# Social Science in Perspective

## EDITORIAL BOARD

## INSTRUCTION TO AUTHORS / CONTRIBUTORS

*Social Science in Perspective,* **a peer reviewed journal,** is the quarterly journal of C. Achutha Menon (Study Centre & Library) Foundation, Thiruvananthapuram, The journal appears in English and is published four times a year. The journal is meant to promote and assist basic and scientific studies in social sciences relevant to the problems confronting the Nation and to make available to the public the findings of such studies and research.

Original, un-published research articles in English are invited for publication in the journal. Manuscripts for publication (articles, research papers, book reviews etc.) in about twenty (20) typed double-spaced pages may kindly be sent in duplicate along with a CD (MS Word). The name and address of the author should be mentioned in the title page. Tables, diagram etc. (if any) to be included in the paper should be given separately. An abstract of 50 words should also be included.

References cited should be carried with in the text in parenthesis. Example (Desai 1976: 180) Bibliography, placed at the end of the text, must be complete in all respects.

***Examples***

1.  Desai A.R. (1976) : *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.

2.  Bhatt, Anil, 'Voluntary Action in India : Roles, Trends and Challenge', *Economic and Political Weekly* 20-27, June 1996, Vol. XXX, No.16, Pp.880-85.

    All references should be alphabetically arranged at the end of the text.

    The opinions expressed in this journal are those of the respective authors and reviewers, not of this centre.

    Copies of books for review may be sent in duplicate to the Editor and the articles for publication in the journal should be sent to the Executive Editor, Social Science in Perspective, C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 012

iii

# SOCIAL SCIENCE IN PERSPECTIVE

## CONTENTS
Page

**Articles**

# OUR CONTRIBUTORS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Kanam Rajendran | : | President, C.Achutha Menon Foundation, Thiruvananthapuram. |
| Prof. (Dr.) Nimmi Kurian | : | Professor, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, & Member, Editorial Advisory Board, *Social Science in Perspective.* |
| Prof. (Dr.) Janki Andharia | : | Dean-Jamsetji Tata School of Disaster Studies & Chairperson, Centre for Disasters and Development, Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS), Mumbai. |
| Tania Teresa Mathews | : | Research Officer on a Project for the Tata School of Disaster Studies (TISS), Mumbai. |
| Prof. (Dr.) S. Janaka Rajan | : | Former Professor & Director, Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS), Chennai. President, South Asia Consortium for Interdisciplinary water Resources Studies, Hyderabad. |
| Prof. (Dr.) C. P. Rajendran | : | Professor, Geo-dynamics Unit, Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, Bengaluru. |
| Prof. (Dr.) Kusala Rajendran | : | Professor, Centre for Earth Science, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru. |
| Prof. (Dr.) M.A. Oommen | : | Professor Emeritus, Post Doctoral Scholar of the Rockfeller Foundation, Visiting fellow at the Yale University and a Senior Full bright scholar. |
| Dr.V.S. Vijayan | : | Former Chairman, Bio-diversity Board, Former Chairman, Dr. Sálim Ali Foundation and Member, Gadgil Committee. |
| Dr.N. Vinod Chandra Menon | : | Founder Member, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Government of India & Senior Advisor, Sphere India. |
| Prof.(Dr) B. Vivekanandan | : | Former Chairman, Centre for American and West European Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. |
| Prof. (Dr.) Mary George | : | Former Professor & Head, Department of Economics, University College, Thiruvananthapuram & Former Chairperson, Kerala Public Expenditure Review Committee, Government of Kerala. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Prof. Udaya S. Mishra | : | Professor, Centre for Development Studies, Prasanth Nagar, Thiruvanathapuram, India. |
| Dr. Gayathri Balagopal | : | Independent Resercher based in Chennai. She has been a Consultant with Madras Institute of Development Studies, Navajbai Ratan Tata Trust & The Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health. |
| Dr. M. Suresh Babu | : | Professor, Dept. of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras, Chennai. |
| Dr.P. Sanal Mohan | : | Professor, School of Social Sciences, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. |
| G.Madhusoodanan I.A.S. | : | Founder-Director General of World Institute of Sustainable Energy (WISE), Pune. |
| Prof. (Dr.) N.C.Narayanan | : | Professor, Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay. |
| Dr. N. Anil Kumar | : | Executive Director, MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), Chennai-600113. |
| Suma Vishnudas | : | Scientist, Community Agrobiodiversity Centre, M.S. Swaminathan Reserach Foundation, Wayanad. |
| Saji John | : | Director and Chief Executive Offier, Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council, Keralam. |
| Dr. K Jafar | : | Associate Professor, Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS), Chennai. |
| Dr.V Raman Kutty | : | Professor, Sri Chithra Institutie of Medical Science and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram. |
| Dr. K. Anilkumar | : | Professor, College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Kerala, Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Mannuthy. |
| Dr. P.K. Manoj | : | Professor, , Department of Applied Economics, (CUSAT), Kochi, Kerala - 682 022. |
| Shekhar Pathak | : | Taught in Kumaon University, Nainital and now associated with PAHAR and edits the journal *Pahar*. |
| John Kurien | : | Visiting Fellow, Azim Premji University, Bengaluru and former UN/FAO Post-Tsunami Fisheries Co-Management Advisor in Aceh. |

# Social Science in Perspective

**Quarterly Journal of**
**C. ACHUTHA MENON STUDY CENTRE & LIBRARY**
**Thiruvananthapuram**

## SUBSCRIPTION DETAILS

### Annual Subscription

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Individuals | Rs.300 | Single copy | Rs.75 |
| Institutions | Rs.400 | Single copy | Rs.100 |

Annual subscription is for the period January to December. Subscription should be made in cash/DD/Cheque payable in favour of Managing Edior, Social Science in Perspective, C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 012. Outstation cheques should include a bank charge of Rs.50/-

## ADVERTISEMENT TARIFF

| | |
|---|---|
| Back cover (Colour) | Rs. 10000 |
| Back cover (B/W) | Rs.  7500 |
| Back Inside (Colour) | Rs.  8000 |
| Back inside (B/W) | Rs.  7000 |
| Full Page | Rs.  5000 |
| Half Page | Rs.  3000 |

## Special Issues of Our Journal
# Social Science in Perspective

# *Editorial*

Citizens of Kerala are bewildered by the catastrophic situation experienced by them from the unprecedented rain, heavy floods, landslides and loss of life and property across Kerala that occurred for almost two weeks between 8th and 19th of August 2018. Though Kerala has not confronted such a situation in recent times, some observe that similar situation occurred in 1924 though the scale of destruction bears no parallel between the two. Some subscribe to the view that such outcomes are phenomenon which occur in a time span of centuries. A civilized society cannot remain indifferent to such incidents but rather has to probe and monitor all its re-sources to brave it and cope with it.

In Kerala, the much valued people centred growth, sustainability of the resource base of the state and the evolved ethos of social cohesion were broken in the context of the masquerading and profiteering culture of the 'new capitalist'. Though attempts of sustainable development were initiated by the new government in its quest for an alternative development path through its *New Kerala* initiatives, the present castrophic scenario necessitates a *reconstruction* in toto.

In this Endeavour we require to examine different development paradigms that we have adopted and taking cue from such experiences we have to undertake the reconstruction requirements in its proper

perspective. This exercise primarily requires a holistic approach to development rather than piecemeal initiatives.

In the above context C. Achutha Menon Foundation organized a two day National Seminar on 'Common Property and Citizens Rights: Issues of Reconstruction of Kerala' at Thiruvananthapuram on 25th & 26th of October 2018 to frame a working model for the construction of post flood Kerala.

Experts from different fields presented scholarly papers on different aspects of the main theme which included *Assessing the Resource base, Sectoral Balance, Growth Dynamics, Financial Management and Policy Challenges*. The revised version of the papers presented in the seminar are included in this special issue. We immensely thank all the contributors who have responded positively to the endeavor.

**Editor**

# Social Science in Perspective

## INSTRUCTION TO AUTHORS / CONTRIBUTORS

*Social Science in Perspective,* **a peer reviewed journal,** is the quarterly journal of C. Achutha Menon (Study Centre & Library) Foundation, Thiruvananthapuram, The journal appears in English and is published four times a year. The journal is meant to promote and assist basic and scientific studies in social sciences relevant to the problems confronting the Nation and to make available to the public the findings of such studies and research.

Original, un-published research articles in English are invited for publication in the journal. Manuscripts for publication (articles, research papers, book reviews etc.) in about twenty (20) typed double-spaced pages may kindly be sent in duplicate along with a CD (MS Word). The name and address of the author should be mentioned in the title page. Tables, diagram etc. (if any) to be included in the paper should be given separately. An abstract of 50 words should also be included.

References cited should be carried with in the text in parenthesis. Example (Desai 1976: 180) Bibliography, placed at the end of the text, must be complete in all respects.

***Examples***

1.  Desai A.R. (1976) : *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.

2.  Bhatt, Anil, 'Voluntary Action in India : Roles, Trends and Challenge', *Economic and Political Weekly* 20-27, June 1996, Vol. XXX, No.16, Pp.880-85.

    All references should be alphabetically arranged at the end of the text.

    The opinions expressed in this journal are those of the respective authors and reviewers, not of this centre.

    Copies of books for review may be sent in duplicate to the Editor and the articles for publication in the journal should be sent to the Executive Editor, Social Science in Perspective, C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 012

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Editor | : | **Dr. R.K. Suresh Kumar** |
| | | Tel : 0471-2345850 (O) |
| | | 0471-2721871 |
| | | Mob : 9387803414 |
| | | Email : dr.rksureshkumar@gmail.com |
| Executive Editor | : | **Dr. P. Sukumaran Nair** |
| | | Tel : 0471-2352365 (R) |
| | | Mob : 9447564625 |
| | | Email : drpsukunair@gmail.com |

# SOCIAL SCIENCE IN PERSPECTIVE

## CONTENTS          Page

# OUR CONTRIBUTORS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dr. S. Premjith | : | Professor, Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Development Studies, Neyyar Dam, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India. |
| Praveen | : | Project Fellow, Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Development Studies, Neyyar Dam, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India. |
| Saisree K.G | : | Research Associate, Inter University Centre for Alternative Economics, Department of Economics, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. |
| Shijo Philip | : | Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University College, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. |
| Dr. Sheela M.C. | : | Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University College, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. |
| Saurav Kumar Rai | : | Senior Research Assistant, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Teen Murti House, New Delhi-110011. |
| Dr. Sajjan Kumar | : | Ph.D. from Centre for Political Studies, JNU, New Delhi. He is Academic Consultant, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. |
| Dr. Ravi K. Mishra | : | Deputy Director, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. |
| Dr. Rajeevan R. | : | Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, NSS College, Nilamel, Kerala. |
| Dr. D. Purushothaman | : | Associate Professor, Centre for South Asian Studies, Pondicherry (Central) University, Puducherry 605 014, India. |
| Dr. P. Sukumaran Nair | : | Executive Editor, Social Science in Perspective, C. Achutha Menon Study Centre, Thiruvananthapuram. |

v

vi

# *Special Issues of Our Journal*
# *Social Science in Perspective*

# Social Science in Perspective

## INSTRUCTION TO AUTHORS / CONTRIBUTORS

*Social Science in Perspective,* **a peer reviewed journal,** is the quarterly journal of C. Achutha Menon (Study Centre & Library) Foundation, Thiruvananthapuram, The journal appears in English and is published four times a year. The journal is meant to promote and assist basic and scientific studies in social sciences relevant to the problems confronting the Nation and to make available to the public the findings of such studies and research.

Original, un-published research articles in English are invited for publication in the journal. Manuscripts for publication (articles, research papers, book reviews etc.) in about twenty (20) typed double-spaced pages may kindly be sent in duplicate along with a CD (MS Word). The name and address of the author should be mentioned in the title page. Tables, diagram etc. (if any) to be included in the paper should be given separately. An abstract of 50 words should also be included.

References cited should be carried with in the text in parenthesis. Example (Desai 1976: 180) Bibliography, placed at the end of the text, must be complete in all respects.

***Examples***

1.  Desai A.R. (1976) : *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.

2.  Bhatt, Anil, 'Voluntary Action in India : Roles, Trends and Challenge', *Economic and Political Weekly* 20-27, June 1996, Vol. XXX, No.16, Pp.880-85.

    All references should be alphabetically arranged at the end of the text.

    The opinions expressed in this journal are those of the respective authors and reviewers, not of this centre.

    Copies of books for review may be sent in duplicate to the Editor and the articles for publication in the journal should be sent to the Executive Editor, Social Science in Perspective, C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 012

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Editor | : | **Dr. R.K. Suresh Kumar** |
| | | Tel : 0471-2345850 (O) |
| | | 0471-2721871 |
| | | Mob : 9387803414 |
| | | Email : dr.rksureshkumar@gmail.com |
| Executive Editor | : | **Dr. P. Sukumaran Nair** |
| | | Mob : 9447564625, 9745961955 |
| | | Email : drpsukunair@gmail.com |

# SOCIAL SCIENCE IN PERSPECTIVE

## CONTENTS  Page

v

# OUR CONTRIBUTORS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Prof. (Dr.) B. Vivekanandan | : | Former Chairman, Centre For American & West European Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. |
| Patibandla Srikant | : | Independent Researcher, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh. Email: psrik21@gmail.com |
| Prof. (Dr) A K Verma | : | Director, Centre for Study of Society and Politics, 78, New Civil Lines, Kanpur |
| Shri Nirjhar Mukherjee | : | Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Berhampore College, West Bengal, India |
| Prof. (Dr) Manish | : | Professor, Centre for International Politics, School of International Studies, Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India. |
| Vijendra Singh | : | Assistant Professor, Centre for International Politics, School of International Studies, Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India. |
| Annpurna Nautiyal | : | Professor of Political Science & Currently Vice Chancellor of the HNB Garhwal University, Srinagar, Garhwal, Uttarakhand. |
| Dr. Rajan Pandey | : | Assistant Professor in Political Science, School of Business Studies and Social Sciences, Christ University, BGR campus, Bengaluru. |
| Dr. Shiraz Sheikh | : | Project Associate under the UGC-Centre for Pakistan Studies at the Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. |
| S.Y. Surendra Kumar | : | Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Bangalore University, Bengaluru. |
| Dr. Dhruba Pratim Sharma | : | Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Guwahati University, Guwahati, Assam. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dr. Josukuty C.A. | : | Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram |
| Prof (Dr.) K.M.Sajad Ibrahim | : | Professor and Head, Department of Political Science, University of Kerala, Thirvananthapuram |
| Prof. (Dr.) M.R. Biju | : | Dean, School of Social Sciences, Dean, School of Legal Studies and Head, Department of Public Administration and Policy Studies, Central University of Kerala, Kasaragode. |
| M.R.B.Anantha Padmanabha | : | Deputy Editor, South Asian Journal of Socio – Political Studies (SAJOSPS) |
| Dr. Alaknanda Shringare | : | Assistant Professor , Department of Political Science, Goa University |
| Dr. V. Bijukumar | : | Associate Professor, Centre for Political Studies, School of Social Sciences, JNU, New Delhi - 110067 |
| Prof (Dr) M.J.Vinod | : | Professor & former Dean (Arts) In the Department of Political Science, Bangalore University, Bangalore, India. |
| Dr. P. Sakthivel | : | Professor of Political Science and Public Administration, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, Tamil Nadu. |
| Rajvinder Singh | : | Research Scholar, Dept. of Political Science, Punjab University, Chandigarh. |
| Prof (Dr.) Jose George | : | Former Professor & Head, Dept of Civics and Politics, University of Mumbai. |
| Dr.S.S.Sreekumar | : | Associate Professor and Head, P.G. Department of Political Science, JNRM Government College, Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, India. |

# Social Science in Perspective

**Quarterly Journal of**
**C. ACHUTHA MENON STUDY CENTRE & LIBRARY**
**Thiruvananthapuram**

## SUBSCRIPTION DETAILS

**Annual Subscription**

| Individuals | Rs.300 | Single copy | Rs.75 |
| Institutions | Rs.400 | Single copy | Rs.100 |

Annual subscription is for the period January to December. Subscription should be made in cash/DD/Cheque payable in favour of Managing Edior, Social Science in Perspective, C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 012. Outstation cheques should include a bank charge of Rs.50/-

## ADVERTISEMENT TARIFF

| Back cover (Colour) | Rs. 10000 |
| Back cover (B/W) | Rs.  7500 |
| Back Inside (Colour) | Rs.  8000 |
| Back inside (B/W) | Rs.  7000 |
| Full Page | Rs.  5000 |
| Half Page | Rs.  3000 |

*Special Issues of Our Journal*

# Social Science in Perspective

# *Editorial*

It was believed by many that the results of the 17th General Election would be different from the previous one. Though such a sense prevailed among both the public and the pundits, they failed to identify the latent forces forging the Indian political mind. On the eve of declaration of election schedule for the 17th Lok Sabha by the Election Commission of India, the Prime Minister exhorted the people to actively participate in the election terming it as the "celebration of democracy". Deep and intense polemics set the tone and tenor of the election campaigning across India since the poll announcement.

On May 23rd after a near successful completion of seven phases of electioneering and a long wait for a month, poll results were announced. The results were quite stunning and baffling to all the stake holders. It is to be admitted that the winners won the election more assertively and emphatically. The winners comfortably formed the government upon a strong democratic claim in terms of both seats and vote share. In the post election scenario explanations are coming forth vindicating the massive victory on one side and accounts of failures and set backs on the other.

In this context, it is incumbent on us to explicitly analyse the 17th Lok Sabha Election to bring out the tectonic shifts, new characteristics and sensitivities that are emerging in the Indian political landscape. At the outset, it seems that conventional approaches, strategies, norms and yardsticks became defunct in Indian electioneering. For example, as is normal, the ruling front espoused their achievements particularly in the economic sphere focusing on the benefits entitled and enjoyed by the targeted folk in India. However, the opposition questioned all such credentials on the basis of conventional data related exercises. If the results are any indication, vast majority of the targeted beneficiaries rallied behind the ruling front across India. Does it mean that the development plank reflected in the living conditions of the marginalised sections has contributed to the victory of the ruling front? Is it that the opposition failed in discerning the sensitive transformations that occurred

in the living conditions of the marginalised sections of the Indian masses? Is the Indian electorate finally concerned with tangible changes in the economic scenario influencing them in casting their votes? In terms of economic changes what actually influenced the Indian electorate to vote in the present pattern? The secular Vs communal arguments were much used during elections by all the parties. Is it right to analyse the outcome of the election as a mere result of the majority-minority divide / polarisation? Is the Uttar Pradesh experience an indication of breaking of the caste configurations and a move towards the real agenda of development? Or was it a response to the corrupt and dynastic power bases that was there in their memory line? Have people become more sensitive to national issues like the security issues and terror threats and its organic religious sources?

Ultimately we should also trace the election outcome in terms of the rise of individuals as citizens empowered with more information and self criticism exercising their voting rights more critically and consciously. How far the voters were mesmerised by the media buzz, corporate agenda and money and muscle power?

An examination of all these issues are essential for a proper understanding of the 2019 general election results. It is with this purpose in mind that the Achutha Menon Foundation has decided to bring out a special issue of our journal *Social Science in Perspective* under the rubric *2019 Parliament Election : A Perspective*.

We requested experts in this field from the length and breadth of the country to contribute articles on the above theme. The response from the scholars was overwhelming. We have received 20 articles on this. We thank all the scholars who found time amidst their tight schedule to contribute papers in response to our request. We have great pleasure to present this special issue for the benefit of our readers, psephologists and the public.

*Wishing you a very happy and prosperous New Year 2020.*

*Editor*

Thiruvananthapuram
December 2019

# Recommendations to Build Social and Ecological Resilience in Poovar Coastal Village, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

*S.Premjith, Praveen*
*& Saisree K.G*

*The present paper discusses four important studies carried out on Poovar, a coastal village of Thiruvananthapuram, by Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Development Studies with the financial support of Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment. These studies were undertaken in five satellite villages near Poovar, Thiruvananthapuram district in the year 2018. The data were collected directly from the local people and fishermen families through personal discussions and interviews regarding the various aspects of the livelihood conditions and other aspects. The main objective of the study was to assess social and ecological resilience in Poovar. The studies focus on present condition of mangrove fauna and flora, challenges arising from eco-tourism, marine and estuarine fisheries sector, poor livelihood status, improper occupational structure and poor institutional support prevailing among the fisher folk in Poovar Island. Poovar is currently undergoing major changes associated with land use for eco- tourism development which is listed into a world-class tourist destination by 2042, named Kovalam-*

*Poovar Tourism Corridor. The paper includes policy recommendations for the developing Poovar into a model coastal village.*

## Introduction

Poovar is an unexplored small coastal fishing village situated around 30 km from Thiruvananthapuram and just 14 km from Vizhijam. It is famous for its mangrove forest, pristine beaches, beautiful estuary and exotic beach resorts. The estuary is a bar- built type formed by the confluence of river Neyyar flowing down 56 km from the Agastyamala Hills with a catchment area of 30.93 hectares and15 km length. The famous Anandan Victoria Marthanda Varman Canal, (AVM canal) connects Poovar estuary with 20 places in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu state and was used for various purposes like transporting paddy and salt to Thiruvananthapuram which was the capital of the erstwhile Travancore princely state. Previous studies (Mary Helen *et al* 2007, 2008, 2011, 2014; Padma Mahant and Sanjeet kumar, 2017 and Premjith *et.al* 2017 and 2018) revealed that the AVM canal and the estuarine region of Poovar is in deplorable condition and the people are at risk of epidemics and other possible ill health due to intensive human activities such as eco-tourism, sand extraction and domestic sewage. The present paper discusses four important studies conducted under the project funded by Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KSCSTE). These studies were undertaken in five satellite villages (Poovar, Puthiyathura, Karumkulam, Pozhiyoor and Pulluvila) near to Poovar landing centre in the year 2018. The data were collected directly from the local people and fishermen families through personal discussions and interviews covering various aspects of their livelihood conditions.

### The Ongoing Destruction of Poovar Fishing Village

Poovar has strong ties with the legendary King of the erstwhile

Princely State of Travancore, the Marthanda Varma Maharaja. Poovar was a trading center of timber, sandal wood, ivory and spices during ancient times. It is believed that the King Solomon landed in a port called 'Ophir', which is figured out as "Poovar". Regarding population, nearly two fifths are Hindus, about one third are Christians and more than one fourth are Muslims. Almost 60% of the Christians are fisher folk. The revenue village "Poovar" has a land area, roughly covering about 4000 acres (George and Domi2002). It has four coastal wards namely 8, 9, 10 and 11 and is predominantly inhabited by the fishermen community. The village has a total of 1187 houses and 1245 households are living there. Among them, 63 households are landless or presently living as a joint family. Regarding the housing situation in the village, it is noted that 13.48 percent houses are pucca, 75.15 percent are semi-pucca and 11.37 percent houses are kachha houses. About 88.04 percent of the existing houses in the village have sanitary toilets. Safe drinking water is available to 89.55 percent of the existing houses. Most of the houses in the village (97.22%) are electrified. It is noted that 612 persons from the fisher folk community are insured with the Fisheries Board (Matsya Board).

**Mangrove Fauna and Flora**

The Mangrove forest around the Poovar estuary has suffered from advanced degradation and over exploitation through human interactions over the last decades. The studies of Padma mahanti *et.al.* (2017), and Premjith *et.al.,* (2017) revealed that out of common plant species, the prominent plant species among them are *Cerbera odollum*, *Barringtonia racemosa*, *Pandanus utilis, Cocus nucifera and Derris trifoliate*. The plant parts of the major flora available in the study area have medicinal values and used in different forms. The juice of the *Eichhornia crassipes* is used against Jaundice while fruits of *Cerbera odollam* are used as bio insecticides. A cursory observation revealed that the most prominent flora are *Cerbera odollum, Barringtonia racemosa and Cocos nucifera* and

most visible avifauna are *Haliastur indus, Corvus splendens, Bubulcus ibis and Ardeola grayii*.

The study revealed the presence of endangered mangrove trees namely *Sonneratia caseolaris (*fig.2*)* and *Barringtonia racemosa in Poovar coast and these trees* can tolerate wide range of salinity from 0 -15ppt. Fruits are used as a poultice in sprains and swellings. Fermented juice of the fruits is useful in arresting hemorrhage. Juice of unripe fruit is used to treat cough. The Bark of the tree is astringent and antiseptic. The heavy wood (800 kg/m$^3$) is used for boatbuilding, construction, piles, and posts.

Most of the mangrove tree was being destroyed by the local people for fire wood and land mafia for development projects and eco- tourism purpose which are the easiest way to earn money. The mangroves in Poovar are unique in the sense that more than half are under private ownership, making conservation difficult. Mangrove conservation is of vital concern as mangrove swamps represent rich and diverse living resources with high ecological, environmental and socio-economic values. The renewal of island is possible only by motivating the private owners.

**Eco-tourism**

Poovar is currently undergoing major changes associated with land use for eco- tourism development which is *listed* into a world-class tourist destination by 2042, named Kovalam-Poovar Tourism Corridor (www.keralatourism.org). A shift in focus from agriculture to tourism has led to massive land development throughout the island in order to accommodate this growing industry. There are about fifteen tourist resorts in the premises of Poovar estuary and nearly forty resorts in and around Poovar village. Majority of resorts release their effluents directly in to the estuary. New beach resorts are under construction in the Poovar-Vizhinjam area.

The construction of hotels and recreational facilities has often been

in direct conflict with the local residents who wish to preserve their culture and lifestyles. They cautioned the indigenous fisher folk of Poovar about the possible dangers of change in land use and the impact that it will have on their livelihood. The important fauna and flora  are  in the wedge of extinction as natural habitats are destroyed (Premjith 2017; 2018). The present study reveals that if the environmental destruction continues, there is no other option to the fisherfolk of Poovar who should look for other means for subsistence. In the past two decades, Poovar has witnessed incidences of crime and incarceration and accidental deaths in the estuary and sea (The Hindu, 2013).

**Marine Fisheries**

Many studies were undertaken regarding small scale fisheries of major fishing villages of Thiruvananthapuram coast (CMFRI 2010). But very little study has been carried out in the fishing village of Poovar. The results of one study (Premjith, 2018) with the objective of identifying fin fish resources and eco friendly fishing methods revealed that out of 308 marine fishes of Malabar coast 45 species of fin fishes are found in Poovar and caught by four major artisanal gears namely gill net, hook and line and two forms of inshore and offshore encircling gear. Saleela *et. al* (2015) stated that fishery of Poovar coast mostly represented 99 percentage of fin fishes comprising of 43 species.

Juveniles of *Rastrelliger kanagurta, Mugil cephalus*, *Valamugil speigleri* and *Caranx ignobilis* are distributed throughout Poovar coast (fig.5) and their shoal sometimes enter into the estuary. Juveniles of Ribbon fishes, *Trichurus lepturus* have high demand as dry fish in small scale industry.

Natural calamities such as sea erosion and cyclonic storm "OCHKI" do not cause much damage in the village due to its land contour of continental shelf. During rainy season especially in south west monsoon and north east monsoon when the sea becomes rough, the fisher workers are forced to remain idle and live under conditions of severe poverty.

Nowadays, mechanization has almost swept out the traditional mode of technology. The villagers are of the opinion that the construction of the International Seaport, reduction of subsidies, globalization policies of the state government and depletion of fish diversity and resources would have a negative impact on the economy of fishing community. But the younger generation find the use of traditional catamarans and knowledge in fishing unattractive and uneconomical. All this shows the necessity of a unique fisheries policy for sustainable development of fisher folk in the five satellite villages of Poovar.

The people of this village make their living solely by fishing in traditional old ways. The fishermen face a lot of challenges. Absence of a harbour is a serious issue in this coastal village. Their livelihood is completely relied on river, estuary and sea including their way of commutation. One can witness the rustic ways of their unique lifestyle. What is required now is a unique fisheries policy which gives adequate recognition to the traditional fishermen of the Poovar coast. The policy should lay emphasis on fish production and post harvest sector which should support the livelihood of the traditional fisher folk.  It is also an undisputable fact that the benefits given by the government have not reached to the fishing people; especially in the traditional and marginal sectors. Therefore, certain recommendations are made to be incorporated in the government policy.

