana area of Reasi district in Jammu and Kashmir. And since then, there has been a buzz in the world media around this seemingly magical ore which is said to solve all our problems shortly. Going as far as stating lithium as the ‘White Gold’ of the 21st century, similar to how

petroleum was referred to as black gold in the 20th century is the bloodline of the emerging industrial economy of the world. Lithium is also projected to achieve such feats because of the innovation in the EV sector.

After the reforms against climate change, we are trying to shift faster into renewables, and in this stride, EVs or Electric vehicles are the most promising step. Since road transportation alone accounts for nearly 16% of all carbon emission worldwide,

and almost 20-30% of CO2 emissions in India comes from automobiles, it's safe to assume that the removal of the same would heavily favour our dreams of achieving a carbon neutral state by the year 2070.

But the most difficult hurdle in our way to fully transition to EVs is not the production of the cars itself, but rather the requirement of a better energy source for it. As we know, EVs are known to be slow to charge. It takes around 6-8 hours to

fully charge an EV, which in turn gives it a range of up to 300 km. This is the sole reason for the automotive market being so sceptical about the transition to EVs. The normal person would fill up his petrol demon in about 5-10 minutes and be done for the day but have to wait for an entire night to do the same in his EV, including the fact that he might have to take multiple stops because of low range, and wait on charging stations before proceeding to the next one to not risk a fallout in the middle of nowhere. And in case of a fallout in the middle of nowhere, he also cannot put a 'bottle of battery charge stored in his boot space' into his EV to power it to the next charging station as he does in his normal petrol/diesel car.

These have been common problems amongst all EV enthusiasts. Even Giants like Tesla struggle to answer this problem to date. Unless there is a breakthrough in material science, the most economical solution we have right now is the use of a battery which can retain a lot of energy per unit mass, instead of building more and more charging stations which will in turn require more money, land and engineers to build, two of which we are in shortage of.

And the solution we reached is the use of Lithium-Ion batteries.

But why lithium-ion?

There have been multiple other materials which are easier to produce or have a higher energy density compared to lithium.

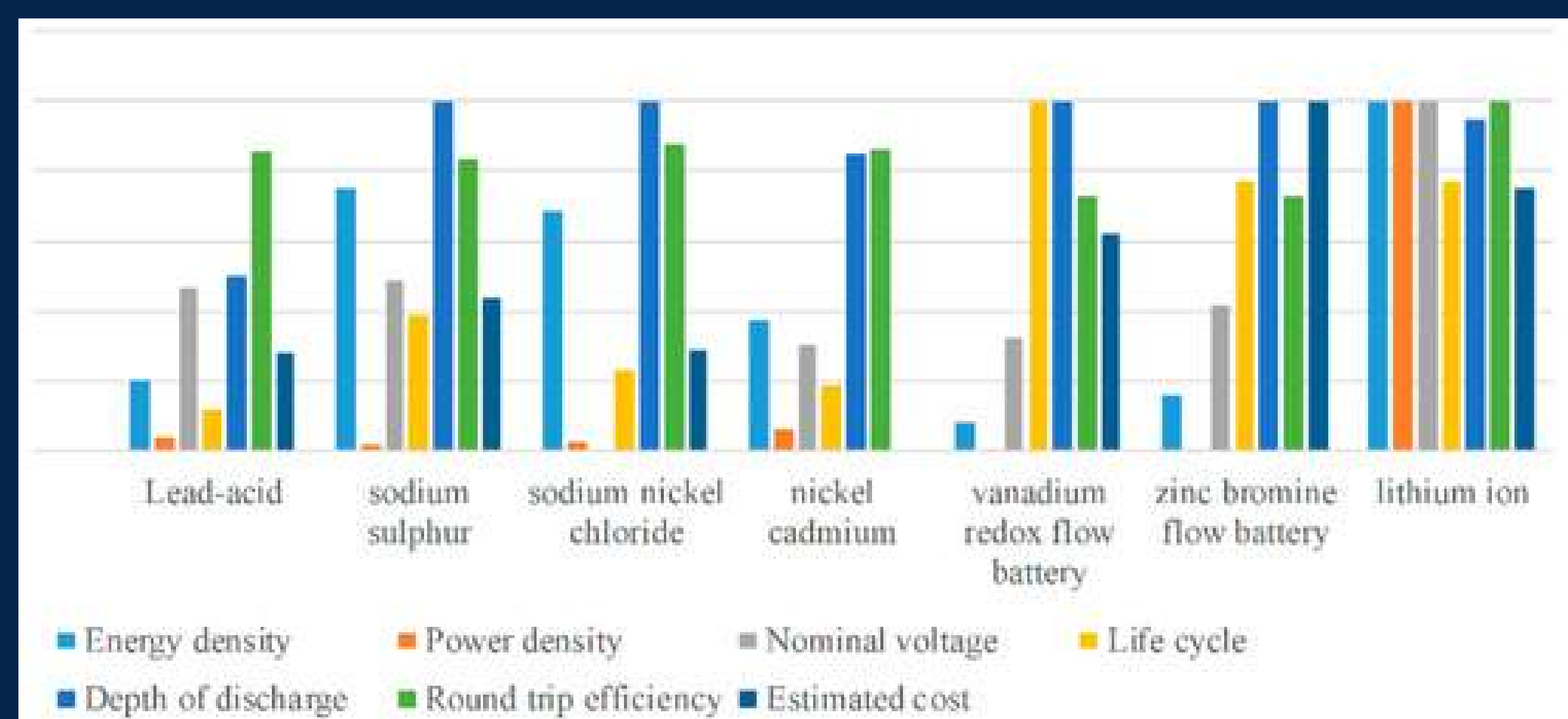
For example, lead acid batteries, which are common in cars as the ignition and interior lighting battery as they are cheap and easy to produce. But their energy density is very bad (Energy Density being the amount of energy they can store per unit mass), that is 30 to 50 watt-hours per kilogram. Also, they have an efficiency of 70-85% meaning they lose 15-30% of the energy stored in them every time they are recharged, which adds up over time. Also, their disposal brings another can of worms since lead is very toxic, and can cause serious health issues in case of exposure.

Another example would be Nickel-cadmium batteries with an efficiency of 85% and energy density of 45 to 80 watt-hours per kilogram, which have a faster recharging time and very fast discharge rates, ready to supply energy in a very short

amount of time, making them perfect to be used in energy backups for telecom and aviation sectors where time is crucial. Also, the shelf life is around 15 to 20 years, making them very cost-efficient over time in the said industries. But the problem is the same, cadmium being very toxic to deal with as well as having very poor retention of energy causes them to fall behind in cases where a longer stable supply of energy is required.

Lithium metal batteries, chemically closest to lithium-ion, have an efficiency of 90% and an energy density of 60-120 watt-hours per kilogram. Being lightweight and energy dense makes them perfect for small hand-held electronics like cameras and electronic thermometers. But being a primary cell means they can only be charged once, making their use economically unsuitable.

Lithium-ion on the other hand has all the said advantages in one, being chemically safer than its alternatives makes it easier to manufacture and dispose of. Its energy efficiency



Graph 1: Lithium-ion vs other battery alternatives.

is calculated to be 99% which is leagues ahead compared to the other alternatives like lead-acid and nickel-cadmium, losing almost none of the energy being stored over time which makes them efficient. Lithium is the 3rd element in the periodic series making it very light, almost 50-60% lighter than its alternatives. And, it has an energy density of 50-260 watt-hours per kilogram, adding a cherry on the cake. This just goes on to solidify the fact that the abundance of lithium will in turn give a great advantage to its owner in the EV sector and the energy sector as a whole.

Lithium and Geopolitics:

Humanity has always needed the energy to progress. And in the 20th century, the source we acquired in bulk was petroleum, adeptly described as “Black Gold”, since its ownership by a nation meant that the nation would thrive by either utilising it or exporting it to other nations for profits. The Middle-Eastern nations were amongst the first to reap the benefits of this oil boom. And more powerful nations like USA and UK at that time could change the rules of this oil business in their favour (the UK established the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC), later British Petroleum in the region of Persia now Iran, and the USA made multiple “peace handlings” to gain hand in the Middle-Eastern oil market..

Even today, Russia is using its petroleum and natural gas reserves in an attempt to handicap the EU in “retaliation” to the sanctions put on it.

A similar kind of situation is seen in the 21st century. We have seen the consequences of the over-exploitation of this resource in the form of pollution and climate change. As humanity progresses towards a carbon-neutral future, lithium has taken the place of petroleum, taking the title of “White Gold” because of its importance in the energy sector right now. The early players in this game were the USA, Australia and China, reporting 6.8,6.3 and 4.5 million tonnes of lithium ore reserves respectively. But it's not all as it is estimated that there are 80 million tonnes of this resource on Earth. And none of the big players have very large amounts of lithium to exploit. The bulk of this 80 million is found in just 4 countries namely Argentina, Chile, Bolivia and Australia, accounting for nearly 80% of all known lithium reserves to man. And the region where the 3 South-American countries of Chile, Argentina and Bolivia intersect, contains nearly all of it, for which it is named as South-American Lithium Triangle (or SALT).

And who is the top manufacturer of lithium-ion batteries in the world? It's not the SALT countries but China.

And India now is importing nearly 70% of all battery cell requirements from China, making the nation vulnerable to market fluctuations and dependent on China to progress in the sector of EVs and the modern energy sector as a whole.

