



- ▲ Old Gold
- ▲ Reclaiming Globalisation as Our Own
- ▲ Books

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15

Contents

1. **Old Gold**
Open letter to M S Swaminathan
by Bhaskar Save TRADITION & MODERNITY
Vernacular Values
by Ivan Illich

2. **Reclaiming Globalisation as Our Own**
How to Judge Globalism
by Amartya Sen GLOBALISATION
Democracy as a Universal Value
by Amartya Sen DEMOCRACY
Poverty and Political Freedom
by Rjeev Bhargava
Social Movements in the Age of GLocalisation CONVERGENCE
by Hermann Maiba

3. **Books** *Harish Sethi reviews* SOCIETY & CHANGE
**Social Movements In India: Poverty,
Power and Politics**
edited by Raka Ray and Mary Fainsod Katzenstein

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This digest features important articles on development and social transformation in order to reach those working in the field and not having knowledge of these documents. It is aimed at promoting further reading of the originals, and generating public debate and action on public issues. The articles are compiled and edited for easy reading and comprehension of the concepts, and not so much to reproduce the academic accuracy of the original texts.

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Old Gold

There has been mounting pressure on 'Shining India' to look at its under-world. We are not referring to the old netherworld populated by gangsters and smugglers, nor are we talking about the supporters of modern 'terrorism'.

We are referring to the underworld of people and communities like the traditional fisher folk communities, adivasis and tribals, farmers subsisting on rain fed agriculture, and artisanal workers. There is mounting pressure from farmer suicides, for instance, on 'Shining India'.

***Bhaskar Save**, a farmer, has decided to make a stand - and he has written to the neo-con, M S Swaminathan, who is a newly converted believer in inclusive and sustainable development. His open letter to M S is a rousing call to understand the true nature of production and processing of goods and the understanding of the larger environment; that the onslaught from rootless modernity is disruptive, and in the long run, counter productive and unsustainable.*

Must modernity and science necessarily subjugate and colonise?

*More than twenty five years ago - Old Gold is how we call such prescient writings - **Ivan Illich** laid it bare in his inimitable, incisive style. He traces the war against subsistence and the onslaught on the vernacular to a deliberate effort to subjugate and colonise peoples' minds, lands and cultures.*

It still goes on. Is it now the turn of the native? Is it ripe for a revolt of the subaltern?

Mounting Suicides and National Policy for Farmers, Letter from Bhaskar Save,
[\[eldoc1/0609/DD1_Bhaskar_Mounting_Suicides_NPF.html\]](#)

Vernacular **Values**, Ivan Illich, The Preservation Institute, April 12, 1980.

<http://www.preservenet.com/theory/Illich/Vernacular.html>

[\[eldoc1/q00 /Vernacular values by Ivan illich.html\]](#)

Open Letter To M.S. Swaminathan

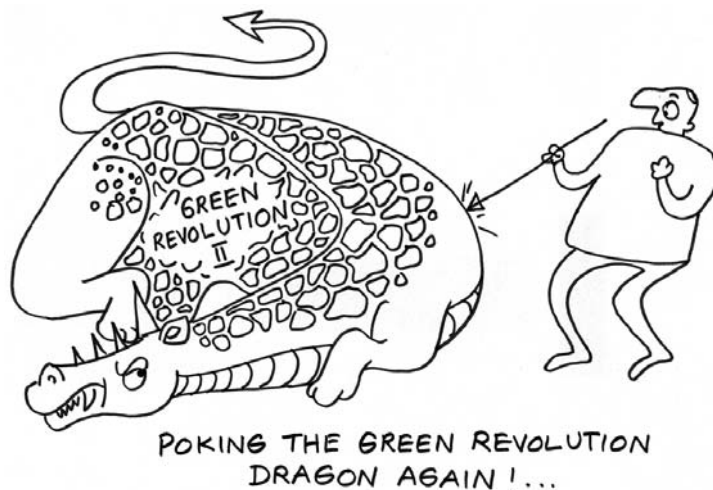
To,

Shri M.S. Swaminathan,
The Chairperson, National Commission on Farmers,
Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India
July 29, 2006

Subject: Mounting Suicides and National Policy for Farmers

Dear Shri Swaminathan,

I am an 84-year old natural/organic farmer with more than six decades of personal experience in growing a wide range of food crops. I have, over the years, practised several systems of farming, including the chemical method in the fifties - until I soon saw its pitfalls. I say with conviction that it is only by organic farming in harmony with nature, that India can sustainably provide her people abundant, wholesome food. And meet every basic need of all - to live in health, dignity and peace.



You, M.S. Swaminathan, are considered the 'father' of India's so-called 'Green Revolution' that flung open the floodgates of toxic 'agro' chemicals - ravaging the lands and lives of many millions of Indian farmers over the past 50 years. More than any other individual in our long history, it is you I hold responsible for the tragic condition of our soils and our debt-burdened farmers, driven to suicide in increasing numbers every year.

As destiny would have it, you are presently the chairperson of the 'National Commission on Farmers' mandated to draft a new agricultural policy. I urge you to take this opportunity to make amends - for the sake of the children, and those yet to come.

I understand your Commission is inviting the views of farmers for drafting the new policy. As this is an open consultation, I am marking a copy of my letter to: the Prime Minister, the Union Minister for Agriculture, the Chairperson of the National Advisory Council, and to the Media - for wider communication. I hope this provokes some soul-searching and open debate at all levels on the extremely vital issues involved so that we do not repeat the same kind of blunders that led us to our present, deep festering mess.

The great poet, Rabindranath Tagore, referred not so long ago to our "*sujhalam, sufalam*" land. Ours indeed was a remarkably fertile and prosperous country - with rich soils, abundant water and sunshine, thick forests, a wealth of bio-diversity, and cultured, peace-loving people with a vast store of farming knowledge and wisdom.

Farming runs in our blood. But I am sad that our (now greyed) generation of Indian farmers, allowed itself to be duped into adopting the shortsighted and ecologically devastating way of farming, imported into this country by those like you, with virtually zero farming experience!

For generations beyond count, this land sustained one of the highest densities of population on earth. Without any chemical 'fertilizers', pesticides, exotic dwarf strains of grain, or the new, fancy 'bio-tech' inputs that you now seem to champion. The many waves of invaders into this country, over the centuries, took away much. But the fertility of our land remained unaffected.

Though stationary, nature provides their needs right where they stand. But 'scientists' and technocrats like you - with a blinkered, meddling itch - seem blind to this. On what basis do you prescribe what a tree or plant requires, and how much, and when?

TRADITION & MODERNITY

This country has more than 150 agricultural universities, many with huge land-holdings of thousands of acres. They have no dearth of infrastructure, equipment, staff, money, ... And yet, not one of these heavily subsidized universities makes any profit, or grows any significant amount of food, if only to feed its own staff and students. But every year, each churns out several hundred 'educated' unemployables, trained only in misguiding farmers and spreading ecological degradation.

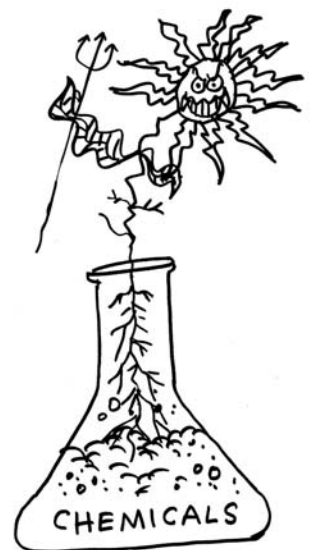
In all the six years a student spends for a M. Sc. in agriculture, the only goal is short-term - and narrowly perceived - 'productivity'. For this, the farmer is urged to *do* and *buy* a hundred things. But not a thought is spared to what a farmer must *never do* so that the land remains unharmed for future generations and other creatures. It is time our people and government wake up to the realisation that this industry-driven way of farming - promoted by our institutions - is inherently criminal and suicidal!

Gandhi declared: Where there is *soshan*, or exploitation, there can be no *poshan*, or nurture! Trying to increase Nature's 'productivity,' is the fundamental blunder that highlights the ignorance of 'agricultural scientists' like you. The mindset of servitude to 'commerce and industry,' ignoring all else, is the root of the problem. But industry merely transforms 'raw materials' sourced from nature into commodities. It cannot create anew. Only nature is truly creative and self-regenerating.

The Six Self-renewing *Paribals* of Nature

There is on earth a constant inter-play of the six *paribals* (key factors) of nature, interacting with sunlight. Three are: air, water and soil. Working in tandem with these, are the three orders of life: '*vanaspati srushti*' (the world of plants), '*jeev srushti*' (the realm of insects and micro-organisms), and '*prani srushti*' (the animal kingdom). These six *paribals* maintain a dynamic balance. Together, they harmonise the grand symphony of nature, weaving the new!

Man has no right to disrupt any of the *paribals* of Nature. But modern technology, wedded to commerce - rather than wisdom or compassion - has proved disastrous. Modern farmers spray deadly poisons on their fields. These massacre nature's *jeev srushti* - the unpretentious but tireless little workers that maintain the ventilated quality of the soil, and recycle all life-ebbed biomass into nourishment for plants. The noxious chemicals also inevitably poison the water, and nature's *prani srushti*, which includes humans.



The Root of Unsustainability

Sustainability is a modern concern, scarcely talked of at the time you championed the 'green revolution'. Can you deny that for more than forty centuries, our ancestors farmed the organic way - without any marked decline in soil fertility? Is it not a stark fact that the chemical-intensive and irrigation-intensive way of growing monoculture cash-crops, has been primarily responsible for spreading ecological devastation far and wide in this country? - Within the lifetime of a single generation!