**Livelihood Status of Fishermen in Poovar Fish Landing Centre**

The third study based on livelihood status of fishermen was conducted during the period September 2016 to November 2016 in three wards of Poovar fish landing area. One hundred and three fishermen were interviewed, out of which nearly 50% were less than 50 years of age. The entire 103 fishermen interviewed in the area belonged to the Latin Catholic Mukkuva community. Generally, traditional fishermen are forced to take up different types of income generating activities during non fishing period. But in this study area, most of the fishermen were not interested

to engage in other income generating activities or job. Therefore the families are forced to fully depend upon fishing and fish sale. During rough seasons, the fish workers are forced to remain idle and live under conditions of severe poverty. Most of them have pucca houses. All sample houses are electrified and they use Liquefied Petroleum Gas and 87.4% of the houses have proper sanitation facilities.  The educational status of the family members reveals that 13.1% are illiterate, 53.5% have primary level, 26.7% have secondary level and only 6.7% have higher level of education. The activity status of the family members shows that only 34% of people are engaged full time in fishing and related activities. The majority (43.5%) are dependents (housewives, infants, children, old age people), 15.9% are employed in organised and unorganised sectors and nearly 7% of the population are still unemployed. The average monthly income of the head of a household (fishermen) is Rs. 6000/-. The consumption pattern indicates that nearly three fourth of the household expenditure was mainly utilized for household consumption. Because of the poor financial background, majority of the fishermen have no boats and fishing gears and they are working as labourers. The poor livelihood status, improper occupational structure and poor institutional support prevailing among fisher folk should be improved. Socio economic constraints such as illiteracy, family pressure, low economic status and unemployment are the major problems faced by the Poovar fishermen community. Most of them are illiterate and below poverty line. They are struggling to survive. They are not ready to engage themselves in any other income generating activity. Most of the respondents have land holdings of below two cents, so they could not engage themselves in any small scale agriculture or related activities during bad season. Majority (99%) of the fishermen are alcoholic, 92% are smokers and 93% are tobacco chewers.

The study reveals poor livelihood status, improper occupational structure and poor institutional support in the selected area. In order to overcome this situation, there should be provision for some sort of

alternate jobs for fishermen by government and NGOs or skill development training for income generation during bad season. The government should also take steps to control the interference of traders or middle men and thus create safe environment for the fishermen to carry out direct selling in the market. Health services of this fishing area should be ensured through government assistance. Periodical awareness classes against smoking and alcohol consumption should be conducted through these health service centres to fishermen. Promotion and development of various agro-farming involving agro horticulture crops are some other options which are needed to be implemented in this area. Training should be provided for bivalve fishery, aquaculture and mariculture; human resource utilization and management are to be developed and implemented in a phased manner for the balanced and sustainable development of marine fishery sector in this area.

**Poovar Back Waters**

The lower reaches of the river Neyyar forms a backwater system near Poovar.  Poovar estuary play a significant role as nursery grounds for fin fishes and shell fishes  in view of their high productivity and shelter to the juveniles. Due to slow changes in climatic and coastal geomorphic conditions, the estuarine systems have undergone some changes, particularly with regard to sedimentation and sand bar formation. Most of the fish species collected from the environments are transient forms inhabiting the estuarine and riverine environments. The commercially important groups which contribute to the major catches belong to the estuarine habitat which is highly seasonal, since the catches depend upon the adjacent sea and river. But, in Poovar these catches were mainly benefited to those who are coming from outside the district. They are mainly from neighboring districts of Kerala and Tamilnadu.

Many species use the estuarine environment as temporary feeding grounds principally of juveniles. These major biological features are linked to the estuarine ecosystem. Therefore, it is not justified to limit the census

of estuarine species to only those species with a fully estuarine biological cycle. The concept of hot spots (species richness) largely based on concentration of species in an area plays an important role in nature that result from the exchanges between biotic and abiotic components in various ecosystems. Man-made changes like construction of tourist villas, resorts, hotels, boat services and disposals across most of the rivers and reclamation of land for various purposes have led to environmental changes in the estuarine system. In addition to this, the increase of effluent discharge by domestic, commercial and transport means has brought out changes in the biotic community of estuaries. It is imperative to understand the biodiversity of the habitats so as to understand resource potential and to exploit natural living resources for the welfare of mankind.

**Government's Responsibilities**

Fish resources are described as 'common pool resources' as they are generally owned by no-one until the point of capture. Government intervention is very important to regulate fisheries for the benefit of the community, ensuring long-term sustainability. Good fisheries management is reliant on sound science, quality management processes with effective engagement and consultation with stakeholders, and effective compliance. The department's primary responsibility is to conserve, develop and manage the fish and aquatic resources of the state for the benefit of present and future generations. It does this through managing and licensing fishing activities and by protecting the environment and ecosystems on which fish depend. The involvement of state and central governments are effective in the quality management of the marine and freshwater environment. Many participants in the commercial sector experience difficulties from a combination of declining real prices, escalating fuel and labour costs, increasing competition from imported products, fluctuations in the value of Indian Rupees , environmental and biological impacts on fish stocks, and loss of fishing grounds.

Aquaculture is a growing technology industry influenced by investment, climate and efficiency of regulation. The recreational fishing sector is also faced with challenges including loss of fish stocks and fishing ground. The Kerala State Department of Fisheries is implementing a number of reforms aimed at transforming fisheries management and meeting future challenges. The reforms are focused on removing unnecessary regulation and simplifying fisheries laws, establishing a more structured and risk-based approach to management of fish stocks, developing clearer management goals and harvest strategies for fisheries, and working on innovative approaches such as co-management. The following agencies are functioning under the department with various goals: (i) Kerala Fishermen's Welfare Fund Board (KFWFB), (ii) Kerala State Cooperative Federation for Fisheries Development Limited (Matsyafed), (iii) Agency for Development of Aquaculture, Kerala (ADAK), (iv) Fisheries Resource Management Society (FIRMA), (v) National Institute of Fisheries Administration and Management (NIFAM), (vi) Fish Farmers Development Agency (FFDA), (vii) Kerala State Coastal Area Development Corporation (KSCADC) and (viii) Society for Assistance to Fisherwomen (SAF).

**Policy Recommendations**

**I. Improve biodiversity of Poovar for sustainable development**

The area is a popular tourism destination of Kerala and supports the livelihood of the local communities. The following practices need to be adopted for maintaining the natural serenity of the Poovar.

(i)   Use of traditional row boats/solar boats instead of speed boats/ diesel runs boats which will ensure lowering the pollution level- air, noise and water pollution in the estuary.

(ii)  Need of trainings and awareness programme to the boat drivers on biodiversity, history, avifauna, ecological importance of estuary and mangrove forest.

(iii) Complete ban on plastic entering the river systems which finally pollutes estuary and Poovar beach.

(iv) Sewage treatment plants are mandatory for tourist resorts.

(v) Calculating the carrying capacity and practicing sustainable and ecologically viable tourism.

(vi) Regular monitoring of fauna and flora of estuary and AVM canal and biodiversity inventorization needs to be carried out.

(vii) Environment impact assessment of the area needs to be carried out to learn the impact of tourism on the biodiversity and ecology of this fragile habitat.

(viii) Safety measures for tourists needs to be strengthened.

(ix) Need an interpretation centre at starting point for a formal lecture / video clipping about the ecological and historical importance of the place including safety measures.

(x) Need a proper guideline(s) for the tourists regarding what they have to do or have not to do for maintaining the backwater ecosystem (Padma Mahanti and sanjeet kumar, 2017)

## II. Role of Estuary for the sustainable Development of Fisher folk of Poovar

Estuarine areas are densely populated by humans due to their high productivity, especially from the point of Fisheries, aquaculture, water transport and coconut cultivation (Nandan, 2012 and Ramachandra *et al.,* 2013). Estuaries are known the world over as breeding and nursery grounds for a variety of marine fishes apart from their own resident fishes. Most of the estuarine fishes are indeed not permanent residents there but seasonal migrants from marine areas, especially during their early stages of life. The investigation conducted by Premjith *et.al* (2017) showed that 19 fish species, belonging to the 14 families are present in Poovar estuary. Out of 19 fishes, 8 fishes have economic importance at Poovar

area. It includes *arius, Channa marulius, Channa striata, Chanos chanos, Etroplus suratensis, Lutjanus argentimaculatus, Mugil cephalus* and *Oreochromis mossambicus.*

Ongoing experimental cage culture of *Etroplus suretencis* in the Poovar estuary by Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram gives encouraging result. Similarly the fishes like sea bass, milk fish, mugil *cephalus*, and resident shell fishes like *macrobrachium rosenbergii* and green crab *scylla cerrata* are identified as suitable cultured species for cage culture.  Establishment of aquarium, hatchery, knowledge centre and post harvest processing centers at Poovar definitely helps fisher folk of Poovar to revive from poverty. Central marine Fisheries Institute (CMFRI), Vizhijam sub centre has started hatcheries for 'valayoudu' fishes and shell fish  *perna viridis* with modern amenities for the regular supply of fish seed and shell-fish seed to the Aqua farmers in and around the Thiruvananthapuram district, Kerala and will be functioning in full swing  from February 2019 onwards.

## III. Role of AVM Canal for the Sustainable Development of Fisher Folk of Poovar

The canal, extending between Poovar to Mondaicaduputhur, with more than 2.5 m deep and 6 m wide, running parallel to the shore is suitable for pen and cage culture activities. Seeds of most of the estuarine fishes and shell fishes are available in the canal itself. The same seed could be used for culture activities.

## IV. Fisheries and Poverty Alleviation

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) says that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". According to UN Committee on Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights (2001), "Poverty means a human condition characterized by the sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights".

While major effort has been made recently to understand the nature and cause(s) of poverty in fishing communities, an attempt has been made to understand how small scale fisheries can also contribute to poverty alleviation. It is important to distinguish between poverty prevention and poverty reduction. Failure to understand this distinction and to recognize the implications in terms of policy is likely to lead to a muddied debate and possibly to unwanted out comes and inappropriate policies.

Poverty reduction means a situation where people are becoming measurably better off over time due to their involvement and investment in fisheries activities. And this will helps to lift people out of poverty. Poverty prevention refers to the role of fisheries activities in helping people to maintain a minimum standard of living.

When using aquaculture or aquatic resources management as a tool for poverty alleviation and development, what types of opportunity exist for poorer peoples' entry to aquaculture and how can entry be facilitated? The following are a number of simple activities that can be promoted and  enable poor people to start engaging in aquatic resource management with low levels of risk and that do not require fish ponds.

1.  The previous studies (Premjith and Saisree, 2018) showed that the literacy level among middle aged people is very low. State literacy mission should design pedagogy to continue to educate our fishermen and women.

2.  Provide opportunities to get water bodies for poor and/or landless people for small cage culture or through the use of their labour.

3.  The enhancement of communal water bodies though the stocking of self-recruiting species or routine re-stocking mechanisms can raise overall production and act as a mechanism to increase coherence of a group of resource users.

4.  Facilitating access to fingerlings is often a simple hurdle that prevents many remote communities from engaging in aquaculture who would otherwise do so. The regular and reliable supply of fingerlings is a strong factor in influencing a family's' decision to start fish culture.

5.  Locally produced seed is often preferred for local supply since local production is both visible and easy to access. Traded seed may be of inferior quality because of the stresses of travel and unscrupulous traders.

6.  Seed/fingerling nursing is an activity that requires minimal land or water surface and can be engaged in by women and even children. The nursed fingerlings have better survival in small-scale ponds and reduced risks to farmers.

7.  Supporting seed traders and distribution networks are effective in areas where there are significant quantities of commercial fingerlings produced. But the penetration in to rural areas is limited. Seed traders can facilitate supply and landless people can act as traders in the business if they have some sort of credit facilitation. Traders can also be used as an effective extension channel where information dissemination services are limited.

8.  Facilitation of pond lease or purchase by either individual or groups is a direct and welcome intervention. This can be achieved by the facilitation of credit, or through assistance in community organization to release parts of water bodies to poorer groups as part of broader rural development activities.

9.  The effective involvement of women in aquaculture and aquatic resource management is often difficult. This problem should be addressed.

10. Poor people's livelihoods often depend on a range of resources

and livelihood activities. Therefore aquaculture needs to fit with and complement other activities, rather than attempt to replace such activities.

11. Provide proper information about small-scale aquaculture and fishing techniques that have been employed successfully by poor communities elsewhere.

12. The establishment of farmer groups underpins many of these interventions and the groups can be involved in harvest and post harvest sectors.

## V. Objectives Recommended for Incorporating Government's Fisheries Policy

Besides maximising the production of fish on a sustainable basis, the Government should incorporate the following objectives for its fisheries policy:

1. First and foremost, we should increase the per capita consumption of fish through production of low cost high protein fish food through aquaculture practices. Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram initiated cage fish culture activities in the estuary of Poovar with the financial assistance of Kerala State Council for Science Technology and Environment. This has been a highly potential sector and offer huge opportunity for the development of fisheries through aquaculture and mariculture farming practices.

2. Increase employment opportunities among the fisher folk through fish ranching, fish processing and fish trade. Career for fisheries and aquaculture graduates are available with a variety of employers, including state and central government agencies, academic institutions and fish farms. Government agencies and industrial organizations recruit positions like aquaculture farmer, shellfish culturist, hatchery technician,

biological science technician, fish research assistant etc. Many career options exist in this field in both public and private sectors in aquaculture to sea farming of fish, shellfish and marine organisms. Entry-level aquaculture jobs require either a high school diploma or an undergraduate degree in aquaculture and fisheries, but more advanced positions require a master's or doctorate degree.

3. The government should enhance the living conditions of the fishermen and their families by maximising economic benefits to them. This is achieved through provision of cold storage, fish handling, processing facilities, and production of different value added by products including the concept "fresh to Home". It is necessary to improve fisheries post-harvest technologies to ensure that the region's fish and fishery products are of good quality and safe not only for export but also for domestic conception. The other sources for economic benefits include establishment of handicrafts village, open-air restaurant, swimming pool and seaside garden for children. Introduction of a boat service by district tourism promotion council (DTPC) via the sea stretch connecting the internationally renowned beach at Kovalam and Poovar should also be planned to generate income for unemployed fishermen youth.

4. To maximise export and foreign exchange earning capacity" There is, however, little doubt that it has received priority.

## VI. Need for Monitoring and Regulating Wing for Analyzing the Role of Fisher Folk in Fisheries Activities

*Producers***:** The producers are those who are going for fishing. Majority are men. They are using mechanized, motorized or non-motorized (traditional) boats. Motorized and non-motorized boats constitute the category of small-scale. One major difference between the small-scale and large-scale involves the sharing patterns. Typically on small-scale

boats the crew generally receives a share of the catch while in the mechanized sector the crew generally receives a wage. In the 'small-scale' sector owners often double as crew members and earn an extra share.

*Post-harvest workers*: Post-harvest workers are processors and traders. A large proportion is women. The stakeholders can be identified by their supply chains. Women played a crucial role in the distribution of fish, carrying them to the neighboring villages and markets; undertaking simple preservation and processing methods such as salting, drying and manufacturing fish sauce., this would give rise to a clear gender-based division of labour in the traditional fishing economies and an important role to the women in the economic system. Although women had a well-defined role in the production systems, the extent of their representation in the political and administrative systems was limited.

*The processing factories*: There is a need for the processing factories in the post harvesting sector which provides ample opportunities to the fisherwoman to earn livelihood. Fish not used for human consumption is used for fish meal production. Processors are not well-educated, have inadequate knowledge in preservation and processing techniques, and little access to skills development and information on food hygiene. These factors contribute to the difficulty in complying with safety and quality standards.

*Local fresh fish trade*:  Largely the domain of women who sells fresh fish in the neighboring markets and towns. Their main competitors are the bicycle fish vendors one decade back and now they have shifted to motorbikes and three wheelers. Increasingly, women have access to public or private transport systems so they can reach more distant markets and carry bigger loads than before. Traditionally processed fish production and trade is also largely the domain of women, either as the producers or as wage labourers in traditional processing activities. The market in dried and salted fish is declining as a result of access to cheaper/fresh fish in the markets.

*Export trade*: This is a male-dominated activity (women are mainly present as workers in the shrimp processing factories). The big investments and big returns have pushed the sector to over capitalize. Unlike the other activities in the sector, the export trade has developed along strictly commercial lines.

*Distant urban trade*: A major competitor for the local fresh fish trade and traditionally processed fish trade is the developed urban trade for the export trade. The main source of supplies into the supply chain is small-scale fisheries. This sector has grown over the last two decades which has impacted negatively on some of the poorer stakeholders especially the women traders and processors, and coastal fish consumers.

*Ancillary workers*: It includes both men and women depending on the nature of the work. They undertake a range of support services such as working at the fish landing centers; sorting, cleaning and transporting fish and shrimp; selling baskets and ice; repairing boats; preparing and selling food to fishers, includes those working as labourers on multi-day boats. They are largely invisible and remain unrecognized as 'fish workers'. Women play a critical part in the domestic economy of small-scale fishers during the lean season when they are the main family income earner; either through selling dried fish stored from a good fishing season. Children in fishing communities have an incentive to drop out of school as they can earn as much as an adult working for a day on the beach.

*Middlemen*: Another group of stakeholders in the sector are the 'middlemen' who primarily supply finance for fishing and post harvest operations. One category of the middlemen is the money lenders who mainly cater to the local fresh fish and traditionally processed fish trade. Their loans have a high interest rate and servicing these can account for up to 50 percent of a woman's earnings. The second are 'trader-financiers' who provide 'advances' to the fisher folk in return for assured

supplies of fish either at 'fixed prices' or, more widely, at a price less than the open market price. The trader-financiers are generally more active in the export and distant urban supply chains where both the margins and the competition are higher.

*Markets*: A number of market-related issues are raised by small scale fishers regarding less effective government involvement to regulate the market and ensure just prices for fishers and consumers. Kerala State Cooperative Federation for Fisheries Development Limited (Matsya fed) purchases only three percent of fish produce in the state. Lack of an effective plan to purchase, store and release excess fish to the market in an appropriate time during low-yield seasons, reduction in the quality of fish due to lack of proper transportation except two or three buses run by Matsya Fed for women, cold storage facilities and ice factories in the coastal areas drastically affect the income of coastal people of Poovar.

## VII. Optimum Utilization and Minimum Wastage of Fishery Resources

In Kerala, most of high-value fish catch is actually utilized mainly for human consumption while the low-value fishes are turned into products like fish meal for non human consumption and manure. Meanwhile on board fishing vessels, the price of high-value of the catch could be diminished to low-value, giving less benefit to the fishers due to poor handling on board. In such situation, proper encouragement in terms of financial support should be provided by the government agencies to the active women engaged in post harvest sector of Poovar coast to develop many quality value-added products for export and domestic market with available modern technology to sustain the economic benefit that could be obtained by fishers and relevant stakeholders. As a matter of fact, products such as fish balls, fish cakes, imitation crab sticks, imitation shrimps, breaded squid rings, breaded fish or shrimp, fish crackers, fish skins, and the like, could now be seen in local super markets' shelves, especially in urban centers of the country.

## VIII. Quality Improvement of Traditional Fish Products

In the Asian region, traditional fish products like fish sauce, cured fish such as sun-dried, salted and dried, steamed or boiled and fermented are major source of micronutrients and animal protein of the population. Many reports have indicated that 30-45% of fish landed in many Asian countries are converted into traditional fish products when storage facilities for fresh fish are inadequate. Traditional fish products usually consumed by low-income members of the society are mostly produced in backyards using low-level technology and they are always served as source of income for many fishing communities. In the marketing system however, products from backyard processing could not easily compete with those produced from modern processing industry, especially in terms of quality and quantity. The low quality of the raw materials, outdated processing and preservation technologies, packaging and marketing practices remains unappealing to consumers.

The fisheries sector has immense potential in terms of wealth creation, employment generation and food security as well. Unfortunately, such a vast resource has been neglected by the central and state governments. Even a cursory glance at the fishermen in coastal villages reveals that they are poverty stricken with 90 percent of the traditional fishermen living below poverty line. With almost no support from banking system, our fishermen have to depend on the age-old tools for processing and marketing. The traditional skills and knowledge on fisheries and use of eco-friendly craft and gears help them in the capture fishery during inclined weather season. The technological development, which has taken place in our country, has not reached our traditional fishermen. The large scale industrialization which has been allowed in recent years in coastal areas without having any strict regulatory regime has devastating impact on the marine live stock, on the health of fishermen and their livelihood. The urgent steps should be taken to transfer the outcome of research and technological development from various research institutes of the

country to the fishers who are actively engaged in capture and culture fisheries. Then only we could think off a sustainable economic growth among the fisherfolk of the Poovar coast.

**References**

1.    George and Domi (2002) : "Residual literacy in a Coastal Village: Poovar village of Thiruvananthapuram district. : An Assessment of Socio-economic Status *Article*. KRPLL Project, CDS, *Trivandrum*.

2.    Nandan.B.S., Jayachandran ,P.R., and Sreedevi, O.K., (2012): "Temporal pattern of fish production in a micro tidal tropical estuary in the south west coast of India", *Ind.J. fish*. , 59(2) pp. 17-26

3.    Mary Helen, D.S. Jaya and Premjith.S, (2007): "Effect of tourist resort on the water quality of Poovar estuary, S.W. Coast of India with special reference to the Heavy metal pollution'', *Him. J.Env.Zool,  VOL.2121(2) pp.295-302.(issn 0970-2903).*

*4.*    H. Mary Helen, S. Premjith and Jaya. D.S., (2008):  "Studies on impact of sewage discharge on the sediment characteristics of Poovar estuary, Kerala", *Poll. ReS.,27(3)20-23(issn 0257-8050).*

5.    H. Mary Helen, S. Premjith and D.S. Jaya (2014): "Bacteriological studies on water, sediment and fish samples of Poovar estuary, South India", *Journal of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries*. vol.2.pp. 337- 343. (ISSN 2321-340x).

6.    Padma Mahant and Sanjeetkumar, (2017): "Major biodiversity of poovar beach along the Neyaar River: a tourism destination of Kerala" *Int.Res.J. Environmental Sci* Vol. 6(2), 72-75.

7.    S. Premjith, Prasanth and S. Jayasree, (2017): "Endangered and Threatened Mangrove plant B*arringtonia racemosa* reported from Poovar South coat of India for Conservation Concern", *J.Env.Bio-Sci.* (accepted)

8.    S. Premjith, P. Praveen , SaiSree and P. Jayasree, (2017): "A Least

concern mangrove species *Sonneratia caseolaris* reported from Poovar estuary, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala", *Ajms* vol.5 No 7 (ISSN: 2321-8819)

9.    S.Premjith, P. Praveenprasannan and N.S Jayasree 2017"Fin fish resources of PoovarEstuary, south west coast of Kerala" *Ajms* vol 5 No 8 (ISSN 2321-8819)

10.   S. Premjith, P. Praveen and S. Jayasree, (2017): "Conservation and Management issues of AVM canal - Heritage for future generations", *Perspectives on Biodiversity of India - Volume III*

11.   S.Premjith and Saisree, K.G. (2018): "Weak Supportive System and Livelihood Status among Fisherfolk in Poovar Fish Landing Centre, Kerala", *IOSR-JHSS* vol.23,(1) 7 pp.73-83.e ISSN: 2279-0837

12.   Ramachandran,T.V., Subash Chandran, M.D., Joshi, N.V., Mahima, B., Prakash, N.M and Sreekanth,N. (2013): "Estuarine Fish Diversity and Livilihoods in Uttara Karnataka district Karnataka State", *Sahyadri Conservation Series* 34*, ENVS Technical report*, 64., CES,Indian Institute of Science ,Banglore, 560012, India

13.   *The Hindu Daily 2013*. Poovar rape: police looking at list of guests

# Living Status and Conditions of the Elderly Syrian Christians in Kerala - An Empirical Analysis

**Shijo Philip**

*This paper is an attempt to throw light on the living status and conditions of the elderly among the Syrian Christians in Kerala, one of the demographically advanced communities in the state. It has been found that a vast majority of the elderly Syrians in Kerala belongs to the rural areas; falls in the APL category and are completely domestic. Significant difference is observable in the residential status among different age cohorts. Completely domestic category is the highest in the age group of oldest old and lowest in the young old. No significant difference is observable in the case of living status. Over all, around three forth of the Syrian Christian elderly are currently married and nearly twenty per cent are widowed. Considerable difference is observable in the case of age wise categorization and living status. Widowed are the highest in the 80 plus age category and are more among the females. Currently married are the highest in the young old category. The highest number of divorced are among the female elderly than among the elderly males. Considerable regional difference exists in living arrangement. Over all, around half of the Syrian elderly are currently living with their spouse. More than fifty per cent are economically*

*independent and nearly forty per cent lives with the support of children. Regarding gender & economic status, significant difference is observable. While around seventy per cent of the elderly males are economically independent, this percentage is only forty for female elderly.*

## 1. Introduction

There are different views on the exact beginning of Christianity in India. Some are of the view that Christianity was brought in India by St. Thomas in AD 52, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. Others argue that it was within a few hundred years of the birth of Christ. But it has been well accepted that during the period of St. Thomas, Christianity in India formed part of the mainstream of Kerala society, enjoying civil autonomy and social privileges under the local kings (David, 1985, Mundadan 1984).

The Christian communities of Kerala may be divided into two broad categories: the Syrian Christians[1] and non-Syrian Christians. The Syrian Christians are the original Christians of Kerala. They are called the Syrian Christians as they follow the Syrian rites in their church services and worship. These original Kerala Christians were also known as 'Nasrani Christians', 'St. Thomas Christians', and 'Malankara Christians' (KC Zachariah, 2017). The Syrian Christian community of Kerala consist of a number of different denominations: The Romo-Syrians (former Jacobite or Orthodox Christians who had become Roman Catholics under Portuguese influence), the Jacobite/ Orthodox Syrians (the original Syrian Christians), the Reformed Syrians (Mar Thoma) and Syro Malankara Syrians .

Syrian Christians, distinguish themselves from other communities with its own social and cultural traits and more than 2000 year old heritage. Many Syrian Christian denominations are demographically advanced in comparison to many other communities in Kerala. In 2014, among the Christian denominations (and among all communities in

Kerala), the Mar Thoma Syrians had the highest proportion of the elderly (25 per cent), followed by the Orthodox Syrians, with a proportion of 24of their total population. Among all communities in Kerala, the highest per cent of households with elderly are also among the Mar Thoma Syrians (59 per cent). (KC Zachariah, 2017).

This paper tries to give an over view of the living conditions and status of the elderly[2] among Syrian Christians in Kerala based on a primary survey carried out during the second half of 2018. The study covered the entire state of Kerala, dividing it into three regions-Travancore, Cochin and Malabar. Travancore region comprised of four districts - Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta and Alappuzha. Kottayam, Idukki, Ernakulam and Thrissur included in Cochin region and Palakkad, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kannur and Kasaragod belong to the Malabar region. 447 sample households having elderly were selected for the study and from each house hold one elderly was selected. From each region proportionate samples were included.

Around 47 per cent sample of the elderly were from the Cochin region, the region where majority of Syrian Christians resides. From the Travancore region 38 per cent samples were selected and nearly15 per cent samples were selected from the Malabar region (Table.1).

**Table 1 : Distribution of elderly among Syrian Christians according to region**

| Region | No. | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Travancore | 170 | 38.1 |
| Cochin | 210 | 47.0 |
| Malabar | 67 | 14.9 |
| Total | 447 | 100.00 |

*Source: Primary survey*

The total elderly population were divided into three age cohorts-Young old (60-70 years), Old old (70-80 years) and oldest old (above

80 years).Among the sample population majority (62 per cent) belongs to the age group of 60 to 70 years. Nearly 26 per cent belong to the old old category and around 13 per cent belong to the oldest old cohort (Table 2). The male - female proportion were almost equal - 51 per cent male & 49 per cent female.

**Table 2.  Distribution of elderly among Syrian Christians according to age**

| Age Cohorts | No. | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Young old (60-70 years) | 275 | 61.52 |
| Old old (70-80 years) | 116 | 25.95 |
| Oldest old (above 80 ye2ars) | 56 | 12.53 |
| Total | 447 | 100.00 |

*(Primary survey)*

Table 3 presents the denomination wise distribution of the elderly. Around 34 per cent of the elderly belongs to the Orthodox Syrians. Syro Malabar Catholic community comes next with a representation of 28 per cent. Jacobite Syrians were nearly 19 per cent and Syro Malankara & Mar Thoma Community was around 13 per cent & 7 per cent respectively.