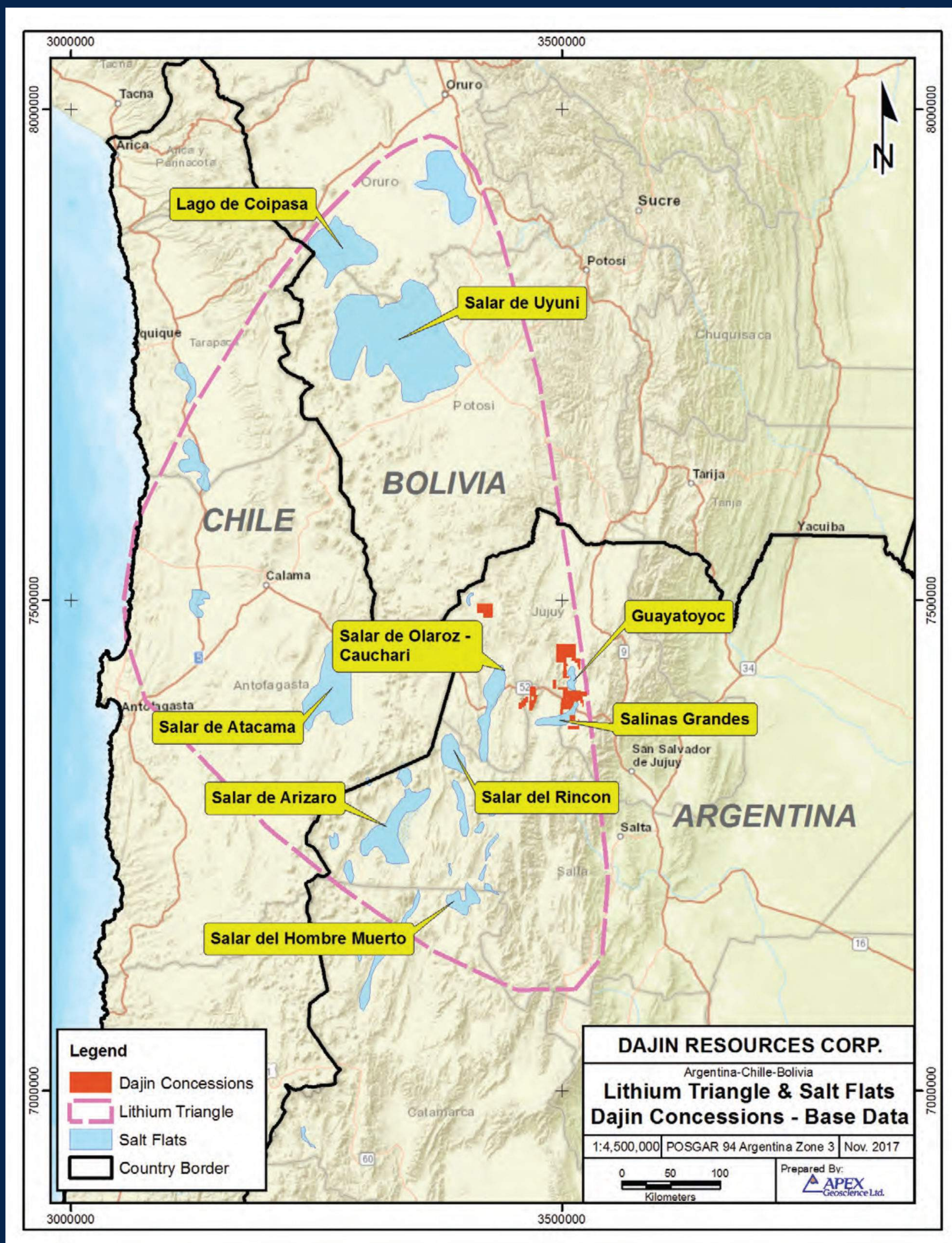
But how China became the top producer despite having no significant amounts of lithium reserves? This is where Geopolitics comes in.

Historically, whenever nations have found a really valuable resource in their possession but no practical means of utilising it or protecting it,

they have either formed alliances with nations in similar states or mindsets, the bright example of which is OPEC or have succumbed to becoming puppet states of powerful nations like in case of British Petroleum. In the case of SALT nations, the latter have come into place. China, at the beginning of this century, went on a spending spree to own stakes in the largest lithium reserves in the world.

Some of them are:

1-Tianqi Lithium is the 2nd largest shareholder in Sociedad Química y Minera de Chile or SQM, one of the biggest suppliers of lithium-based in Chile, investing billions in infrastructure and extraction.



The Lithium Triangle, containing the shared deposits between Chile, Bolivia and Argentina in the Andes Mountains .

2-Ganfeng lithium goes on to acquire 51% of stakes in Cauchari-Olaroz, an Argentina-based lithium project in a joint venture with Lithium Americas, a Vancouver-based company.

3-China's 1-billion-dollar

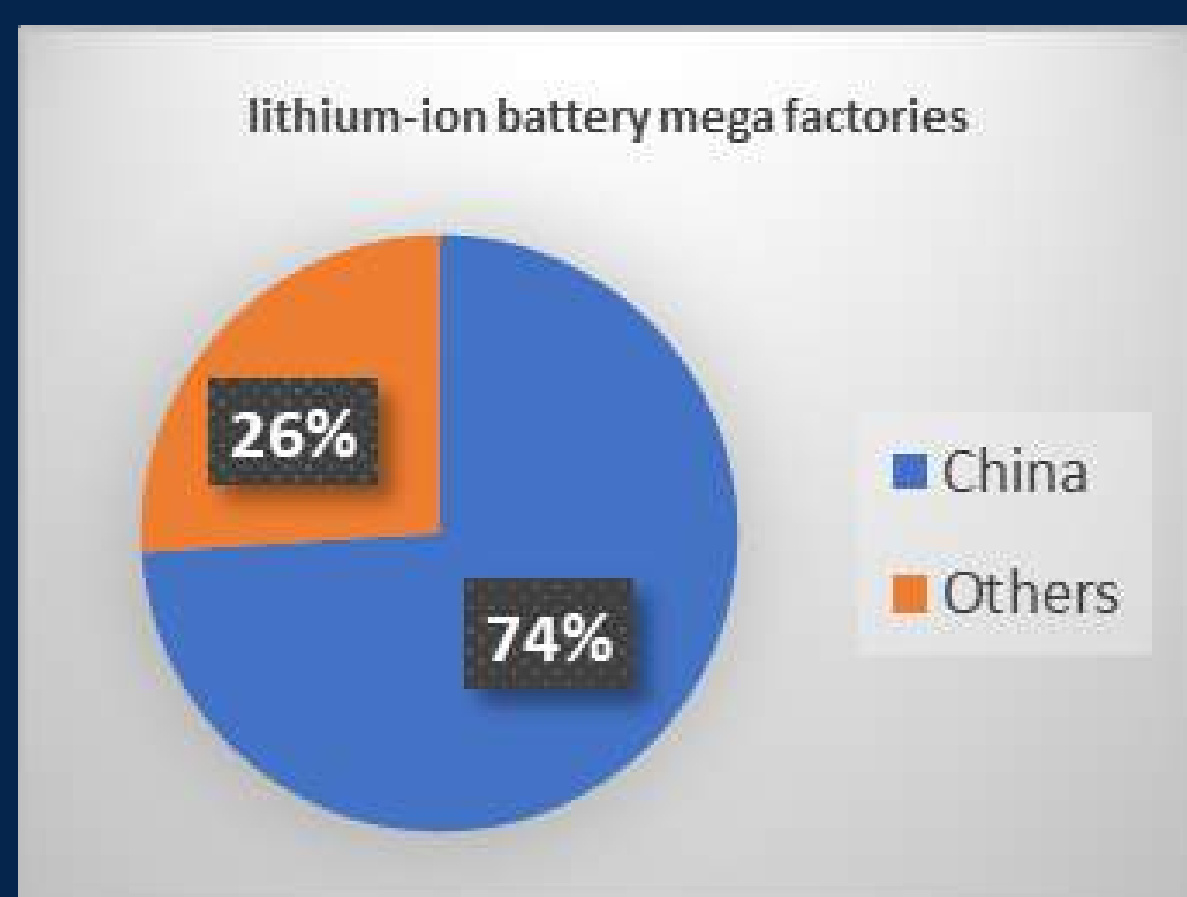
investment in Bolivia's state-owned producer Yacimientos de Litio Bolivianos (YLB) in agreement with Bolivia's Luis Acre Government.