Engineered Erosion of Crop Diversity, Scarcity of Organic Matter, and Soil Degradation

This country boasted an immense diversity of crops, adapted over millennia to local conditions and needs. But in the guise of increasing crop production, exotic dwarf varieties were introduced and promoted through your efforts. This led to more vigorous growth of weeds, which were now able to compete successfully with the new stunted crops for sunlight. The farmer had to spend more labour and money in weeding, or spraying herbicides. Much less organic matter was locally available to recycle the fertility of the soil, leading to an artificial need for externally procured inputs. Inevitably, the farmers resorted to use more chemicals, and relentlessly, soil degradation and erosion set in.

Engineered Pestilence

The exotic varieties, grown with chemical 'fertiliser', were more susceptible to 'pests and diseases', leading to yet more poison (insecticides, etc.) being poured. But the attacked insect species developed resistance and reproduced prolifically. Their predators - spiders, frogs, etc. - that fed on these insects and 'biologically controlled' their population, were exterminated. So were many beneficial species like the earthworms and bees.

Agribusiness and technocrats recommended stronger doses, and newer, more toxic (and more expensive) chemicals. But the problems of 'pests' and 'diseases' only worsened. The spiral of ecological, financial and human costs mounted!

The 'Development' of Water Scarcity and Dead, Salty Soils

With the use of synthetic fertilizer and increased cash-cropping, irrigation needs rose enormously. In 1952, the Bhakra dam was built in Punjab, a water-rich state fed by 5 Himalayan rivers. Several thousand more big and medium dams followed all over the country, culminating in the massive Sardar Sarovar. And now, our government is toying with a grandiose, Rs.560, 000 crore



proposal to divert and 'inter-link' the flow of our rivers.

India, next to South America, receives the highest rainfall in the world. The living soil and its underlying aquifers serve as gigantic, ready-made reservoirs gifted free by nature. Particularly efficient in soaking rain are the lands under forests and trees. Half a century ago, most parts of India had enough fresh water all round the year, long after the rains had stopped and gone. But clear the forests, and the capacity of the earth to soak the rain, drops drastically. Streams and wells run dry.

While the recharge of groundwater has greatly reduced, its extraction has been mounting. India is presently mining over 20 times more groundwater each day than it did in 1950.

More than 80% of India's water consumption is for irrigation, with the largest share hogged by chemically cultivated cash crops. Maharashtra, for example, has the maximum number of big and medium dams in this country. But sugarcane alone, grown on barely 3-4% of its cultivable land, guzzles about 70% of its irrigation waters!

Soil salinisation is the greatest scourge of irrigation-intensive agriculture, as a progressively thicker crust of salts is formed on the land. Many million hectares of cropland have been ruined by it. The most serious problems are caused where water-guzzling crops like sugarcane or basmati rice are grown round the year, abandoning the traditional mixed-cropping and rotation systems of the past, which required minimal or no watering.

Since at least 60% of the water used for irrigation nowadays in India, is excessive, indeed harmful, the first step that needs to be taken is to control this.

Conservative Irrigation and Groundwater Recharge at Kalpavruksha

Efficient, organic farming requires very little irrigation - much less than what is commonly used in modern agriculture. My farm is a net supplier of water to the eco-system of the region, rather than a net consumer! Clearly, the way to ensure the water security and food security of this nation is by organically growing mixed, locally suitable crops, plants and trees, following the laws of nature.

Need for 30% Tree Cover

We should restore at least 30% ground cover of mixed, indigenous trees and forests within the next decade or two. This is the core task of ecological water harvesting - the key to restoring the natural abundance of groundwater. We sadly fail to realise that the potential for natural water storage in the ground is many times greater than the combined capacity of all the major and medium irrigation projects in India - complete, incomplete, or still on paper!

By inter-planting short life-span, medium life-span, and long life-span crops and trees, it is possible to have planned continuity of food yield to sustain a farmer through the transition period till the long-life fruit trees mature and yield. The higher availability of biomass and complete ground cover round the year will also hasten the regeneration of soil fertility.

Production, Poverty & Population

After the British left, Indian agriculture was recovering steadily. There was no scarcity of diverse nourishment in the countryside, where 75% of India lived. The actual reason for pushing the 'Green Revolution' was the much narrower goal of increasing marketable surplus of a few relatively less perishable cereals to fuel the urban-industrial expansion favoured by the government.

The new, parasitical way of farming you vigorously promoted, benefited only the industrialists, traders and the powers-that-be. The farmers' costs rose massively and margins dipped. Combined with the eroding natural fertility of their land, they were left with little in their hands, if not mounting debts and dead soils. Many gave up farming. Many more want to do so, squeezed by the ever-rising costs. This is nothing less than tragic, since nature has generously gifted us with all that is needed for organic farming - which also produces wholesome, rather than poisoned food!

Restoring the natural health of Indian agriculture is *the* path to solve the inter-related problems of poverty, unemployment and rising population.

In Conclusion:

I hope you have the integrity to support widespread change to mixed organic farming, tree-planting and forest regeneration (with local resources and rights) - that India greatly needs. I would be glad to answer any query or doubt posed to me, preferably in writing. I also welcome you to visit my farm with prior notice.

I may finally add that this letter has been transcribed in English by Bharat Mansata, based on discussions with me in Gujarati. (The annexures hereto are excerpted from his forthcoming book, 'The Vision of Natural Farming,' Earthcare Books, which draws largely on my experience.) Whether or not you agree with my views, I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

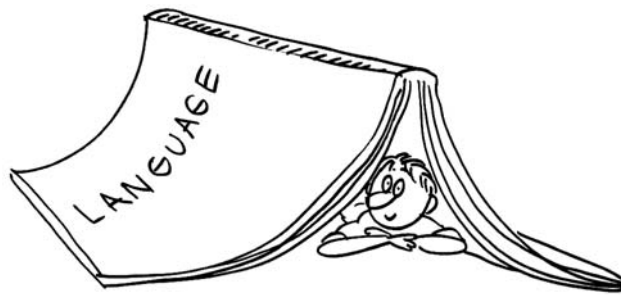
Bhaskar H. Save

Vernacular Values

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Cuernavaca, April 12, 1980

During the next several years I intend to work on an epilogue to the industrial age. I want to trace the changes in language, myth, ritual and law, which took place in the current epoch of packaging and of schooling. I want to describe the fading monopoly of the industrial mode of production and the vanishing of the industrially generated professions this mode of production serves.



I am back to the study of history, the study of popular cultures, mentalities, practices and tools all too often overshadowed by the history of ideas, institutions and dominant styles. The promised epilogue is taking shape in a dozen essays on the fate of *Vernacular Values* during the last five hundred years of warfare that has been waged by the modern State against all forms of *Subsistence*.

-Ivan

Where the war against subsistence has led can best be seen in the mirror of so-called development. During the 1960's, "development" acquired a status that ranked with "freedom" and "equality". Development was described as a building program - people of all colors spoke of "nation-building" and did so without blushing. The immediate goal of this social engineering was the installation of a balanced set of equipment in a society not yet so instrumented: the building of more schools, more modern hospitals, more extensive highways, new factories, power grids, together with the creation of a population trained to staff and need them.

Today, the moral imperative of ten years ago appears naive; today, few critical thinkers would take such an instrumentalist view of the desirable society.

Two reasons have changed many minds. First, undesired externalities exceed benefits - the tax burden of schools and hospitals is more than any economy can support; the ghost towns produced by highways

impoverish the urban and rural landscape. Externalities represent costs that are "outside" the price paid by the consumer for what he wants - costs that he, others or future generations will at some point be charged.

These rising externalities, however, are only one side of the bill which development has exacted. **Counter productivity is its reverse side.** It arises "within" the very use of the goods purchased.

Each major sector of the economy produces its own unique and paradoxical contradictions. Each necessarily effects the opposite of that for which it was structured. This institutionalized frustration, resulting from compulsory consumption, demands an increase in the production of scavenging and repair services to impoverish and even destroy individuals and communities, affecting them in a class-specific manner.

The under classes are now made up of those who **must** consume the counterproductive packages and ministrations of their self-appointed tutors; the privileged are those who are free to refuse them. A new attitude, then, has taken shape during these last years: the awareness that we cannot ecologically afford equitable development.

Ten years ago, attitudes toward development and politics were simpler than what is possible today. Work was identified with employment, and prestigious employment confined to males. The analysis of shadow work done off the job was tabu. A contrary view of work prevails when a community chooses a subsistence-oriented way of life. Now is the time to dig out the axioms hidden in the idea of development itself.

Vernacular is a Latin term that we use in English only for the language that we have acquired without paid teachers. In Rome, it was used from 500 B. C. to 600 A. D. to designate any value that was homebred, homemade, derived from the commons, and that a person could protect and defend though he neither bought nor sold it on the market. I suggest that we restore this simple term, vernacular, to oppose to commodities and their shadow. It allows me to distinguish between the expansion of the shadow economy and its inverse - the expansion of the vernacular domain.

The War Against Subsistence

Just as the environment is divided by each society differently into food, poison and what is never considered as digestible, so issues are divided by us into those which are legitimate, those one leaves to the fascists, and those which nobody raises. However, these latter are not actually illegitimate. The distinction between vernacular and industrial values is of this kind. With this essay, I want to draw this distinction into the realm of permissible discussion.

In terms of 20th century classical economics, both the shadow economy and the vernacular domain are outside the market, both are unpaid. Also, both are generally included in the so-called informal sector. And both are indistinctly viewed as contributions to "social reproduction." But what is most confusing in the analysis is the fact that the unpaid complement of wage-labor which, in its structure, is characteristic of industrial societies only, is often completely misunderstood as the survival of subsistence activities, which are characteristic of the **vernacular** societies and which may continue to exist in an industrial society.