**Table 3 .Distribution of elderly among Syrian Christians according to denomination**

| Denomination | No. | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Syro Malabar Catholic | 124 | 27.7 |
| Jacobite | 84 | 18.8 |
| Orthodox | 150 | 33.6 |
| Marthomite | 33 | 7.4 |
| Syro Malankara | 56 | 12.5 |
| Total | 447 | 100.0 |

*Source: Primary survey*

More than three forth of the elderly Syrians reside in rural Kerala

and the rest (23.7 per cent) lives in urban areas (Table 4). Around 80 per cent of them were belonged to the APL category and 20 per cent belong to the BPL category (Table 5).

**Table 4 .Distribution of elderly among Syrian Christians according to place of residence**

| Place of residence | No. | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Rural | 341 | 76.3 |
| Urban | 106 | 23.7 |
| Total | 447 | 100.0 |

*Source: Primary survey*

**Table 5 .Distribution of elderly among Syrian Christians according to poverty status**

| Poverty Status | No. | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| BPL | 91 | 20.3 |
| APL | 356 | 79.7 |
| Total | 447 | 100.0 |

*Source: Primary survey*

### 2. Residential Status of Elderly Syrians

Regarding residential status, irrespective of region, large majority (around 90 per cent) belong to the completely domestic category. This is the highest in the Malabar area where 99 per cent of the elderly are completely domestic. This percentage is lowest in the Travancore region (86.4 per cent). Elderly who belongs to the Non Resident Indian (NRI) category are the highest in the Travancore region and in the Malabar region no single elderly belong to this category. Elderly who are emigrant earlier and now at home are the highest in the Travancore region (9.6 per cent) and lowest in the Malabar region (1.4 per cent). This is the second largest with 5.8 per cent of the Syrian elderly belonging to this category.

**Table 2. 1 : Distribution of elderly among Syrian Christians
according to residential status & region**

| Residential status | Region | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Travancore | Cochin | Malabar | Total |
| Completely domestic | 86.4% | 95.0% | 98.6% | 92.2% |
| NRI | 2.3% | .9% | | 1.3% |
| Emigrant earlier, now at home | 9.6% | 4.1% | 1.4% | 5.8% |
| Others | 1.7% | | | .6% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Chi-square value =16.085 | D.f = 6 | | Sign = .013[3] | |

*Source: Primary survey*

Among different age cohorts, completely domestic category is the highest in the age of oldest old group and lowest in the young old category. No NRI belongs to the oldest old age cohort. NRIs in young old & old old group are 1.7 per cent and 0.8 per cent respectively. Elderly who are emigrant earlier and now at home are the highest in the young old group (7.0 per cent) and lowest in the oldest old cohort. (1.7 per cent). No significant difference is observable regarding residential status of the Syrian Christian elderly among different age cohorts (Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2 Distribution of elderly among Syrian Christians
according to residential status & age**

| Residential status | Age | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Young old (60-70 years) | Old old (70-80 years) | Oldest old (above 80 years) | Total |
| Completely domestic | 90.6% | 93.3% | 98.3% | 92.2% |
| NRI | 1.7% | .8% | | 1.3% |
| Emigrant earlier, now at home | 7.0% | 5.0% | 1.7% | 5.8% |

| Others | .7% | .8% | | .6% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Chi-square value = 4.676 | | D.f = 6 | | Sign = .586[3] |

*Source: Primary survey*

### 3. Living status of Elderly Syrians

Regarding the region wise distribution of elderly and their living status (Table 3.1) no significant difference is observable. Over all around 74 per cent of the Syrian elderly are currently married and 22 per cent are widowed. The percentage of divorced and unmarried is almost equal in the total Syrian elderly - 1.9 per cent. In the case widowed, the highest proportion is observable in the Travancore region and least in the Cochin region. In the matter of divorced and currently married category Cochin is slightly ahead of other regions.

**Table 3.1 : Distribution of elderly among Syrian Christians according to living status & region**

| Living status | Region | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Travancore | Cochin | Malabar | Total |
| Currently married | 70.6% | 76.6% | 72.5% | 73.7% |
| Unmarried | 1.7% | 1.8% | 2.9% | 1.9% |
| Divorced | 1.7% | 2.3% | 1.4% | 1.9% |
| Widowed | 26.0% | 19.3% | 23.2% | 22.4% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Chi-square value = 3.158 | | D.f = 6 | | Sign = .789[3] |

*Source: Primary survey*

Significant difference is observable in the case of age wise categorization and living status of the Syrian Christian elderly in Kerala. As expected, the widowed is the highest in the oldest old group i.e. the 80 plus age category (44.8 per cent). Currently married is the highest in the young old category (79 per cent). Surprisingly the divorced are slightly highest in the oldest old age cohort (Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2 Distribution of elderly among Syrian Christians
according to living status & age**

| Living status | Age | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Young old (60-70 years) | Old old (70-80 years) | Oldest old (Above 80 years) | |
| Currently married | 79.0% | 71.7% | 51.7% | 73.7% |
| Unmarried | 2.1% | 2.5% | | 1.9% |
| Divorced | 1.4% | 2.5% | 3.4% | 1.9% |
| Widowed | 17.5% | 23.3% | 44.8% | 22.4% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Chi-square value = 23.777 | D.f = 6 | | | Sign = .001[3] |

*Source: Primary survey*

Regarding gender wise living status, remarkable difference can be observed in the category of widowed. The widowed are the highest among the female Syrian elderly which comes around 38 per cent. However only around 8 per cent of the elderly males are widowed. This is being reflected in the case of currently married category. While around 90 per cent of the Syrian male elderly are in the status of currently married, only 57 per cent of the female elderly fall this category. However, divorced are the highest among the female elderly than among the elderly males (Table 3.3).

**Table 3.3 : Distribution of elderly among Syrian Christians
according to living status & gender**

| Living status | Gender | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Total |
| Currently married | 89.8% | 57.0% | 73.7% |
| Unmarried | 1.7% | 2.2% | 1.9% |
| divorced | .8% | 3.1% | 1.9% |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Widowed | 7.6% | 37.7% | 22.4% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100.0% |
| Chi-square value = 66.883 | D.f = 3 | | Sign = .000[3] |

*Source: Primary survey*

## 4. Living Arrangement of Elderly Syrians

There is considerable regional difference among Syrian Christian elderly in living arrangement. Over all around half of the Syrian elderly is currently living with their spouse. While 36 per cent lives with son & family, only 6.2 per cent lives with daughter & family. Seven per cent lives alone, 1.3 per cent lives with siblings, 0.2 per cent lives in orphanages. It can be seen that elderly Syrians who are living alone is the highest in the Travancore region, which is more than double in comparison to Cochin region & more than three times higher than that of the Malabar region. Elderly who are living with spouse is also the highest in Travancore region (Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1 : Distribution of elderly among Syrian Christians according to living arrangement & region**

| Living arrangement | Region | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Travancore | Cochin | Malabar | Total |
| Living alone | 11.5% | 4.7% | 3.0% | 7.0% |
| With spouse | 54.0% | 45.5% | 46.3% | 48.9% |
| With son and family | 25.9% | 42.3% | 40.3% | 35.7% |
| With daughter and family | 7.5% | 5.2% | 6.0% | 6.2% |
| With siblings | .6% | 1.4% | 3.0% | 1.3% |
| Grand children | | .9% | 1.5% | .7% |
| Old age home | .6% | | | .2% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Chi-square value = 24.014 | | D.f = 12 | | Sign = .020[3] |

*Source: Primary survey*

There is significant age wise difference among Syrian elderly in living arrangement. In the oldest old category nearly 70 per cent of the elderly lives with son & family. This percentage for the young old category is around 29. Majority (around 55 per cent) of the elderly from the young old group lives with their spouse. The percentage of Syrian elderly who are living alone is the highest in the old old group. There is markable difference exists in the percentage of elderly who are living with son & living with daughter among different age cohorts (Table 4.2**).**

### Table 4.2 : Distribution of elderly among Syrian Christians according to living arrangement & age

| Living arrangement | Age | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Young old (60-70 years) | Old old (70-80 years) | Oldest old (Above 80 years) | Total |
| Living alone | 6.5% | 11.0% | 1.8% | 7.0% |
| With spouse | 54.8% | 48.3% | 21.1% | 48.9% |
| With son and family | 29.4% | 33.9% | 70.2% | 35.7% |
| With daughter and family | 7.2% | 4.2% | 5.3% | 6.2% |
| With siblings | 1.4% | 1.7% | | 1.3% |
| Grand children | .4% | .8% | 1.8% | .7% |
| Old age home | .4% | | | .2% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Chi-square value = 42.563 | | D.f = 12 | | Sign = .000[3] |

*Source: Primary survey*

**Table 4.3 : Distribution of elderly among Syrian Christians according to living arrangement & gender**

| Living arrangement | Gender | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Total |
| Living alone | 4.8% | 9.3% | 7.0% |
| With spouse | 63.8% | 33.8% | 48.9% |
| With son and family | 27.5% | 44.0% | 35.7% |
| With daughter and family | 3.1% | 9.3% | 6.2% |
| With siblings | | 2.7% | 1.3% |
| Grand children | .9% | .4% | .7% |
| Old age home | | .4% | .2% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Chi-square value = 47.499 | | D.f = 6 | Sign = .000[3] |

*Source: Primary survey*

Regarding gender, considerable difference exists in living arrangement (Table 4.3). Males who are living with spouse are almost double (64 per cent) in comparison to their female counterpart (34 per cent). But in the case of those who are living with son & family, the opposite is true. More females (44 per cent) are living with sons and family than males (28 per cent). Another important finding is that more females are living alone (9.3 per cent) than males (4.8 per cent).

**5. Economic Status of Elderly Syrians**

With regard to economic status, nearly 54 per cent Syrian elderly are economically independent and around 38 per cent lives with the support of children. Only around 3 per cent lives with the support of spouse. There is remarkable difference in region wise economic status of the elderly. While around 63 percent of the elderly in Travancore region are economically independent, this percent in Malabar region is nearly 38. Half of the elderly in Malabar lives with the support of children. Around

10 per cent of the elderly in Malabar lives with the support of other relatives (Table 5.1)

**Table 5.1 : Distribution of elderly among Syrian Christians according to economic status & region**

| Economic status | Region | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Travancore | Cochin | Malabar | Total |
| Economically independent | 63.0% | 51.2% | 37.7% | 53.6% |
| With the support of children | 28.3% | 41.0% | 49.3% | 37.5% |
| With support of relatives | 4.6% | 4.1% | 10.1% | 5.2% |
| With support of spouse | 4.0% | 2.8% | 2.9% | 3.3% |
| Support of spouse and children | | .5% | | .2% |
| Old age home | | .5% | | .2% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Chi-square value = 20.060 | D.f = 10 | | Sign = .029[3] | |

*Source: Primary survey*

No significant difference can be observed in age wise economic status of the Syrian elderly. Economically independent elderly are the highest in young old age cohort (57 per cent) and least in the oldest old cohort (43 per cent). Majority (around 57 per cent) in the 80+ category lives with the support of children. Those who are not getting the support of children in this group are observed to be economically independent. 7.6 per cent of the old old category lives with the support of relatives (Table 5.2).

**Table 5.2 : Distribution of elderly among Syrian Christians according to economic status & age**

| Economic status | Age | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Young old (60-70 years) | Old old (70-80 years) | Oldest old (Above 80 years) | Total |
| Economically independent | 56.5% | 51.7% | 43.1% | 53.6% |
| With the support of children | 33.2% | 38.1% | 56.9% | 37.5% |
| With support of relatives | 5.3% | 7.6% | | 5.2% |
| With support of spouse | 4.2% | 2.5% | | 3.3% |
| Support of spouse and children | .4% | | | .2% |
| Old age home | .4% | | | .2% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Chi-square value = 17.431 | | D.f = 10 | | Sign = .065[3] |

*Source: Primary survey*

Regarding gender & economic status considerable difference is observable. While around 68 per cent of the elderly males are economically independent, the percentage is only 39 for elderly females. Around 49 per cent of the elderly females live with the support of children. For males this percentage is 26.2. Females who live with the support of relatives are nearly 6 percent. For males this is 4.3 percent (Table 5.3).

**Table 5.3 : Distribution of elderly among Syrian Christians according to economic status & gender**

| Economic status | Gender | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Total |
| Economically independent | 68.2% | 38.5% | 53.6% |
| With the support of children | 26.2% | 49.1% | 37.5% |
| With support of relatives | 4.3% | 6.2% | 5.2% |

| With support of spouse | .9% | 5.8% | 3.3% |
|---|---|---|---|
| Support of spouse and children | | .4% | .2% |
| Old age home | .4% | | .2% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Chi-square value = 46.245 | D.f = 5 | | Sign = .000[3] |

*Source: Primary survey*

**Conclusion**

In this paper an attempt has been made to throw light on the living status and conditions of the elderly among the Syrian Christians in Kerala. The socio-economic profile of sample Syrian Christian elderly in Kerala provides certain unique inferences. A good percentage of sample elderly are keen to be economically independent. This preference on economic independence is reflected on their living status as a good percentage of elderly prefer to live either alone or with spouse. However, these general characteristics of elderly are not distributed uniformly across gender, denominations, regions and various socio-economic groups. It is also found that most of these socio-economic attributes of sample respondents are statistically different across the above-mentioned groups. Being one of the demographically advanced communities and with more number of elderly in their population, it is interesting to dive deep into this community and to trace out life of the elderly among them. If these people are leading a satisfactory later life, it can be emulated by other communities too. If they are in misery, we have to address them. All these warrants further studies and research among these graying cohorts.

**Notes**

1.     The present study considers those Christians who follow Syrian rites in church worship as 'Syrian Christians'.

2.     The international definition of 'elderly' is a person who is sixty five years of age or older. But in Kerala (and India), the elderly

are defined as persons aged sixty years or older. (UNFPA, 2017; 2013, KC Zachariah, 2017). This study also adopts this definition and defines 'elderly' (often referred as the 'aged') as a person having age sixty and above.

3.   The criteria taken for significance level is 5 percentage.

**Reference**

1.   David, M.D. (ed.). (1985): 'History of the Church in India', *in Asia and Christianity,* Himalaya Publishing House, Bombay.

2.   Mundadan, A.M. (1984): *Indian Christians: Search for Identity and Struggle for Autonomy*, Dharmaram Publications. Bangalore.

3.   K.C. Zachariah (2006): *The Syrian Christians of Kerala, Demographic and Socio-Economic Transition in the Twentieth Century*, Orient Longman, New Delhi.

4.   K.C. Zachariah (2017): *Changing Kerala: Population Growth & Economic Development of Religious Denominations*, RedInk, Kochi.

# Atrocities Against Women in Kerala

**Sheela  M.C.**

*The achievements in the social and demographic fields in Kerala have been widely acclaimed and often the 'Kerala model' is projected as worthy of emulation. Historically Kerala has been quite different from the rest of the country in terms of the indicators of women's development. In terms of sex ratio, literacy, life expectancy and mean age at marriage, women in Kerala score higher than any other state in the country. In spite of all the positive indices of better quality of life, Kerala is ranked high in crime and suicide rates. As per the figures brought out by the State Crime Records Bureau, the total reported cases of crime against women are increasing over the period. The number of 'Rape cases' has increased as years passed. The 'cruelty by husband /relatives' still continues  a major component in crime against women. As per data from National Crime Records Bureau, Kerala is a state where 'Rate of total cognizable Crimes' (incidence of crime per one lakh female population) is much higher than the national level. Even when we want women to come out of their homes and take up employment, the safety of women is a serious issue. Greater efforts are required in this field. Violence against women happens because of inefficient legal justice*

*system, weak rules of law and male dominated social and political structures. This paper draws attention to the trend, pattern and rate of violence against women in Kerala and also look into the cause, consequences and prevention of atrocities against women.*

Women constitute almost the half of the total world population. Gender based violence is a common reality in the lives of women and girls in many parts of the world, developing and industrialised countries alike. It has been recognised as a violation of basic human rights of women and of their exercise of fundamental freedom. In all societies, to a greater or lesser degree, women and girls are subjected to physical, sexual and psychological abuse that cuts across lines of income, class and culture. Though there were several attempts to upgrade the status of women, the condition of women remains the same but for a few changes among some sections of women. History shows that women have never had an opportunity to express their individuality, since their freedom has always been suppressed by their immediate society.

**Status of Women in India**

In India, domestic violence is emerging as a major social problem. However, until recently, the documentation on the prevalence and correlates has remained scant. In a landmark study, the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) in partnership with the International Clinical Epidemiologists Network (INCLEN) has provided reliable estimates on the prevalence of domestic violence as well as its correlates (INCLEN, 2000).

Women in India constitute near about half of its population (50%) and most of them are grinding under the socio-cultural and religious structures. National Family Health Survey (NFHS 2002) found that at least 1 in 5 married women in India have experienced domestic violence since the age of 15. In India safe 2000 multi-site study of nearly 10,000

households, 40 percent of the women reported experiencing at least one form of physical abuse and 26 percent reported severe physical abuse, including being hit, kicked, or beaten. UNFPA also reports that 40% of the women in India suffer domestic violence and abuse from male partner. Records from the Special Cell for Women and Children in Mumbai, established by the Police Commission to provide a range of support services to women and their families, revealed that 53 percent of women endured domestic violence for 3-17 years before complaining to police (Dave and Solanki 2000). National Crime Record Bureau statistics show that the rate and incidence of crime has increased from 5.1 and 14 in the year 2006 to 34.9 and 59 during the year 2011. The most common crimes against women in India are sexual harassment, rape, dowry, child marriage, female infanticide and sex-selective abortion, domestic violence and trafficking. Many rapes go unreported. Due to "family honour" many complaint files are withdrawn and in many cases the police do not give a fair hearing.

Male violence against women is a worldwide phenomenon. It determines what they do, when they do it, where they do it, and with whom. Fear of violence is a cause of women's lack of participation in activities beyond the home, as well as inside it. Within the home, women and girls may be subjected to physical and sexual abuse as punishment or as culturally justified assaults. These acts shape their attitude to life, and their expectations of themselves.

**The Kerala Context**

The achievements in the social and demographic fields of Kerala have been widely acclaimed and often the 'Kerala model' is projected as worthy of emulation. Historically Kerala has been quite different from the rest of the country in terms of the indicators of women's development. In terms of sex ratio, literacy, life expectancy and mean age at marriage, women in Kerala score higher than any other state in the country. It brings up Kerala at par with developed countries

Kerala has done exceptionally well in terms of all human

development indicators: very low level of infant mortality rate (11 per 1000 live births); high longevity of males and females (69 years for males and 75 years for females); below-replacement level of fertility (1.7 children per woman); near universal literacy rates of males and females (94 percent for males and 88 percent for females); and high levels of health and nutritional status of women and children. Researchers and policy makers have been engaged in evaluating these remarkable achievements, the so-called Kerala model of development (Dreze and Sen, 1995; Heller, 1995; Kannan, 1998; Lieten, 2002).

The reasons for this enormous human development in Kerala are many. The implementation of comprehensive redistributive land reforms in the early 1970s transformed the agrarian relations and facilitated social change in Kerala. The conferment of ownership of land titles to hutment dwellers, small artisans, and agricultural labourers liberated them from feudal subservience and enhanced their bargaining power and human dignity. Local level struggles and broad-based social mobilisation struggles from below provided the erstwhile deprived sections institutionalised bargaining power to claim their rights for minimum wages, fair working conditions, social protection and other welfare entitlements including food subsidies. Legislative and institutional changes in the labour market through responsive government interventions paved the way for wage and employment security. In fact, Kerala has a comprehensive pension and social security regime, especially in the informal or unorganized sectors, which include agricultural labourers, head load workers, construction workers, toddy tappers and widows, to name only a few.

Political mobilisation and collective action around educational reforms played a major role in creating an enabling environment for mass literacy. The liberal policies followed are also linked to advancement in the status of women especially of the socially and economically deprived groups.

The social movements of yesteryears also played significant roles in enhancing the status of women and creating a liberal attitude towards

girls' education. And the system of matrilineal in powerful and influential communities such as the Nair's where women controlled the property and other important duties of the household, had an influence on the society in their appreciation for women's high status (Agarwal, 1994). The enlightened educational policies pursued in the erstwhile Travancore and Cochin States, contributed in many ways to the development of the health sector and the utilisation of available health services.

The twentieth century witnessed many social movements that benefited women in diverse ways such as supplying them with information and education on the various oppressive tactics used by upper castes and the elite in society against the poor, the landless and the lower castes. The radical political traditions in Kerala and the mass mobilisation of the backward castes for affirmative action also had their influence on the creation of the stage for voicing their rights. Women's status was, in the process, enhanced with growing participation in these movements, increasing exposure to education, rising assimilation of progressive ideas, and rising appreciation of their own rights.

**Overview of Status of Women in Kerala**

Kerala has often been referred to as the ''land of Women''. An overview of the situation of women in Kerala presents a paradoxical picture. Laudable achievements in the socio-demographic realms notwithstanding, such as favourable sex ratio, and high levels of literacy, unseen in other parts of the country, issues of economic impoverishment, low participation in political activity, malnourishment and low labour force participation rates are rampant among women in Kerala. Harassment of women in the domestic sphere and the work place is also observed to be quite common in the State.

**Domestic Violence in Kerala: Prevalence and Correlates**

In recent years, domestic violence is being increasingly recognised as a human rights and social and public health concern. Although the estimates of prevalence of domestic violence vary widely, prevalence rates

generally range from 20 percent to 50 percent (Heise, et al, 1999). In the current literature on domestic violence, different explanations have been given for its occurrence: (1) cultural systems legitimise violence, legal authorities fail to protect women, economic structures subordinate women, and political systems marginalise women's needs (Heise, et al, 1994); (2) marital violence is more prevalent in societies in which patriarchal systems are strong and women have few options outside of marriage due to divorce restrictions and low access to economic resources, and where violence is an accepted means for conflict-resolution (Levinson, 1989); (3) violence against women is a reflection of the power relationships between spouses (Strauss, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980); (4) violence against women is linked to woman's lower self-esteem, severe depressive symptoms with minimal personal resources, and little institutional support (Strauss, 1980); (5) society encourages husbands to exercise their rights to dominate and control wives (Dobash and Dobash, 1992). In this context, this study draws attention to the following area.

**Objectives**

(i) To identify the nature, cause and consequences of the atrocities against women in Kerala.

(ii) To examine the trends, pattern and prevention of violence against women in Kerala

**Method**

Data for the study has been taken from various volumes of Crime in India, a publication of National Crime Records Bureau, India and from the State Crime Records Bureau, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

**Concepts**

The term 'atrocities against women' refers to as *"a cruel and wicked act against a woman which causes her emotional or physical injury or both"*.

**Definition**

The widely used definition of violence against women (VAW) is: The Declaration on Elimination of Violence Against Women adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1993, defines Violence Against Women as "any act of gender based violence against women that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private spaces". The Centre for Diseases Control in the US has defined four different types of violence:

- Physical violence

- Sexual violence

- Threat of physical or sexual violence, and

- Psychological or emotional abuse.

Economic violence is another category of violence identified by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women. This is perpetrated usually by an intimate partner or family member and includes economic blackmail, control over money a woman earns, denial of access to education, health assistance or remunerated employment and denial of property rights (Coomaraswamy 1996). Gender-based violence against women takes many forms and occurs throughout a woman's life cycle.

Heise (1994) describe the different forms of violence that women experience throughout their lifespan.

*Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations,* declared in a 2006 report posted on the *United Nations Development Fund for Women* (UNIFEM) website: Violence against women and girls is a problem of *pandemic* proportions. At least one out of every three women around the world has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime with the abuser usually someone known to her.

The Police Research Bureau, Delhi has referred to "crime against women" under two categories:

- crimes under the Indian Penal Code, and

- crimes under the local and special laws.

The Bureau has identified seven crimes in the first category and four crimes in the second category of crimes. The seven crimes under the IPC are: rape, kidnapping and abduction, homicide for dowry, torture (physical and mental), molestation, eve-teasing; and importation of girls up to 21 years of age, while the four crimes under the local and special laws are: commission of sati, dowry prohibition, immoral traffic, and indecent representation of women.

## Forms of Violence

According to an article in the *Health and Human Rights Journal,* regardless of many years of advocacy and involvement of many feminist activist organizations, the issue of violence against women still "remains one of the most pervasive forms of human rights violations worldwide".

Violence against women can fit into several broad categories. These include violence carried out by "individuals" as well as "states". Some of the forms of violence perpetrated by individuals are: *rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, reproductive coercion, female infanticide, prenatal sex selection, obstetric violence, and mob violence;* as well as harmful customary or traditional practices such as honour *killings, dowry violence, female genital mutilation, marriage by abduction and forced marriage.* Some forms of violence are perpetrated or condoned by certain states such as *war rape; sexual violence and sexual slavery* during conflict; *forced sterilization; forced abortion;* violence by the police and authoritative personnel; *stoning and flogging.* Many forms of VAW, such as *trafficking in women and forced prostitution* are often perpetrated by organized criminal networks

The violence against women can occur in both public and private spheres of life and at any time of their life span. They are given in table 1.

Table 1 : WHO's typology table

| Phase | Type of violence |
|---|---|
| Pre-birth | Sex-selective abortion; effects of battering during pregnancy on birth outcomes, coerced pregnancy |
| Infancy | Female infanticide; emotional and physical abuse, sexual ,differential access to food and medical care and psychological abuse |
| Girlhood | Child marriage; female genital mutilation; physical, sexual and psychological abuse; incest; child prostitution and pornography |
| Adolescence and adulthood | Dating and courtship violence (e.g. acid throwing and date rape); economically coerced sex (e.g. school girls having sex with "sugar daddies" in return for school fees); incest; sexual abuse in the workplace; rape; sexual harassment; forced prostitution and pornography; trafficking in women; partner violence; marital rape; dowry abuse and murders; partner homicide; psychological abuse; abuse of women with disabilities; forced pregnancy |
| Elderly | Forced "suicide" or homicide of widows for economic reasons; sexual, physical and psychological abuse; accusations of witchcraft; differential access to food and medical care. |

*Source: Heise, Pitanguay and Germain (1994). Violence Against Women: The Hidden Health Burden. World Bank, Discussion Paper.*

**Crime against Women in Kerala During the period 2007-2018**

Crime against women in Kerala during the period 2007-2018 shows that rate of crime is increasing at a fast rate. The crime against women doubled in 2018 (all forms of crime (table 2) from the year 2007.

Table 2 : Crime against Women in Kerala during the period 2007-2018

| Crime head | 2007 | 2011 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rape | 500 | 1132 | 1656 | 1987 | 2015 |
| Molestation | 2604 | 3756 | 4029 | 4498 | 4589 |
| Kidnapping & Abduction | 166 | 221 | 166 | 200 | 181 |
| Eve teasing | 262 | 573 | 328 | 394 | 463 |
| Dowry | 22 | 15 | 25 | 13 | 16 |
| Cruelty by husband & relatives | 3976 | 5377 | 3455 | 2863 | 2048 |
| Other offences | 1851 | 2205 | 5455 | 4298 | 4427 |
| Total | 9381 | 13279 | 15114 | 14254 | 13732 |

*Source: SCRB, Kerala*

**Crime against Women - District Wise Statistics**

According to an ICRW-INCLEN (International Centre for Research on Women and International Clinical Epidemiologist Network) study (2000), Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala, ranks first among five cities in India in prevalence of domestic violence. There are increasing reports of dowry-related violence, rape (1019 reported rape in 2012) and other atrocities against women in Kerala. Kerala has recorded 23,853 cases involving violence, including rape, against women and 1,326 cases of attack on children in the past two years (2013). Domestic violence dominate among the crimes against women in Kerala, a study by the Institute of Social Science for Kerala Police (2013) has revealed. As much as 51.4 per cent of the crimes are related to domestic crimes which are more common among the women who are between 26 and 40 years (44.9 per cent). The capital city of Kerala ranks first in atrocities against women. Details are given in table 3.