4-Tianqi lithium also holds a 51% stake in Talison, one of the world's leading lithium producers based in Kwinana, Australia

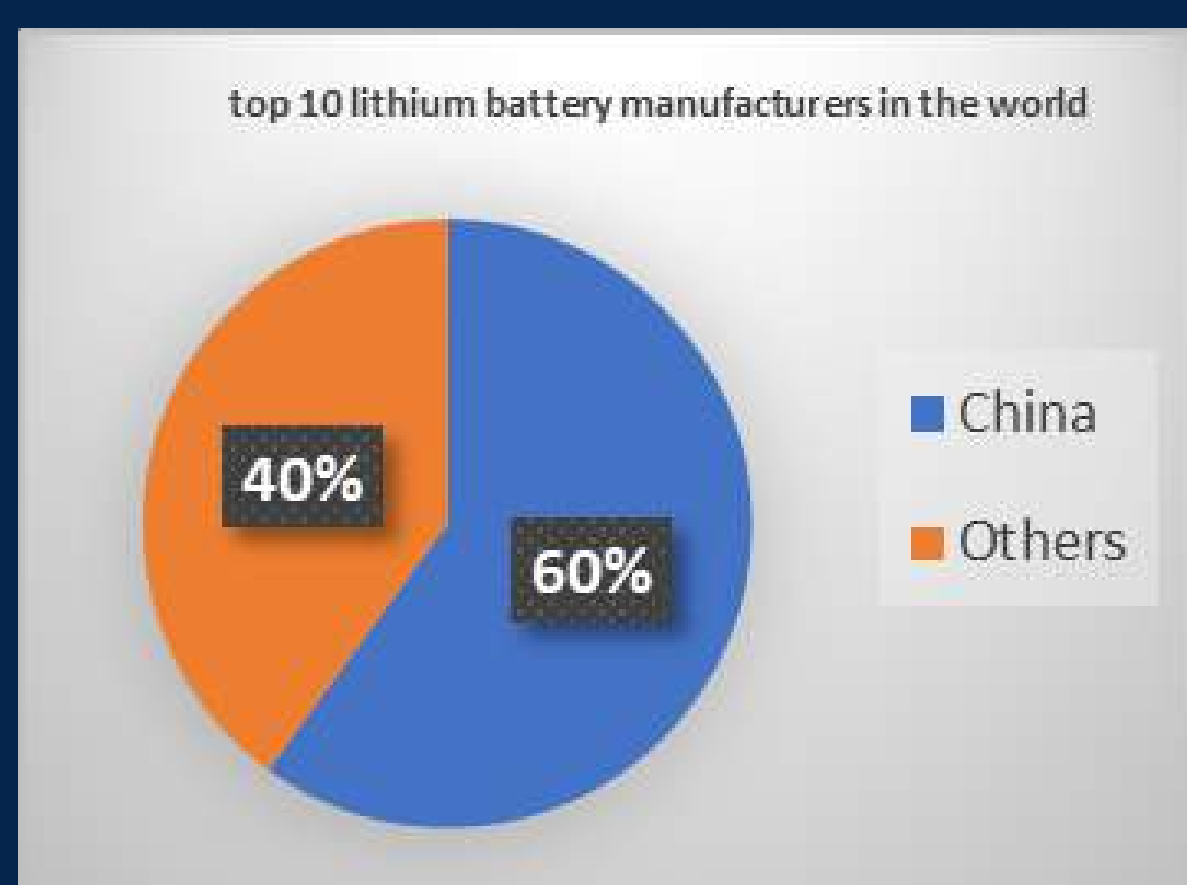
This is how it does not own much lithium, but virtually controls all of the lithium flow around the world.

Its presence in the lithium battery manufacturing market is so substantial that:

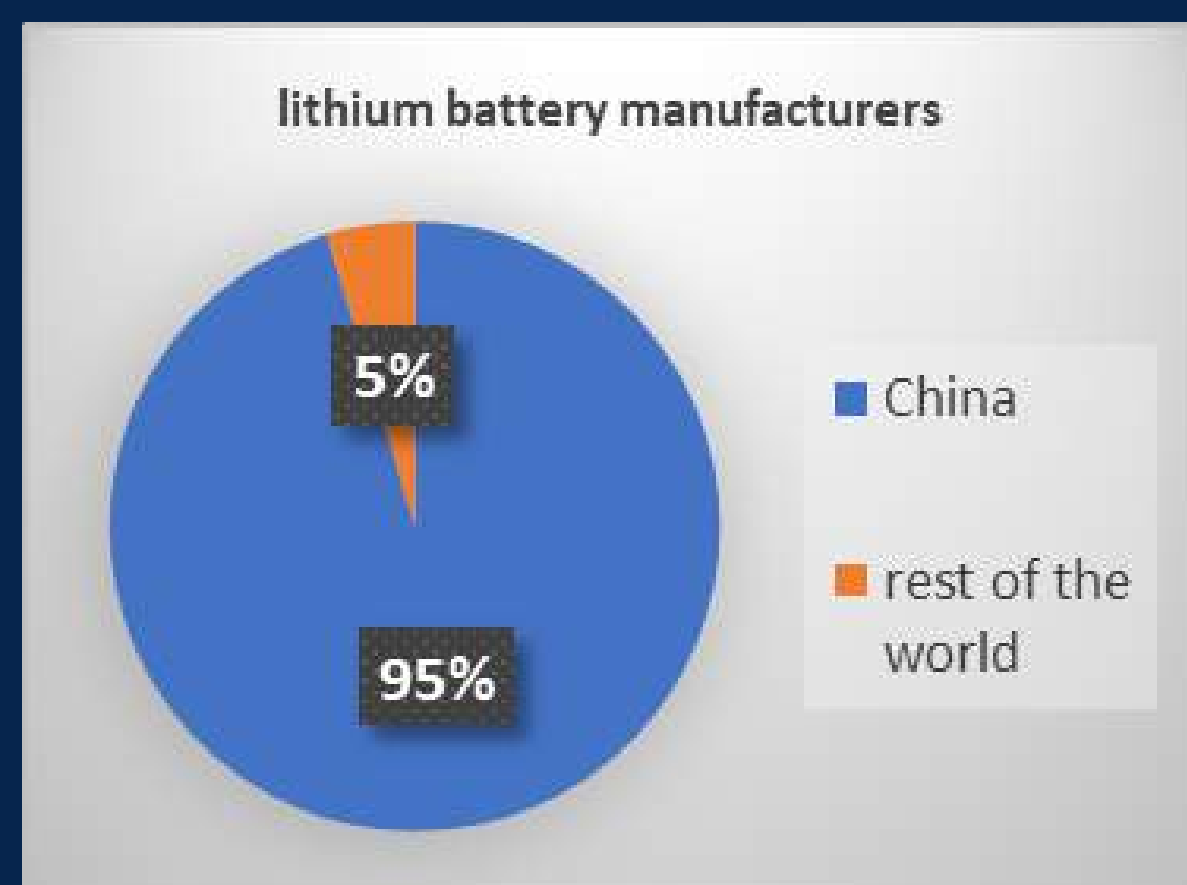
1- Out of 200 lithium-ion battery mega factories, 148 of them are present in China



2- 6 of the top 10 lithium battery manufacturers in the world are located in China



3- Out of the total 107 lithium battery manufacturers in the world, 102 are based in China



China is undoubtedly the global juggernaut when it comes to lithium batteries.

India and the future with lithium:

In the lithium battery sector, India currently is importing 170 crore rupees worth of raw materials from different nations and 8800 cr rupees worth of lithium batteries, 70% of which comes from China.

But this year we have hit on a jackpot namely the Reasi District reserves, estimated to become the 7th largest lithium reserve in the world. But is this going to help our nation? Yes and No

In the long run, we are going to remove our dependency on other nations for lithium-ion batteries, bringing us a step closer to becoming a self-sufficient nation. But practically speaking, that is almost a decade into the future.

Also, it's a G3 survey, meaning the actual quantities may vary in the future.

Right now, we neither hold the extraction facilities to extract this lithium nor the manufacturing facilities to manufacture lithium-ion batteries. We only have one lithium refinery project located in Gujarat, which is yet to be completely started. Also, we don't hold any expertise in lithium recycling either, recycling only 1% of all the

lithium-ion batteries we use. This is a great challenge for our market as we are falling more and more backwards as time progresses in this sector.

The only two processes we are capable of doing right now with lithium are lithium-ion cell and battery pack manufacturing, and for both of them, we are in collaboration with China and other countries.

Munoth Industries (MIL) has a technology agreement with China-based TianJin Lishen Battery Joint-Stock CO., LTD, and the company plans to produce battery packs for wearable electronics and mobile phones in the 1st phase of operations.

Storage battery Major EXIDE is to set up a Lithium-ion cell plant in Bengaluru in collaboration with China's SVOLT Energy Technology Co Ltd and another Joint venture is planned with Switzerland's Leclanche, to manufacture lithium-ion batteries.

Japanese tech giants like Toshiba, Suzuki and Denso Corp are planning to turn their joint manufacturing facility for lithium-ion cells in Gujarat.

So what's the Government doing for all of this?

There have been numerous positive steps in policy reforms taken by our Government to boost and sustain production of both Lithium-ion batteries and EV.

Union budget 2023-24, Govt. removes custom duty on imports of goods and machinery which are involved in manufacturing of lithium-ion cells. This goes in a step further and also removes custom duties from importing equipment required for the manufacturing of Electric vehicles. Also, Customs duties on importing premium vehicles which come in completely built units have been increased to 70% from the previous 60% to promote manufacturing in our own country.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitaraman on February 1st also stated that projects involving Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) will be provided with VGF or Viability Gap funding for a total capacity of 4000MWh to

boost such endeavours. This will help such projects to become viable in the market as the Govt. will be providing a viability gap funding of up to 20% of the total project cost.

And for the FAME II India scheme, the Union budget has allocated a total of 5172 cr for fiscal 2024, which is the biggest investment into FAME II yet.