The choice between labor-intensive consumption and modern forms of subsistence is the most resistant blind spot of economics. I propose to throw light on this issue through an examination of everyday-speech. I shall proceed by contrasting the economic nature of this speech in industrial society with its counterpart in pre-industrial epochs. As I shall show, the distinction finds its origin in a little-known event, which occurred at the end of the 15th century in Spain.

While Columbus sailed for foreign lands to seek the familiar - gold, subjects, nightingales - in Spain, Elio Antonio de Nebrija proposed the fundamental engineering of a new social reality to queen Isabella. He advocates the reduction of the queen's subjects to an entirely new type of dependence. He offers Isabella a tool to colonize the language spoken by her own subjects; he wants her to replace the people's speech by the imposition of the queen's *lengua* - *her* language, *her* tongue.

Nebrija says "Language has always been the consort of empire, and forever shall remain its mate. Together they come into being, together they grow and flower, and together they decline." He created two rulebooks, both at the service of the queen's regime. First, he wrote a grammar. Then he also wrote a dictionary that, to this day, remains the single best source on Old Spanish.

Continuing to develop his petition, he introduces **the** crucial element of his argument: the unbound and ungoverned speech in which people actually live and manage their lives, has become a challenge to the Crown. He proposes to regularize language to stop people from wasting time on frivolous reading.

Nebrija argues for standardizing a living language for the benefit of its printed form. This argument is also made in our generation, but the end now is different. Our contemporaries believe that standardized language is a necessary condition to teach people to read, indispensable for the distribution of printed books. The argument in 1492 is the opposite: Nebrija is upset because people who speak in dozens of distinct vernacular tongues have become the victims of a reading epidemic.



Nebrija clearly showed the way to prevent the free and anarchic development of printing technology, and exactly how to transform it into the evolving national state's instrument of bureaucratic control. The switch from the vernacular to an officially taught mother tongue is perhaps the most significant - and, therefore, least researched - event in the coming of a commodity-intensive society.

From the very earliest days, the Church is called the "mother". Nebrija's argument implies that, institutionally, the state must now assume the universally maternal functions heretofore claimed only by the Church. *Educatio*, as a function first institutionalized at the bosom of Mother Church, becomes a function of the Crown in the process of the modern state's formation.

His important innovation was to lay the foundation for a linguistic ideal without precedent: the creation of a society in which the universal ruler's bureaucrats, soldiers, merchants, and peasants all pretend to

speak one language, a language the poor are presumed to understand and to obey. Nebrija established the notion of a kind of ordinary language that itself is sufficient to place each man in his assigned place on the pyramid that education in a mother tongue necessarily constructs.

Both Columbus and Nebrija offer their services to a new kind of empire builder. But Columbus proposes only to use the recently created caravels to the limit of their range for the expansion of royal power in what would become New Spain. Nebrija is more basic - he argues the use of his grammar for the expansion of the queen's power in a totally new sphere: state control over the shape of people's everyday subsistence.

The Imposition of Taught Mother Tongue

Historians have chosen Columbus' voyage from Palos as a date convenient for marking the transition from the Middle Ages to modern times, a point useful for changing editors of textbooks. But the world of Ptolemy did not become the world of Mercator in one year, nor did the world of the vernacular become the age of education overnight. Rather, traditional cosmography was gradually adjusted in the light of widening experience. Columbus was followed by Cortéz, Copernicus by Kepler, Nebrija by Comenius. Unlike personal insight, the change in worldview that generated our dependence on goods and services took 500 years.

By the time of Comenius (1592 - 1670), the ruling groups of both the Old and New Worlds were deeply convinced of the need for such a method. This gradual replacement and degradation of the vernacular by its costly counterfeit heralds the coming of the market-intensive society in which we now live.

Vernacular comes from an Indo-Germanic root that implies "rootedness" and "abode." *Vernaculum* as a Latin word was used for whatever was homebred, homespun, homegrown, homemade, as opposed to what was obtained in formal exchange.

By speaking about vernacular language and the possibility of its recuperation, I am trying to bring into awareness and discussion the existence of a vernacular mode of being, doing, and making that in a desirable future society might again expand in all aspects of life.

Mother tongue, since the term was first used, has never meant the vernacular, but rather it's contrary. The term was first used by Catholic monks to designate a particular language they used, instead of Latin, when speaking from the pulpit. No Indo-Germanic culture before had used the term. The word was introduced into Sanskrit in the eighteenth century as a translation from the English.

Today, "mother tongue" means several things: the first language learned by the child, and the language, which the authorities of the state have decided, ought to be one's first language. Thus, mother tongue can mean the first language picked up at random, generally a very different speech than the one taught by paid educators and by parents who act as if they were such educators.

We see, then, that people are considered as creatures who need to be taught to speak properly in order "to communicate" in the modern world. Dependence on taught mother tongue can be taken as the paradigm of all other dependencies typical of humans in an age of commodity-defined needs.

As language teaching has become a job, it has begun to cost a lot of money. Words are now one of the two largest categories of marketed values that make up the gross national product (GNP). Money decides what shall be said, who shall say it, when and what kind of people shall be targeted for the messages. Administrators and entertainers, admen and newsmen; ethnic politicians and "radical" professionals, form powerful interest groups, each fighting for a larger slice of the language pie.

Ten years ago, energy accounting was almost unthinkable. Now it has become an established practice. It would be interesting to know what language accounting looks like.

Taught everyday language is without precedent in pre-industrial cultures. The current dependence on paid teachers and models of ordinary speech is just as much a unique characteristic of industrial economies as dependence on fossil fuels. The need for taught mother tongue was discovered four centuries earlier, but

only in our generation have both language and energy been effectively treated as world wide needs to be satisfied for all people by planned, programmed production and distribution.

Traditional cultures subsisted on sunshine, which was captured mostly through agriculture. These cultures that lived mostly on the sun subsisted basically on vernacular values. In such societies, there was no need for the production of power in centralized plants and its distant distribution to clients. Equally, in these essentially sun-powered cultures, there was no need for language production. Language was drawn by each one from the cultural environment, learned from the encounter with people whom the learner could smell and touch, love or hate.

The vernacular spread just as most things and services were shared, namely, by multiple forms of mutual reciprocity, rather than clientage to the appointed teacher or professional. In most cultures, we know that speech resulted from conversation embedded in everyday life, from listening to fights and lullabies, gossip, stories, and dreams. Even today, the majority of people in poor countries learn all their language skills without any paid tutorship, without any attempt whatsoever to teach them how to speak.

I feel sorrow for those students whom education has made tone deaf; they have lost the faculty for hearing the difference between the desiccated utterance of standard television English and the living speech of the unschooled.

Language exempt from rational tutorship is a different kind of social phenomenon from language that is purposefully taught. Even today, the poor in non-industrial countries all over the world are polyglot. Communities in which monolingual people prevail are rare except in three kinds of settings: tribal communities that have not really experienced the late Neolithic, communities that for a long time lived through exceptional forms of discrimination, and among the citizens of nation-states that, for several generations, have enjoyed the benefits of compulsory schooling.

Throughout history, untutored language was prevalent, but hardly ever the only kind of language known. The ordinary language, until Nebrija, was prevalently vernacular. And this vernacular, be it the ordinary colloquial, a trade idiom, the language of prayer, the craft jargon, the language of basic accounts, the language of vengery or of age (for example, baby talk) was learned on the side, as part of meaningful

everyday life. Of course, Latin or Sanskrit was formally taught to the priest, court languages such as Frankish or Persian or Turkish were taught to the future scribe.

But, in traditional societies, no matter how much or how little language was taught, the taught language rarely rubbed off on vernacular speech. Everyday language, until recently, was nowhere the product of design; it was nowhere paid for and delivered like a commodity.

Between taught mother tongue and the vernacular I draw the line of demarcation somewhere else than linguists. The terms elite language, trade language, second language, local idiom, are nothing new. But each of these can be formally taught and the taught counterfeit of the vernacular comes as a commodity and is something entirely new.

Not all standard language is either grammar-ridden or taught. In all of history, one mutually understandable dialect has tended toward predominance in a given region. This kind of principal dialect was often accepted as the standard form. Diffusion occurred through a much more complex and subtle process. The language of Mogul hordes (Urdu) came into being in northern India. Within two generations, it became the standard in Hindustan, the trade language in a vast area, and the medium for exquisite poetry written in the Arabic and Sanskrit alphabets. Not only was this language not taught for several generations, but poets who wanted to perfect their competence explicitly avoided the study of Hindu-Urdu; they explored the Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit sources that had originally contributed to its being.

It is true that the dominant position of elite or standard language was always bolstered by the technique of writing. Printing enormously enhanced the colonizing power of elite language. The historical monopoly of educational bureaucracies over the printing press is no argument that printing techniques cannot be used to give new vitality to written expression and new literary opportunity to thousands of vernacular forms.

The commercial status of taught mother tongue, call it national language, literary standard, or television language, rests largely on unexamined axioms, some of which I have already mentioned:

that printing implies standardized composition;

those books written in the standard language could not be easily read by people who have not been schooled in that tongue;

that reading is by its very nature a silent activity that usually should be conducted in private;

that enforcing a universal ability to read a few sentences and then copy them in writing increases the access of a population to the content of libraries:

these and other such illusions are used to enhance the standing of teachers, the sale of rotary presses, the grading of people according to their language code and, up to now, an increase in the GNP.

Vernacular spreads by practical use; it is learned from people who mean what they say and who say what they mean to the person they address in the context of everyday life. This is not so in taught language. The vernacular and taught mother tongue, are like the two extremes on the spectrum of the colloquial. Language would be totally inhuman if it were totally taught.