Table 3 : **Crime against women - 2018 - District wise statistics**

| Sl. No. | Name of Dist/City | Rape | Mole-station (354 IPC) | Kidnapping & Abd-uction | Eve-teasing 509 IPC | Dowry Deaths | Cruelty by husband or rela-tives | Other Offen-ces | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Trivandrum City | 87 | 191 | 7 | 20 | 1 | 50 | 171 | 527 |
| 2 | Trivandrum Rural | 187 | 530 | 13 | 8 | 2 | 122 | 299 | 1,161 |
| 3 | Kollam City | 80 | 223 | 11 | 26 | 4 | 111 | 120 | 575 |
| 4 | Kollam Rural | 94 | 302 | 0 | 22 | 0 | 93 | 85 | 596 |
| 5 | Pathanamthitta | 93 | 185 | 3 | 10 | 0 | 39 | 385 | 715 |
| 6 | Alappuzha | 116 | 263 | 20 | 28 | 0 | 81 | 354 | 862 |
| 7 | Kottayam | 132 | 220 | 10 | 29 | 0 | 70 | 68 | 529 |
| 8 | Idukki | 86 | 259 | 6 | 18 | 0 | 88 | 25 | 482 |
| 9 | Ernakulam City | 84 | 253 | 7 | 65 | 1 | 76 | 523 | 1,009 |
| 10 | Ernakulam Rural | 132 | 315 | 12 | 33 | 0 | 117 | 260 | 869 |
| 11 | Thrissur City | 114 | 144 | 5 | 34 | 0 | 98 | 387 | 782 |
| 12 | Thrissur Rural | 65 | 189 | 3 | 31 | 1 | 76 | 158 | 523 |
| 13 | Palakkad | 146 | 177 | 14 | 22 | 1 | 119 | 73 | 552 |
| 14 | Malappuram | 187 | 404 | 7 | 48 | 2 | 338 | 369 | 1,355 |
| 15 | Kozhikode City | 43 | 144 | 21 | 13 | 0 | 98 | 298 | 617 |
| 16 | Kozhikode Rural | 91 | 255 | 17 | 14 | 2 | 210 | 124 | 713 |
| 17 | Wyanad | 86 | 135 | 12 | 4 | 2 | 42 | 102 | 383 |
| 18 | Kannur | 115 | 186 | 8 | 16 | 0 | 138 | 385 | 848 |
| 19 | Kasaragod | 75 | 178 | 4 | 13 | 0 | 82 | 186 | 538 |
| 20 | Railways | 0 | 36 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 53 | 95 |
| 21 | CBCID | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 |
| 22 | TOTAL | 2015 | 4589 | 181 | 460 | 16 | 2048 | 4427 | 13736 |

*Source: SCRB, Kerala, 2018*

From the table, it can be inferred that the government should make more efforts to reduce violence against women by strengthening the police department. The severity and prevalence of crimes against women in the

districts show different patterns of crime, so efforts should be made to tackle it by launching different programmes for each district.

**Causes of Violence**

Many incidence of violence are not reported because of the shame and fear associated with being a victim. Rates of sex trafficking, sexual violence in armed conflict situations, female infanticide, and violence in schools and the workplace, for example, are thought to be significantly underdocumented, particularly in developing countries (Coomaraswamy 1996).

According to Ahuja (1998) and Sharma (1997) a common approach in some of the theories has been to focus on individual aggressors. There are two kinds of explanations focusing on individuals. One includes psycho-pathological explanations that focus on personality characteristics of victims and offenders. These theories provide pathological explanations for violent behaviour focusing on brain structures, chemical imbalances, dietary deficiencies, hormonal factors as well as evolutionary theories and genetic characteristics to explain violent behaviour. The socio-psychological model on the other hand argues that violent behaviour can be understood by careful examination of the external environmental factors that have an impact on the behaviour of individuals leading to stressful situations or family interactional patterns.

Feminist analysis of violence has been based on power relations between men and women that deny women equal access to power and resources thus making them more vulnerable to violence from men. The cause of this violence can be traced to patriarchy - the ideology that bestows on men power and authority over all aspects of women's lives including their bodies (Mo Hume (2009). Heise (1998) proposes a clearer and interrelated ecological framework for understanding violent behaviour among individuals. This framework includes a range of physical, social, emotional and psychological factors at the personal, community and societal levels. In this model, the causative factors are represented in the form of four concentric circles.

As much as 51.4 per cent of the crimes are related to domestic crimes which are more common among the women who are between 26 and 40 years (44.9 per cent). Poverty coupled with alcoholism is the root cause for crime against women, it has been revealed. But there are other causes among which the most vulnerable ones are social media and modern ICT tools. A high level of divorced and widowed women at the macro level state data and micro level panchayat data show the poor status of women in the Kerala society, argue Ramanathaiyer and Macpherson (2000).

Studies from WHO (1997) indicate that between 16% and 52% of women world-wide are physically assaulted by an intimate partner at least once in their lives. Evidence from Sri Lanka shows that 60% of 200 women interviewed said they were beaten by their partners, 51 of the women said their partner used a weapon during the physical assault. In Bangladesh, 50% of wives murdered were killed by their husbands (Coomaraswamy 1996). In Ecuador, for example, a World Bank study found that approximately 22% of women reported being sexually abused in schools.

**Consequences of Atrocities**

The violence against women can occur in both public and private spheres of life and at any time of their life span. Violence against women often keeps women from wholly contributing to social, economic, and political development of their communities. Many women are terrified by these threats of violence and this essentially influences their lives so that they are impeded to exercise their human rights. Apart from that, the causes that trigger VAW or gender-based violence can go beyond just the issue of gender and into the issues of age, class, culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and specific geographical area of their origins.

Violence against women both inside and outside of their home has been a crucial issue in the contemporary Indian society. One gender

has been controlling the space of India's social, economic, political and religious fabric since time immemorial.

A qualitative study in Ethiopia found that harassment and sexual abuse contributed to low female enrolment rates and high dropout rates from secondary schools. In Pakistan nearly one-third of the women had experienced physical violence at least once in marital life, the reasons being financial constraints, children or in laws, although these factors were not significantly associated with anxiety/depression. The low social and economic status of women can be both a cause and a consequence of this violence

The cost and consequence of violence against women last for generations. Children who witness domestic violence are at increased risk of anxiety, depression, low-self esteem and poor school performance, among other problems that harm their well-being and personal development. Gender-based violence has long-lasting effects in the life of a woman or a girl growing up. Aside from negative sexual effects, it can have a negative effect physically, socially, emotionally, and psychologically. Such effects can be depression, anxiety, and victimization. The physical effects of domestic violence on children, other than the effects of direct abuse, can start when they are foetus in their mother's womb, can result in low infant birth weights, premature birth, excessive bleeding, and foetal death, due to the mother's physical trauma and emotional stress.

World Health Organisation (WHO), in a study carried out in 1996 entitled 'Violence Against Women', identified the psychological and physical impact of domestic violence on the health of the victims-survivors. They came up with a categorisation of the health consequences of violence against women according to the degree of the outcome mostly whether the outcome was fatal or non-fatal (UNICEF 2000).

**Prevention against Atrocities**

Violence against women and girls is rooted in gender-based

discrimination and social norms and gender stereotypes that perpetuate such violence. Given the devastating effect violence has on women, efforts have mainly focused on responses and services for survivors. However, the best way to end violence against women and girls is to prevent it from happening in the first place by addressing its root and structural causes. Prevention entails supporting the implementation of the agreed conclusions of the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) that placed a strong focus on prevention through the promotion of gender equality, women's empowerment and their enjoyment of human rights. It also means making the home and public spaces safer for women and girls, ensuring women's economic autonomy and security, and increasing women's participation and decision-making powers - in the home and relationships, as well as in public life and politics. They can begin to challenge the deeply rooted inequalities and social norms that perpetuate men's control and power over women and reinforce tolerance for violence against women and girls.

Prevention should start early in life, by educating and working with young boys and girls promoting respectful relationships and gender equality. Working with youth is a "best bet" for faster, sustained progress on preventing and eradicating gender-based violence. While public policies and interventions often overlook this stage of life, it is a critical time when values and norms around gender equality are forged.

The solution lies in the fact that women empowerment approach to combat violence against women should be well integrated and interwoven into all policies and programmes of the governments. Women should be equal partners not only at the public places but should have adequate control of their own resources. Awareness-raising and community mobilization, including through media and social media, is another important component of an effective prevention strategy.

**Conclusion**

Centuries have come, and centuries have gone, but the plight of women is not likely to change. Time has helplessly watched women

suffering in the form of discrimination, oppression, exploitation, degradation, aggression and humiliation. Kerala is not exempted from it. It is a paradox in the State that along with high human development index, atrocities against women are increasing. It has been seen that when the society imposes sanctions against the perpetrators of violence, the women are empowered to exert for their rights. Only when the family and the society are democratized, the status of women is strengthened. At this time, it becomes the duty of the state to facilitate and strengthen the process.

**References**

1.    Agarwal B. (1994) : *A field of one's own: Gender and land rights in South Asia,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

2.    Ahuja (1998) and Sharma (1997): *High literacy and mounting violence: A case of women in Kerala, India*

3.    Coomaraswamy (1996): "Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women: Its Causes and Consequences", United Nations  Economic  and Social Council.

4.    Dave and Solanki (2000): Dave, A., & Solanki, G. (2000): "Special Cell for Women and Children: A Research Study on Domestic Violence". In A summary report of four records studies  (pp. 25– 33). Washington, DC: ICRW

5.    Dobash and Dobash, (1992): "Male Violence against women: Current Research and Future Directions".

6.    Dreze and Sen, (1995): *India: Economic Development and Social Opportunity*, Oxford and University Press, Oxford.

7.    Dreze and Sen, (1995): **Heller**, (1995), Kannan (1998):*Domestic Violence against Women in Kerala*, CDS

8.    Heise,  Pitanguay and Germain (1994): "Violence Against Women: The Hidden Health Burden", World Bank, *Discussion Paper*. Washington. D.C.: The World Bank.

9.    Heise L (1998): "Violence against Women: An Integrated Ecological Framework", *Violence against Women*, Vol. 4.

10.   Heise , et al, (1999): *Violence against women: global scope and magnitude.*

11.   Levinson, (1989): Strauss, Gelles, and Steinmetz, (1980): *Societal Change and Change in Family Violence from 1975 to 1985 As Revealed by Two National Surveys*

12.   Lieten, (2002): *The "right to be helped": welfare policies and notions of rights at the margins of Soviet society*, 1917-1950

13.   Mo Hume (2009): *Psychological trauma and physical health: A psychoneuroimmunology approach to etiology of negative health effects and possible interventions.*

14.   National Family Health Survey (NFHS 2002): *NFHS-2, India volume*, International Institute of population sciences, Mumbai, India, 2008.

15.   Ramanathaiyer and Macpherson (2000): "Collaboration Paradox: Scientific Productivity, the Internet, and Problems of Research in Developing Areas", *Social Studies of  Science.*

16.   UNICEF, "Domestic Violence against women and girls", *Innocenti digest*, no.6, June 2000

17.   World Health Organization (1997):  *Violence against women.*

# Periodizing History: A Hegemonic Discourse

**Saurav Kumar Rai**

*The present paper examines the problem of periodization in history and associated subjectivity. The post-modernist turn in history has revealed that the conventional periodization of historical time into ancient, medieval and modern is nowhere an objective phenomenon, rather it carries value judgements. In this regard, everything which is related to 'modern' becomes superior, progressive and admirable; whereas things and practices belonging to 'ancient' and 'medieval' times become inferior, regressive and despicable. Even when something related to ancient and medieval period is appreciated, yardstick remains exclusively modern in nature. At the same time, the present paper also explores the repercussion of such subjective division of time in legitimizing the colonial hegemony.*

Marc Bloch once argued that history is not merely 'science of men' rather it is the science of 'men in time'. A historian cannot think of human history in abstract, he has to specify the 'time' of which he is talking about. Now, the problem, according to Bloch, is that 'real time' is always moving and in essence is both- a continuum and also a perpetual change [Bloch 1953: 28]. This generates the problem related to periodization in history. It becomes difficult to break history into well demarcated epochs, phases or periods because of this dual nature of

time. Furthermore, it is very difficult to conceive universal periodization of history as the trajectory of historical progression of different regions is not exactly the same. Although the protagonists of linear progression of history have argued in favour of history of all regions passing through similar stages, still the problem of 'universal epochal threshold' remains as different stages of linear progression have been witnessed by different regions at different junctures. Nevertheless, according to Reinhart Koselleck, this entire concern regarding the difficulties in periodization of history actually arose with the conceptualization of something like *neue Zeit* (new time) or *Neuzeit* (modernity) in the eighteenth century.

Although historians were time-sensitive even prior to eighteenth century, but they rarely used to pass value judgments on the 'time' that had already passed. Individual events, institutions and personalities were definitely subject of appraisal, but historians hardly commented on the 'time' to which those events, institutions or personalities belonged. So, 'time' itself was value neutral and just remained a form or category in which all histories could be placed.[1] In other words, a historian writing in the fifteenth century nowhere believed that he belonged to a time or an era superior to his predecessors. Anything and everything was possible in all eras and timeline was just a way to record human history in chronological manner. So, prior to eighteenth century, the use of the term like 'modern time' was only in the sense of being 'recent' and it was not at all a value loaded term.

### *Neue Zeit* or 'new time'

In the eighteenth century with the conceptualization of the idea of *neue Zeit* or 'new time', time no longer remained a passive entity rather, as argued by Koselleck, time metaphorically turned into a force of history itself [Koselleck 2002: 165]. According to Koselleck, '[H]istory no longer takes place in time, but rather through time' [Koselleck 2002: 165]. Thus, the idea that we are living in a time fundamentally different from the preceding one gained significance. *Neuzeit* became bearer of all those valuable things and ideas which were not just absent in earlier

time but not at all possible in those times. So, a sense of being part of a 'superior' age or era precipitated in the eighteenth century. This sense of 'superiority' was essentially juxtaposed with the idea of 'inferiority' of time that had already passed. Therefore, more a person will travel backward in time scale, more 'uncivilized' and 'barbarous' he would become. Thus, history became synonymous to 'evolution' where each successive stage was better than the previous one. Closely related to this evolutionary scheme was also the idea of 'open future'. It was conceived that new things would keep on coming in future which would always be better than what is there in present. This, in turn, also gave rise to the accompanying concepts of 'progress' and 'development' as universal phenomena. Consequently, mere citing of 'time' could give some sense of backwardness or superiority of a society, institution, idea or people. There was no need at all to enter into detailed assessment of them; the 'time' to which they belong itself became suggestive of their respective worth and character. As stated by Koselleck, 'Centuries are thought of as cohering units loaded with meaning' [Koselleck 2002: 166].

In fact, this entire notion of belonging to a superior age was an inherent outcome of modernity or *Neuzeit*. As argued by post-structuralist post-modernist writers, modernist traditions tried to arrange knowledge around certain major binaries such as science vs. literature, science vs. magic, fact vs. fiction, civilization vs. madness, truth vs. imagination, new time vs. antiquity/dark age and so on. In all these binaries, the second term almost always occupies a substandard or inferior position. In other words, modernity is based on essentially negative characterization of 'pre-modern' or things belonging to earlier times. It is this negative characterization of earlier time by creating several binaries that sustained the most dominant claim of modernity viz. 'when measured against all prior history the new time is unique.' Metanarratives were developed regarding *Neuzeit* to sustain its uniqueness. According to Jean Francois Lyotard, these metanarratives ensured the domination of various sorts - of one class over another, of men over women, of

majority over minority, of present over past, of modern over pre-modern [Lyotard 1979].

Thus, beginning from eighteenth century, 'time' was given a completely new connotation and history was periodized into ancient, medieval and modern. In this periodization of history 'modern' hegemonized 'ancient' and 'medieval'. Whatever considered as 'modern' became essentially authentic, worthy and something to be followed by the entire world; whereas 'ancient' and 'medieval' became disgusting, primitive and mostly dark with occasional 'golden ages'.[2] So, a kind of, to use the terminology of Hayden White [1975], 'Metahistory' developed which not only constructed but also concocted or fictionalized the past to show the uniqueness of 'present' or 'modern'.[3]

### Application on Non-Western Societies

Interestingly, when this conventional periodization of history was applied on non-Western societies it led to the production of another kind of hegemonic narrative. It was argued that the arrival of *neue Zeit* or 'new' time in non-Western societies was not concurrent with the West. The non-Western societies of the eighteenth and nineteenth century were considered as still belonging to some 'different' 'archaic' time. This led to 'non-simultaneity of the simultaneous' [Koselleck, 2002: 159]. And since 'modernity' was conceived as something that should be strived for by all human societies (because of its inherent embedded values), colonial rule was justified to usher *neue Zeit* in non-Western societies.

Not only this, even within Western world itself, different nations claimed a very different epochal threshold for 'modernity' or arrival of 'new time'. As for example, in French perception modernity or *Neuzeit* began from 1789, for the Russians 1917 appears as the watershed between the 'old' and the 'new' time, whereas the Germans conceive it from the era of National Socialism. Hence, as argued by Koselleck, "Depending on the way questions are asked, a very different organization of time-in terms of specific strata, regions, nations, continents or the world as a whole-can be found for defining an epochal boundary that

marks the commencement of something like 'modernity'" [Koselleck, 2002: 159].

**Concluding Remarks**

Thus, periodization of history is not merely an academic tool to place historical events into a linear chronology rather it is part and parcel of 'hegemonizing discourses' which have been regarded by Foucault as one of the essential characterization of modernity. Discourse, according to Foucault, essentially lays down the rigid rules regarding what can be spoken, where and how one may speak and who may speak. In other words, it hegemonizes the epistemological space. And this is precisely what periodization in history has done [Foucault 1972]. That is why, historians have now started challenging such kind of periodization of history and evolutionary paradigm associated with it. Post-modernist turn of history is an important step in this regard.

**Notes:**

1. However, ancient Indian texts provide an interesting antithesis to this. In India, time was never value-neutral which is very much evident from the prevalence of the notion of *'Kaliyuga'*. However, it was diametrically opposite from the idea of *neue Zeit*. While *neue Zeit* entailed the idea of progress and superiority of present time, the idea of *Kaliyuga* conceived the ongoing time as one of decadence. Nevertheless, A.K.Ramanujan talks about the context sensitiveness of 'time' in pre-modern India. Time in Indian world view was highly dependent on mood. Time was supposed to be changed only with the change in 'moods' or 'norms'. One can clearly see this thing in the concepts of *Yuga and Ritu* which were frequently used for the articulation of time in pre-modern Indian texts [Ramanujan 1999].

2. But even that 'golden age' was not conceived as being superior to 'modern', rather it was seen as reflecting 'modern' ideas into

'past' in rudimentary forms. So, the entire idea of something being 'ahead of its time' got precipitated.

3.    In this regard Hayden White very clearly argues that traces of past are available to us only in disjointed, episodic manner. It is the historian who creates out of it a 'meaningful story' or what he calls 'verbal fiction'. Hence, according to White, it completely depends on the historian that what he wants to tell his audience as the same set of disjointed traces of past may be construed as tragic, ironic or comic [White 1975].

**References**

1.    Bloch, Marc (1953): *The Historian's Craft*, Vintage Books, New York.

2.    Foucault, Michel (1972): *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* Pantheon Books, New York.

3.    Koselleck, Reinhart (2002): *The Practice of Conceptual History*, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

4.    Lyotard, Jean Francois (1979): Translated into English in (1984): *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

5.    Ramanujan, A. K. (1999): 'Three Hundred *Ramayanas*: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation' in Vinay Dharwadeker (ed.) *The Collected Essays of A.K.Ramanujan*, Oxford university Press, Delhi.

6.    White, Hayden (1975): *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

# Tripura 2018: Explaining the Verdict

**Sajjan Kumar &**
**Ravi K. Mishra**

*In the first ever direct electoral contest between Left and the Right in independent India, BJP registered a spectacular victory over incumbent CPI (M) government. The electoral verdict into this politically polarized state rewarded BJP with 43 seats out of 59, while incumbent CPI(M) had to contend with mere 16 seats, a fall of 34 seats from the last election. On the other hand, Congress, which has been the main opposition party since 1993, had won 10 seats and 44% votes along with its ally INPT in the last assembly election 2013, witnessed a humiliating defeat by not winning a single seat this time. For BJP, it was a journey from zero to zenith wherein the party that had got zero seats and mere 1.54% vote in the last assembly election was able to reinvent itself and capture the popular imagination of the majority of the electorates in the state. While the saffron party did well in other election bound North-Eastern states too, what differentiated Tripura election from rest of the states was the intense ideological dimension involved in the electoral battle. Therefore, any inference to declare BJP's victory in Tripura as an outcome of mere brilliant electoral arithmetic would be misleading and gross misreading of the verdict. The success of the*

*saffron party in the red citadel was as much a victory of its dedicated effort in the last 3 years as of the failures of the Left to reinvent itself and of the complacency of the Congress to be a mute spectator to the en-masse alienation of its support base that shifted to BJP. In fact, Tripura verdict could be understood by locating the complex interplay of the strategic part of BJP along with the ironical reception of CPI(M) - a factor that got compounded with the tribal question in the state - and finally the apathy of Congress party with its traditional voters.*

<div align="center">I</div>

### Tracing the Journey : BJP From Zero to Zenith

In the aftermath of 2014 victory, Tripura formed BJP's strategy of having a *Communist-Mukt-Bharat* (Communist-free India) wherein the trusted lieutenant of Amit Shah, an ex-RSS Pracharak, Sunil Deodhar, who had proven his organizational acumen as election manager of Modi's constituency Varanasi in 2014, was entrusted with the responsibility to fulfill the mission by being elevated as state-in-charge in November 2014.[1] Laden with the experiential account of 10 years of working as RSS Pracharak at Meghalaya from 1991 to 2001, he had some familiarity with the socio-political dynamics of North-Eastern states including Tripura.

He was warned by the BJP top leadership that the existing BJP in the state is just for a namesake with a mere 1.54% vote share in the previous assembly election of 2013 that witnessed a meagre increase up to 5.7% in 2014 Lok Sabha election. To his advantage, he was told, would be the 25 years of anti-incumbency against Left-front government in the state in 2018 when next assembly election would take place. Thus, he had only 3 years to transform the party as well as the political dynamics of the state.[2]

Realizing the mammoth challenge of taking head-on an

entrenched and disciplined cadre based party like CPI(M) that had been ruling Tripura since 1978 except for 1988-93, he decided to break the precedent of state-in-charge making just occasional visits to the state and started frequenting entire Tripura multiple times in 2015 and settled there since January 2016. In that process, he embarked upon the uphill task of organizational laydown of the party by reinventing the existing platforms and establishing others and making them representative of the demographic profile of the state, particularly the Tribal who were suffering from the acute sense of cultural and economic alienation. Infusing the ideological element with a customized political strategy, BJP started approaching both the Tribals section by not only promising them a better economic deal but also, presenting the portrait of Bharat-Mata in tribal attires, thereby attempting to harmonize their economic and cultural aspiration with the cultural outlook of RSS.[3] To the Bengali section, the party appealed to their sense of living in a marginal state, both spatially as well as economically and promised to catapult the existing marginality to the mainstream of India. The success of BJP leadership in reinventing the party machinery, its emergence as the only credible alternative against CPI(M), and stitching a successful alliance with the dominant Tribal based party IPFT while keeping its grip upon the majority of Bengali section intact in this ethnically sensitive state and the corresponding spectacular electoral victory over CPI(M), speaks volumes about the massive strategic and ideological investment that have gone in the making of this verdict.

In fact, his strategy was clear since day one, that is, to know the core of CPI(M)'s preponderance in the state vis a vis its political rival and it took no time to realise, he states, that Left's strength lied in encashing the perception of being invincible in all the 20 ST seats. However, his own reading of the ground was more complex and he claimed to witness a deep alienation of Tribal people not only from CPI(M) but also other parties on account of their hostility and apathy to de-historization of tribal identity and loss of cultural symbols in the wake of concerted attempt by the left governments to dishonour and destroy

their shared bonding with the royal symbols.[4] In nutshell, he opined, the tribals' sense of pride was crushed and the first and foremost challenge I faced was to attempt to take some measures in that regard. This objective had its own electoral calculation as in his own words, 'upon my first tour of the state in 2015, I was told that in assembly elections CPI(M) starts its seat counting from 20, that is, all the ST seats are considered confirmed seats for the Left.' This got him his first strategic drive and the old Pracharak in him with the thick experience of working among the tribals in Meghalaya guided him. I decided to take the bull by the horn, he opined, and therefore decided to deprive CPI(M) of its tribal base by following a two-pronged strategy.[5] One, in the long-term, the tribals need to be made to feel as the core of the power discourse of the state. However, that could be done only if BJP first transforms itself as the true representatives of the tribal identity and their pride. Hence, adequate tribal representation at all levels became his prime motto. Subsequently, he got the tribal-morcha of BJP reactivated by giving the tribals adequate representation at all levels by having two vice-presidents, one secretary besides they being represented in all party Morchas except SC and OBC Morchas. Besides, 4 out of 8 members of the core group-highest body of the party in the state hail from tribal community. 'My motto was simple, he states, that BJP in Tripura must not be merely a Bengali dominated party but rather should be true to its name that is Bharatiya Janata Party both in its intent and its composition.'

It was this investment in the Tribal question that got him successfully cement the electoral alliance with IPFT without accepting latter's core demand of having a separate state for the Tribals. This also reveals the systematic strategic part of his political moves that he clearly laid out since his arrival in the state.

Having invested in the tribal issues, he then shifted to more generic political aspects and got Biplab Deb as the local face of the party in the state and in tandem they succeeded in making BJP as the fulcrum of anti-CPM space in a matter of just 2 years.

Thirdly, he claimed to have a layered web of party cadres by measures like, 'one booth 10 youths' in all the 3214 polling booths in the state, besides having one *panna-pramukh* for every 60 voters from the voter list, thereby having a team of almost 48,000 cadres. Similarly, he got a team of professional and dedicated youths heading various cells like IT-Cell, Media-Cell etc. who process the information dissemination and reception on an hourly basis. These cells have a presence of enthusiastic youths. For instance, Prangshu Deb (25) and Mukesh Raj (22) who were part of BJP's IT cell stated that all the members of the cell fell within the age-bracket of 25-35 years who coordinated a total of 150 WhatsApp groups for 60 constituencies besides having similar set of other groups on social media constantly interacting with people from all walks of life.[6]

## II

### Tripura: The Rise of Saffron Wave in the Red Bastion

The specificities of the socio-political dynamics of Tripura distinguishes it not only from other north-eastern counterparts but also from other Indian states. Politically, since the attainment of full statehood in 1972 it is the only remaining state where CPI(M) has been in power since last forty years since 1978, barring a period of five years from 1988-1992 when Congress led coalition ruled the state. Besides, the entrenchment of ideological-ethnic fault lines since late 1970s made elections as occasions replete with political violence. Moreover, it's the first state in entire North-East that witnessed the most acute demographic change on account of the influx of Hindu Bengali refugees from Bangladesh in the aftermath of partition and 1971 war, relegating the indigenous tribal population as minority constituting around 30% of the state's population.

### CPI(M) and Tripura as a Party-Society

In the past four decades, the dominant political and electoral narrative of Tripura have been simple, that is, one is either pro-CPI(M) or anti-CPI(M) and this division permeates through all spheres of society.

In fact, a series of three longitudinal fieldworks in all parts of the state by one of the authors in the month of September-October 2017, January 2018 and February 2018, revealed the entrenched political divisions informing the everyday lives of the people.[7] Hardly any village that was visited didn't have the narrative of people being discriminated or rewarded in the matters of allotment of monthly ration, allocation of government schemes including works under MNREGA etc, based upon their political loyalties. Every village is politically divided between the 'pro and anti' CPI(M) camps and that got resonated in the responses of the people who share a positive or negative experiential outlook with reference to the ruling party. In short, CPI(M) was the savior and lifeblood to the former and a demon and devastating factor to the latter. Hence, one witnessed the recurring instances of violent intra-tribal clashes during election period, based on their loyalties to anti-CPI(M) Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura (IPFT) and CPI(M)'s Tripura Upajati Gan Mukti Parishad (TUGMP). Similarly, the Bengali population constituting almost 70% of the population but primarily concentrated in 32% of states' territory also share the intense political divide.[8]

**Discredited Congress and the Rise of BJP**

Since the turning of Tripura as a red-bastion since 1978 and until last assembly election of 2013, Congress undisputedly had been the fulcrum of anti-CPI(M) sections of the state. As the table-2 indicates, in the last five elections since 1993, whereupon the left front has continuously been in power, the Congress-TUJS alliance has been consistently getting the support of more than 40% of the electorates and the difference of vote percentage between the two has been in the range of 5 to 8 percent. On the other hand, in 2013 assembly election, BJP's vote share was 1.54%. which rose to merely to 5.77% in 2014 Lok Sabha election despite the prevalence of Modi wave. The CPI(M) in fact not only won both the Lok Sabha seats but also got a whopping share of 65% of the popular votes and defeated its Congress rivals by almost a margin of five lacs.[9] The ever-increasing winning momentum

of Left front further continued after 2014 Lok Sabha polls, in the elections to Panchayats (15 July 2014), the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) that covers 68% of the state territory (4 May 2015) and Nagar Panchayat & Municipal Council (2015).