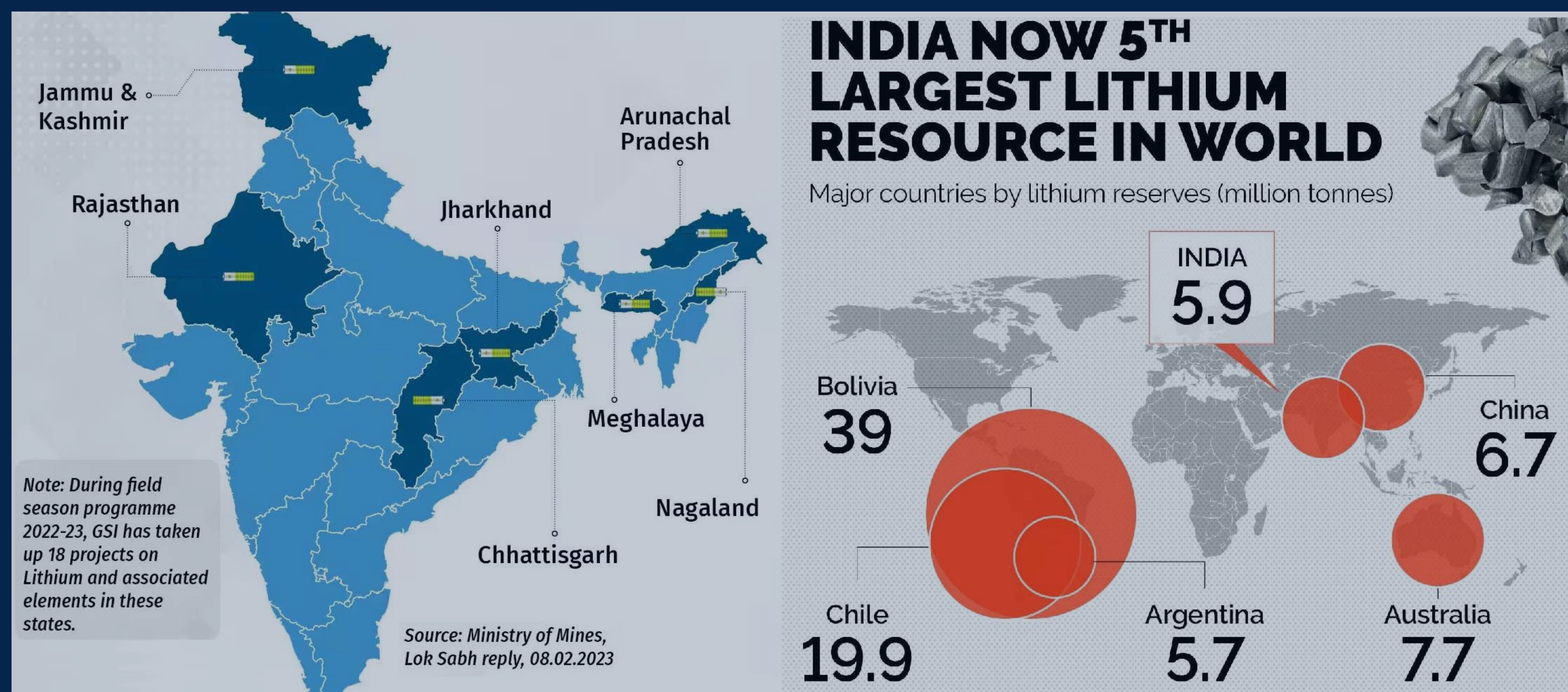
Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicle in India Phase II (FAME India II) Scheme has been launched with an outlay of Rs. 10000 crores to incentivise the demand for Electric Vehicles (EVs) by providing subsidies and creating charging infrastructure. 1 million electric 2-wheelers, 5 lakh electric 3-wheelers, 55000 electric cars and 7090 Electric buses are to be supported under FAME II subsidies alongside an allocation of

Rs. 1000 cr for charging infrastructure planned to be provided too. This has been the driving force towards the transition into EVs in India, which has seen great success in recent years.

In the end, the only things left for us to do is to expand in the extraction and refining sectors of lithium more to decrease the dependence on importing lithium and we would be set to achieve our goal of becoming “atma-nirbhar” at least in the sector of energy and EV.



The only thing left for us to do is to expand in the extraction and refining sectors of lithium more to decrease the dependence on importing lithium."



PHILOSOPHY





POLITICAL THOUGHTS OF MACHIAVELLI

By Harendra Singh

Often criticised by many, Machiavelli's thoughts and philosophies need to be reviewed. The article attempts to view the Italian thinker with a fresh perspective.

ONiccolò Machiavelli was an Italian Renaissance diplomat and a great political philosopher who is most famous for his writings - The Prince and The Discourse with the former being the most important one. He has been criticised for his ideologies till date but has also been followed by various political thinkers and also by people till date.

The researcher will provide a brief history of Machiavelli and analyse his writings and also connect the same to the contemporary world. A philosopher, Niccolò Machiavelli was born on May 3, 1469 in the Republic of Florence (present day Italy) in the period of renaissance. His father was a lawyer due to which he received extensive formal education.

Back then, Italy was divided into 5 city-states- Naples, Milan, Venice, and Sates controlled by Pope. All of these city-states were not in harmony with each other and there was constant interference from Britain, France, Spain and Germany.

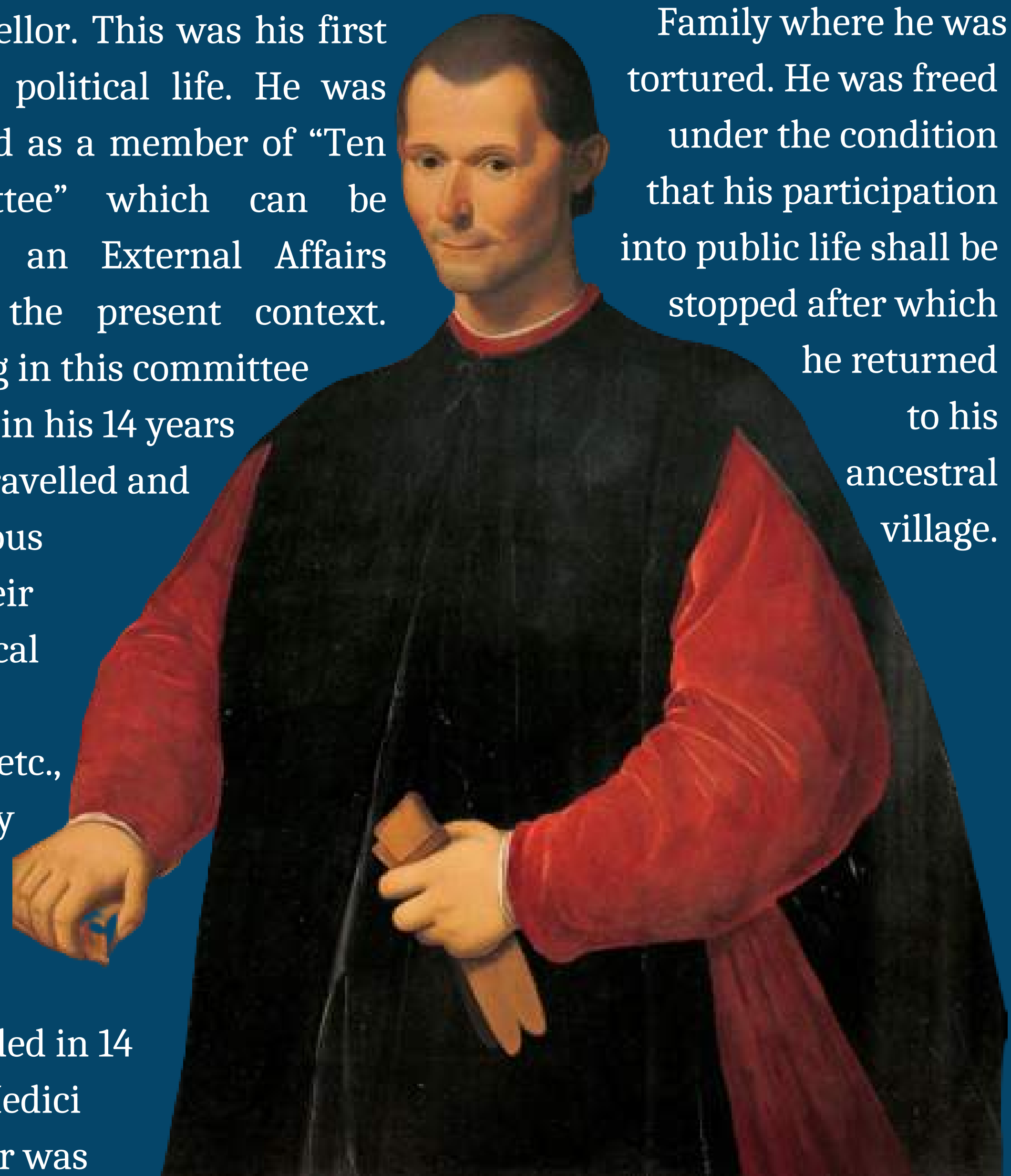
These are the political condition. Through this chaos and deficiency of unity in Italy, Machiavelli was motivated to see Italy as a single united nation. The Medici Family was the ruling family of Florence until the year 1494 after which, they were overthrown and a Republic form of government was established.

This was quite a big political change and at the age of 29, Machiavelli was taken aboard in the government as a Second Chancellor. This was his first step into the political life. He was then promoted as a member of "Ten War Committee" which can be paralleled as an External Affairs Ministry in the present context. While working in this committee as a diplomat, in his 14 years of tenure he travelled and observed various kingdoms. Their policies, political ideologies, working style etc., all were closely observed and looked at by Machiavelli. His tenure ended in 14 years as the Medici Family's power was

re-established with the assistance of the Spanish Army.