Speech is much more than communication, and only machines can communicate without reference to vernacular roots. A growing percentage of speech has become mere formula in content and style. In this way, the colloquial moves on the spectrum of language increasingly from vernacular to capital-intensive "communication".

So far, every single attempt to substitute a universal commodity for a vernacular value has led, not to equality, but to a hierarchical modernization of poverty. The modernized poor are those whose vernacular domain, in speech and in action, is most restricted - those who get least satisfaction out of the few vernacular activities in which they can still engage.

Mother tongue is taught increasingly, not by paid agents, but by unpaid parents. These latter deprive their own children of the last opportunity to listen to adults who have something to say to each other. For the professional parent who engenders children as a professional lover, who volunteers his semi-professional counselling skills for neighborhood organizations, the distinction between his unpaid contribution to the managed society and what could be, in contrast, the recovery of vernacular domains remains

meaningless. He is fit prey for a new type of growth-oriented ideology - the planning and organization of an expanding shadow economy, the last frontier of arrogance which *homo economicus* faces.

[Note: These essays from *CoEvolution Quarterly* were the basis of most of Illich's book *Shadow Work* (Marion Boyars, 1981).]

Reclaiming Globalisation as Our Own

Globalisation brings riches and power to some. It brings loathing and fear to many others. What is this creature or creation that we call globalisation? As a notion derived from the dominant description in most media today, it has everything in it to fear and loathe for the underclass and the subaltern, and for the weak and the uninformed.

But that is a manufactured notion of globalisation - manufactured and perpetuated to increase its power and control. It is not the predominant form of globalisation if we look at the history of human civilization, and even its current practice. The dominant discourse in the 'non-vernacular' media has given it pride of place. That is not to doubt its power and its pervasiveness. But this power and pervasiveness does not give it predominance, except in the minds - and hearts - of those who love to use it, and those who fear it.

*In his quiet, matter-of-fact style **Amartya Sen** posits globalisation as a world heritage, which has contributed, 'over thousands of years, to the progress of the world through travel, trade, migration, spread of cultural influences, and dissemination of knowledge and understanding (including that of science and technology)'.*

He positions democracy as part of this world heritage, as something that has intrinsic and universal value; and that the choice of development over democracy is a false choice, that has not been tested anywhere. He goes further, and avers that it is only democracy that makes it possible to deal with scarcity and famines, and not the lack of it.

*In an accompanying piece, **Rajeev Bhargava** dwells on this supposed choice between poverty and freedom - whether freedom from poverty is a priority over political freedom. No contest. That they are mutually exclusive is the false choice.*

*In the last piece, which we have abstracted at length, **Hermann Maiba** looks at Social Movements and the process of globalization. Her conclusion - it has created not only new constraints but in turn it has also opened novel opportunities for social movement activists to resist the very processes that produced these grievances. It reinforces the notion that we reclaim globalisation as our own!*

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How to Judge Globalism

Amartya Sen

Globalization is often seen as global Westernization. Those who take an upbeat view of globalization see it as a marvelous contribution of Western civilization to the world. From the opposite perspective, Western dominance—sometimes seen as a continuation of Western imperialism—is the devil of the piece. In this view, contemporary capitalism, driven and led by greedy and grabby Western countries in Europe and North America, has established rules of trade and business relations that do not serve the interests of the poorer people in the world.



Is globalization really a new Western curse? It is, in fact, neither new nor necessarily Western; and it is not a curse. Over thousands of years, globalization has contributed to the progress of the world through travel, trade, migration, spread of cultural influences, and dissemination of knowledge and understanding (including that of science and technology).

To reject the globalization of science and technology because it represents Western influence and imperialism would not only amount to overlooking global contributions—drawn from many different parts of the world—that lie solidly behind so-called Western science and technology, but would also be quite a daft practical decision, given the extent to which the whole world can benefit from the process.

A Global Heritage

Our global civilization is a world heritage--not just a collection of disparate local cultures. When a modern mathematician in Boston invokes an algorithm to solve a difficult computational problem, she may not be aware that she is helping to commemorate the Arab mathematician Mohammad Ibn Musa-al-Khwarizmi, who flourished in the first half of the ninth century.

Not only is the progress of global science and technology not an exclusively West-led phenomenon, but there were major global developments in which the West was not even involved. The printing of the world's first book was a marvelously globalized event. The technology of printing was, of course, entirely an achievement of the Chinese. But the content came from elsewhere. The first printed book was an Indian Sanskrit treatise, translated into Chinese by a half-Turk.

Global Interdependences and Movements

To see globalization as merely Western imperialism of ideas and beliefs (as the rhetoric often suggests) would be a serious and costly error, in the same way that any European resistance to Eastern influence would have been at the beginning of the last millennium. Of course, there are issues related to globalization that do connect with imperialism (the history of conquests, colonialism, and alien rule remains relevant today in many ways), and a postcolonial understanding of the world has its merits. But it would be a great mistake to see globalization primarily as a feature of imperialism. It is much bigger--much greater--than that.

The issue of the distribution of economic gains and losses from globalization remains an entirely separate question, and it must be addressed as a further--and extremely relevant--issue. There is extensive evidence that the global economy has brought prosperity to many different areas of the globe.

We cannot reverse the economic predicament of the poor across the world by withholding from them the great advantages of contemporary technology, the well-established efficiency of international trade and exchange, and the social as well as economic merits of living in an open society. Rather, the main issue is how to make good use of the remarkable benefits of economic intercourse and technological progress in a way that pays adequate attention to the interests of the deprived and the underdog. That is, I would argue, the constructive question that emerges from the so-called antiglobalization movements.

Are the Poor Getting Poorer?

The principal challenge relates to inequality--international as well as intranational. The troubling inequalities include disparities in affluence and also gross asymmetries in political, social, and economic opportunities and power.



A crucial question concerns the sharing of the potential gains from globalization--between rich and poor countries and among different groups within a country. It is often argued that the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer.

On the other side, the apologists of globalization point to their belief that the poor who participate in trade and exchange are mostly getting richer. If the central relevance of this question is accepted, then the whole debate turns on determining which side is correct in this empirical dispute. But is this the right battleground in the first place? I would argue that it is not.

Global Justice and the Bargaining Problem

Even if the poor were to get just a little richer, this would not necessarily imply that the poor were getting a fair share of the potentially vast benefits of global economic interrelations. When there are gains from cooperation, there can be many possible arrangements.

As the game theorist and mathematician John Nash discussed more than half a century ago (in "The Bargaining Problem," published in *Econometrica* in 1950, which was cited, among other writings, by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences when Nash was awarded the Nobel Prize in economics), the central issue in general is not whether a particular arrangement is better for everyone than no cooperation at all would be, but whether that is a fair division of the benefits.

An Analogy with the Family

By analogy, to argue that a particularly unequal and sexist family arrangement is unfair, one does not have to show that women would have done comparatively better had there been no families at all, but only that the sharing of the benefits is seriously unequal in that particular arrangement. Many different family arrangements--when compared with the absence of any family system--would satisfy the condition of being beneficial to both men and women. The real issue concerns how fairly benefits associated with these respective arrangements are distributed.

Altering Global Arrangements

Can those less-well-off groups get a better deal from globalized economic and social relations without dispensing with the market economy itself? They certainly can. The use of the market economy is consistent with many different ownership patterns, resource availabilities, social opportunities, and rules of operation (such as patent laws and antitrust regulations). And depending on these conditions, the market

economy would generate different prices, terms of trade, income distribution, and, more generally, diverse overall outcomes. The arrangements for social security and other public interventions can make further modifications to the outcomes of the market processes, and together they can yield varying levels of inequality and poverty.

The crucial role of the markets does not make the other institutions insignificant, even in terms of the results that the market economy can produce. As has been amply established in empirical studies, market outcomes are massively influenced by public policies in education, epidemiology, land reform, micro credit facilities, appropriate legal protections, et cetera; and in each of these fields, there is work to be done through public action that can radically alter the outcome of local and global economic relations.

Institutions and Inequality

Globalization has much to offer; but even as we defend it, we must also, without any contradiction, see the legitimacy of many questions that the antiglobalization protesters ask. There may be a misdiagnosis about where the main problems lie (they do not lie in globalization, as such), but the ethical and human concerns that yield these questions call for serious reassessments of the adequacy of the national and global institutional arrangements that characterize the contemporary world and shape globalized economic and social relations.

Omissions and Commissions

The distribution of the benefits in the global economy depends, among other things, on a variety of global institutional arrangements, including those for fair trade, medical initiatives, and educational exchanges, facilities for technological dissemination, ecological and environmental restraints, and fair treatment of accumulated debts that were often incurred by irresponsible military rulers of the past.

In addition to the momentous omissions that need to be rectified, there are also serious problems of commission that must be addressed for even elementary global ethics. These include not only inefficient

and inequitable trade restrictions that repress exports from poor countries, but also patent laws that inhibit the use of lifesaving drugs.

Another--somewhat less discussed--global "commission" that causes intense misery as well as lasting deprivation relates to the involvement of the world powers in globalized arms trade. The world establishment is firmly entrenched in this business: the Permanent Members of the Security Council of the United Nations were together responsible for 81 percent of world arms exports from 1996 through 2000. Indeed, the world leaders who express deep frustration at the "irresponsibility" of antiglobalization protesters lead the countries that make the most money in this terrible trade. The arms are used with bloody results--and with devastating effects on the economy, the polity, and the society.