However, the zenith of electoral successes of CPI(M) in the period of 2013-2015 had a profound bearing upon the political dynamics of the state as Congress lost the confidence of the vast majority of anti-CPI(M) minded voters in the state. This created a political vacuum, which in turn, created a space for a more credible alternative to anti-CPI(M).

**Rise of the BJP Since 2016**

BJP in its post-2014 avatar had already set the electoral aim of having a *Congress-Mukt Bharat* had already set its eyes on Tripura to encircle its arch-ideological enemy, the Left, as part of its aim of realizing a *Communist-Mukt Bharat*. Laden by the weight of Narendra Modi led central government, BJP lost no chance in encashing the crisis of the lack of a credible opposition in the wake of discredited Congress and invested all its energy to present itself as a better alternative and determined rival to CPI(M).

Since early 2016, the success of BJP in capturing the imagination of the anti-left voters, its claim to being the dominant rival to CPI(M) and emergence as the principal opposition force was endorsed in the results of by-elections to three assembly constituencies wherein it outperformed Congress and was runner up. In the wake of fieldwork by an overarching majority of anti-left respondents, both tribal as well as Bengalis, across the state who while batting for BJP identified themselves as Congress-voters in the last assembly election, indicated a near complete shift of Congress support base to BJP. Further, to win the war of perception and increase its winnability quotient, BJP went for a multi-layered strategy of defecting the big Congress leaders to its fold as has been the case in other states; systematically highlighting the failures of the Left-front government; making economic and cultural promises having popular resonance among the people; and launching a high-profile

campaign with star campaigners at the top and a team of thousands of activists, volunteers and professionals in the backdrop.

Unlike Congress, BJP mirrors CPI(M) in terms of its organizational structure and cadre base. And laden with the factor of 25 years of anti-incumbency factor against the left to its advantage, along with populist promises of 7th Pay commission to 1.5 lac government employees and the alliance with Indigenous Peoples' Front of Tripura (IPFT) in Tribal dominated constituencies, BJP was altogether a different business in the state.'

Also, the strong trend of party ruling at the centre having a bigger sway over the electoral choice in the North-Eastern states became a factor that CPI(M) had to grapple with while facing BJP in the first-ever direct contest between left and right in post-independent India.

**III**

**The Crisis Ailing CPI(M) in Tripura**

CPI(M) in Tripura became a case of multiple paradoxes. To majority of Tribal it's a Bengali party, while to majority of Bengalis the party favoured Tribal interests. Similarly, the party presented 'Tripura Model' of governance with whopping figure of development record, most notable being the impressive decline in poverty level and the attainment of 97% literacy rate by 2016, while the opposition parties used the same census data revealing that 82% of the houses in the state are still Kutcha houses, which accounts for 94% of the Tribal households. Thirdly, the party that otherwise champions change over continuity and constantly reflect youths in its rank and file, reflect more and more an ageing profile.

**CPI(M)'S Ageing Support Base in Tripura**

A cursory look at the profile of CPI(M)'s candidates revealed that the party preferred predominantly old over the young in a state wherein the percentage of people in the age-group of 15-29 happen to be 30%. Nor did it field a single candidate from outfits representing youths like SFI. Resonating this profile of relatively ageing party leaders and

assembly candidates, three longitudinal fieldwork in the state by the author from September 2017 to February 2018 indicated that youths have shifted away from the party in a big way among Bengalis as well as Tribals. Overwhelming majority of the respondents who professed support to CPI(M) happen to represent elderly population. The youths on the other hand felt alienated from the party on account of multiple reasons. While majority of the tribal youths suffered from double alienation of cultural and economic loss, an overwhelming majority of young Bengali respondents felt frustrated with party as state's aspirational class. Consequently, it was found that while the tribal youths are relating more and more with the IPFT, their Bengali counterparts were willing to give BJP a chance. This left party with the herculean task of fetching the electoral youths for its relatively ageing candidates when its arch-rival, BJP-IPFT alliance have fielded significantly more number of young candidates. In fact, there were 7 of the 9 candidates of IPFT, an ally of BJP in ST seats, who were young.[10]

**Failure to set Election Agenda**

At a time when BJP was leaving no stone unturned to oust the left government from Tripura and has aggressively pushing for its call for change with the creative slogan of 'Chalo Paltai' (*let's change*), CPI(M)'s slogan of Shanti, Sampriti, Unnayan (*Peace, Fraternity, Development*) seemed like a footnote to the text of political polemics of the state. In fact, most of the CPI(M) supporters had more negative things to say about BJP rather than positive things about their party. While the same was true about BJP supporters whose prime drive to vote happened to be a hate for CPI(M) rather than love for BJP, this trend of negative vote spelt trouble for the ruling party as the electoral agenda has been set by BJP rather than CPI(M).

It was startling to find that both leaders and supporters of CPI(M) are privileging attack upon BJP's campaign and poll promises rather than presenting a positive case for CPI(M)'s agenda. In this charged context of competing mudslinging, CPI(M), which was, facing 25 years

of anti-incumbency baggage, seemed to be reacting to the agenda set by BJP.[11]

**Cadre Vs People Paradox**

In the wake of fieldwork, it was found that the political division in the state runs through the dominant fault line of being either pro-CPI(M) or anti-CPI(M). As per peoples' responses it was this political division that subsumed the prime beneficiaries of various government schemes. The positive correlation of a substantially high number of respondents articulating an anti-CPI(M) position while presenting themselves as being discriminated in matters of allotment of MNREGA works and other policy benefits and vice versa indicated a tough terrain for the ruling Left front in the state.[12]

Secondly, a great majority of anti-CPI(M) respondents argued that only the Left cadres at the village and local level had been the prime beneficiaries of government schemes would champion the party this time. In this backdrop, the coming assembly election turned more and more as a contest between the CPI(M) cadres' vs the people.[13]

**The Silent Voters**

Also, the fieldwork revealed another significant factor of respondents who present the case of falling in the category of silent voters, which is, qualitatively distinct from the category of fence-sitters. In the context of Tripura, a significant section of people who preferred to remain silent about their political preference before the election, gave enough indication that they have already decided whom they will vote for but would not like to reveal on account of the prevailing power equations in their respective localities and their inability to guess about the winners.

The fact, that CPI(M) was ruling the state continuously for the last 25 years, the silence of the voters was not an encouraging factor for them as, more often than not, the support base of ruling party with entrenched cadre base tend to be more vocal and vice versa.

On the positive side, the CPI(M) state leadership tended to be

aware about the unsettling newness of this election wherein the party was facing a determined and decisive BJP unlike Congress which they used to present as a docile and an indecisive alternative to anti-CPI(M) support base. The state general secretary of CPI(M), Bijon Dhar, conceded the unprecedented challenges but pointed out that BJP is just an electoral hype without structural and ideological entrenchment- a factor, he opined, would favor the Left.[14] However, the tide of change was too strong to be reversed.

<div align="center">IV</div>

**Congress-withering Away of the Support Base**

Continuing with its down ward plunge in the North-Eastern states, Congress managed to acquire the status of an irrelevant player by completely alienating its support base in the poll bound Tripura. It's reduced to being a party for the namesake and merely on the signboards as majority of electorates failed to even mention its name on their own. Upon being asked, they acknowledge its existence but merely as an entity that used to matter in the past! This has happened to a party that bagged 45% of popular votes in the last assembly election of 2013 and it had been getting more than 40% of vote share since 1988. As the fieldwork in the state suggests, any attempt to attribute the blame on extrinsic factors for the precarious position of Congress in Tripura would be partial, misleading and a case of wishful thinking. From Tripura's vantage point Congress was likely to be marred in deep malaise on account of the three intrinsic and one extrinsic factors:[15]

**Deep Apathy to Support Base**

First intrinsic factor that explains the crisis of Congress is the popular perception of Congress as a discredited platform vis a vis its rivals. In the state of Tripura which is polarized between pro-CPM and anti-CPM camps, Congress until 2013 has been the forum of anti-CPM population which gets reflected in the 40% plus vote share that party has been bagging since 1988. The section that has been voting for

Congress despite the party losing to CPM since 1993, as the fieldwork suggested, had been at the receiving end by getting harassed, discriminated and in quite a few cases have been killed. But the response of the state and national leadership of the party had been of outright aloofness and indifference, taking the voters for granted. In response after response, it was the accounts of systematic targeting of the anti-CPM people reported by the respondents wherein Congress was claimed to have failed its support base, leaving them at the mercy of their fate. The national leadership of the party was accused of treating the state as a cog in the larger wheel of realpolitik of maintaining a functional relationship with CPI(M) most of the time.

**Failure to Distinguish from the Left**

In a scenario when the anti-CPM people had been rallying behind Congress in election after election, the national leadership of the party was perceived to be soft on CPI(M). In complete denial of the ground realities, the national Congress leadership since early 1990s was reported to be soft on CPM by letting them have a free run in the state in exchange for their support at the national level. The most glaring example of this attitude of national leadership happens to be the instance when before the assembly election in 1993, the then Prime Minister, P.V Narsimha Rao, heeded to the request of CPM to have the assembly election under president rule rather than under the outgoing Congress government in the state, allegedly, in exchange for Left's support to his minority government. No wonder, Congress tasted a humiliating defeat in that election whereafter it never made a comeback to power in the state again. In fact, its was reported by many anti-CPM respondents that how in the past the CPM cadres used to take a dig at them by quipping that their leaders have enough understanding with the national Congress leadership on Tripura. This created a deep confusion and suspicion in the minds of the Congress voters with reference to the credentials of Congress as a platform against CPM. In fact, a middle-aged respondent at Sabroom in South Tripura district categorically stated that for the first time in BJP they have got a more credible anti-CPM platform.[16]

**Treating the State as Margin**

In the wake of fieldwork, it was claimed that the political mood of the state in this election was markedly different from that in the past elections. This was on account of the popular perception by majority of the respondents that Tripura had acquired an unprecedented centrality in the national political imagination, primarily on account of the massive investment of interest and effort of BJP's national leadership in the state. Here, even a common respondent would name Sunil Deodhar, BJP in-charge as the leader while mentioning Biplab Deb who was found to be quite a popular BJP leader among the anti-CPM electorates. It's for the first time that a state in-charge who was from outside the state had acquired the image of a decisive leadership, installing confidence and acquiring popularity among the people. On the other hand, all the Congress state in-charge were casual in their approach to the state as they would come to the poll bound state, stay at a hotel and treat their responsibility more as a routine work. What differentiated Congress from BJP in terms of offering themselves as a credible anti-Left platform was the sheer lack of their passion about taking the Left in a passionate manner. This colossal mismatch between the hostile ground situation that in the past had put the Congress workers and supporters at receiving end, and the half-hearted, docile and politically malleable attitude of the national Congress leadership to their state leader and electorates has led to the withering away of the party in the 2018 Assembly election.

Also, it was quite clear that CPM has been winning the elections continuously since 1993 not only on account of their massive political investments but also by the persistent failures of Congress to make the proportionate and passionate political investment. In this regard, it is noteworthy that BJP was not even a marginal force in the state until 2015. It got merely 1.54% votes in the last election as compared to 45% of the Congress. In 2014 election also the Modi wave failed to reach the state and BJP could not get more that 5.7% of the votes. In fact, Left kept on registering the impressive electoral success at all levels which seriously dented the credentials of Congress as the fulcrum of

anti-CPM space. Simultaneously, the national leadership of BJP started taking deep interest in the state and left no stone unturned to fill in the vacuum created by emergence of Congress as a discredited platform in the eyes of its support base. The fieldwork has unambiguously revealed that entire Congress support base has shifted to BJP as overwhelming majority of the pro-BJP respondents identified themselves as having voted for the Congress in the last election. The data from the fieldwork categorically suggested that Congress vote share would not touch the 3% mark and most of its candidates would have to forfeit their deposit.

<div align="center">V</div>

## Changing Tribal Dynamics

In the polarized electoral battle between Left and the Right in Tripura, the key to the corridors of power was lying with a tribal based ethnocentric party, Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT), which contested the election in alliance with BJP. In fact, since July 2017, the party was consistently accused by ruling CPM of fomenting violent ethnic tensions between the tribal and Bengali section of the state. Be it the blockade of only road and rail connection of the state with the rest of India to press for their demand for a separate state for Tribal, or the sectarian ethnic killings like that of a local journalist Shantanu Bhowmik, the party has always been accused by the CPM. While it contested in just 9 out of 20 assembly seats reserved for the Scheduled Tribes, its sway over tribal section, especially the youths ran across the state. No wonder, BJP gave a cold shoulder to other tribal based party's like INPT, NCT etc. who were willing to be a part of its anti-CPM alliance.

## Background

In the context of ethno-centric politics of the state, IPFT is just a new wine in the old bottle with some specificity. The ethnic tussle that started with the influx of Hindu refugees from Bangladesh since

1947, acquired a political dimension in 1967 with the formation of a tribal political outfit, Tribal Upajati Juba Samiti (TUJS) with four charter of demands pertaining to the restoration of the tribal lands transferred to the non-tribals since 1960; creation of an Autonomous District Council for the tribals in the state under the 6th Schedule of Constitution; reservation of Government jobs for the tribals; and the introduction of Roman script in place of Bengali script for Kok-Borok and its recognition as the state official language and as medium of instruction. In the course of the intensification of ethnocentric politics, TUJS underwent the process of splits and mergers, leading to the formation and reformation of many ethnocentric tribal based parties, of which IPFT also is an outcome. It was formed in 1997 by a breakaway section of TUJS under the leadership of N.C Debbarma and it is alleged that the party won the elections of Autonomous Distric Councils in 2000 by using the clout of the then Tribal Insurgent outfit, National Liberation Front of Tripura (Biswamohan) against the Left Front candidates. Thereafter, the party underwent the process of mergers and splits with other tribal parties, finally coming out with its name again in 2009.

The fifth consecutive and spectacular success of CPM in 2013 assembly election, had a debilitating bearing not only upon the future electoral prospect of the Congress, but also upon the most prominent tribal based party INPT (earlier TUJS) that had been ally of Congress since 1983 assembly election. While Congress could manage to win 10 assembly seats in 2013, its ally INPT failed to win a single seat. The electoral decline of INPT gave space to IPFT which emerged as the main rival to CPM in the 2015 election to ADC. Since then, the party had been becoming more assertive and in agitational mode to press for its demand of a separate state for Tribals, until it entered into an electoral alliance with BJP and agreed to temporarily suspend the issue of a 'separate state'.

**Current Ground Scenario**

In the course of fieldwork in the state, it was found that an

overwhelming majority of the tribals, specially the youths related strongly with IPFT and its leader N.C Debbarma vis a vis other tribal based parties like INPT and NCT. Therefore, it can be inferred that the presence of other tribal based parties like INPT and NCT did not have any significant impact upon the tribal support base of IPFT. There is a palpable sense of anger among the majority of the tribals against the ruling CPM for their complete partisan attitude of materially incentivizing only the Left cadres and supporters and acquiring a patronizing approach to the Tribal question when the Left Front leaders claimed to have given a 'Tripura Model' for Tribal development! In this backdrop, CPM emerged as the common enemy for the aspirational and young tribals whose sentiment was echoed by the tribal elders too. For instance, Kriti Kishore Debbarma, a Tripuri tribe and  principal of a private school at Bishramganj in Charilam constituency reserved for ST, states, 'the combination of three factors, namely, corruption, discrimination and ethnicity has driven the tribals to oust the CPM. Therefore, IPFT has captured their imagination as it takes a clear position against the CPM and consequently, the former will get overwhelming support.' Similarly, the speculation regarding the unease among the Christian tribals and many of the IPFT leadership who hail from the Christian minority community, after IPFT allied with BJP, doesn't seem to hold the ground as would be obvious from a representative response of a Christian tribal youth, Sinion Debbarma from Simna, another constituency with more than 95% tribal population, who meticulously states the dominant prevailing mood by saying, 'I may not be happy with BJP, but I am very angry with CPM. I don't know what will happen tomorrow but know what I have to do today. First and foremost, CPM must be defeated and IPFT has entered into alliance with BJP for the same objective and therefore we are with IPFT-BJP alliance.[17]

**The Tenuous Alliance**

       Both BJP and IPFT leaders were clear that their alliance was just an electoral alliance and neither of the two parties has changed their

stance on the issue of 'separate state for tribal' that BJP opposes and IPFT demands for. At a time, when there was a bigger and common enemy in the face of CPM, the immediate electoral dividend was expected for the alliance. However, the top leader of IPFT categorically stated that this is just a sequentialist step in the assertion of the tribals for their rightful claim. The real challenge would be to tackle the incommensurability between their respective positions on tribal question in Tripura.

<div align="center">

**VI**

</div>

**Conclusion**

The electoral decimation of CPI(M) and the spectacular victory of BJP in 2018 Tripura Assembly election was possible due to the over confidence of CPI(M) in its cadre and organisational strength at a time when the party was losing popular support among both the Bengalis and Tribals. Unlike its traditional political rival in the state, i.e, Congress, the saffron party was leaving no stone unturned to oust the Left from the seat of power. CPI(M) government and state unit not only failed to read the popular discontent against its local level leaders and cadres but also mistakenly hoped that anti-CPI(M) votes would be divided into BJP and Congress. However, the electoral verdict, as discussed above, clearly stated that by the end of 2017, BJP had emerged as the fulcrum of anti-CPI(M) sentiment, thereby reducing Congress as a footnote to the electoral chapter. On a positive note for the Left, the electoral verdict revealed that the party still commands a significant support base in the state and it is Congress that lost the base to BJP. However, in the immediate future the party has to re-strategize its political plank by adapting itself to the cultural investment of BJP and the changing ethnic politics in the state at a time when the ripples of NRC demand (National Register of Citizenship) is felt in the state wherein the tribal parties like INPT are sensing political opportunity.

Table-1 : Electoral Perofrmance of CPI(M) and Congress
in Tripura since 1978

| ELECTION YEAR | VOTE PERCENTAGE | | DIFFERENCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| | CPI(M)+ | CONGRESS + | |
| 1978 | 47.84 | 17.76 | 30.08 |
| 1983 | 46.78 | 30.51 | 16.27 |
| 1988 | 46.13 | 47.48 | -1.35 |
| 1993 | 44.35 | 39.33 | 5.02 |
| 1998 | 48.90 | 43.10 | 5.80 |
| 2003 | 51.28 | 43.54 | 7.74 |
| 2008 | 51.38 | 43.44 | 7.94 |
| 2013 | 52.32 | 44.60 | 7.72 |
| 2018 | | | |

Table-2 : Religious, Demography and Their Territorial profile of
Bengalis and Tribals in Tripura.

| RELIGION (%) | Hindu | Muslim | Christian | Buddhist |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total 83.4 | 8.6 | 4.4 | 3.4 |
| | Rural 79.9 | 9.9 | 5.6 | 4.3 |
| | Urban 93.1 | 4.8 | 4.8 | 0.9 |
| DEMOGRAPHY (%) | Tribal | SC (Bengalis) | Others (Bengalis) | |
| | Total 31.8 | 17.8 | 50.4 | |
| | Rural 41.2 | 16.1 | 42.7 | |
| | Urban 5.1 | 22.6 | 72.3 | |
| TERRITORY (%) | **Tribal Area ADC**: 68% | | | |
| | **General Area**: 32% | | | |

**Footnotes**

1.  Interview with Sunil Deodhar, BJP Prabhari for Tripura on 18th September 2017.

2.  Ibid.

3.  Ibid.

4.  Ibid.

5.  Ibid.

6.  Interview with Prangshu Deb (Head of BJP OT cell in Tripura) on 22nd October 2017.

7.  The fieldwork conducted by one of the authors in three stages between September 2017 to February 2018.

8.  Please refer to Table-2 for details.

9.  Election commission of India. See Also, Table-I.

10. Based on The fieldwork conducted by one of the authors in three stages between September 2017 to February 2018.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Interview with Bijon Dhar, General Secretary, State CPI(M) Unit of Tripura on 11th January 2018.

15. Based on the fieldwork conducted by one of the authors in three stages between September 2017 to February 2018.

16. Based on the fieldwork conducted by one of the authors in three stages between September 2017 to February 2018.

17. In lieu of interview conducted during the fieldwork by one of the authors on 3rd February 2018.

# Karnataka-Why Siddharamaiah's Welfare Politics Failed to Reelect Congress?

Sajjan Kumar &
Ravi K.Mishra

*The 2018 Karnataka Assembly Election brought a hung verdict between the ruling Congress, BJP and JD(S). BJP emerged as the single largest party in the 224 member House while congress emerged as the second largest party. The JD(S) appeared as the kingmaker with having the say to who would govern Karnataka for the corrent term. The Karnataka verdict reveals the centrality and fusion of dominant castes when they face a pressure from below. In fact, notwithstanding their traditional rivalry, the vokkaligas, Lingayats, Bunts and other upper castes came together to respond to Siddharamaiah led Congress government's attempt to privilege the AHINDA, ie, the lower caste and class vis a vis the dominant social section in the state. In the final moment, it is this feature that went against the Congress in terms of attaining the majority, inspite of the grand old party getting more votes than BJP or JD(S).*

The Karnataka Assembly Elections, which dominated national attention as the precursor or otherwise of saffron outreach in the south India headed for hung verdict between the Ruling Congress, BJP and

JD(S). Elections to the 224 Karnataka Legislative Assembly threw up a hung verdict making congress and JD(S) to cobble together a workable arrangement for the next five years - which the alliance is struggling hard to retain.

In the hung Assembly wherein BJP emerged as the single largest party in the 224-member House while Congress emerged as the second largest party. The JD(S), as predicted emerged as the kingmaker with having the say as to who would govern Karnataka for the current term.

**Congress- From Perceptual Edge to Electoral Disappointment**

**The Edge**

However, the electoral verdict apart, the crucial question that needs to be engaged with is why Congress despite having a reasonable popularity and getting higher voting percentage than BJP and JD(S) failed to emerge as the single largest party in terms of the number of seats, as was being predicted by most of the notable election surveys? In fact, in the survey done by one of the authors it was revealed that there was no real anti-incumbency against the Siddharamaiah government. On the contrary, the voters were speaking favorably about the developmental work done by his government. However, the pre-election field study showed that the anti-incumbency factor was working against the sitting MLA's belonging to Congress, BJP and JD(S).[1]

The survey and its analysis by the authors coupled with some of the analysis by the eminent social scientists, Like James Manor who have been following Karnataka politics for the last five decades from a close quarter also predicted an edge for the Congress on account of the positive interface of Congress welfare policy and better electoral strategy.[2]

The survey showed that the Congress is leading over the other parties uniformly on all parameters, namely, development, welfare, community preference, Chief Minister choice, party preference across age and gender.[3]

Congress had an edge over its main rival BJP in all the regions except coastal Karnataka. In fact, the dominant characteristic of the 2018 assembly election happened to be a complete absence of 'anti-incumbency' factor against both the government and the Chief Minister. In our fieldwork, majority of respondents rated both, the performance of Congress and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah as satisfactory. The popular welfare schemes, absence of any corruption issue and stability factor were offered as the reasons behind the largely positive image of the ruling party and its leader.[4]

On the other hand, BJP seeking to oust the incumbent Congress, was found failing in building a dominant election narrative resonating with the electorates. That lacuna on the part of BJP had been on account of its inability to offer better credentials on parameters of corruption, stability and welfare. Besides, the issue of Hindutva had few takers besides coastal region. Finally, Modi factor was found to be a non-starter except part of Mumbai Karnataka, particularly Belgaum district and coastal region.[5]

In most of the electoral studies including the one by the author, Congress was witnessing a consolidation of Dalits, Tribals, Muslims and lower OBC voters on account of the welfare policies reaching out the weaker sections and corresponding satisfaction with the party and state leadership. All these were rationally expected to translate into a positive vote or a pro-incumbency vote for the ruling party.

On the other hand, BJP was expected to be the prime beneficiary of the consolidation of Lingayats due to merger of KJP that contested 2013 election separately. However, besides this segment the saffron party wasn't finding a popular take among the subalterns who dominate the state demographically. In fact, the projection of Tribal leader Sriramulu as possible deputy Chief Minister didn't seem to resonate with most of the tribal voters beyond certain pockets in Southern Karnataka.

In our field study, JD(S)' main traction came from its strong position in Southern Karnataka and Bangalore where Vokkaliga concentration is

most intense, which in turn, attracted other communities and castes like Muslims, OBCs and in some constituencies Dalits too. However, the party was very weak in coastal region and Mumbai Karnataka. As it turned out subsequently, the party was expected to have a better strike rate than Congress and BJP in southern Karnataka region.

**Region Wise Voting Pattern**

Congress' decisive edge in Southern, Central and Hyderabad Karnataka was on account of the demographic advantage of Dalits, Tribals and Muslims - the core support base of the ruling party. On the other hand, BJP has a strong presence in Mumbai Karnataka and Coastal region as demographically, the core support base of Congress is relatively weak while the castes like Lingayats and Marathas, Konkan Bhandaris, Bunts, who dominate the two regions respectively, favoured BJP. JD(S) was found to be a distant third in these two regions on account of near absence of its core support base,i.e, Vokkaligas.[6]

Thus, it was caste and community that emerged as the main electoral determinants in this election which defined the respective bastions of Congress, BJP and JD(S).

'AHINDA' for Congress, Upper Castes Lingayats for BJP and Vokkaligas for JD (S)

The AHINDA (non-Vokkaliga OBCs + Dalits+ Tribals + Muslims) support base worked in favour of Congress. The prime reason accounting for this happened to be the success of popular pro-poor welfare schemes, mainly, Anna-Bhagya, that had created a good-will for the ruling party and its incumbent Chief Minister. Besides, Muslims were veering solidly towards Congress more intensely as the perception that a likely post-poll alliance between JD(S) and BJP was an imminent possibility, drove a significant percentage of minorities away from JD(S) in favour of the Congress.

Majority of Dalits and tribals also preferred the Congress government's pro-poor welfare schemes over other factors. Besides, BJP's

deputy Chief Minister candidate Sriramulu, could not capture the imagination of majority of the tribal except in certain pockets. This was contrary to the BJP's expectations that those two sections would shift their loyalties towards it. Further their calculation that a section of Madigaswould sail with them given their so-called anger towards the ruling Congress also did not seem to hold much water.[7]

On the other hand, the upper castes, like Brahmin, Bunts, Jains, Lingayats etc. were strongly consolidated in favour of BJP, primarily on account of the perception that the incumbent Congress government led by Siddaramaiah had catered to the interests of Dalits, Tribals and Muslims at their cost.

Similarly, for Vokkaligas, this election was a 'now-or-never' moment to see the revival of JD(S) and its leader Kumaraswami, whom they intended to catapult to Chief Minister's post through any possible permutation and combination of post-poll alliance. Moreover, the dominant Vokkaligas and Lingayats, nurture a sense of loss of power given their perception that Siddaramaiah had been championing the interest of non-Vokkaliga OBCs, Dalits, Tribals and Muslims at their expense.So, the popularity of Chief Minister candidate became significant.

Overall, JD(S) did not gain much by receiving support from the MIM and BSP. It was found that only in the Mysore region some of their candidates had received electoral bolstering among Dalits and Muslims because of the support of BSP and MIM.