One of the first policy changes by the re-established rulers was to remove all the civil servants from their position.

Hence, Machiavelli too lost his position in the government. It doesn't stop here, in 1513, Machiavelli was arrested for conspiring against the Medici Family where he was tortured. He was freed under the condition that his participation into public life shall be stopped after which he returned to his ancestral village.



This is where Machiavelli started his writings - "The Prince" and "The Discourses" of which the former has been used by the likes of Hitler and Stalin and in the contemporary world, used till date by business tycoons and the corporate world as the modern ideology for success.

This 90-page book written in 1513 is a masterpiece for political philosophy which was originally intended to give political advice to Lorenzo de Medici, Duke of Urbino. This book has been said to have a very negative ideology in its sense. In those times and also in the contemporary world, the central view guiding various political philosophers was ethics, goodness and other moral practices mainly in Christianity shall be followed by those in power.

The authority shall be given to only that individual who has high moral and strong ethics. Only then they believed that the King or Prince will be able to do justice to his kingdom.

The rulers inculcated with these values and turned to think that these values are vital for having control over their kingdom and long-term success, power with peace and harmony.

This philosophy has been excluded in "The Prince" by Machiavelli. Instead, he placed power at a superior place than morals and ethics.

The use of power was just and absolute for him until and unless the ulterior motive is maintained, i.e., acquisition and maintenance of power.

He believed and said that goodness and morals do not increase the power of a ruler and hence, if they come in between the actions of the ruler intending for him and the kingdom to grow, he the ruler shall forget all morals and continue with his action. This ideology can be paralleled with the phrase "End justifies the means".

Though, this phrase was not particularly mentioned in the book, it can be inferred from the same that the means used to achieve the ulterior motive however immoral it may be, are all justified by the end result achieved.

The following are the different aspects onto which Machiavelli threw light upon which are the substantial source of information for framing the political thoughts of Machiavelli.

The state was interpreted by Machiavelli in two types- one with a republican form of government which was elected by the popular vote of the people. He has discussed about this form of government in "The Discourses" on which the researcher will elaborate in the further sections of the paper.

The other type of state was a monarchy, ruled by a Prince. In this book, Machiavelli focused on the princes which were new to the position and power and guided them in the aspect of maintaining and acquiring power.

The basic assumption Machiavelli made about human nature was that Man was very pessimistic. For it is a good general rule about men, that are ungrateful, fickle, liars and deceivers, fearful of danger and greedy for gain. Man is a very self-interest-oriented person and placed this above all.

This leads to a conflict in society as members of society are always in a state of competition with each other. This is the assumption onto which Machiavelli built his philosophy. Anarchy-disorder is the situation which is led to by the selfish nature of men.

In the 16th century, Italy had a similar situation which the researcher believes might have been a factor for the assumption mentioned above.

Here, the role of a Prince comes in to eliminate the anarchy, restore law and order and re-establish peace. The traits of this Prince shall be autocratic and in line with a tyrant but with a majority rule. The Prince while in power shall focus onto the common people.

As they comply with the orders and law of the land simply because they dread the results of not doing as such. The Prince shall care for the people.

Secure their life and property, maintain order and stability and be loyal. But his ulterior motive shall be to Preserve his land and maintain his power. For this, he must possess the quality of *Virtu*.

Virtu is the main idea that captures Machiavelli's thoughts regarding human profound quality in military and he has mentioned the same in this book very frequently.

Russel Price interpreted *Virtu* in two ways. One as the "energy, the ability to decide and to act, leaving aside any "moral" aspect of this energy and ability."

In this interpretation, Virtù can be seen as a tool which has no moral basis but a motive only to maintain and acquire power. Neal Wood too had a similar interpretation and said that the evil use of power shall only be done in an occurrence of necessity.

In the other interpretation of Russell, he emphasized that Virtù should be interpreted as moral qualities in the Roman period, or in

the classical Latin Virtù, which signifies force, strength, and efficiency. We can comprehend from both of these interpretations that the main aim of the Virtù is to enable the Prince to act in situations of dangers to his state. The dangers on the state are from 5 aspects- Fortuna, Conventional Morality, Nobility, Common People, Neighboring States.

- Fortuna - It is the fate of the state and the prince which lead to few

unpredictable and uncertain endeavors in life. It may bring opportunity for you or may result in decimation. Virtù in this aspect is the capacity to grab this opportunity in way of foresightedness.

- Conventional Morality - Morals are laid out in the standards or religion and are the absolute standards of virtues.
- These act as a danger as according to him, these morals and standards may act as a hinderance between his actions and his goals and he said that the ruler, to be effective may sometimes go against the morals laid down which ensures his power is maintained.

This is one of the most important aspects as it contributes to a lot of the criticism he has been facing till date and also the aspect from where the phrase “End justifies the means” is interpreted from. Machiavelli further says that the morals and virtues shall not be wholly abandoned but shall be followed when they act in the benefit of the state and helps in preserving the same but then ignore them when necessary.

Furthermore, he had laid down a double standard of morality wherein, as mentioned the role of morality in the course of the Prince is one standard; the other standard is for the public to follow because they have a different purpose than from the prince, they do not have to preserve and protect the state and its people but shall ensure



the peace and harmony in themselves by following the morals laid down in religion and the virtues. "A prince, especially a new one, cannot observe all those things for which men are esteemed, being often forced, in order to maintain the state, to act contrary to fidelity, friendship, humanity, and religion.

Therefore, it is necessary for him to have a mind ready to turn itself accordingly as the winds and variations of fortune force it, yet, as I have said above, not to diverge from the good if he can avoid doing so, but, if compelled, then to know how to set about it." The Prince has to learn how not to be good as if a Prince tries to appeal to everyone, he is bound to fail in his endeavors.

Nobility - These are the person who comprise the elite class of the society and who are in close proximity to the Prince. According to Michiavelli, they act as a danger due to their ambitions, their ambitions to get hold of power and these might act as a serious hindrance for the Prince. Due to these ambitions, these elite people may conspire with enemies, take the side of the opponent or may play any other tactic to het a share of the power. For this, the Prince shall keep their ambitions under control.

"Men ought either to be well treated or crushed, because they can avenge themselves of lighter injuries, of more serious ones they cannot; therefore, the injury that is to be done to a man ought to be of such a kind that one does not stand in fear of revenge." Further, he said that a Prince's logic shall be like a fox and strength shall be like a lion wherein he can recognize the traps and fight them accordingly.

- Common People - The common people who Machiavelli states shall be the main focus of the Prince to keep in his side may become an anger if they are dissatisfied with the ruler as they do have the power to overthrow the one with the commanding power. It shall be the duty of the Prince to firstly, keep them satisfied. Second, he shall ensure that the common people are in a constant state of fear and ensure that their actions do not displeasure the one on power. This is important for ensuring long term power stays in the hand of the Prince. It is better to be feared than loved, if you cannot be both. This was emphasis as love can be temporary if the other person is dissatisfied whereas fear is long turn. Although it shall be mentioned that the Prince shall never be hated by the people but only be feared. Further, violence and cruelty are justified by Machiavelli only till a point where it is necessary and limited and only done to prevent a greater harm.

- Neighboring States - War is an inevitable part of a ruler's rule and a Prince shall always be ready for a war and achieve victory. He recommended the use of the citizens as an army in place of mercenary soldiers to ensure loyalty in his army.

Discourses on Livy

In the book, Machiavelli states that "I have set out all I know and all I have learned in the course of my own experience and steady reading in the affairs of the world." Since the start, he has settled that he is going to dwell upon a new area of which has not been taken by anyone yet.

This also applies to The Prince; it is a political theory that isn't connected to the past.

For fighting from all these 5 sources of dangers, the quality of Virtu is required. Mansfield, in "Machiavelli's Virtue", has criticized the use of Virtu. His main criticism is that Machiavelli used the ideology of Virtu in a very isolated manner and narrowed it to the 15th century politics only and not idealized it as a human nature in general. This led to scholars analyzing Virtu only in that isolated sense and not comparing it with the contemporary world.

The Discourse has been inspired by the Roman history dedicated to the republican form of government as mentioned above. The book has been divided into three parts, part one deals with the internal decisions of the Romans, part two deals with their external affairs and part three looks upon the impact of these decisions onto the Romans. He has been more inclined towards the facts in this book while referring to the roman history and not "what shall be done."

"In setting up states, in maintaining governments, in ruling kingdoms, in organizing armies and managing war, in executing laws among subjects, in expanding an empire, not a single prince or republic now resorts to the examples of the ancients." In book 1 he sets Rome as an ideal government and suggests that the man shall follow the lines of the same. He divided the government into six types - monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, tyranny, oligarchy and anarchy. The first three forms of government were

the good ones but he mentioned that these three were inevitable from the latter three forms of government which are ideal. Rome was a republic mixing all the three forms and was creating a balance. He further states that a state while its formation shall have the founder acting alone to ensure proper organisation and effectiveness in the process which will result in a long-lasting government. He also emphasis on the importance of religion in the society and says that it is vital to ensure that the pubic remains god-fearing which leads to a better population. Rome did have such a religion which he believed to be better than Christianity as it proved to be ineffective in unifying Italy and mentioned it as a primary element for joy in the population.