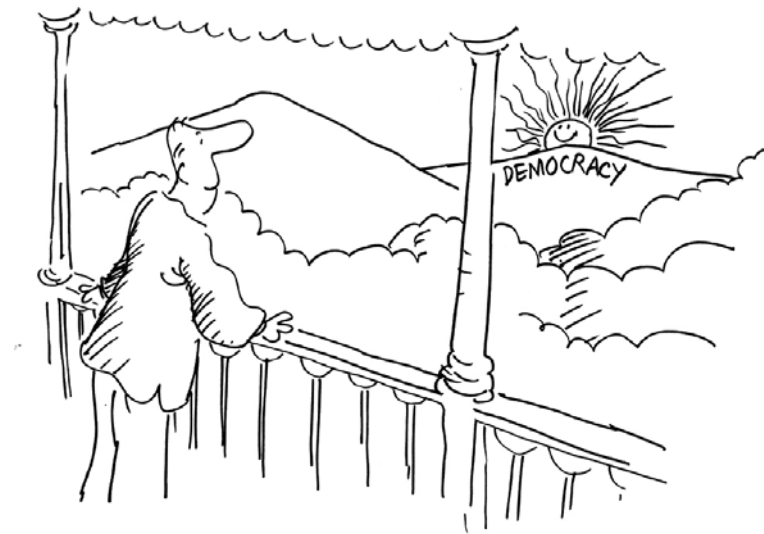
Fair Sharing of Global Opportunities

The central issue of contention is not globalization itself, nor is it the use of the market as an institution, but the inequity in the overall balance of institutional arrangements--which produces very unequal sharing of the benefits of globalization. The question is not just whether the poor, too, gain something from globalization, but whether they get a fair share and a fair opportunity. There is an urgent need for reforming institutional arrangements--in addition to national ones--in order to overcome both the errors of omission and those of commission that tend to give the poor across the world such limited opportunities. Globalization deserves a reasoned defense, but it also needs reform.

Democracy as a Universal Value

Amartya Sen

In the summer of 1997, I was asked by a leading Japanese newspaper what I thought was the most important thing that had happened in the twentieth century. Among the great variety of developments that have occurred in the twentieth century, I did not, ultimately, have any difficulty in choosing one as the preeminent development of the period: the rise of democracy.



5

Democracy as we know it took a long time to emerge. Its gradual--and ultimately triumphant--emergence as a working system of governance was bolstered by many developments, from the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215, to the French and the American Revolutions in the eighteenth century, to the widening of the franchise in Europe and North America in the nineteenth century. It was in the twentieth century, however, that the idea of democracy became established as the "normal" form of government to which any nation is entitled--whether in Europe, America, Asia, or Africa.

Throughout the nineteenth century, theorists of democracy found it quite natural to discuss whether one country or another was "fit for democracy." This thinking changed only in the twentieth century, with the recognition that the question itself was wrong: A country does not have to be deemed fit *for* democracy; rather, it has to become fit *through* democracy. This is indeed a momentous change. It was also in this

century that people finally accepted that "franchise for all adults" must mean *all*—not just men but also women.

I do not deny that there are challenges to democracy's claim to universality. These challenges come in many shapes and forms—and from different directions. Before I begin to examine this claim and the disputes that surround it, it is necessary to grasp clearly the sense in which democracy has become a dominant belief in the contemporary world.

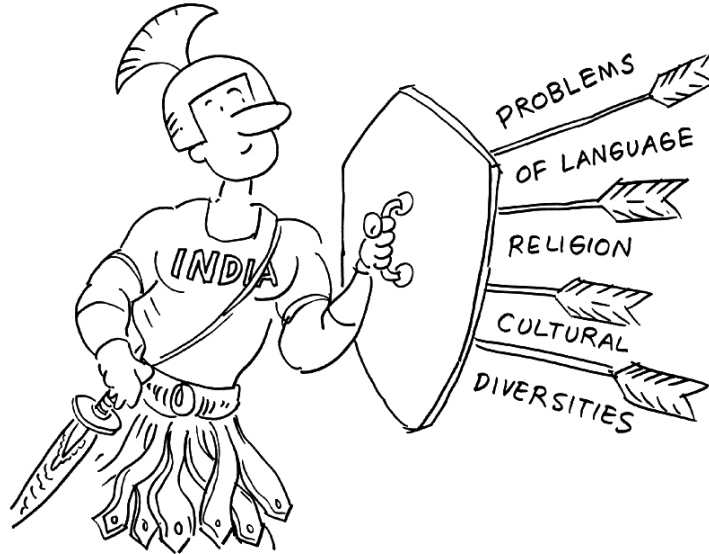


The Indian Experience

How well has democracy worked? India, of course, was one of the major battlegrounds of this debate.

In denying Indians independence, the British expressed anxiety over the Indians' ability to govern themselves. India was indeed in some disarray in 1947, the year it became independent. And yet, half a century later, we find India survives and functions remarkably well as a political unit with a democratic system. Indeed, it is held together by its working democracy.

India has also survived the tremendous challenge of dealing with a variety of major languages and a spectrum of religions. The fact that consternation greets sectarian violence and that condemnation of such violence comes from all sections of the country ultimately provides the main democratic guarantee against the narrowly factional exploitation of sectarianism.



Democracy and Economic Development

It is often claimed that nondemocratic systems are better at bringing about economic development. This belief sometimes goes by the name of "the Lee hypothesis," due to its advocacy by Lee Kuan Yew, the leader and former president of Singapore.

There is, in fact, no convincing general evidence that authoritarian governance and the suppression of political and civil rights are really beneficial to economic development. Systematic empirical studies (for example, by Robert Barro or by Adam Przeworski) give no real support to the claim that there is a general conflict between political rights and economic performance.

The question also involves a fundamental issue of methods of economic research. We must not only look at statistical connections, but also examine and scrutinize the *causal* processes that are involved in economic growth and development.

There is overwhelming evidence to show that what is needed for generating faster economic growth is a friendlier economic climate rather than a harsher political system. We must go beyond the narrow confines of economic growth and scrutinize the broader demands of economic development, including the need for

economic and social security. In that context, we have to look at the connection between political and civil rights, on the one hand, and the prevention of major economic disasters, on the other.

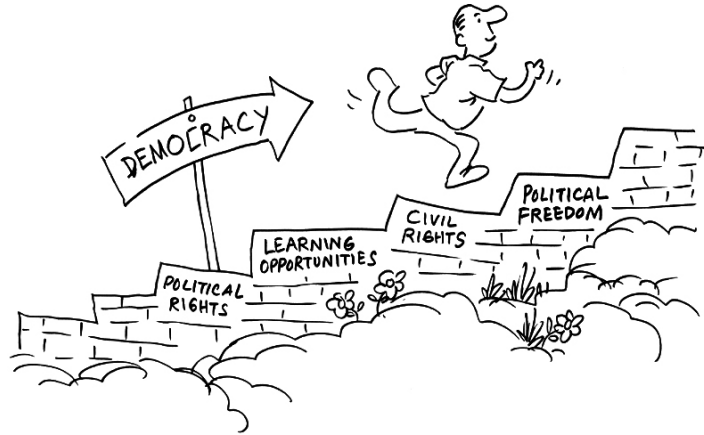
I have discussed elsewhere the remarkable fact that, in the terrible history of famines in the world, no substantial famine has ever occurred in any independent and democratic country with a relatively free press.

Famines are easy to prevent if there is a serious effort to do so, and a democratic government, facing elections and criticisms from opposition parties and independent newspapers, cannot help but make such an effort.

There is, I believe, an important lesson here. Many economic technocrats recommend the use of economic incentives (which the market system provides) while ignoring political incentives (which democratic systems could guarantee). The protective power of democracy may not be missed much when a country is lucky enough to be facing no serious calamity, when everything is going quite smoothly. Yet the danger of insecurity, arising from changed economic or other circumstances, or from uncorrected mistakes of policy, can lurk behind what looks like a healthy state.

The Functions of Democracy

What exactly is democracy? Democracy is a demanding system, and not just a mechanical condition (like majority rule) taken in isolation. We can distinguish three different ways in which democracy enriches the lives of the citizens. First, political freedom is a part of human freedom in general, and exercising civil and political rights is a crucial part of good lives of individuals as social beings. Second, democracy has an important *instrumental value* in enhancing the hearing that people get in expressing and supporting their claims to political attention (including claims of economic needs). Third, the practice of democracy gives citizens an opportunity to learn from one another, and helps society to form its values and priorities.



There are many things that we might have good reason to value and thus could be taken as "needs" if they were feasible. In the formation of understandings and beliefs about feasibility (particularly, *social* feasibility), public discussions play a crucial role.

Universality of Values

In the light of this diagnosis, we may now address the motivating question of this essay, namely the case for seeing democracy as a universal value. In disputing this claim, it is sometimes argued that not everyone agrees on the decisive importance of democracy, particularly when it competes with other desirable things for our attention and loyalty. This lack of unanimity is seen by some as sufficient evidence that democracy is not a universal value. Clearly, we must begin by dealing with a methodological question: What is a universal value?

I would argue that universal consent is not required for something to be a universal value. Rather, the claim of a universal value is that people anywhere may have reason to see it as valuable.

It is with regard to this often *implicit* presumption that the biggest attitudinal shift toward democracy has occurred in the twentieth century. In considering democracy for a country that does not have it and where many people may not yet have had the opportunity to consider it for actual practice; it is now presumed that the people involved would approve of it once it becomes a reality in their lives.

Some who dispute the status of democracy as a universal value base their argument on the presence of regional contrasts. They say, poor people are interested, and have reason to be interested, in bread, not in democracy.

As discussed above, the protective role of democracy may be particularly important for the poor. Second, there is very little evidence that poor people, given the choice, prefer to reject democracy.