Majority of the respondents belonging to non-Vokkaliga OBCs, Dalits, Tribals and Muslims, unequivocally preferred Siddaramaiah as the next Chief Minister on account of his performance in the last two years. Surprisingly, majority of the Muslims have a connect with Siddaramaiah on account of his welfare policies rather than mere secular posturing. Similarly, along the expected lines overwhelming majority of Vokklingas preferred Kumaraswami while the Lingayats were near unanimous in preferring Yeddyurappas as their Chief Minister choice.

Interestingly, while Vokkaligas justified their choice in terms of pro-

farmer image of JD(S) and Kumaraswami, rather than caste matrix, majority of Lingayats rationalised their choice for Yeddyurappa by arguing that he caters for entire public rather than just for Dalits, Tribals and Muslims.In this regard the satisfaction percentage of Siddaramaiah government's was more pertinent.

The most important electoral determinant that affected the voting preference of the majority of the electorates happened to be the popular welfare policies, especially, the Anna-Bhagya, that has truly found favour among the poor. That factor acquired overarching importance in the backdrop of three years of drought in different parts of the state wherein the efficient delivery of the highly subsidised food emerged as the saviour for the people. Undoubtedly, that reaped dividends for both the Congress and Siddaramaiah by rewarding Congress with higher voting percentage as compared to BJP and JD(S).[8]

The major strength of BJP since 2014 has been the 'Modi factor', which has usually put rival parties at a disadvantage. However, from Karnataka perspective, barring coastal region, Modi didn't seem to be an electoral factor. His speeches failed to resonate with the majority of the electorates including the Lingayats who constitute the bulk of its support base. Here also, the Lingayats were driven more by the factor of seeing Yeddyurappa as next Chief Minister rather than stay enchanted by Modi.[9]

Similarly, majority of peasant castes, considered BJP and Modi not being friendly to the interest of the farmers. Thus, Karnataka election presented a case wherein the local and regional factors dominated the electoral dynamics rather than the triad of secularism-communalism and nationalism.

**JD(S) as Pro-Farmer Party followed by Congress**

Another significant finding of the field study happened to be the reception of JD(S) as the pro-farmer party followed by Congress which is seen as championing the cause of the small peasants. However, BJP was seen as ignoring the cause of the farmers. In fact, a significant

section of the respondents found BJP being "hostile" to farmers' interest. Demonetization was cited as an illustration. This has also contributed to the non-emergence of Modi factor in the state as an electoral determinant.[10]

**Return and centrality of Welfare Politics**

Another notable aspect, that Karnataka revealed was the emergence of the centrality of welfare politics as the superseding issue over the intangible factors like nationalism, secularism and Hindutva. The fact that BJP was on the defensive pertaining to the strong delivery of Siddaramaiah government's welfare schemes spoke volumes about the emerging centrality of tangible welfare policies.

**No Electoral Impact of Separate Lingayat Religion and Separate Flag Issues**

The much hyped issue of granting a separate religious status for Lingayats and Karnataka having a separate flag of its own didn't resonate with the political calculation of the electorates on the ground. Those issues had been political theatrics by the Congress leadership to privilege regional issues over the national one at the level of media in order to entrap BJP and make it respond to agendas set by the ruling party. Thus, both the issues seem to be mainly posturing by the political leaders while the vast majority of the electorates didn't consider them crucial. Consequently, Congress attempt to dent a section of Lingayat voters to its side didn't work as majority of Lingayat voters remianed intact behind BJP.[11]

**Tactical Voting by Lingayats and Vokkaligas against Congress outside their Respective Bastions**

The consolidation of AHINDA behind Congress created a sense of resentment among the two dominant castes, Lingayats and Vokkaligas, against the incumbent Congress. Both the castes are used to see Chief Minister's hailing from their respective castes. The fact, that Siddaramaiah belonged to none and from the vantage point of the two dominant castes,

championed the cause of lower OBCs, Dalits, Tribals and Muslims, further angered them against Congress. Therefore, while majority of the Lingayats and Vokkaligas veered to BJP and JD(S) respectively - a factor Congress perceived to be in its favour as anti-Congress vote was splitting, in many constituencies the two dominant caste members professed to vote for each-other tactically in case either of them happened to be in minority. Thus, in various pockets, the dominant castes, Lingayats and Vokkaligas, seemed to tactically support each other against Congress to ensure its defeat. This aspect emerged despite the fact that state is known to witness an intense rivalry between these castes for power.[12]

**BJP's Failure to set an Election Narrative and Agenda**

Finally, on the expected lines, our field study confirmed the failure of BJP to dominate the war of perception on account of its failure to set an election narrative, which it had been doing in other states. In other words, the 2018 Karnataka Assembly election was about the lack of any significant narrative by BJP. In fact, Congress emerged as the unequivocal champion of development welfare schemes and stability and the party has been setting the agendas and BJP seems to have been reacting to them. Notably, even JDS had a narrative in this election when it came to championing the interest of the farmers.

On the question of leadership, BJP seemed to err in announcing Yeddyurappa as Chief Minister candidate without giving him a free hand. His projection by the party was considered half-hearted one. The fact that in a state where local and regional factors were constituting the voting behaviour, the emergence of Modi and Amit Shah and in some pockets Yogi Adityanath as the main campaigners was a strategic mistake by the BJP. This alone failed to tackle Siddaramiah, who hit the field as a local Kannadiga who also happened to be the flag bearer of Karanataka pride and Karnataka autonomy.[13]

Therefore, the Congress had done well by not getting bogged down by incumbency. The BJP also invested all its energy in attempting to capture their "gateway to the South"

**Conclusion**

In the final analysis, the Karnataka verdict reveals the centrality and fusion of dominant castes when they face a pressure from below. In fact, notwithstanding their traditional rivalry, the vokkaligas, Lingayats, Bunts and other upper castes came together to respond to Siddharamaiah led Congress government's attempt to privilege the AHINDA, ie, the lower caste and class vis a vis the dominant social section in the state. In the final moment, it is this feature that went against the Congress in terms of attaining the majority, inspite of the grand old party getting more votes than BJP or JD(S).

**Footnotes**

1. Based on the fieldwork conducted by one of the authors from 27th April to 9th May 2018.

2. For detail see James manor, The Election Outlook in Karnataka, EPW, Vol-53, Issue No-5, 3 Feb 2018.

3. Based on the fieldwork conducted by one of the authors from 27th April to 9th May 2018.

4. Ibid. Also see, For detail see James manor, The Election Outlook in Karnataka, EPW, Vol-53, Issue No-5, 3 Feb 2018.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

# Digital Technology for Good Governance : The Indian Experience

**Rajeevan R.**

*With the expansion of globalization, reinventing governance and bureaucracy became a central theme in the theory and practice of Public Administration. The governments all over the world are attempting to improve the system of public service delivery and efficient functioning of its organs through the adoption of digital technology. Internet is the biggest revolution in human history. The convergence of all forms of communication on the digital play field is opening up immense new possibilities of achieving speed, versality and space-time independence. Digital technology has offered a huge potential in finding an innovative way to reach the true ideals of a democracy i.e. government of the people, by the people and for the people. The present study is an attempt to examine the existing status of digital technology in governance through a look into the various stages of its evolution and the reform measures taken by the government of India at various stages. It also examines its impacts, quality of citizen service in terms of accountability and transparency and how much it contributes towards good governance in India.*

The 21st century experienced a revolution in adopting digital technology in governance. It is generally referred to as "people friendly

and state friendly". It was the American engineers who launched the development of digital technology in the mid twentieth century. Their techniques were based on mathematical concepts suggested by the seventeenth century German mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibaiz, who proposed a binary computing system. Digital technology was initially developed in the early 1990s as means of dissemination of public services and information. In 1998, commercial digital television broadcasts started in United states. Communication Satellites known as DBS (Direct Broadcast Satellite) transmitted compressed digital signals for viewers to receive several hundred television programming choices. Other forms of digital information, including audio programmes, were send to subscribers via satellite. To ensure betterment of their citizens, governments all over the world have accepted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) announced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the year 2015, as acceptable governance targets for all. Today these technologies have been accepted as an important base towards ensuring efficient and transparent governance all over the world.

**Good Governance**

The word governance came from the latin word 'gubernare' or more originaly from the Greek word 'kubernaein' which means 'to steer'. It was Harland. Cleveland (1972) who first used the word governance as an alternative to public administration. Governance refers to the manner of steering or of directing and controlling a group of people or a state. It also means the process of decision making or the process of exercising authority to govern people or regulate public affairs for the safety, security of the state and overall welfare of the people. Governance entails two processes: decision making and implementation of the decision. In broad terms decision making refers the process by which a person or group of persons, guided by socio-political structures, arrive at a decision involving their individual and communal needs and wants. Implementation is the process that logically follows the decision: it entails the actualization or materialization of the plan or decision. Governance is

not just decision making because decision without implementation is self-defeating.

Good governance is generally considered as the application of accountability, transparency, rule of law and citizen's participation in the process of governance. It can be regarded as a moral stance: a supreme value that maximizes the common good and therefore, be pursued both in public and private spheres. As a result, the credibility of the public organizations depends much on the perception that they hold the values they claim to represent, such as democracy, social justice, equity, transparency, accountability, effectiveness and rule of law. All of these values are key components of the wider good governance institutional agenda (Cangas, 2014: 2). A number of states in the world have taken steps to ensure their public servants discharge their services in the right manner.

Good governance in public administration traditionally has been divided into two schools - the normative and the structural. The normative perspective after drawing up on organizational development, examines how ethical values are inculcated and put into operation in organizations. The structural approach probes formal-legal arrangements, primarily regulatory and legal prescriptions and prohibitions through which governments seek to channel and control administrative behavior (Gilman and Lewis, 1996 :517-524). So many measures were adopted by states all over the world to ensure good governance. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) definition of governance is set out in 1997 UNDP policy document entitled 'Governance for Sustainable Human Development'. The document states that governance can be seen as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises mechanisms, process and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences (UNDP, 1997: 2-3)

Generally speaking, good governance policies should aim at more

citizen orientation, transparency, accountability, anti-discrimination, fight against corruption and citizen participation. Government's duty is to govern in a way that optimizes the security and welfare of citizens. The measure of good governance is how far the government is able to improve the quality of the life of people tangibly as well as intangibly. Even if there is good democracy and good constitution, but people are hungry, good democracy and good constitution has no meaning. Good governance must have its own measures based on the overall performance of the state as measured by the improvement in the quality of life of the people. The government must have the mechanism to manage its resources for societal progress and economic development in a corruption free, transparent and effective manner. Digital technology has been accepted as the right way towards achieving these goals.

**E-Governance**

E-governance or electronic governance is basically the application of information and communication technology to the processes of government functioning in order to bring about simple, moral, accountable, responsive and transparent (SMART) governance. E-governance is justified because it enhances the capacity of public administration to increase the supply of public value ie. the things that people want. A true measure of the state is not its size but rather the nature of the functions that it performs and the efficiency and effectiveness with which it performs them. E-governance can undoubtedly perform such a governance function for the people.

Abramson and Means defined E-governance as 'the electronic interaction (transaction and information exchange) between the government, the public (citizens and business) and employees' (Abramson and Means, 2001). World Bank has defined E-government as the usage of information technologies by various government departments and agencies that have the ability to modify the relations among people, business and the government. Such technological advancements are capable of providing numerous benefits like improvised

delivery of services to citizens and business, better empowerment of citizens, reduced levels of corruptions and efficiency in working styles adopted by government' (World Bank, Issue Note, 2001). A.H. Rizvi observed that E-governance initiatives have not just benefitted people by providing market information economically but have also helped in the uplift of level of education of students living in rural areas through various educational projects. Definitely these projects are need of the hour and there is a vast scope for introduction of such projects into the development of rural areas' (Global Journal for Research Analysis, 2016)

E-governance is the specific task of using the tools offered by information technology in various aspects of the process of governance with the objective of achieving efficiency, transparency, accountability and user friendliness in all the transactions that the citizens and business conduct with the government. It encompasses the entire process of public administration, the processes underlying the formulation of public policies, the HRD efforts required for re-skilling the government machinery, prioritisation, efficient management of public resources and above all re-designing the various instruments used to realize the concept of a welfare state.

**The benefits of E-Governance**

The following are the major benefits of E-governance.

1.  Reducing costs:- Putting service in on-line, the cost of processing decreases substantially. The paper based administrative and service work needs lot of paper, printing and stationary. Efficiency is also attained in internal process and enabling faster decision making.

2.  Accelerates Economic Development:- E-government is generally a more productive version of government. Modern technologies reduce government expenses on service and it enables government to create positive transaction.

3.  Enhancing Transparency:- Through the application of e-

devices, all government information's can be made available to the people. The free and easy access of information to the people makes the process of governance more transparent. Government information's are uploaded on the internet and people can be accessed it on the web portals.

4.  Enhancing accountability:- Building government accountability and transparency are a significant focus of E-government in many developing countries. It allows the on-line tracking of applications through the web by public and the press. Redressal of grievances through the on-line system ensures the answerability of public officials and also sensitize them. For example it provides full particulars of tenders of all major purchases, the results of their evaluations and placement of orders, the time and cost over runs and the reasons; monthly management accounts of the departments and public sector undertaking and the explanations for deviations from the budgetary norms and the like.

5.  Improving service delivery:- E-governance could open up new channels of providing services to the people. IT services have the potential to accelerate the extension of all government services to the citizens like education employment, government aids and utilities. It is also beneficial to the rural agricultural people as well as the coastal people who are working in fisheries sector.

6.  Ensuring people's participation in government:- The ICT can equip people for genuine participation in an inclusive political process that can produce well informed public consent, the ever more prevalent basis for the legitimacy of governments. It also enable citizens to ask questions and get answers within a reasonable time from the mighty governing class-even from Prime minister or minister's office by return mail.

7.  Facilitating an e-society:- E-government initiates the

promotion of information and communication technology to use in every sectors of social life like education health etc.

The government of India declared the year 2001 as the year of e-governance. The government of India as well as a number of state governments are taking initiatives to introduce e-governance in their respective areas. It laid down the following three measures to re-engineer the entire administration

1. Making administration accountable and citizen friendly.

2. Ensuring transparency and right to information.

3. Taking steps to cleanse and motivate the civil services.

**Digital Governance in India**

Digital governance started in India during the seventies with a focus on in-house government applications in the areas of defence, economic monitoring planning and to manage data intensive functions related to elections, census, tax administration etc. The efforts of the National Information Centre (NIC) to connect all the district head quarters during the eighties was a watershed. The advent of phenomena like liberalization, privatization and globalization-initiated ITC application in public administration. From the dawn of 1990s the economic reforms adopted by the government of India enhanced the use of IT for wider sectoral applications with policy emphasis on reaching out to rural areas and taking in greater inputs from NGOs and Private sector.

In the year 2000, the government of India announced the 'IT Act 2000 of India' that provided a legal frame work to the digital initiatives in the state. This act provided 'legal sanctity to all electronic records and other activities carried out by electronic means' given 'legal recognition to the digital signatures', initiated 'regulation of certifying authorities', recognized 'the penalties and adjudication for various offences', described 'hacking as a cyber crime and prescribed its punishment. It has also bestowed power to the police to enter and search, without any warrant, any public place for the purpose of nabbing cyber

criminals and preventing cyber crime. (Government of India, IT Act 2000). A positive trend towards regeneration of reforms in Indian administration got a further impetus with setting up of second Administrative Reforms Commission in the year 2005 by the Government of India. *(https:// darpg.gov.in/arc.reports)* Several of its reports such as report on Right to Information (Report 1 of 2nd ARC), report on e-governance (report 11, 2nd ARC) and report of citizen - centricity (Report 12 of 2nd ARC) are commendable recommendation in this respect.

Even in the dawn of the 21st century there were many constraints on realizing the presumed potential uses of IT and these reflect the readiness of governments to appropriate IT for pursuing development. Among the most obvious and critical is the connectivity factor. About connectivity in India C.P. Chandrasekhar observed 'Data suggests that India may be on track to realize the required degree of diffusion on telecommunication technology, even if at a slow (but accelerating) pace. Recently released figures indicate that telephone density has touched 5 per 100 inhabitants as on March 31, 2003 compared with only 1.39 at the end of March 1994. When the shift to a new, more liberal telecom policy began, since then the rate of expansion of connectivity has indeed been rapid, with tele-density touching 2.86 lines per 100 people on March 31, 2000, 3.64 on March 31, 2001, 4.4 on March 31, 2002 and 5 as on March 31, 2003 (Tripathi, 2007, 140). There after teleconnectivity was substantially increased as a result of expanded access to the internet and the benefits it can provide.

With the expanded access to internet government of India announced National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) in the year 2006. It comprised of 27 mission mode projects (MMPs) and eight components to 'make all government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets and ensure efficiency, transparency and reliability of such services at affordable costs to realize the basic needs of the common man.' Some of the MMPs included passport, land records, e-courts and e-procurement. Even the primary

ICT infrastructure was established such as State Data Centers (SDCs), State Wide Area Network (SWAN) and State Service Delivery Gateways (SSDG). More than 1.2 lakh rural tele centers, called Common Service Centers (CSCs) were also made operational as service delivery outlets across all the states and union territories (Malhotra, 2018, 10).

After two years ie in 2008 National Service Delivery Gateway (NSDG) was launched as a standard based messaging switch to provide seamless inter-operability and to help in tracking and time stamping all transactions of government. Internet diffusion is very low in our state even at the dawn of 2010s. According to ITU (2011) there were about 120 million internet users in India of 1.2 million inhabitants-this is merely 10% of the population while it was 27% for Asia region. Also there were only around 15 million fixed broadband subscriptions in India that is merely 1.23% of the total population of the country (ITU: 2012). According to the Economist (2010) India was placed at the bottom block-58 out of total 70 countries on digital economy ranking.

The national policy on IT was approved in the year 2012 to encourage adoption of ICTs, to provide fiscal benefits to SMEs to 'create a pool of 10 million additional ICT skilled manpower, to adopt open standards and with several such IT focused national goals.' In the year 2013, government of India announced "GI Cloud" christened 'Meghraj'. It was rolled out to utilize and harness the benefits of cloud computing in governance domain (Malhotra, 2018, 11). In the year 2013, Mobile Seva (the national mobile governance initiative) was also formally launched with the aim of making India a world leader in harnessing the potential of mobile governance for inclusive development. Mobile seva provides an integrated platform for all government departments and agencies for delivery of public services to citizens and business over mobile devices using SMS, USSD, IVRS, CBC, LBS and mobile applications. Economist Intelligence unit e-readiness ranking in 2015 of select countries of the world shows India's e-readiness score (out of 10) as 4.96 and rank as 54 were as USA it is 8.95 and 1 and Japan it is 8.08 and rank 18.

On March 25, 2015 prime minister Narendra Modi launched PRAGATI (Pro Active Governance and Timely Implementation), which is a unique interactive platform for ushering transparency and accountability in governance with real time exchange of information. Pragati aims to address common people's grievances which simultaneously reviewing and monitoring progress of important programmes / projects of both central and state governments using three digital technologies in conjunction viz. digital data management, video conferencing and geospatial technology for effective governance. (The Hindu - March 26, 2015)

**Digital India Programme**

Communicating with the citizens has been a big challenge even in modern democracies. As far as India is concerned, it has an extensive geography, large population and vast linguistic and cultural diversity. The most efficient way for communicating with all the people of this vast state is through connectivity at a digital platform. Digital technology in governance is a vital tool for rural development, delivery of public services, providing real time information and data to people, transferring benefits of government schemes directly to the people and expansion of financial services in India. The announcement of the government of India - digital India programme in 2015 - provides the vision of the government on the effective participation of an active government in joining together with citizens, private sector and use of technology.

Digital India is an ambitious programme of the government of India launched on 1st July 2015 with a vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society. The programme is an inclusive campaign which ensures that public services be made available to citizens electronically by improving online infrastructure and by increasing internet connectivity or by making the country digitally empowered (The New Indian Express July 2, 2015). The programme is useful in engaging government with citizens and industry to transform India into a digitallyempowered society and knowledge economy. It also aims to create a truly participatory

democracy in the country as it's target is to collect more than 130 crore Indians with their government so that they can avail the benefits of various public services in real time.

Digital India is rooted in three vision areas and nine pillars. The three vision areas are (a) digital infrastructure as a utility to every citizen. (b) Governance and service on demand and (c) Digital empowerment of citizens. These vision areas are expected to be achieved by nine pillars. They are Broadband Highways, Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity, Public Internet Access Programme, E-governance - Reforming Government through Technology,e-Kranti- Electronic Delivery of Services, Information for all, Electronic manufacturing, IT for job and Early HarvestProgramme (Taking the power of digital to next level 2015). The focus of digital India programme is on being transformative to realize IT (Indian Talent) + IT (Information technology) = IT (India Tomorrow) and making technology central to enable change. Digital India programme has received appreciation from all over the world for its innovative approach.

**Major Initiatives Under Digital India Programme**

1. *my gov. in* has been implemented as a platform for citizen engagement in governance through a 'Discuss', 'Do' and 'Disseminate' approach. The mobile app for my gov. would bring these features to users on a mobile phone (mygov.in)

2. *e-hospital:-* The online registration system has been introduced as a platform for connecting the patients, doctors and the hospitals to provide a one stop solution for the citizens. This application provides important services such as online registration, payment of fees and appointment, online diagnostics reports, enquiring the availability of blood etc. (https://www.nic.in / projects / e-hospital /)

3. Digital Locker System:- This application provides 'private space on public cloud' especially for storage, issuance and

verification of documents and certificates in a digital form. It will minimize physical documents and enable sharing of e-documents across agencies. The sharing of e-documents will be done through registered repositories there by ensuring the authenticity of the documents online  (https://digilocker.gov.in)

4.  Aadhar:- A 12 digit unique number issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) by taking a person's biometric details such as iris scan and finger print and demographic information like date of birth and address. It can be equated with America's social security number as it has more uses and fewer safeguards. This is to be used as a basic or primary identifier to roll out several government welfare schemes and programmes. The UIDAI, which issues aadhar is a statutory authority established in January 2009 by the government of India under the provisions of aadhar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act 2016. (https://uidai.gov.in/your.aadhaar/about-aadhaar.html)

5.  Direct Benefit Transfer:- It is unique initiative of reforming government delivery system by re-engineering the existing process in welfare schemes for simple and faster flow of funds and to ensure accurate targeting of the beneficiaries, duplication and reduction of fraud. Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) was started on 1st January 2013. The scheme entails transfer of subsidies directly to the bank or post office account of the beneficiaries without any intermediaries in between. This is being now supported by a mobile app called Jan DhanDarshak - which will help locating financial touch points across the country. This will reduce delays in payment and most importantly accurate targeting of beneficiaries is possible. (The Hindu, January 2, 2013)  Initially, there were 27 schemes and services covered under DBT which have now

risen to total schemes: 395 from 56 ministries. (https://dbtbharat.gov.in/scheme/schemelist)

6. National Scholarship Portal:- NSP is another one stop solution for end to end scholarship process right form submission of student application, verification, sanction and disbursal to end beneficiary for all the scholarship provided by the government of India.

7. DeitY has under taken an initiative namely Digitize India Platform (DIP) for large scale digitalization of records in the country that would facilitate efficient delivery of services to the citizens.

8. Jeevan Pranam:- It is a bio-metric enabled digital service for pensioners for securing the life certificate. (https://jeevanpranam.gov.in/#)

9. Bharat Net:- A newly initiated government of India project for a high speed digital highway to connect all 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayat of the country. This would be the world's largest rural broadband connectivity project using opticalfibre.

10. United Mobile Application for New Age Governance (UMANG):- A single mobile platform for all Indian citizens to access central, local and other government services that provides seamless integration with popular customer-centric services including Aadhar and Digi locker. It has been made available through mobile application, web, IVR and SMS and is expected torevolutionize the way how an Indian citizen avails government services today. (https://web.umang.gov.in/web/#)

Digital India initiative is the way for an easy, efficient and empowered governance and has to became the backbone of good governance paradigm. It is a big platform where every individual is digitally empowered - the key to the concept of new age governance. This can be achieved through increasing the internet penetration and usage of

broadband across the country. India is the second largest internet market in the world with almost 260 million broadband users. It is analyzed that the digital India plan could boost GDP up to $ 1 trillion by 2025. It can play a key role in macro economic factors such as GDP growth, employment generation, labour productivity and growth of business.

The digital India initiative will also make visible change in the social life of India especially in education and health care. The modern ICT devices especially mobile phones makes it easier for the people to obtain access to services and resources. The conversion of school and college classrooms as smart and visual classrooms are revolutionary changes in accessing most modern academic knowledge. Mobile and internet banking is also flourishing in the state which will benefit to the state and community in a multi-dimensional way. It will also facilitate not only business entrepreneurs but also the farmers and fishermen.

The initiative also have its environmental effects. The ICTs will help in reducing the carbon foot print by reducing fuel consumption, water management, greener work places etc. It will help in efficient management and usage of scarce and non renewable resources. Cloud computing technology minimizes carbon emissions by improving mobility and flexibility. Technology is re-shaping the way government is designing and implementing programmes. The use of these technologies has brought in better systems, greater efficiency and is beginning to have a profound impact on governance.

**Challenges to Digital Governance**

Though the e-governance experience has wide scope in every field of governance and service, which has various challenges in various forms.

The major challenge to digital governance all over the world, especially third world countries is that organizations choose not to improve digital governance. The managerial and other staff in various organizations prefer to be silent towards digitalization. The bureaucrats are averse to such innovation due to change in power relations equation

(Maheswari, 2000). This is mainly due to the lack of exposure, lack of easy availability of skills on the fear of adequate security to their information.

Illiteracy among the vast multitude of people especially in rural areas is another challenge. Due to lack of infrastructure in rural areas, people do not have effective access to digital and information technology. Therefore, they are not able to get the benefits of various schemes and services and compared to the urban population. The cost of subscribing to a telephone line, PC and so on is a dream of the rural poor. Ordinary citizen finds it very difficult to access the internet in an environment where broadband development is very low and the facilities for its installation is very expensive. The government of India has tried to invest in infrastructure to support e-government and ICT. There are still a lot of problems regarding infrastructure such as obsolete equipment, infrastructure in few better developed metros and big cities

The cyber interventions by hackers is one of the major threats to ICT systems. At present hackers are attacking even defence secrets. So continuous monitoring of data is required. Sometimes people are not ready to take the risk of safety and security of very important data or information. Security challenge is also a severe problem in the field. The people feel that using website to transfer their personal information like name, photo, date of birth, ID No., credit card details with public agencies online or electronically is not safe. The recent news on such incidence of hackers add fuel to the fire as far as the common people are concerned. There is lack of robust cyber security mechanisms to protect hardware and software is a big challenge in this area. Recently it has been reported that some persons theft information from aadhar server. Such breaches in the security system of the aadhar can be dangerous to the entire digital India programme.

Electronic litter, popularly known as 'e-waste' is another challenge. According to global e-waste Monitor Report (2017) by ITU, around 44.7 million metric tons of e-waste was generated in the year 2016. In

developing countries like India, e-waste is a bigger challenge because of unplanned discarding that makes disposal difficult as well as costly.

Power failure in third world countries like India is another challenge in the way. Major power cuts affecting various parts of India ranging from 5 to 12 hours every day. Even though uninterrupted power supply systems are used, yet they prove insufficient to cope up with the power break downs. Financing difficulties encountered by the local grass root level institutions as well as by the state governments. Drastic steps are needed to inject funds for the development of power sources in the rural areas, especially to take steps to ensure the participation of private sector for power generation.

Another major challenge in the field is the shortage of project leaders and guides who could ensure implementation of the ICTs at the grass root level. The expert professionals who are always prefer to work in the metros or cities, will adversely affect the implementation of ICTs in the rural areas. The lack of knowledge in English and Computer knowledge kept away the large number of villagers far away from the government services. So it is difficult to achieve digital governance at the village level at a speedy manner. But the present education system is beneficial to equip the new generation people in advanced technology.

**Conclusion**

In the post liberalization era governments all over the world have been engaged in improving internal efficiencies, responsiveness, co-ordination and integration between various government departments and external agencies, citizens and business. Digital technology provides to governments internal and external communication to gain speed, precision, simplicity, outreach and networking capacity. After realizing this fact, most of the developing states turns its attention in investing more in the field. Now the government of India has developed a comprehensive ICT policy with an intension to revolutionize the whole field of administration and service sector to change the face of India especially to make a positive change in the standard of living of the

citizens of India. Digital India programme is an inclusive campaign which ensures that public services be made available to citizens electronically by improving online infrastructure and internet connectivity.