Machiavelli mentioned that a corruption free republic is essential to ensure a free-state as he in the book emphasizes more on the population compared to the ruler in "The Prince". He explains that the citizens of the state shall be motivated to ensure the overall growth of the state and not their own personal gains. That is why he emphasizes on the elimination of corruption and throws light on how Rome in its initial stages was able to be free from corruption which proved out to be very beneficial for them.

Hence, the book one mainly focuses on the process of formation of a state and has cited various examples from the history of Rome to substantiate his ideologies. One of the important methods to ensure participation of the population in the political institutions were to include and allow all social classes in the institutions.

He mentions the practice of empowering the lower classes in Rome which lead to conflict between classes which he believed to be beneficial for the republic. He also suggested to allow the population to collectively go against a public official who has dissatisfied the population.

He suggests this so as to ensure that the for of the government as a whole remains safe and only a single official takes the blame of dissatisfaction.

Military expansion is the central theme of the second book and he believed that an aggressive policy to expand the territory because the neighboring states will be in competition and expansion will result in elimination of threat.

He believed that Rome had a great foreign policy - firstly, they were liberal in terms of immigration and ensured that the state had free citizens which will in-turn result in a larger citizen military. Second, he mentions that a state shall have allies and friendly relation with their inferior neighbors.

He says that for wars, the state shall always try to be in a dominant position and try to ensure less costs are incurred by the state and says this to be a very successful policy for future states. Renewing a Republic was also a topic in the discourse for which Machiavelli stated that returning to its original principles can prove to be very effective to ensure sustainability of the republic and if this was followed, Rome would not have been corrupted.

Political Interpretations from Machiavelli

In the book, Machiavelli states that "I have set out all I know and all I have learned in the course of my own

experience and steady reading in the affairs of the world." Since the start, he has settled that he is going to dwell upon a new area of which has not been taken by anyone yet. Machiavelli said "Any man who tries to be good all the time is bound to come to ruin among the great number who are not good. Hence a prince who wants to keep his authority must learn how not to be good, and use that knowledge, or refrain from using it, as necessity requires."

This is how he thought a prince shall be while in power to sustain. Machiavelli focused not on the ideals and morals but rather emphasised on the ways and practices a Prince shall follow to ensure that he remains in power and continues to acquire more.

"Yet the way men live is so far removed from the way they ought to live that anyone who abandons what is for what should be pursues his downfall rather than his preservation; for a man who strives after goodness in all his acts is sure to come to ruin, since there are so many men who are not good." This is what creates a distinction between the philosophers who aim at the ideal world and form their reviews, critics and philosophies accordingly and the ones who look at the real world the interpret the philosophy from the ground and to bring in subtle changes and improvements.

Machiavelli falls into the second category of philosophers. In the period of Renaissance in Italy, where each and every person was expected to be sceptical, secular and a lover of antiquity, Machiavelli proved to be the best

example of these aspects by recommending ideologies to the Prince in the same lines.

In terms of the Republic form of government, Machiavelli has taken quite a different course in “The Discourses” when compared to “The Prince” but it wouldn’t be wrong to say that however controversial the later was, the former was a very basic but essential guide for a state to follow to ensure its longevity and sustainability as a state is constantly affected from internal or external factors for which sticking to its principles and ideologies in extremely essential.

Political Thoughts of Machiavelli in the Contemporary World

Kings, Queens, Leaders, Monarchs are still present in the contemporary world and the principles are being laid down since centuries.

The principles are being followed but at the same time being amended to the likings of the present day.

This has resulted in many ideologies becoming obsolete and irrelevant.

But Machiavelli does not fall into that category, his principles are relevant till date and are followed by various people sitting at the top of their field.

The Prince establishes that success and achieving power is superior to morals and ethics. Be it politics, business or any other activity, humans till date are on the same line.

Cut-throat competition is common now a days in every endeavour of life and people just do not care about morals and as Machiavelli mentioned, the ones who do, succumb to the ones who don’t. This is simply how the world works and the sooner one accepts this, the happier he will be.

But Machiavelli did not suggest that morals be abandoned by the common people, according to him, this principle was only for the Prince. But in the contemporary world, it is clearly present in the common people as well.

This is the detour that the society has taken from the previous time and the ideologies of Machiavelli. Abandoning of morals is an everyday practice which has resulted in huge class divide among people which has created an anarchy.

Conclusion

Although criticised by many, the researcher believes that the political thoughts of Machiavelli were not totally negative but actually gave the real picture of the society and its code of conduct. Be it the prince or the discourse, his ideologies were very much relevant to the 15th century and assisted on how a Prince or the leader of a Republic government ought to be to ensure long term sustainability and power.

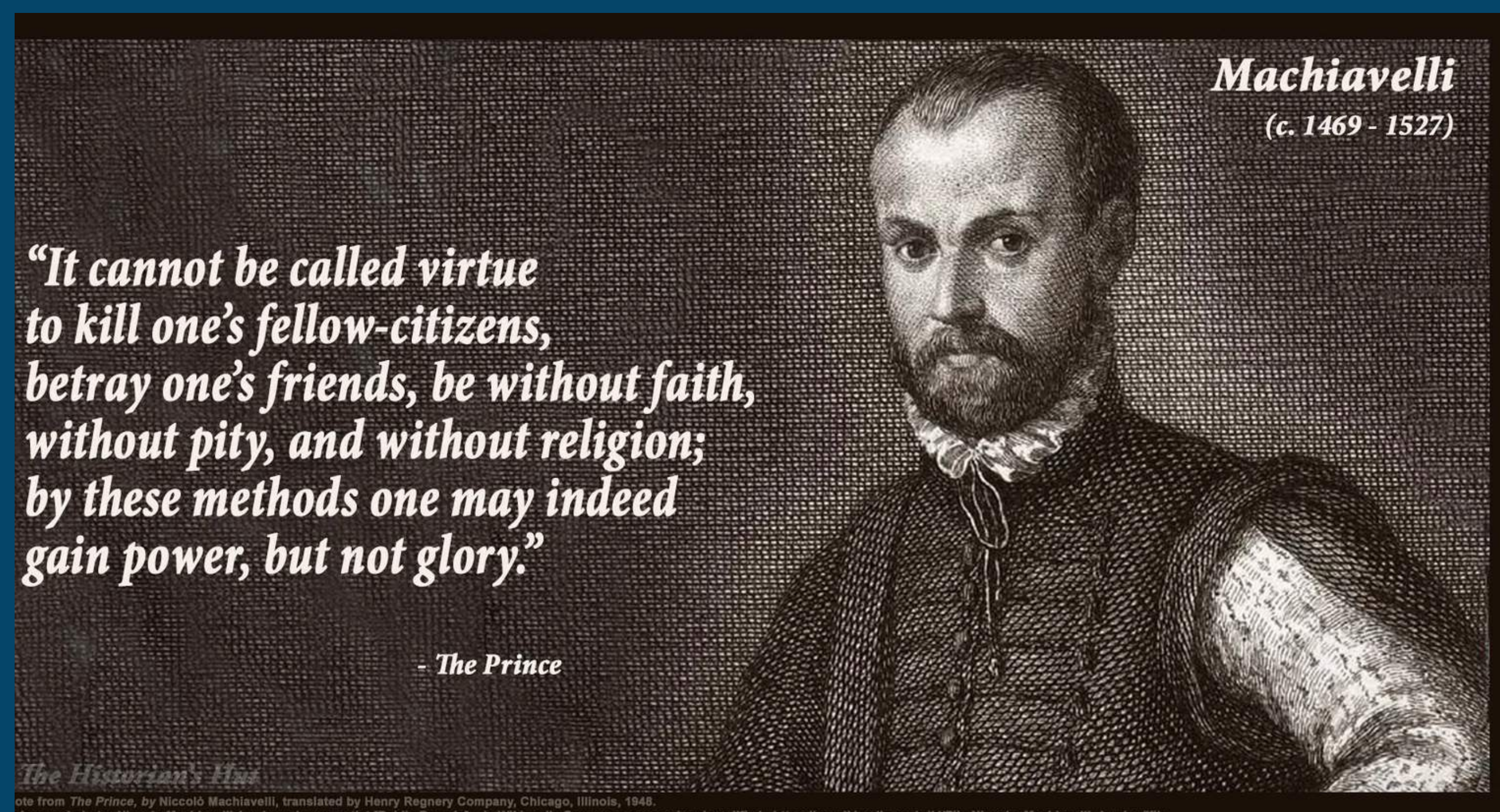
Following the morals and ethics simply leads to a inevitable defeat which is the story of the contemporary world too.

As mentioned above, the present world is in a state of Anarchy in the aspect of morals and ethics.

The need of the hour is to have leaders be it democratic or monarchic to ensure an equilibrium in the society because Machiavelli mentioned that it shall be the duty of the ruler to ensure that it public is satisfied and in the current context, the lower class are surely not satisfied with their rulers.

Also, as mentioned in the discoursed the population shall ensure to act in the benefit of the state and not their personal interests which the researcher believes is a key element in the economic divide present now.