The Argument from Cultural Differences

There is also another argument in defense of an allegedly fundamental regional contrast, one related not to economic circumstances but to cultural differences. It has been claimed that Asians traditionally value discipline, not political freedom, and thus the attitude to democracy must inevitably be much more skeptical in these countries.

It is very hard to find any real basis for this intellectual claim in the history of Asian cultures, especially if we look at the classical traditions of India, the Middle East, Iran, and other parts of Asia.

To dismiss the plausibility of democracy as a universal value because of the presence of some Asian writings on discipline and order would be similar to rejecting the plausibility of democracy as a natural form of government in Europe or America today on the basis of the writings of Plato or Aquinas (not to mention the substantial medieval literature in support of the Inquisitions).

Due to the experience of contemporary political battles, especially in the Middle East, Islam is often portrayed as fundamentally intolerant of and hostile to individual freedom. But the presence of diversity and variety *within* a tradition applies very much to Islam as well. In India, Akbar and most of the other Moghul emperors (with the notable exception of Aurangzeb) provide good examples of both the theory and practice of political and religious tolerance. The Turkish emperors were often more tolerant than their European contemporaries.

Diversity is a feature of most cultures in the world. Western civilization is no exception.

Where the Debate Belongs

I have tried to cover a number of issues related to the claim that democracy is a universal value. The value of democracy includes its *intrinsic importance* in human life, its *instrumental role* in generating political incentives, and its *constructive function* in the formation of values (and in understanding the force and feasibility of claims of needs, rights, and duties). These merits are not regional in character. Nor is the advocacy of discipline or order.

The force of the claim that democracy is a universal value cannot be disposed of by imagined cultural taboos or assumed civilizational predispositions imposed by our various pasts.

Poverty and political freedom

Rajeev Bhargava

The great Indian economist Amartya Sen has proposed the mind-opening idea that democracy is a protection against famine. It is part of a conventional, commonsense worldview that freedom means little to those without shelter, clothing or food and that, for the poor, the fulfilment of basic needs has priority over political freedoms.

Freedom in exchange for life? This is one of the many points I was fortunate to discuss with Amartya Sen when he was present at a seminar in Delhi organised around his book *Development as Freedom*. The urgency of their economic needs forces the poor to put their lives at enormous risk. If people are ready to do so just to earn their daily bread, why would they not readily give up their liberties and rights to keep their lives going?

Poverty, liberty and human need

Does not authoritarianism have a strong, watertight case in poverty-stricken societies? There are three possible replies to this anti-democratic argument. The first reply is given by Amartya Sen himself. The claim that the citizens of the 'third world' are indifferent to political and democratic rights can be verified, Sen says, only when there is a large sample available across countries on the importance of political rights, the freedom of expression and dissent and of free elections.

To this argument of Amartya Sen, let me add a second and third of my own. Is it really accurate to say that a person who lacks food or shelter is not concerned with freedom at all?

The fulfilment of basic needs is very deeply connected with basic freedoms. People do not wish to choose between basic needs and basic freedoms. Rather, they are compelled to pay attention to one particular kind of needs-freedoms package. This is true of everyone, even of the rich.

The third argument is that the case for authoritarianism appears to hinge on extreme examples taken in abstraction from the actual life-context of the poor in 'third world' societies and not on instances of commonplace, chronic but less dramatic deprivations. Sen's argument and my own, rests on entirely different, more routine examples from poor societies.



Consider a person who goes through a rough, daily grind to make two ends meet. He may feed himself and his family all right - but only with a Herculean effort that takes the very life out of him, day after day, month after month, year after year. Would he want to escape this crushing situation? Would he try to do something to change it? It depends entirely on the price he must pay for transformative action.

To begin with, he would speak up against his horrendous condition. Perhaps privately at first, and then in public. But I don't think mere expression, or even communication would satisfy him. He would want to do more. He would wish to earn a living by a less severe form of labour. If exploited, he would want to end it. Since this is unlikely to happen instantly, he might wish to join a group with similar objectives. Perhaps, if a political party with such a promise exists already, he would, if he could, vote for it.

Give this man the choice between his daily grind and his right to speak out freely, to associate with others, and to vote. He would certainly not give up his daily grind, even if he wanted to. Since this altered life-context can be secured only with the help of his political freedoms, he would put up with his daily grind so long as he could have his political freedoms.

So, political freedoms are important for four reasons. First, they are intrinsically valuable because the opportunity to participate in the life of one's community is fundamental to human existence and valuable by itself. Second, they have a constructive value because through dialogue, discussion and debate, we come to understand what our real needs really are. Third, they have instrumental value, particularly in poor societies. They make governments accountable and responsive to ordinary citizens, prevent rulers from privately consuming a large share of resources or squandering them publicly, protect us from poor governance, help governments to take correct decisions, and by providing a space for people to come together and act publicly, they help ensure the provision of essential services and monitoring their functioning.

This instrumental value in poor societies extends also to prevention of catastrophes. Despite severe crop failure and massive loss of purchasing power, there has been no recurrence of famine in India since 1943. In contrast, between 1958 and 1961, 30 million people died in famines in China. To the three justifications for political freedom offered by Sen, I would add a fourth. This can be called its reconstituting (or reconditioning) role in human life. Political freedoms help us to change the way we experience our current condition. They give us hope of an alternative future. Our perspective on our own future makes a profound difference to how we live our present.

Social Movements In The Age Of Globalization

Hermann Maiba

Introduction

For many decades social movements have been understood from a state-centric perspective. In their historical research on French social movements, Tilly (1984) and Tarrow (1995) have forcefully demonstrated that the emergence, shape, and development of social movements was closely related to the development - in its scope, resources, and penetration - of the modern state.

In light of the protest events of the last few years (Zapatista uprising in 1996, Seattle 1999, Washington, DC 2000, Quebec and Prague 2001, Genoa 2002, etc.), this state-centric perspective has become increasingly contested. On what has been called Global Days of Action, decentralized protest events in different parts of the world coincided with large-scale protests that took place parallel to the meetings of supra-national institutions.

The global anti-war demonstrations on February 15th provide only the latest instance of transnationally coordinated movement events. A range of publications on this topic has emerged, most of which argue for a theoretical adjustment of how we understand social movements today. For example, Ray suggests, "In an age of globalization of economic and political structures it is no longer appropriate to analyze social movements solely at the level of nationally defined space" (Ray, 1993: XVII). In a similar vein Buechler argues, "contemporary social movement activism can be understood only in a global frame of reference. This premise has been sorely lacking in prevailing social movement theories, and they will remain impoverished until they can incorporate the diverse and subtle ways in which global dynamics and structures both enable and constrain the opportunities for social movement mobilization in different times and places" (Buechler, 2000: 78).

Despite the burgeoning literature on transnational social movements, we still lack of a coherent theoretical foundation for studying this phenomenon. Some movement commentators have focused on the organizational features that connect activists in different countries, while others have applied it to the boundary crossing aspects of the Internet. I will propose several dimensions of transnationality (networks,

spaces, diffusion, political opportunity structure, identity & consciousness) that can help guide the empirical analysis of today's social activism.

Historiography of Globalization

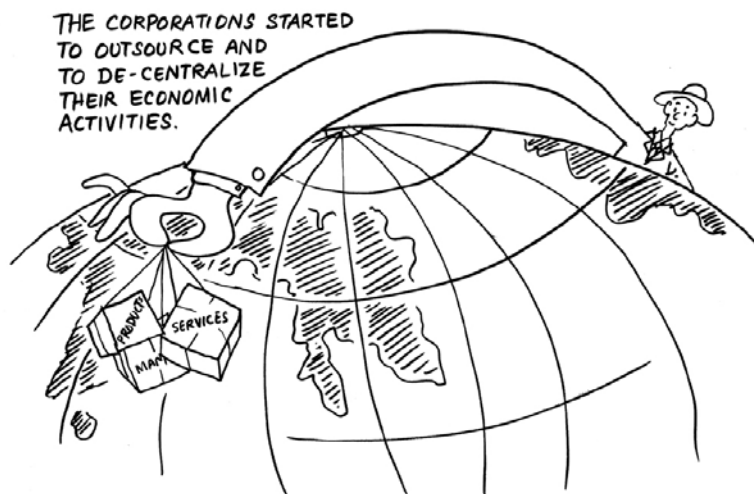
As world system scholars have pointed out, the propensity of stretched social relations that encompass the whole globe has not just happened over the course of the last fifty years (Arrighi, 1994; Hirst and Thomson, 1996; and Wallerstein, 1998). According to Wallerstein, the incessant search of market expansion is an inherent characteristic of capitalism and globalization that dates back as far as the 15th century. Even though Genoese merchants in the 15th century traded goods from far away, the increasing speed to innovate and revolutionize the means of production led to a qualitative transformation of worldwide social relations. Castell and Arrighi's discoveries do account for this crucial fact. They argue that the informalization of societies, i.e., the growing importance of the generation and distribution of information, has enabled a qualitatively new form of global social relationships. Technical revolution in the telecommunication and transportation systems also has significantly altered the economic realm. Thus, I follow both Castells and Arrighi, who date the onset of the qualitatively different process of globalization with the revolutionary innovations in the 1970 in the communication industry. It is from this Marxian historical-materialist perspective of social development that I want to discuss the different dimension of globalization.

Economic Globalization

The capitalist economy is the driving force of globalization. In its incessant pursuit for new products, markets and cost-efficient ways of production, this economic engine has created the technological possibilities for global economic integration. The modern communication technologies are the backbone of today's global economic practices.

Like the invention of the steam engine, which provided the technological means for the transition from the agrarian economy to industrialism, the new communication technologies need to be considered as the building block that made possible the transition to post-industrialism. This paradigmatic shift not only affected the economic organization but the social order as a whole.