Digital technology can also be applied in the consultation process among citizens, interest groups, political parties and public service. This will revolutionize politics by its application in the selection of candidates, election and legislation. It can also be effective in engineering greater citizen involvement in policy formulation and its implementation. Hope that in the very near future, government could deliver all its services in electronic mode so as to make the government process transparent, citizen centric, efficient, effective and easily accessible.

**References**

1.     Cangas, Alisha, Herrero. (2014): The *Good Governance Agenda for Civil society*, In Brief, No. 12. December 2014

2.     Davies. A (1994): *Telecommunications and Politics, The Decentralized Alternative,* Pinter, London.

3.     Gilman, Stuart C.; Lewis, Carol W. (1996): '*Public Service Ethics: A Global Dialogue'*, Public Administration Review, Vol. 56 No. 6

4.     Gore. A. (1993): *Creating a Government that Works Better and Costs Less*, Plum books and Penguin, Newyork.

5.     Jones S.G. (1995): *Computer Mediated Communication and Community,*Sage Thousand Oaks, CA.

6.     Kawatra PS. (2001):*Text Book of Information Science,*PH Publication Corporation,New Delhi.

7.     Maheshwari SR. (2000):*Major Issues and Challenges of Public Administration in the Third World - An Overview.* in RD Sharma (ed), (2000):*Administrative Systems in Developing Societies,* Mittal Publications,New Delhi.

8.     Malhotra, Charu. (2018):*Role of Digital Technologies in*

*Governance*, Indian Institute of Public Administration,New Delhi.

9.     Rizvi, AH (2016): *'A study of E-Governance Educational Projects in India',* Global *Journal for Research Analysis,* vol. 5 No. 1.

10.    *The New Indian Express*, Thiruvananthapuram.

11.    *The Hindu*, Thiruvananthapuram.

12.    Tripathi, Vishwas. (2007):*E-Governance Perspective and Challenges,* Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd.New Delhi.

13.    UNDP (1997) *Governance for sustainable Human Development,* Newyork, (UNO-UNDP).

14.    World Bank (2001) *Issue Note: E-Government and World Bank*, Newyork (UNO)

**Websites**

http://darpg.gov.in/arc.reports

(https://www.nic.in / projects / e-hospital /)

(https://digilocker.gov.in/)

(https://uidai.gov.in/your.aadhaar/about-aadhaar.html)

(https://dbtbharat.gov.in/scheme/schemelist)

(https://jeevanpranam.gov.in/#)

(https://web.umang.gov.in/web/#/)

# Parental Involvement in Education of Children : A Comparison Across Scheduled and Non-Scheduled Caste Households in Puducherry

D. Purushothaman

*Inequalities in educational system exist worldwide, while in India, it is significantly related to caste, class and gender. Multiple factors including family background, economic conditions, parental involvement, infrastructural facilities of school etc. influence children's educational attainment. The study specifically focuses on understanding the family environment and parental role in educational achievement and performance. Puducherry union territory is the study area and the study units were from 630 households comprising of 450 SC and 180 non-SC households to understand the household situation. Frequencies, means and percentages are used to explain the data and the focus of the analysis was based on SC and non-SC category. Parents perceive that children's education, especially of the boys will change the economic position of the family. Parents, especially of SC households less frequently visit schools to enquire the child's performance. Only a few members attended meeting of various committees at school. Parental involvement may*

*have a major impact on children's seriousness and engagement at school. A greater proportion of household heads are aware of many welfare/affirmative schemes but not all with clarity.*

## Introduction

Persistent inequalities of caste, class, race, ethnicity and gender are evident in education system worldwide (see DFID Report, 2007), at the stage of enrollment and attendance, in outcomes and achievement, or in terms of the consequent opportunities. In India, the pattern of inequality in education correlate consistently and significantly with caste, class and further gender and poverty while complex interactions exist between each in the production of persistent exclusion in education. As a result a section of the society continuously lack opportunities to participate and benefit fully from society as they are excluded especially in certain basic requirements such as education, economic participation etc. It reflects the multiple and overlapping nature of the disadvantages experienced by certain groups of the population where social identity is the central axis of their exclusion (Kabeer, 2006). It leads to the denial of basic rights, lack of access to resources and ultimately results in deprivation and inequality.

In a study conducted by Lohithakshan (2007) to determine the social and environmental factors on educational attainment, it was identified that communal background, poor economic conditions and irregularity in attendance at school are strongly associated. The literature on educational social capital by Coleman (1988), within the family indicates that family engagement in children's educational endeavors is one of the main determinants of educational attainment. The educational advantage that children enjoy from the relationships with their families is considered as family level social capital. Higher levels of parental education and higher family income are associated with better educational

outcomes of children. Family characteristics also include family income, parental education, family structure, religion, ethnicity, caste and parental engagement; each directly influences the time and resources that are dedicated to children's education outcomes. Data and studies on family engagement in educational activities are rare but only a few studies have addressed the issue. In Sri Lanka, Athurupane et al (2007) found that several factors - family support for private tuition, help from the mother, number of books in home are all associated with higher scores in Mathematics, English and first language.

In India, the perception of the quality of the education system, by parents and students, and their assessment on the benefits of education and the accessibility of the education system will influence the decision of whether parents decide to send their children to school. The social status of the child, which is predominantly determined by caste, also influences this assessment (Jha and Jhinglan, 2005). Coleman (1979) believes that the concept of "Equality of Educational Opportunity" is a mistaken notion and it locates the "Equality of Opportunity" within the educational institutions, and thus focuses attention on education as an end in itself rather than as a means to an end to be achieved in adulthood. A proper formulation of education would be that the school's task besides increasing opportunity for all, should impart an education catering to differential environments that the children face outside the school.

Muralidharan and Kremer (2006) in a nationally-representative survey of rural private primary schools in India state that 28 percent of the population of rural India has access to fee-charging private schools in the same village. Private schools are more common in areas with poor public school performance and richer states are less likely to have rural private schools. Compared to public schools, private schools pay much lower teacher salaries; have lower pupil-teacher ratios; and less multi-grade teaching. Private school teachers are 2 to 8 percent less likely to be absent than teachers in public schools and 6 to 9 percent more likely

to be engaged in teaching activity at any given point in time. They are more likely to hold a college degree than public school teachers, but much less likely to have a formal teacher training certificate. Children in private school have higher attendance rates. They have higher test scores, even after controlling for observable family and school characteristics.

Twentieth century policies helped officially decrease some of the inequality between groups and thereby enrollment but necessary change is yet to come. The education gap translates through the active schooling system with the proportion of dalit to non-dalit success remaining at a constant low rate through primary, secondary and post secondary schooling. Studies conducted historically and the recent past reflect the continuing gap between SC and non-SC students in terms of access to education facilities, utilization of facilities and the discrimination that hinders the utilization and fastens differential outcome for SC student. Positive discrimination and support provided is rarely utilized by a majority as there is lack of awareness and poor situational opportunities. Thus the study specifically focuses on understanding the family environment and parental role in educational achievement and performance.

**Methodology**

The data for the present study was taken from the larger study conducted on "Educational Status of Scheduled Castes in Puducherry: Attainments and Challenges" funded by ICSSR during 2013-2014. Puducherry union territory is the study area and the study units were selected based on the higher SC composition i.e. districts, communes and villages/wards. Thus it covers 2 districts, 6 communes and 18 villages/wards. From these, 630 households comprising of 450 SC and 180 non-SC households were covered to understand the household situation and parental involvement on children's educational attainment. The questions related to the socio-economic background, household details, neighbourhood details, children school related information, classroom participation and achievements and parental involvement and perception

towards children's education were collected through interviews. Further information related to the socio-economic background, household details, neighbourhood details, school and classroom facilities, interaction at school with classmates and teachers, the participation and achievements at class, efforts attempted to enhance performance by parents and teachers, utilization of welfare schemes, aspiration and discrimination practised are collected from the  students of 6th standard, 9th standard and collegiate students. In addition other necessary information was collected through the secondary sources such as Census Report, School records and other reports which were used to understand the village and institutional information. The collected data were edited, coded and entered in SPSS software and were analyzed broadly on the basis of social category. Frequencies, means and percentages are used to explain the data and the focus of the analysis was based on SC and non-SC category.

**Findings**

Information relating to household is pertinent to the study as it influences to a large extent the opportunities and is instrumental in shaping up the life skills of an individual, especially providing basic needs for children essential to build up their future. A majority of the household heads is aged between 31 and 50 years and a small proportion are both young up to 30 years and old above 51 years. Predominantly the household heads are males and (or) fathers and only a small proportion are female headed households. An overwhelming majority is Hindus and speaks Tamil as their mother tongue. Nearly two-third of the household heads are educated up to 10th standard level of schooling while a small proportion has higher level of schooling and a small proportion is also illiterates. A majority of household heads earn through wage labour and a small and significant proportion work in private companies at different levels. The family income of one half of the households ranges between Rs. 5001 and Rs. 10000 per month and another one quarter earn less than Rs. 5000 per month. More than half of the families belong to the

BPL category while the proportion is more in SC households. Relatively greater proportion of non-SC households stated that they have somebody at home who knows English, predominantly children or spouses but SC households have lesser presence of English knowing persons at home (Table 1).

The housing particulars indicate that a majority own houses, especially SC households. Though a majority lives in pucca and semi-pucca houses, a considerable proportion (i.e.) around half of the SC households live in huts. The rooms are also few in a majority of households with 1 or 2 rooms, while a very small proportion has 3 or more rooms across categories. Only one-fourth has separate place at home for children to study and there is significant difference between SC and non-SC households with more non-SC households having a separate place to study.  A majority of the households has access to pipe water and electricity supply. Only a small proportion has access to toilet facilities at home but a majority of SCs use more of community toilets in comparison to non-SCs. Except two, none of the households has land ownership. Regarding the availability of furniture, gadgets and vehicles, a majority of the households has television, fan, telephone/mobile while Puducherry household has predominantly more of table/chair, refrigerator, cycle, scooter/motorcycle and computer. Except fan, television and mobile, in all the other items, lesser proportion of SC households possess in comparison to non-SC households. The social composition of neighbourhood shows a majority of SC households has a more homogeneous neighbourhood or same caste members in their neighbourhood while non-SC households report mixed caste members in their neighbourhood. An overwhelming majority reported availability of an educated person in the neighbourhood, but relatively lesser proportions provide educational guidance and support for their children and some stated that they do not require it (Table 1).

A majority of households had children studying between 6th and 10th standard of schooling while about one sixth had children studying

in lower primary level, higher level and undergraduate level respectively while a small proportion of households does not have children. A majority of non-SC households has enrolled their children in English medium schools. Relatively more SC households enrolled their children in government schools but more of non-SC households enrolled their wards in private unaided schools/colleges. A majority of the household is 1 to 5 km away from their children's school/college. About one-third of the children commute to school/college by bus and an equal proportion walk to school/college. Many also use cycle and two-wheeler for commuting to school/college. A small proportion of household heads expressed that they borrowed money for their children's education, especially SC households. A majority of household has nobody at home to assist the children with academic activities and some household heads had sought private help. Only 3 household heads mentioned that their children dropped out after 12th standard of schooling (Table 2).

The  mean expenditure for children's education (both boys and girls) at different educational level (table 3) shows that except primary level, relatively more amount is spent for boys in comparison to girls. Comparing across SC and non-SC households, no specific pattern is observed between boys and girls, but at collegiate level it is observed that SC households spend relatively more for girls, while there is a wide gap between boys and girls in non-SC households where in they spend more for boys in comparison to girls.

Only a small proportion of household heads are members of various committees and associations at children's school and participation is even less, while no major difference exist among SC and non-SC households. Some of them who do not attend state that they do not have time, do not get information, or are not interested (Table 4). Three fourth of the household heads are aware of the various welfare/affirmative schemes. Around two fifths reported that their children receive freeship and studentships, free textbooks, mid-day-meal at school level and a very small proportion got their children admitted through the quota

system. Many of the parents came to know about reservation and scholarships only when they admitted the children for higher education. Household heads are relatively less aware/not aware of the post-metric scholarships, MCM/Remedial/other coaching or hostel accommodation, tuition waiver, vocational training/capacity building schemes etc., provided by government to the children (Table 5).

With regard to parental involvement and perception towards children's education, a few households, especially non-SC households expressed difficulty in admitting their children in schools/colleges. A majority of household heads expressed that parents motivate their children in education with non-SC households out numbering SC households. A majority of the household heads expressed that their children are interested in attending schools/colleges. They felt that their children's education will change their economic position and help them to live independently. With regard to their children's performance at school, a majority reported that their children were good and a considerable proportion also reported that their children were very good. In the academic performance at school, their performance is largely based on teacher's guidance, hard work and familial support. Predominantly many parents visit schools/colleges of their wards, largely to attend school functions where their children take part in cultural activities, but the visits are drastically reduced for meeting teachers or collecting the report cards of their children from school. This is more predominantly observed for SC children as reported by the household heads. There is clear difference between SC and non-SC children in parental visit to interact with teachers in knowing their children's progress. Majority of the household heads reported that their children especially SC actively engage in cultural and sports activity compared to non-SC children. Only some parent's felt engaging in other programmes disturbs their academic performance. Majority of the parents aspire their children to atleast get an undergraduate degree and a considerable proportion across categories are interested to educate their children in professional course and a small proportion

are interested to educate their children in B.Ed. course. No major difference exists between categories in terms of parental aspiration. A majority of the SC household heads stated that their children received books, notebooks, uniforms while a small proportion also received bicycles. Very small proportion of household heads had their children outside the village or town for want of better opportunities in schools such as infrastructure facilities and good quality teaching. A small proportion of children especially SC households assist in work at home where predominantly more female children assist work at home in comparison to male children. As reported by the household heads, the children spend about an hour to assist at home. A majority stated that children regularly study at home (Table 6). Many of the parent's express that education is important for boys as it can give him a job and help him in looking after the family, provide comfortable life, most importantly his education can change the economic condition of the whole family. A significant proportion of parents with girl children feel it will increase the girl children's critical thinking, self respect and endurance.

## Summary and Conclusion

To sum up, 650 households were selected for the study among SC and non-SC households. The household heads are largely male headed households in the age group of 31 years to 50 years. A majority is Hindus and speaks Tamil at home. The heads of the households are educated up to school level and work as wage labourers. A greater proportion belongs to the BPL category. More non-SC households have somebody at home who knows English. Larger proportion lives in own houses but many SC households live in huts and many non-SC households have separate place at home for children to study. A majority have access to pipe water and electricity supply, but only a small proportion has access to toilet facilities. An overwhelming proportion of the households is landless but has accesses to basic household assets, but relatively lesser proportion of SC household's possess luxurious assets. The neighbourhood of SC households is largely composed of

similar caste members and has educated persons in the neighbourhood but lesser proportion is involved in active guidance and support. A major proportion of households have school going children and SC households send their children to government schools unlike non-SC households. Distance between residence and schools is almost 1 to 5 km and children largely commute by bus. Many households do not have anybody at home to support children with academic activities and expenditure for education for boys is relatively higher in comparison to girls. Parents perceive that children's education, especially of the boys will change the economic position of the family. Many of the fathers aspire their children to get at least an undergraduate degree. Predominantly more female children assist in household work. A majority of households in which children are eligible for government facilities availed it. A greater proportion of household heads are aware of many welfare/affirmative schemes but not all and very clearly. Parents, especially of SC households do not frequently visit schools to enquire about the child's performance and very few members attended the meeting of various committees at school. Parental involvement may have a major impact on children's seriousness and engagement at school.  The school has a major role to play, as once children are enrolled it becomes the institution's responsibility. Parents have started enrolling children in schools but their involvement and input continues to be low.

**Table 1 : Background profile of the head of the households**

| Background information | SC | | Non-SC | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. of respondents | % | No. of respondents | % |
| **Age in years** | | | | |
| up to 30 | 29 | 6.4 | 10 | 5.6 |
| 31 to 40 | 171 | 38.0 | 67 | 37.2 |
| 41 to 50 | 198 | 44.0 | 74 | 41.1 |
| 51 to 60 | 44 | 9.8 | 22 | 12.2 |
| 61 and above | 8 | 1.8 | 7 | 3.9 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | | | |
| Male | 423 | 94.0 | 171 | 95.0 |
| Female | 27 | 6.0 | 9 | 5.0 |
| **Religion** | | | | |
| Hindu | 431 | 95.8 | 169 | 93.9 |
| Muslim | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 0.6 |
| Christian | 19 | 4.2 | 10 | 5.6 |
| **Mother tongue** | | | | |
| Tamil | 450 | 100.0 | 180 | 100.0 |
| Urdu | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| **Educational status** | | | | |
| Illiterate | 28 | 6.2 | 6 | 3.3 |
| up to 5th std | 51 | 11.3 | 18 | 10.0 |
| 6th to 10th std | 280 | 62.2 | 115 | 63.9 |
| 11th, 12th and ITI | 59 | 13.1 | 26 | 14.4 |
| Under graduate | 28 | 6.2 | 13 | 7.2 |
| Post graduate | 1 | 0.2 | 1 | 0.6 |
| Professionals | 3 | 0.7 | 1 | 0.6 |
| **Occupation** | | | | |
| Cultivation and allied agriculture | 4 | 0.9 | 3 | 1.7 |
| Wage labour | 347 | 77.1 | 118 | 65.6 |
| Skilled labour | 8 | 1.8 | 9 | 5.0 |
| Business | 3 | 0.7 | 18 | 10.0 |
| Govt. job | 44 | 9.8 | 6 | 3.3 |
| Private job | 38 | 8.4 | 25 | 13.9 |
| Housewife | 3 | 0.7 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Any other | 3 | 0.7 | 1 | 0.6 |
| **Family Income per month (in Rs.)** | | | | |
| Up to 5000 | 143 | 31.8 | 32 | 17.8 |
| 5001 to 10000 | 212 | 47.1 | 91 | 50.6 |
| 10001 and above | 95 | 21.1 | 57 | 31.7 |

| Ration card/Family status | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| APL | 141 | 31.3 | 71 | 39.4 |
| BPL | 309 | 68.7 | 109 | 60.6 |
| **Languages spoken at home** | | | | |
| Same as mother tongue (Tamil) | 450 | 100.0 | 180 | 100.0 |
| Other | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| **Knowledge of English by** | | | | |
| **persons at home** | | 0.0 | | 0.0 |
| Yes | 295 | 65.6 | 133 | 73.9 |
| No | 155 | 34.4 | 47 | 26.1 |
| **Ownership status of house** | | | | |
| Own | 394 | 87.6 | 161 | 89.4 |
| Rented | 56 | 12.4 | 19 | 10.6 |
| **Type of house** | | | | |
| Pucca | 92 | 20.4 | 51 | 28.3 |
| Semi-pucca | 148 | 32.9 | 75 | 41.7 |
| Huts | 210 | 46.7 | 54 | 30.0 |
| **No. of rooms** | | | | |
| 1 | 164 | 36.4 | 74 | 41.1 |
| 2 | 203 | 45.1 | 69 | 38.3 |
| 3 | 58 | 12.9 | 29 | 16.1 |
| 4 and above | 25 | 5.6 | 8 | 4.4 |
| **Basic amenities** | | | | |
| Separate place for children to read | 95 | 21.1 | 69 | 38.3 |
| Tube/bore well | 15 | 3.3 | 5 | 2.8 |
| Protected well | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 0.6 |
| Piped water | 428 | 95.1 | 173 | 96.1 |
| Electricity | 449 | 99.8 | 179 | 99.4 |
| **Toilet facilities** | | | | |
| At home | 124 | 27.6 | 83 | 46.1 |
| Sharing with others | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 0.6 |
| Open space | 154 | 34.2 | 56 | 31.1 |
| Community toilet | 172 | 38.2 | 40 | 22.2 |

| Land ownership | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No land | 449 | 99.8 | 179 | 99.4 |
| 1 to 5 acres | 1 | 0.2 | 1 | 0.6 |
| **Availability of furniture / gadgets / vehicles** | | | | |
| Table/Chair | 295 | 65.6 | 152 | 84.4 |
| Fan | 435 | 96.7 | 173 | 96.1 |
| Cooker | 55 | 12.2 | 26 | 14.4 |
| Radio | 120 | 26.7 | 42 | 23.3 |
| Cycle | 255 | 56.7 | 101 | 56.1 |
| Refrigerator | 115 | 25.6 | 87 | 48.3 |
| TV | 435 | 96.7 | 176 | 97.8 |
| Telephone/Mobile | 380 | 84.4 | 156 | 86.7 |
| Computer/laptop | 67 | 14.9 | 62 | 34.4 |
| Scooter/motor cycle | 193 | 42.9 | 111 | 61.7 |
| Four wheeler | 12 | 2.7 | 2 | 1.1 |
| **Social composition of neighbourhood** | | | | |
| Same | 377 | 83.8 | 86 | 47.8 |
| Other | 14 | 3.1 | 18 | 10.0 |
| Mixed | 59 | 13.1 | 76 | 42.2 |
| **Availability of educated persons in the neighbourhood** | | | | |
| Available | 413 | 91.8 | 169 | 93.9 |
| Not available | 37 | 8.2 | 11 | 6.1 |
| **Guidance for education from neighbours** | | | | |
| Available | 322 | 71.6 | 134 | 74.4 |
| Not available | 128 | 28.4 | 46 | 25.6 |

### Table 2 : School related information by household heads

| School related information | SC | | Non-SC | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. of respondents | % | No. of respondents | % |
| **Class of children studying** | | | | |
| up to 5th | 81 | 18.0 | 36 | 20.0 |
| 6th to 10th | 168 | 37.3 | 73 | 40.6 |
| 11th, 12th and diploma | 79 | 17.6 | 26 | 14.4 |
| Under graduate | 71 | 15.8 | 26 | 14.4 |
| Post graduate | 7 | 1.6 | 5 | 2.8 |
| Professional | 8 | 1.8 | 6 | 3.3 |
| Ph.D. | 1 | 0.2 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |
| **Medium of instruction** | | | | |
| Tamil | 157 | 34.9 | 41 | 22.8 |
| English | 258 | 57.3 | 131 | 72.8 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |
| **Management of school** | | | | |
| Govt. | 231 | 51.3 | 71 | 39.4 |
| Aided | 7 | 1.6 | 3 | 1.7 |
| Private unaided | 177 | 39.3 | 98 | 54.4 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |
| **Distance to school (in km)** | | | | |
| Up to 1 | 116 | 25.8 | 31 | 17.2 |
| 2 to 5 | 182 | 40.4 | 94 | 52.2 |
| 6 to 10 | 64 | 14.2 | 29 | 16.1 |
| 11 and above | 53 | 11.8 | 18 | 10.0 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |
| **Mode of travel** | | | | |
| Walking | 150 | 33.3 | 38 | 21.1 |
| Cycle | 55 | 12.2 | 40 | 22.2 |
| Bus | 154 | 34.2 | 64 | 35.6 |
| Two wheeler | 39 | 8.7 | 21 | 11.7 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rickshaw | 8 | 1.8 | 4 | 2.2 |
| Any other | 9 | 2.0 | 5 | 2.8 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |
| **Borrowed money or sold assets for children's education** | | | | |
| Yes | 27 | 6.0 | 7 | 3.9 |
| No | 388 | 86.2 | 165 | 91.7 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |
| **Person assisting at home for children's education** | | | | |
| Parents | 17 | 3.8 | 12 | 6.7 |
| Private tuition | 29 | 6.4 | 11 | 6.1 |
| None | 369 | 82.0 | 149 | 82.8 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |
| **Children taking private tuition** | | | | |
| Yes | 29 | 6.4 | 11 | 6.1 |
| No | 386 | 85.8 | 161 | 89.4 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |
| **Children dropout after 12th std** | | | | |
| Yes | 3 | 0.7 | 0 | 0.0 |
| No | 412 | 91.6 | 172 | 95.6 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |

Table 3 : Mean expenditure incurred by household heads for Children Education

| Class category | Mean Expenditure for Children's Education (in Rs.) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | SC | | Non-SC | |
| | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls |
| Primary | 10317.0 | 12521.0 | 12210.0 | 9066.0 |
| Upper Primary | 10880.0 | 7465.0 | 4961.0 | 13555.0 |
| Secondary and Hr. Sec. | 8268.0 | 5728.0 | 13687.0 | 12565.0 |
| College | 28312.0 | 31719.0 | 31698.0 | 12233.0 |

**Table 4 : Details of Participation in Association / Committees at school by household heads**

| Details of Participation in Association / Committees at school | SC | | Non-SC | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. of respondents | % | No. of respondents | % |
| **Membership** | | | | |
| Yes | 91 | 20.2 | 37 | 20.6 |
| No | 324 | 72.0 | 135 | 75.0 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |
| **Participation** | | | | |
| Yes | 80 | 17.8 | 31 | 17.2 |
| No | 335 | 74.4 | 141 | 78.3 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |

**Table 5 : Details on awareness and utilization of affirmative action/welfare schemes in education by household heads**

| Affirmative Actions in Education | SC | | Non-SC | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. of respondents | % | No. of respondents | % |
| Awareness of Welfare/affirmative action schemes | 338 | 75.1 | 129 | 71.7 |
| Reservation/Quota | 28 | 6.2 | 9 | 5.0 |
| Freeship/studentship | 184 | 40.9 | 49 | 27.2 |
| Post-metric scholarships | 9 | 2.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Scholarships/MCM/Merit | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Remedial/other coaching | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Hostel/ accommodation facilities | 4 | 0.9 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Tuition fee waiver | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Vocational training/capacity building | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Free text books/stationery | 174 | 38.7 | 43 | 23.9 |
| Free food/ Mid Day Meal | 169 | 37.6 | 43 | 23.9 |
| Free School uniform | 135 | 30.0 | 27 | 15.0 |
| Any other | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |

### Table 6 : Parental Involvement and perception towards children's education

| Parental Involvement and perception towards children's education | SC | | Non-SC | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. of respondents | % | No. of respondents | % |
| Problems faced in admission | 16 | 3.6 | 13 | 7.2 |
| Parental monitoring in children's progress | 402 | 89.3 | 172 | 95.6 |
| Children interest in attending school | 414 | 92.0 | 172 | 95.6 |
| **Performance of children at school** | | | | |
| Very good | 44 | 9.8 | 50 | 27.8 |
| Good | 341 | 75.8 | 108 | 60.0 |
| Satisfactory | 29 | 6.4 | 14 | 7.8 |
| Unsatisfactory | 1 | 0.2 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Very poor | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |
| **Visit to children's school** | | | | |
| Celebration | 337 | 74.9 | 163 | 90.6 |
| Sports | 305 | 67.8 | 103 | 57.2 |
| Meeting teachers | 326 | 72.4 | 158 | 87.8 |
| Collecting reports | **117** | **26.0** | **107** | **59.4** |
| Any other | 43 | 9.6 | 29 | 16.1 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |
| **Children's Participation in school programs** | | | | |
| Cultural | 335 | 74.4 | 100 | 55.6 |
| Sports | 350 | 77.8 | 91 | 50.6 |
| Co-curriculum | 310 | 68.9 | 93 | 51.7 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |
| **Parents aspiration towards children's educational level** | | | | |
| SSLC | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 0.6 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Under graduate | 185 | 41.1 | 74 | 41.1 |
| Teachers Education | 60 | 13.3 | 10 | 5.6 |
| BE | 93 | 20.7 | 45 | 25.0 |
| MBBS | 72 | 16.0 | 42 | 23.3 |
| Any other | 5 | 1.1 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |
| **Facilities provided to children in school** | | | | |
| Books | 352 | 78.2 | 69 | 38.3 |
| Notebooks | 346 | 76.9 | 69 | 38.3 |
| Uniform | 348 | 77.3 | 70 | 38.9 |
| Cycle | 146 | 32.4 | 11 | 6.1 |
| Any other | 98 | 21.8 | 9 | 5.0 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |
| **Children studying outside village/town** | | | | |
| Yes | 36 | 8.0 | 7 | 3.9 |
| No | 379 | 84.2 | 165 | 91.7 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |
| **Children assisting in work at home** | | | | |
| Yes | 96 | 21.3 | 35 | 19.4 |
| No | 319 | 70.9 | 137 | 76.1 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |
| **Gender of children assisting in work** | | | | |
| Male children | 36 | 8.0 | 10 | 5.6 |
| Female children | 60 | 13.3 | 25 | 13.9 |
| Not assisting | 319 | 70.9 | 137 | 76.1 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |
| **Time spent on household and domestic work (in hours)** | | | | |
| 1 | 60 | 13.3 | 18 | 10.0 |

| 2 | 12 | 2.7 | 8 | 4.4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 and above | 2 | 0.4 | 1 | 0.6 |
| No fixed time | 22 | 4.9 | 8 | 4.4 |
| Not assisting | 319 | 70.9 | 137 | 76.1 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |
| **Children regularly study at home** | | | | |
| Yes | 410 | 91.1 | 163 | 90.6 |
| No | 5 | 1.1 | 9 | 5.0 |
| Not Applicable | 35 | 7.8 | 8 | 4.4 |

## References

1.    Athurupane, H., Glewwe, P., and Wisniewski, S., (2007): *The Impact of School Quality, Socio economic Factors and Child Health on Students' Academic Performance: Evidence from Sri Lankan Primary Schools*, Washington DC: World Bank.