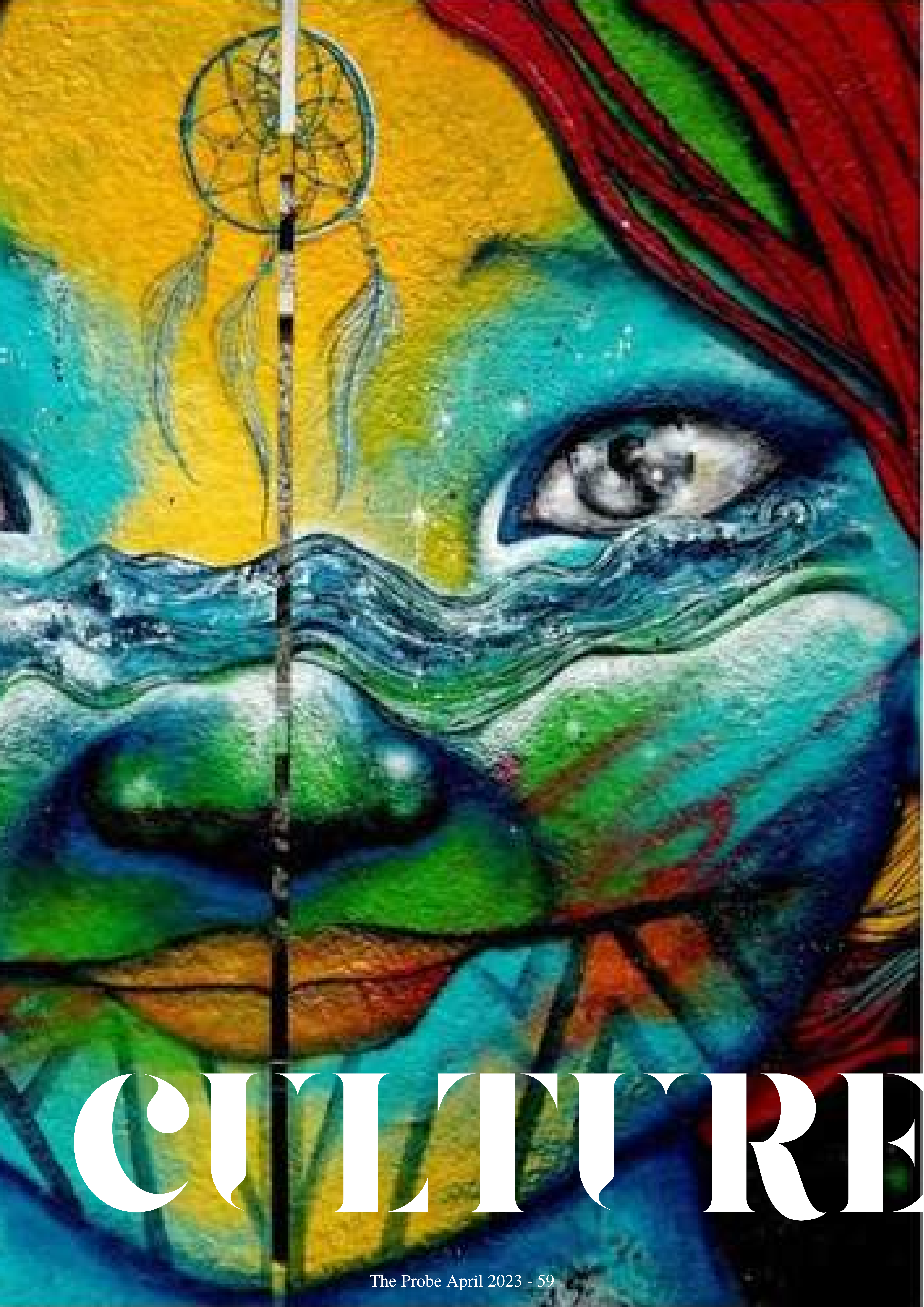
Machiavelli was a very realistic political thinker who kept the needs and wants of the then present society and the leaders present today shall too focus on the same to ensure the world to be a better place to live in.



SOCIETY

3





CULTURE

CAPITALISM AND PATRIARCHY: A NEFARIOUS NEXUS

By Arpit Rituraj

The notion of empowering women in our societies has remained largely distorted, the misalignment is facilitated and exacerbated by the neo-liberal capitalist mode of the economy further significantly. The prominent ingredients in the making of capitalist societies constitute oppression, misogyny, and hardwiring of sexism in its structures and in ways of organising production in particular and overall lives generally. The constant reinventions and enforcement of patriarchal norms have helped capitalism to thrive for decades now, whose routine this article would serve to articulate.

Conspiracy to Disenfranchise

Patriarchy's principle demand instils in keeping women within closed premises of home. Even if they are allowed to work, their work should not disrupt the imposed commitments to their households, according to the imagined idealism. Capitalism introduced us to the term 'homemaker' and created an



indelible distinction between 'productive' and 'reproductive labour'.

It partnered with patriarchy to keep women as underachievers or non-achievers, to maintain a pool of low-wage workers on standby. Following early marriages, unfinished education, or gaps in career owing to marriage or childbirth, when women step out to work, they are either unskilled or low-skilled and have to settle for low-paying chores.

Further, patriarchy confronts various biases regarding women's capabilities as workers and uses their natural biological functions such as menstruation and childbirth against them to devalue their contributions.

Not many women are a part of the formal sectors, but the majority of women do engage in home-based informal work (agricultural labour, domestic workers, small home-based businesses, tailors, seamstresses, and factory workers) that is often miscategorised as housework. For example, it took a year-long farmers' protest in India for women to lay claim to the title of 'farmer' and to be recognised as such. Until then, agricultural work was considered a mere extension of the housework already performed.

The more women are relegated to the domestic sphere, the lower their skills and self-worth, which means corporations can get away with paying them a much lower salary than their male counterparts.

The inherent gender inequalities in a patriarchal society also translate to fewer economic opportunities for women in a capitalist setup. A limited choice pool means women often have to opt for either low-paying home-based jobs or jobs beneath

their level of certification. Even after they somehow manage to attain higher qualifications, the capitalist-patriarchal setup never fails to pull women down.

Enforcement Entitlements in Disguise of Innovations

The fact that patriarchy wants to keep women confined to domesticity works out well for capitalism. Many women in India who identify as housewives are engaged in productive labour from home. For example, some women work from their homes as tailors or seamstresses for entrepreneurs who wish to outsource their work at a low wage rate. Capitalism has never made an effort to address these inequalities by making workplaces gender responsible, giving women an equal playing

field. It has rather advanced the idea of housewives (even when the work done is productive) to ensure women opt for low-paying work in exchange for the relative comfort of working from home and to better manage their reproductive labour. There is little doubt that capitalism has encouraged technological inventions like the variety of equipment that automate housework such as washing machines, vacuum cleaners, and microwave ovens - with the potential to make women's lives far easier.

But set against the backdrop of a patriarchal society and rigid gender roles, a majority of Indian women have no access to these innovations, not just because of affordability but also societal expectations. In our homes, for example, it is expected that women will make fresh food for the family