Modern communication technologies provided the technological means to circumvent the nation-state that regulated all inter and intra economic practices. The global flow of information enabled the expansion of the market on a worldwide scale that, in turn, led national economies across the world to become globally interdependent. According to Castells, these new information technologies unleashed the power of networking and decentralization and thus undermined the centralizing logic of one-way instructions and vertical bureaucratic surveillance.



This race-to-the-bottom dynamics levels out the stark country specific differences. People in the developed and developing world recognize that their fate is connected by the mechanism and dynamics of global capitalism. Fighting the downward pressure in the developed world, i.e., dismantling the welfare state is linked to the same cause as struggles to improve the conditions in the developing countries (poverty, environment devastation and economic underdevelopment). Hardt and Negri's concept of "the multitude" tries to capture the confluence of a diversity of social groups that are negatively affected by capitalist globalization. Despite the diversity of local struggles around the world global capitalism is seen as the root cause of their problems.

What is more recent is the sense of common purpose that groups and movements have found as they realise that various modes of oppression are, in their contemporary forms, contingent upon a particular historical moment in which the contraction of state welfare and the rise of neoliberal privatism have had widespread negative effects. (Redden, 2003: 2)

The recognition that the disparate local and national problems are all related to the mechanism of the global capitalist economy has provided the basis for transnational cooperation and coordination in the sense that "your struggle is our struggle." This recognition of the interconnectedness of local struggles has created the basis for people to join together in a transnational movement whose guiding motto is "Let our resistance be as transnational as capital." Despite the fact that problems do manifest themselves quite differently in various local and national contexts, the sense that struggles in one place are connected to those in another has made it possible for social movements throughout the world to become involved in transnational social movement networks.



Capitalist globalization has not only created socio-economic conditions that lend themselves to a common recognition of the interconnectedness of political struggles, but it has also provided the technological means - as an unintentional dialectic of this structural Modern communication tools, particularly the Internet (websites, list serves, video and audio streaming, chat rooms) have become available also for political activists, and they have used them very effectively. Access to these communication technologies was essential for it has helped to sustain transnational social movement activism and proved to be an important tool for the creation and fostering of transnational movement networks. Movement activists from different parts of the world are connected in transnational movement networks.

In my work I distinguish between two kinds of transnational movement networks: campaign-based networks and ideology-based networks of activists who share a similar political vision. The network form of organization seems to be the most conducive form of social organization in the age of globalization.

Because of the vast differences that groups bring into transnational movement networks in terms of their ideological history, organizing mode, activist culture, etc., the looseness of the networks does not put that much pressure to conform to every aspect in order to collaborate (cf. Rucht (2001)). Activist groups can participate in activities of the network when they deem it worthy and possible without subscribing to a host of formal procedures. This open and malleable nature of networks has produced a greater transnational repertoire of strategic actions.

Because of its loose and more flexible character, the social network is more adaptive and responsive to changing environments. As Keck and Sikkink (1998: 200) have pointed out, "the agility and fluidity of networked forms of organization make them particularly appropriate to historical periods characterized by rapid shifts in problem definition." For example, the global anti-war network is already prepared to circulate an emergency mobilization in case that the American government starts the war against the Iraq.

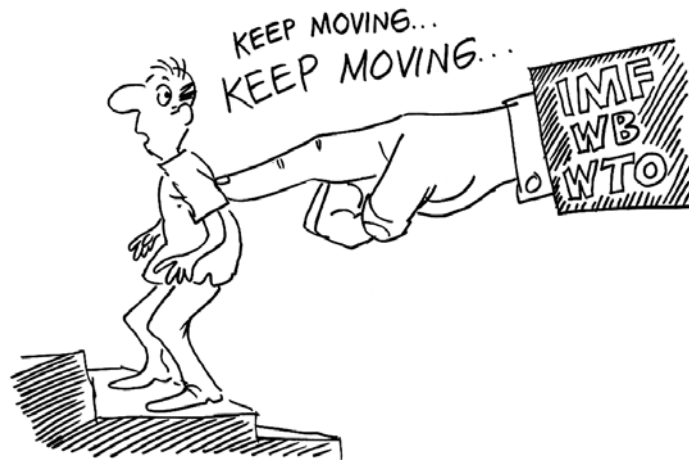
Cultural Globalization

Cultural globalization refers to diffusion processes of cultural products to other societies. The appropriation of life-styles, ideas, cultural symbols, and customs from their original societal context, together with their adaptation, re-interpretation, and integration into existing practices is the subject matter of cultural globalization. The direction of cultural globalization is highly controversial. Some (Ritzer, Barber) portray globalization as the cultural homogenization of Western cultural practices (mainly in its American version) that are being diffused and adopted around the world.

Other scholars (Appadurai) reject the idea of global cultural homogeneity and argue for a more complicated account of global cultural processes. They argue that diffused cultural products take on different meanings in their new societal settings. This line of thought insists that cultural globalization does not proceed like a steamroller. Instead, despite the diffusion of cultural products, significant heterogeneous cultural practices remain among countries.

There are clear examples of the existence of global flows of cultural practices. Migrants bring their folklore as well as their eating habits to their host society; ideas get exchanged via the Internet between like-minded folks and epistemic communities in chat rooms and list serves; and merchandise and life-styles

become diffused by the global reach of transnational corporations and media networks. By synthesizing the heterogeneity/homogeneity arguments, I propose that both processes occur simultaneously. Let me illustrate this by pointing to two global cultural processes, both of which I deem crucial in relation to social movement dynamics: one supports the homogenization paradigm and the second the heterogeneization perspective.



The diffusion of neo-liberalism as the dominant economic paradigm provides the historical backdrop to the globalization process that triggered movement struggles in different parts of the world. Struggles begun in the Global South where the impact of its policies were felt most harshly. Ten years after the Wall came down; the anti-neo-liberal opposition movement emerged in the Global North. This convergence of resistance of the neo-liberal doctrine provided the connecting bridge as well as common targets for the transnational cooperation of a broad spectrum of social movement organizations.

Now I want to turn to another aspect of cultural globalization that demonstrates the paradoxical nature of the globalization process. While better, faster, and cheaper technologies for communication and transportation provided the material infrastructure for world-wide economic exchanges and the spread of cultural products such as, pizzas. These global flows have not just been restricted to corporate merchandise and images. People travel to far away lands as tourists, if they are affluent enough, for business or educational purposes, or as migrants and refugees.

Never before in human history have so many humans traveled so far so fast. With increasing frequency people today live a significant period of their lives in societies in which they were not born. People make

friends from other societies, they learn and sometimes appreciate different cultural practices, they speak different languages.

The exposure to different life realities also affects one's self-definition. People adopt ideas and practices they like regardless of the cultural backgrounds from which they stem. By assembling the best and personally most rewarding aspects of each culture, people create a patchwork of cultural practices. Their identities thus can best be described as hybrid. Mainly through personal contacts with people from other societies but also through travel and electronic communication, individuals and communities form social bonds and experiential empathy with individuals and communities around the world.

Core activists in transnational movement networks are, in effect, like itinerant movement entrepreneurs who have extensively traveled the world and lived in different societies for a substantial time. They speak multiple languages. Such core activists are best characterized by their transnational identity and their commitment to global solidarity. As Max Weber suggested in a different context, one has to look at movement leaders and the intellectual carriers of movements to understand movement dynamics and their trajectories. Not only do they diffuse the global orientation to the other movement participants, but such core activists link movements in different parts of the world where they have established personal contacts.

Despite cultural differences, people experience the common bond of humankind; every attempt to withhold humane treatment is considered an insult to all. This perception and attitude of global solidarity is a very crucial aspect for building and sustaining transnational cooperation. Furthermore, the feeling of transnational connectedness helps to shape a transnational collective identity that provides cohesion for transnational movement networks.

These transnational virtual spaces (mailing lists, website, e-mail, chat rooms, etc.) play an important role in the diffusion of information, ideas, resources, and tactics among social movement activists. For example, the reports of the uprising of the Zapatistas was posted on the Internet, inspired the imagination of other activists around the world, and brought the world's attention to the conflict in the Jungle of Chiapas. The distribution of the draft text of the WTO's proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) over the Internet started a broad-based mobilization campaign in different parts of the world that successfully derailed the MAI accord (Warkentin).

Political Globalization

The process of globalization also substantially changed the configuration of political power. As my socio-historical overview showed, the onset of modernity shifted power from local lords and nobility to nationally consolidated power structures. If one needed an empirical case for the transformation of the inter-state system, the terrorist attack on September 11 was a demonstration par excellence. The attack showed that conflicts and confrontations not only are fought between nation-states but that non-state actors, organized in a transnational network as in the case of Al-Qaeda, can forcefully challenge nation-states.

But also in its domestic effects, the state-centric perspective argued that all internal affairs of a society are regulated by the political configurations prevalent in the particular nation-state. This state-centric perspective suggested that basically all domestic realms (national economy, education, social welfare, and so on) are controlled and shaped by domestic forces under the umbrella of the state apparatus.

This state-centric perspective and the primacy of the nation-state eventually became undermined by the overwhelming global flow of images, information, products, and people across state-borders. "State control over space and time is increasingly bypassed by global flows of capital, goods, services, technology, communication, and information" (Castells, 1997: 243). The nation-state became increasingly powerless in controlling monetary policies, organizing production and trade, collecting corporate taxes, and fulfilling its commitments to provide social benefits.

Even where individual nation-states attempted to restrict or prevent these global flows from circumventing their influence, as demonstrated by the Chinese government's effort to block certain websites or to shore-up the border control to prevent the influx of migrants, such measures have produced paradoxical effects. For example, despite the blocking of certain websites, Chinese cyber geeks created mirror websites that evaded governmental control. Even where the government is aware that the trans-border activities curtail its political power, it is also conscious that its political survival might depend on the participation in the global dynamic. For this very reason the Chinese government joined the World Trade Organization and opened the Chinese market and for foreign products.

Because of the increasing inability of the inter-state system to influence and direct these global flows, supra-national institutions became important actors in the realm of global politics. Another byproduct of the growth of supra-national institutions was the increase of international non-governmental organizations and transnational social movement organizations. Between 1953 and 1993 the number of transnational social movement organizations grew from 110 to 631 (Rucht: 211). The growth was particularly connected to the international conferences within the UN system.



The development of international agencies and organizations has led to significant changes in the decision-making structure of world politics. New forms of multilateral and multinational politics have been established involving governments, IGOs and a wide variety of transnational pressure groups and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). (Held et al., 1999: 53) There seems to be consensus among movement analysts about the emergence of a transnational political opportunity structure (cf. Hilson, 2002; Marks and McAdam, 1996; Marks and McAdam, 1999; Passy, 1999; Smith, 1999; Smith, Pagnucco and Chatfield, 1997; Keck and Sikkink, 1998). I would like to propose that we distinguish analytically three crucial aspects of transnational political opportunities: (1) Supra-national institutions and IGOs as allies; (2) Supra-national institutions, IGOs and TNCs as targets for political protest; and (3) transnational spaces around supra-national institutions.

Where the domestic opportunity structures are closed for social movements at the local and national levels, the movements link themselves to international social movement organizations in order to put pressure on their government from outside.

The UN system became predominantly an ally for reform-oriented social movements and an important provider of resources. The UN system emerged as a field where global policies have been shaped and many transnational social movement organizations (TSMOs) gained access to the UN forums by achieving consultative status and thus were able to exert certain leverage to influence the global rules. Because of the relative openness of the UN system to reform-oriented social movement organizations, many activists groups have been accredited by the UN and thus became eligible for institutional funding. Furthermore, under the umbrella of the UN summits, movement activists were able to build and sustain transnational

networks. These transnational spaces have been enormously important for networking, information sharing, and strategizing. Face-to-face encounters at these parallel summits have facilitated the establishing of new ties and the fostering of existing ties between individual activists and groups they represent.

On the other side, certain inter-governmental and supra-national institutions such as the IMF, WB, WTO, G8, etc., which are far less open to social movement organizations, have become ready targets for popular protests. The summit meetings of these institutions provided the occasion for activist groups around the world to converge in counter summit protests at the official summit meeting site, or to organize coordinated de-centralized solidarity protests in other parts of the world.

This centralized counter summit protests also furnished a transnational space for skill sharing, education, and networking. The time preceding the protest has been used for teach-ins, media work, puppet and banner making and for networking among activists and groups.

Transnational corporations (TNCs) form another set of influential actors impacting global level politics. Because of their economic might, TNCs emerged as powerful new actors on the global level. TNCs use their economic power as a leverage vis-à-vis national states and supra-national institutions. TNCs have been identified as promoters of the neo-liberal agenda. Given this background it is not surprising that TNCs have been perceived as the epitome of evil and thus became targets for protests.

Conclusion

This essay has sought to shed some light on the paradoxical nature of the macro-structural transformations that have been triggered by the process of globalization. The process of globalization has created not only new constraints but in turn it has also opened novel opportunities for social movement activists to resist the very processes that produced these grievances. It has been argued that in the age of globalization social movement activities cannot be merely understood from a state-centric perspective but any social movement analysis must also account for structures and processes that occur above the

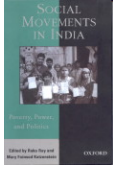


nation-state level. Theorizing social movements in the age of globalization means that we need to grasp the transnational dynamics of today's movement activism. This article in particular highlighted several dimensions of transnationality that I deem crucial for understanding these phenomena.

Review

BOOKS

Harsh Sethi

<p>Social Movements In India: Poverty, Power and Politics</p> <p>Edited by Raka Ray and Mary Fainsod Katzenstien Oxford University Press, Delhi, 2005; Pages 311; Price:Rs.650 [B.Q40.R62]</p>	
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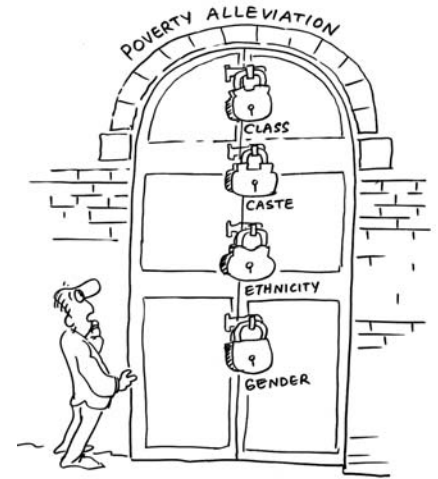
STRATEGIES to remove poverty have always occupied a central position in Indian discourse, not surprising since close to a third of our populace is still below the poverty line. Policy planners have, however, only focused on the differential roles of either the state or the market in attending to this objective. If earlier, greater reliance was on the state operating not only through planned allocation of resources but also through ownership and control of the 'commanding heights of the economy', the pendulum today has swung towards the market, including granting a greater role to foreign capital.

In all of this, what is the role of the public, in particular social movements? Is the public only to be a recipient, an object of public policy, expressing its appreciation or otherwise through episodic elections or protests, or can it play a more pro-active role through organised intervention?

The volume under consideration offers a fresh look at public activism in India, examining both the changing strategies of movement actors over the last five decades as also the shifts in thinking influencing their choice of strategies.

Today, in addition to class, movements have to address concerns of identity - caste, ethnicity, gender - as also factor in issues relating to the environment. What we have as a consequence of this shifting of master frames - from a democratic socialist consensus centred around the state to one of the market - is the development of a highly variegated set of movement strategies, which the book identifies as

repudiation, dilution, adaptation, reconfiguration to adoption and espousal. While it can safely be asserted that most social movements in India still operate within the broad template of the early Nehruvian years - a commitment to democracy, equality and poverty removal - how effectively their specific strategies address these key concerns remains a matter of debate. It is this problematic that these essays seek to address.



The first set of essays by Vivek Chibber, Tanika Sarkar and Patrick Heller focus on movement strategies in an era defined by Nehruvian consensus. Chibber, in foregrounding organized labour, shows how the trade union movement permitted itself to be appropriated by the priorities of the Congress party. Not just the INTUC, but all central trade unions (HMS, AITUC) accepted for themselves a similar role - permitting party concerns to define the union agenda, with clearly negative consequences.

Tanika Sarkar's essay on the Hindu Right on the other hand shows how the Sangh Parivar and its politics, despite seeking autonomy from the Congress, was marginalised by the Nehruvian master discourse. Both its questionable role in the freedom struggle and the unsavoury association with the Mahatma's assassination ensured that in our early years Sanghist politics remained a peripheral presence. But it is Heller's analysis of developments in Kerala that demonstrate the possibilities of a praxis which seeks autonomy from the Congress frame while fiercely adhering to a redistributive agenda that enabled the province to show amazingly positive results in social development, despite the absence of high economic growth. It is interesting how all these three strains of experience continue to mould the vision of social movements even now.

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This was also the phase of the emergence of non-party politics, as different movements and agencies sought autonomy from political parties and elections as also the earlier obsessive concern with the capture of state power (including through revolution) as the favoured route towards social transformation.

Surprisingly however, it is only Baviskar who examines how the emergence of new social actors alters not just strategies of action but even the vision of a desirable order.

The next two essays by Gail Omvedt and Ron Herring more directly address the question of the role of social movements in the era of market and religious nationalism, all of which necessitated a shift of relationship with the Indian state. Nevertheless, as the final essay by Neema Kudva ('Strong States, Strong NGOs', based on case studies of three NGOs in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal) shows, the effectiveness of an NGO in addressing poverty alleviation depends not only on its organizational capacity and flexibility, but also 'ironically on the extent to which the state within which it is located is sympathetic to a pro-poor politics.' Possibly that is why, despite so little sympathy for autonomous NGO activism, the Left Front led West Bengal seems to have done better in poverty alleviation.

An effective democratic strategy for poverty removal and social justice demands an interplay between state, market and civil society. Focusing differentially on any one of the three is not only inefficacious but distortionary.

Despite its intellectual rigour and ethnographic detail, it is doubtful that this book will appeal to the growing constituency of civil society activists. I suspect this is because the activist community is far too caught up with its different agendas to reflect on the broader implications of their sectoral interventions. And that will be a loss for without an engagement with the emerging master frames of discourse, discrete interventions are unlikely to make a societal impact.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN INDIA: Poverty, Power and Politics,

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<http://www.india-seminar.com/2005/556/556%20books.htm>

It is the middle years - between 1964 and 1984 - that witnessed the greatest rupture in Indian political economy. Even as the ideological underpinning of poverty alleviation was granted supremacy, the key vehicle for social transformation - the Congress Party - fractured, thereby opening up spaces for a differentiated activism. Not only did the country experience the Naxalite upsurge but also saw the emergence of the dalit and women's movements and subsequently the struggles around the environment. The essays by Mary John, Gopal Guru and Anuradha Chakravorty, and Amita Baviskar explore different

facets of these movements - in particular how the earlier focus on class and poverty removal came to be mediated by concerns of gender and caste. Not surprisingly, this new emphasis on identity complicated not only the objectives before social movements but also altered our perceptions of what we were willing to classify as 'progressive and just'.