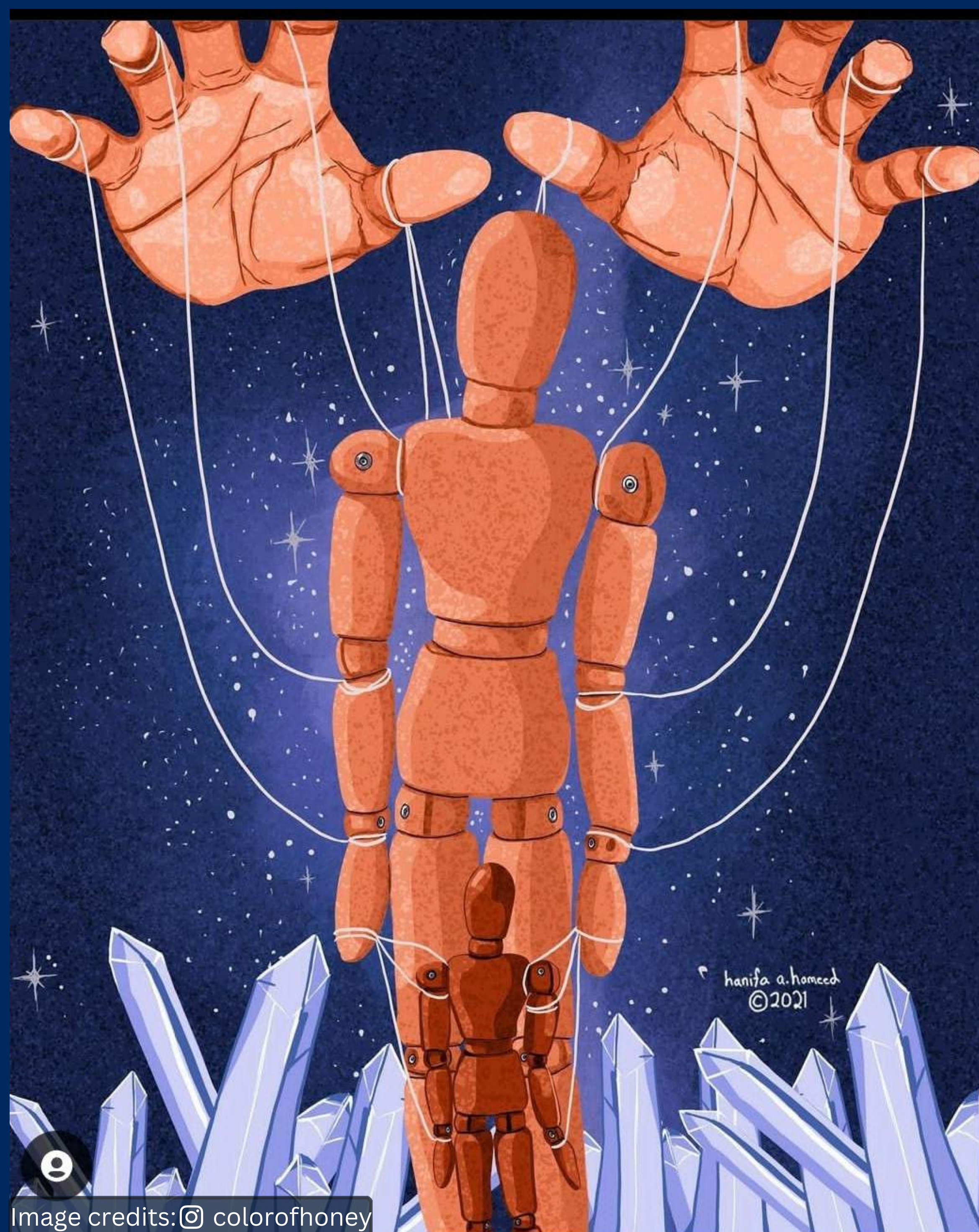


Image credits: @colorofhoney

no matter how late or what time of day it is. So, in many middle-class homes, even though there are microwave ovens that men can use to reheat the food, the wife or mother will still stay up to reheat it for him. It's touted as a labour of love but is just silent oppression in reality. Capitalism wins when the woman buys a microwave oven or is gifted with one and patriarchy wins when she slaves in the kitchen instead of taking a break and letting family members reheat their meals.

Preying on the Slightest of Emancipation

In her book *The Gender Effect*, Kathryn Moeller exposes the inherent hypocrisy of corporate investment in the empowerment of women. According to her, corporations are now more focused on women so that they could be harnessed as a means to grow their markets and profits. They are investing in existing inequities instead of transformative ones, across multiple axes of difference - gender, racial, class, religious, and geographies.

Corporations have learnt that many women are now decision-makers and possess purchasing power. Women are now consuming goods not only to fulfil their requirements but also to reward themselves. It is therefore prudent for firms to break gender stereotypes and frame their product campaigns by emphasising the development of women's personal and social selves.

For example, Ariel India's advertisement campaign '*share the load*', attempted to show the consumers that doing laundry is not only a woman's job. The message could have been widened and collectively urged that housework, including but not limited to laundry, was not just women's work. But the brand's commitment to its product is larger than its commitment to women's empowerment; the latter functions more as a marketing gimmick. To expect that advertisers such as Ariel are leading to some kind of revolution inside Indian homes is laughable. Such campaigns are mere tools for profit-making.

Corporations, of course, are focused on maximising profit, and when it comes to branding, association with women's empowerment is the goose that lays golden eggs for them. Even when corporates invest in gender-sensitive campaigns, they are more focused on marketing than on bringing any serious change to the patriarchal status quo.

The Ploy of 'Free' Society

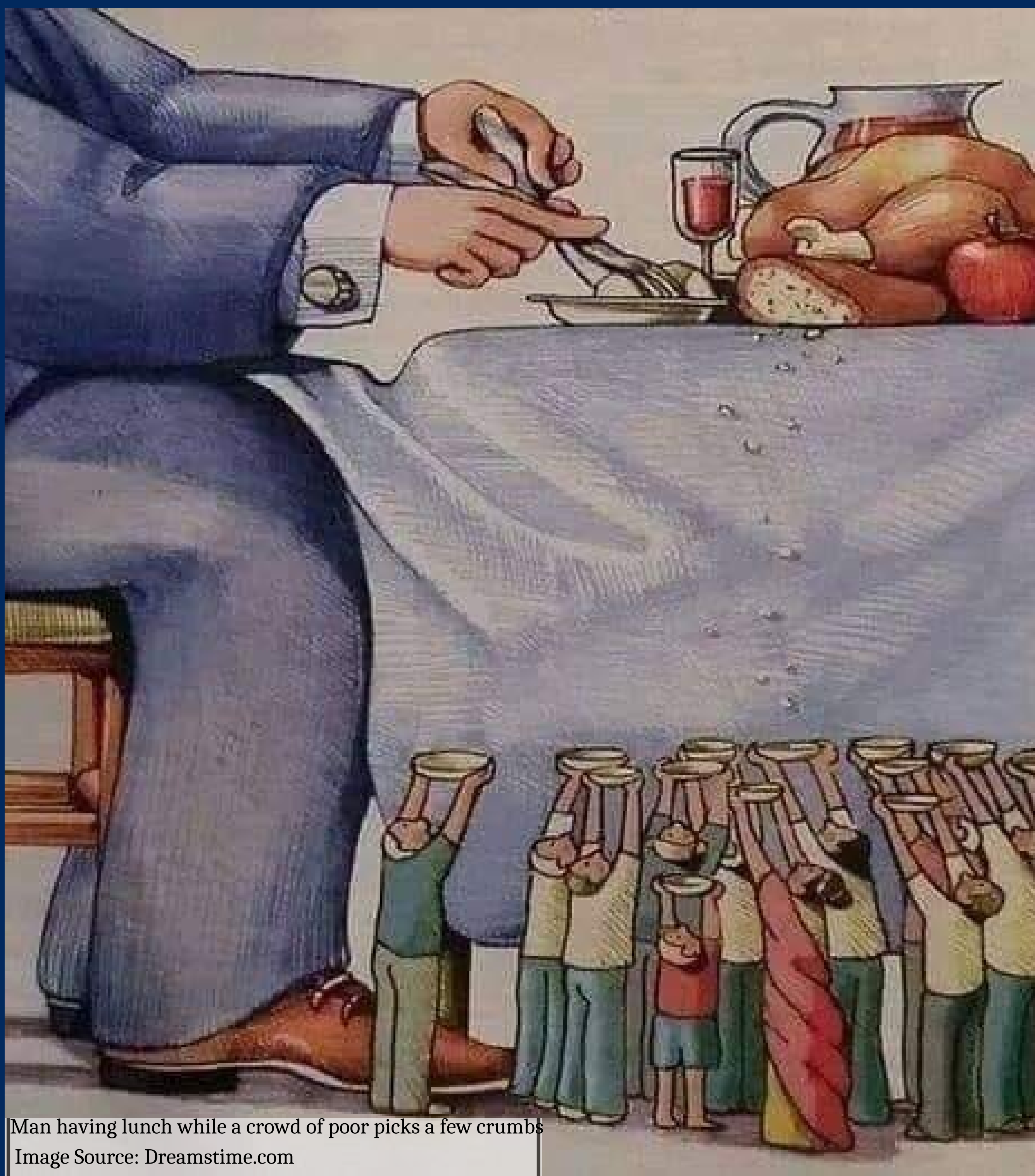
The ideological view of capitalism combines the ostensibly even turf it offers with the structural asymmetries to construct an entirely misguided understanding of equality. According to the accustomed view, capitalism laid a breakaway from the past, where in the new reality, people regardless of gender were set free.

The core of capitalist functioning was meant to be based on contestation and a level playing field. The myth of free competition constructed by capitalism is miles away from the truth. The pre-existing inequalities were not abolished by its introduction or subsequent takeover, and not even by the advent of its offshoot 'democratic way of governance'. Competition in capitalist societies is not as much about money as it is about capital, but only a minority of people at the apex, monopolise the capital and compete for it. The rest masses are left to indulge in

struggles to secure means for consuming its fractions. Turns out, capital is just an instrument for domination. Inequality, in reality, is about domination. Since the structures of domination are rendered invisible in capitalist societies, very little can be done about inequality in spheres of gender, especially under its ambit.



Image Source: thetimesofudaipur.com



Man having lunch while a crowd of poor picks a few crumbs
Image Source: Dreamstime.com

An Alternate View

Today, there is a need to go back to Marxist literature, primarily because of its definition of women's labour, which threatens the traditionalists and invites opposition from them. The view disturbs the status quo and seeks to interfere in the family structures that have emerged as a refuge for patriarchy. Marx defined housework as 'petty, stultifying, and degrading', while Engels said that with the 'emergence of private property and class, society had begun the grouping of men as breadwinners and women as housewives and therein had begun women's oppression.

The Irish socialist republican James Connolly had said that -

“
if men were the
slaves of a
capitalist
society, then
housewives
were 'the slave
of the slave

”

While capitalism exploits every worker, the wage at least recognizes the work and grants bargaining power to women from where they can struggle around against the terms and the quantity of that wage, the terms and the quantity of that work. But housework is considered something that 'cannot be measured in qualitative values' because it apparently comes out of 'love'. This popular imposition of gender traits deprives women of all agencies and contains them in the set conduct of idealism.

Conclusion

Economist Shiuli Vanaja, explains that Capitalism survives by creating inequalities in the system. Only then does it become beneficial in terms of accumulation. The more equal the distribution the least the capitalist accumulation.

Capitalism is not at all interested in tearing any sort of inequality, especially in terms of gender. The bigger the gulf they'll help sustain, the smaller the burden would be on the system to be accountable. Increased inequalities in society open up further doors for the capitalist, from where they can get away by paying less to women workers. The system driven by profit-making even at the cost of oppression does not help in any way to topple patriarchy but rather draws benefits from it, helping the discriminatory structure sustain. The two-way symbiotic relationship that patriarchy and capitalism share, exploits and deprives women in all spheres of life.

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