2.    Coleman, J. S., (1979): *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, Arno Press.

3.    Coleman, J. S., (1988): Social Capital in Creation of Human Capital, *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, S95-S120.

4.    DFID Report, (2007): "Report on *Education Exclusion and Inclusion Policy and Implementation in South Africa and India*", by Yusuf Sayed, Ramya Subramanian, Crain Soudien, Nazir Carrim with Sarada Balagopalan, Fhulu Nekhwevha and Michael Samuel.

5.    Dreze, J.  and Sen, A., (1995):  *India: Economic Development and Social Opportunity*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

6.    Jha, J. and Jhinglan, D., (2005): *Elementary Education for the Poorest and Other Deprived Groups*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi.

7.    Kabeer, N., (2006): *Social Exclusion and the MDGs: The Challenge of Durable Inequalities in the Asian Context*, Institute of Development Studies, Paper presented at Asia 2015 Conference.

8.    Lohithakshan, P.M., (2007): *Dictionary of Education: A Practical Approach*, Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi.

9.    Muralidharan, K.  and Kremer, M., (2006): *Public and Private Schools in Rural India*, Harvard University Press.

10.   Vaidyanathan, A. and Nair, P.R.G., (2001): *Elementary Education in Rural India: A Grassroots View*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.

*Tribute*

# A Tribute to the Patriarch of Legal Education

**P.Sukumaran Nair**

Neelakanta Ramakrishna Madhava Menon, father of modern legal education, one of the independent India's foremost educationist and institution builder par excellence passed away on May 8, 2019. With his sad demise the country lost a pioneer of legal education whose untiring efforts were dedicated to make legal education meaningful throughout the length and breadth of the country. Born in Thiruvananthapuram on 4th May 1935 as the fourth son of Ramakrishna Menon, a law graduate and revenue officer, and Bhavani Amma, a house wife, Madhava Menon completed his early education in Thiruvananthapuram. He graduated from S.D.College, Alappuzha in BSc Zoology. He started his legal education at Government College, Ernakulam from where he shifted to Thiruvananthapuram due to official reasons and secured his law degree in 1955.

After a brilliant academic career Menon enrolled as a practising lawyer at the District Court in Thiruvananthapuram under Poovampallil Neelakanta Pillai. In 1957 he came with flying colours in the Civil Service Examinations and subsequently joined in the Delhi Central Secretariat Service. Life in the Delhi Secretariat was a turning point in his academic life. While working at the Secretariat, he went on his studies at the Campus College affiliated to Punjab University and secured his Post Graduation in Political Science with distinction. Soon he joined the Aligarh Muslim University for higher studies in law, obtained LLM, pursued his research on the topic 'White Collar Crime' and secured PhD. He

gets the credit of the first Ph.D. of faculty of Law, Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). He joined as professor in AMU, later shifted to Delhi and worked in Delhi University. He received Full Bright Scholarship and served as a member of the Delhi University Panel which liaised with Universities from the United States such as Harvard, Columbia, Michigan and Yale.

Prof. Menon was not only an academic magnet but also an excellent institution builder. Before his advent in this arena, legal education in India was confronting with a crisis of credibility - it was a defaulted option (to all) barring few. Career in law at that time was never been a coveted one. The legal course offered then was merely a three year degree programme following the graduation. The Bar Council of India was gravely concerned with this phenomenon and decided to set up an innovative institution which would transform India's legal education landscape, for which they sought the help of this living legend. Menon accepted the challenge and with his missionary zeal he instituted National Law School of Indian University (NLSIU), the country's first law school in Bangalore in 1987 with an independent University status. With a foreign assistance of US $150,000, the Bangalore based law school emerged as the epicentre of legal education in the country.

In order to mould course curriculum, he pursued the Harvard law school case study method and built a committed faculty as he felt that unless the faculty position is improved, the future of legal education will be in quandary. He also introduced Socratic method of teaching, a note worthy trait of engagement and dialogue with his students, organised several open house debates on a variety of themes including fee hike issue. By his hard work and strength of character he could mould a new curriculum enabling the five year law programme to harmonise the lacune prevailed in the existing legal education system. Thus the NLSIU has achieved its purpose of erecting skilled competent lawyers for professional practice. The rigorous integrated five year BA, LLB programme introduced by him has become a template for other national law universities.

Menon's model of institution building unfurled to other spheres too. It was on this initiative that he instituted National University of Juridical Science (NJUS) in 1998 at Kolkata in response to an invitation extended to him by the West Bengal Government. As the first Vice-Chancellor, he developed its infrastructure and curriculum and gave emphatic prominence to academic and research.

The Menon magic of institution building also materialised with the establishment of another sterling institution - The National Judicial Academy. The Supreme Court of India asked him to take over the responsibility of the Director of this institution which was set up in Bhopal for imparting training to Judges, especially the young recruits to the service.

This living legend of law has received many academic awards and distinctions. He was conferred with the living Legend of Law Award by the International Bar Association (1994), Plaque of honour from the Bar Council of India, Degree of Doctor of Law (Honoris causa) from the NLSIU (2001). He was a fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies and Colombia University. The Government of India honoured him by awarding Padmasri in 2003.

Prof. Menon wrote his autobiography 'The Story of a Law Teacher: Turning Point', besides publishing books and articles of a high standard on various themes in Law. After his academic retirement he served as member of various important commissions and committees like member of the commission on Centre - State relations, Chairman of Indian Statistical Institute (Kolkata), Chairman CDS, etc.

In his sunset years he started two model institutions in Kerala-MK Nambiyar Academy for continuing Legal Education and Menon Institute of Legal Advocacy Training for developing grass-roots capacity to access and use the law for under privileged sections of the society.

This doyen of law devoted his entire academic life to see that, *the law worked best when it worked for society's benefit.* No doubt, he

was the last word on the subject. He was in the habit of maintaining close contact with those working in this fields close to his heart.

For C. Achutha Menon Foundation, he was our mentor, philosopher and guide. We always recollect the intellectual support and advise received from him during various occasions. While making tribute to this patriarch of legal education, it will be quite appropriate to  quote Adv. Sriram Panchu, a Senior advocate of Madras High Court, "Perhaps one tribute that would please him would be an introspection if they passed the ultimate Menon test - of using the skill he gave them for the public good, wholly or at least in part."

*Pranam.*

# INDIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

The Indian Council of Social Science Research, (ICSSR) an autonomous organization established by the Government of India, promotes research and publications in Social Science.

## Social Science in Perspective

*(Quarterly Journal of C.Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library)*
Place on record its obligation to ICSSR for financial support and academic recognition.

# C. ACHUTHA MENON FOUNDATION PUBLICATIONS

1.  *Achutha Menon Souvenir* (Mal) (1993).

2.  K.V. Surendranath (ed.) (1993): *For An Indian Model: Essays in Homage to C. Achutha Menon*, Trivandrum.

3.  K.V. Surendranath (ed.) (2002): *Diary Notings of C. Achutha Menon* (Mal.), Current Books, Thrissur.

4.  *Selected Works of C. Achutha Menon* (Mal.) (2002): Manorama Publications, Kottayam.

5.  *C. Achutha Menon Smrithi Chitrangal* (Mal) (2004): Pappiyon, Kozhikode.

6.  K.V. Surendranath (2006): *Man, Vision and Environment* (Mal), Gautha Books, Trivandrum.

7.  K.V. Surendranath (2006): *Lokathinte Mukalthattilude* (Mal), Gautha Books, Trivandrum.

8.  *K.V. Surendranath Souvenir* (2006): Sahithya Keralam, Special Edition, C.Achutha Menon Foundation.

9.  V. Sundaresan (ed.) (2007): *K. Damodaran Smrithi Chithrangal* (Mal), Goutha Books, Trivandrum.

10. Sureshkumar R.K. and P. Sureshkumar (eds.) (2006): *Governance and Development*, APH, New Dehi.

11. Suresh Kumar R.K. and P. Sureshkumar (2008): *Development, Politics and Society: Left Politics in Kerala - A Disinterested Perspective*, APH, New Delhi

12. K. Raman Pillai (2010)*: Facets of Indian Politics,* APH, New Delhi

13. K. Raman Pillai (ed.) (2010): *Land Reforms*, APH, New Delhi.

14. Raman Pillai K., R.K. Sureshkumar & P. Sukumaran Nair (eds.) (2013): *Electoral Reforms*, Kalpaz, New Delhi.

15. V. Sundaresan (ed.) (2013) : *C. Achutha Menon Smrithi Chithrangal* (Mal), C.Achutha Menon Foundation, Thiruvananthapuram.

16. V. Sundaresan (ed.) (2013) : *Kavisanghamam* (Mal), C.Achutha Menon Foundation, Thiruvanantahpuram

17. K. Raman Pillai (Chief ed.) : *C.Achutha Menon Birth Centenary Souvenir* (Mal.) (2013), C.Achutha Menon Foundation, Thiruvananthapuram.

18. Vivekanandan B., R.K. Suresh Kumar & P. Sukumaran Nair (eds.) (2014) : *India Today: Issues Before the Nation - A Festschrift in Honour of Prof. (Dr.) K. Raman Pillai.*, Gyan, New Delhi.

19. Suresh Kumar R.K. and P. Suresh Kumar (2014): *Vikasanam Rashtreeyam Samooham : Keralathile Edathupaksha Rashtreeyam Oru Abhiveekshanam* (Mal), C. Achutha Menon Foundation, Thiruvananthapuram.

20. Suresh Kumar R.K. (2014): *Manavikathayude Prakasagopuramayi Oraal.* (Mal), C. Achutha Menon Foundation, Thiruvananthapuram.

21. Raman Pillai K., R.K. Suresh Kumar & P.Sukumaran Nair (eds.) (2016) : *Panchayati Raj Experience in India*, Kalpaz, New Delhi.

22. R.K.Suresh Kumar & P.Suresh Kumar (eds.) (2016) : *Mattoru Keralam Sadhyamanu (Mal)*, Prabhat, Thiruvananthapuram.

Statement about Ownership and Other Particulars About
**SOCIAL SCIENCE IN PERSPECTIVE**
**FORM - IV**
(See Rule 8)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Place of Publication | : | C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Thiruvananthapuram |
| 2. | Periodicity of Publication | : | Quarterly |
| 3. | Printer's Name | : | Dr. R.K.Suresh Kumar |
| | Nationality | : | Indian |
| | Address | : | C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram 695 012 |
| 4. | Publisher's Name | : | Dr. R.K. Suresh Kumar |
| | Nationality | : | Indian |
| | Address | : | C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram 695 012 |
| 5. | Editor's Name | : | Dr. R.K. Suresh Kumar |
| | Nationality | : | Indian |
| | Address | : | C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram 695 012 |
| 6. | Name and Address of individuals who own the news paper and partners or shareholders holding more than one percent of the total capital. | : | C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram 695 012 |

I, Dr. R.K. Suresh kumar, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sd/-

Dated : 25-09-2009

**Dr. R.K. Suresh Kumar**
Publisher

*Inaugural Address*

# Common Property and Citizen Rights : Issues of Reconstruction of Kerala

**Kanam Rajendran**
*President, C. Achutha Menon Foundation*

The post flood scenario in Kerala has forced a rethinking among all Keralites related to all their endeavours and engagements. The impact of flood has shocked each and every citizen of the state. However, it has also instilled in them a bout of confidence, revived their urge for collectivism and poised them to think for a stable future. The public domain in the state presently delves extensively on various plans and strategies to rebuild Kerala. *The people of Kerala have realized that the eco-system of the state is going to be central in determining their living conditions.* To tell you frankly, for the Achutha Menon Foundation, this is not a new realization that has occurred in the post flood scenario.

I am very happy to say that for the last two decades the Foundation has been seriously engaged in conducting research on Kerala economy, polity and society. The number of seminars held and the books published by the Foundation is a testimony to this. I am not going in to the details of it.

I feel that a brief narrative on Kerala from such studies will provide an appropriate context for the seminar, its objectives and the different topics which are covered in the seminar. Basically, the "Underlying Framework of Governance in Kerala" is provided by the ideological conceptions of the communist party and the left forces. *On the basis of socio, economic and political principles of equality, the governance of the state has succeeded in ensuring a fair and democratic access to all its citizens over the resources of the state.* This approach has empowered the citizens with a fair level of education, health, dwellings

and living sustenance though it has not reached to the level of affluence. Even today there is wide acclaim for these efforts as many hail it as the "Kerala Model of Development".

However, a paradigm shift has steered into the governance of the State under the globalization measures. It has broken the evolved socio-economic ethos of the state. The two remarkable characteristics of the state, 'equality' and 'collectivism' were replaced by the neo-liberal policies and strategies. Untamed market principles, unaccounted capital surge and its inflows found a free play. This neo-liberal phase has distorted the pattern of growth of the economy. This has deprived the public of their jobs, skills and living sustenance and left them vulnerable to market vagaries. It is not the market mechanism perse that is to be criticized. The unregulated neo-liberal policies misdirected the growth structure of the economy. Investment activities were channeled to earn abnormal profit exploiting the structural changes in the demand pattern of the people. Though growth rate picked up in the state, the structure of the growth was not conducive for the making of a stable society. It exerted excessive pressure on the available resources often wreaking the eco system of the state. The plundering of natural resources continued and no serious efforts were made to address the imbalance.

To uphold the values of 'equality' and 'collectivism' and at the same time to speed up the development of the state, principles of co-operativism and strengthening of public ownership were attempted by the Left Governments. However, these strategies were not enough to offset the capitalist grip over the resources in the economy. The misdirected growth and extensive marginalization and inequality of the people prompted a search for an alternative development to the existing market driven governance of the state.

It was felt that a holistic development path based on the principle of sustainable growth would be an appropriate strategy. The Achutha Menon Foundation had organized a two day seminar in 2016 on the theme of "sustainable development" and worked out strategies for building

an alternative development path for Kerala rooted on the principles of equality and collectivism as experienced from the Kerala Model Development (KMD). I am happy to note that the present government in the state has initiated various aspects of the sustainable development in its policy of 'Nava Kerala'. *I believe that by incorporating the basic principle of sustainable development in its governance, Kerala will succeed in revitalizing the different socio-economic activities in such a way that our resource base will cater to the needs of all people within the collective milieu the Keralites are accustomed with.* Within a broad strategy of sustainable development, we expect to fulfill its nurturing at specific and practical levels by tuning and strengthening our democratic institutions to make suitable policy formulations and its subsequent implementation.

However, I feel that in the background of the present catastrophe we cannot wait for a long time for policy making and implementation to adjust itself to its natural time span. The problems of the people are right in front of us. We have to find out urgent remedies to many of these problems and at the same time it cannot be patch up measures. This is a serious issue that we have to address immediately at governance level.

It is heartening to note that many citizens from Kerala and also Malayalees from the diaspora has taken all these issues close to their heart. They have, including many experts among them, started giving ideas for the reconstruction of Kerala along with their financial support. Many experts and specialists have suggested appropriate strategies and frameworks for recreating and rebuilding Kerala which are available both in print and electronic media. Apart from all these ideas, suggestions and advises, I think that this seminar intends to produce a concrete set of policies based on the strength of knowledge and understanding about Kerala economy possessed by the Foundation.

'Common Property and the Citizens Rights' constitute the broad theme of the seminar. *The simple meaning of this dictum is how to make use of the natural resources of the state for the common good of all.* There is nothing new in this statement as far as Kerala is concerned

as it is already engrained in the basic framework of the governance of the state. However, the neo-liberal practices that was in vogue for a considerable time has seriously eroded its strength in governance. *In the present context, the task is how to translate the citizens rights over the resources on the basis of collectivism.* In our efforts to rebuild Kerala on these lines I foresee two pertinent challenges. One is the *consumerist culture* in Kerala which has strengthened in the state since globalization. The second is the *withdrawal of the government from a proactive role succumbing to capitalist pressures.* The spirit of cooperation and collectivism that was evident across Kerala during the calamity gives us a fresh hope to face the challenges of consumerism of the people and passivism of the governance. Moreover, the vitality of collectivism has brought into public domain the responsibility of the Government in rebuilding Kerala, as the private capital remains indifferent.

To ensure the rebuilding of Kerala based on people's aspirations and ecological concerns, I would like to submit few suggestions. *Firstly, though we are in agreement with the broad approach, the specification for each sector and each issue has to be worked out consistent with the eco-sensitive conditions existing in respective spheres.*

Secondly, all the Keralites are stake holders in this re-building process. It is only through collective effort that the rebuilding process can be successfully completed. Therefore, *transparency is a paramount factor in formulating appropriate policies. The policies taken should be people centric.*

Finally, *the kind of reconstruction that we envisage in various sectors should be based on decentralized decision process by which grass roots democracy can be strengthened ushering in a meaningful control over resources by the general public.*

I am happy to inaugurate the Two day National Seminar which I believe, is going to be a milestone in our efforts to rebuild Kerala by upholding the principles of equality, collectivism and strengthening the democratic process at the grass root level.

# Of Flows and Flawed Frames: What Can We Learn (and Unlearn) from the International Experience on Floods?

**Nimmi Kurian**

*The paper argues that framing disasters primarily as a technical problem can end up becoming a virtual analytical cul-de-sac, shutting out valuable deliberative dialogic space and a range of local governance actors with experiential knowledge of responding to floods. It argues that these flawed frames adversely affect those who are most vulnerable. Kerala's floods lend an urgency to begin a broader conversation on India's resource choices, its drivers and determinants as well as its likely consequences for the life chances of local communities who tend to be at the receiving end of flood fury. It argues that flood risk governance has to be acknowledged as a quintessentially crosscutting concept that cannot be seen in isolation from critical issues of poverty reduction, land-use management, water supply, solid waste management and disaster prevention. The paper will engage with the extensive international literature on flood risk governance so as to identify both the opportunities and barriers towards more inclusive models of disaster management. Towards this end, it will draw illustrative examples from Asia, Africa and Europe to move beyond policy silos to explore the potential role that non-structural risk reduction strategies can play in building flood resilience.*

## The Analytical Cul-de-sac

The paper will engage with the extensive international literature on flood risk governance so as to identify both the opportunities and barriers towards more inclusive models of disaster management. Engaging with this literature can also be a useful first step towards designing norms of benefit sharing, negotiating trade-offs, and allocating risks and burdens that have a direct bearing for the life chances of local communities. How do we understand many of these intersections in India's immediate and extended neighbourhood where resource degradation is creating and reinforcing interlocking webs of environmental and socio-economic vulnerability? Parts of Asia are already severely water-stressed and are likely to witness an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme events such as floods and droughts. The Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna basins are among those endemically flood-affected regions of the world and account for 61 per cent of the country's land surface and up to 85 per cent of its flood losses (Ghani: 2002). Across South Asia, climate change is expected to bring an assorted set of challenges ranging from recurrent floods, droughts, declining water tables and a non-linear pattern in monsoons adversely affecting lives and livelihoods (IPCC, 2007: 476). The projected sea level rise could result in a rise of 40 cm, with an estimated 94 million people estimated to be affected due to flooding in coastal areas (IPCC, 2007: 484).[1] Agrarian-based economies are particularly prone to the vulnerabilities that climate change brings in its wake. For instance, loss of biodiversity is already adversely affecting the livelihoods of forest communities living on the India-Myanmar and India-Bangladesh borderlands. For an estimated 4.5 million people living in the low-lying Indian Sundarbans area, any change in sea level translates into a direct threat to their lives and livelihoods. Studies suggest the probability of a sea level rise of 50 cm by 2050 that could submerge large parts of the Sundarbans delta (WWF, Sundarbans, *Future Imperfect*). One of the

greatest impacts of climate change in this area comes in the form of displacement. In West Bengal, 7,000 people have so far reportedly been displaced from the Sundarbans region due to sinking of the islands, and by 2030 this number could well increase to 70,000 affected by flooding (Hazra, 2006).

To begin with, one needs to take a harder look at three interrelated themes that are central to the discourse on floods, namely the notions of opportunity, learning and disaster. Firstly, what sort of an 'opportunity' does the crisis represent and who is it an opportunity for? In this context, it is useful to recall Naomi Klein's powerful critique of the kind of choices that tend to be made after disasters. These, as she points out, have tended to invariably favour neoliberal, free-market interventions. The 'state of shock' as Klein argues, has offered fertile ground for American capitalism to thrive and profiteer. Recall for instance, how in the aftermath of the U.S Civil War of 1861-1865, the quintessential outsider from the North relocated to the war-torn South in search of business opportunities in the rubble of war-devastated economies. They came to by and large be viewed in the public perception of Southerners as opportunistic carpet baggers.[2]

Further, the idea of 'learning' also needs to be problematised to debate what is the nature of the learning that is being referred to. For instance, the idea of 'New Kerala' that is being projected appears at first glance to be a fairly straight forward feel good narrative. It talks of reconstruction, of restoration and of new beginnings but there is also a hint at forgetting and erasing the past that may not be entirely innocent. Implicit in it is the danger of a wilful erasure of painful memories and thereby of the opportunity to learn (as well as unlearn) from the disaster. A troubling case in point is the aftermath of the Gujarat earthquake of 2001 and the nature of reconstruction models that the state chose to adopt. These, as Edward Simpson reminds us in *The Political Biography of an Earthquake: Aftermath and Amnesia*, were designed precisely to

wipe out such difficult memories and 'deliver a brand new state'. These raise the question that Kerala needs to ask of itself: can it afford to forget? In marked contrast to Gujarat is the manner in which Chile chose to respond to disasters. These could, in many ways offer clear parallels for Kerala given that Chile is a tiny strip of land as well as predominantly coastal like Kerala. Unlike Gujarat, Chile consciously chose to remember and not to erase the painful memory of the disaster. In many ways, it refused to forget by investing in daily reminders such as evacuation sirens and effectively using popular culture.

The idea of 'disaster' needs to be similarly problematised to understand how it is framed in the mainstream research and policy imagination. A few illustrative examples can give a sense of the manner in which India has dealt with these framing issues and the price it has paid for the flawed framing of the issue. The first instance of flawed framing is the 8.6 magnitude Assam earthquake and floods of 1950 that was as Angus McLeod Gunn points out, not 'an Indian earthquake' but had its epicentre in Rima in Eastern Tibet. (Gunn 2008: 417) But while the epicenter of the earthquake lay in southeastern Tibet, it was the Brahmaputra Valley that bore the most extensive damage. The earthquake blocked several tributaries of the Brahmaputra and created a 'wall of water' measuring thirty feet high destroying several villages in its wake. The Tibetan "water bank" is in every sense Asia's water bank and the environmental sustainability of Tibet means the environmental sustainability of much of Asia. It constitutes the headwaters of many of Asia's mighty rivers including the Brahmaputra, Mekong and the Yangtze that flow into some of the most populous regions of South and Southeast Asia (Kurian 2004). Studies by Chinese scientists are also pointing to the possibility of a high content of heavy metals in the stream sediments and tailings in Tibet's Gyama Valley that could pose a potential threat to downstream water users (Huang 2010). Added to these are concerns that the fragile ecosystem of the Tibet-Qinghai plateau is showing signs

of stress as it struggles to cope with the furious pace of economic activity. The 'pillar industries' of mining and timber processing have fed the rapid industrialisation of Tibet, bringing in its wake assorted problems of deforestation, soil erosion, landslides, floods, acid rain and pollution especially of its water systems. These are creating ecological imbalances in the form of rising temperatures, retreating glaciers and droughts caused by indifferent rainfall. (Kurian 2018) These are sobering reminders of the need to bring scale into any conversation on disaster risk management. Scale, particularly transboundary scale, remains an understudied dimension in disaster preparedness and response. Boundary-spanning crises such as floods or earthquakes require new scales of governance within cross-border regions.

A second instance of flawed framing is the phenomenon of black Brahmaputra in December 2017, stoking furious speculation that Chinese upstream interventions were causing the colour of the downstream waters to turn black. The speculations also included the allegation that China was constructing a 600-km long tunnel in Yunnan with the purpose of diverting the waters of the Yarlung Tsangpo to the Taklamakan desert in Xinjiang. (*Times of India* 2017) While there was considerable downstream impact, the assumption that China was responsible for it was a flawed correlation in many ways. A recent study dismissed this correlation and established that it was in fact an earthquake in Tibet on 17 December that had resulted in the muddying of the waters of the Brahmaputra.

A third instance of flawed framing is the Kosi floods of 2008, which stands as a disturbing metaphor for much that is wrong with the mainstream Indian discourse on water. The breach in the Kosi barrage in Nepal on 18th August resulted in a humanitarian disaster across both Nepal and India with nearly 50,000 in Nepal and 3 million people in the Indian state of Bihar displaced. Nearly 247,000 acres of farmland was also estimated to have been destroyed in the process. Despite this, the mainstream thinking on water has remained in a state of denial despite

mounting evidence to the contrary. Take for instance the official definition of the Kosi floods as a 'natural' disaster. The belief in embankments as a flood control measure stands largely uncontested. Despite its stated capacity of 9.5 lakh cusecs of water, the Kosi embankment in Nepal breached with just 1.44 lakh cusecs due to the heavy accumulation of silt deposits. Bihar for instance, has 3600 km of embankments but what is troubling is that the area considered flood-prone nearly tripled from 250,000 hectares in 1952 to more than 688,000 hectares in 1994. With the 368,000 ha of the 'flood-protected land' that was flooded in the breach of the Kosi River in 2008, the flood-prone area of the state rose to 724,800 ha. (Mishra 2011) Kosi's annual siltation deposits of over 80 million tons have also eroded the East Bank canal's irrigation potential to just 7 per cent.

Another instance is the 2000 flash floods in Himachal Pradesh caused due to the formation of an artificial lake in Tibet. Such crises underscore the need for early warning systems and to perfect coordination mechanisms including visits to sites as well as putting up permanent monitoring stations to enable quick transmission of information. This fact was brought home in a tragic manner during the flash floods caused from a landslide in Tibet in 2000 that ravaged the Northeast and Himachal Pradesh. In this case, while research and policy defined it correctly, there were no institutional mechanism in place that could prevent or at any rate, mitigate it. The lack of an information sharing agreement between the two countries resulted in loss of life, dislocation and extensive damage to property. Both countries have since signed an MOU on the sharing of hydrological data on the Brahmaputra's flows, which will be vital for timely forecasting and management of floods in the Northeast. MOUs signed in 2002 and 2008 provide information on the water level, discharge and rainfall from three stations on the Brahmaputra, namely, Nugesha, Yangcun and Nuxia from 1 June to 15th October every year. [3]

### *A Missing Water Agenda*

What these three illustrative examples underline is the need to shine a light on a range of missing issues that are currently invisible from the mainstream research and policy discourse. For instance, part of the reason why the India-China dialogue on water is a glass half full is that it has ended up being a single-issue debate, fixated on fears over water diversion by China. But has the fixation with diversion diverted policy attention away from other equally critical issues? It has indeed left hiding in plain sight critical issues that do not find a place on the water table. For instance, the fixation with quantity has come at the cost of water quality and drowned out the possibility of a meaningful dialogue on nonpoint sources of water pollution. Even within China, this is becoming a major concern with northern areas including Beijing anxious about the quality of southern waters that will arrive in the north. Added to these are concerns that the fragile ecosystem of the Tibet-Qinghai plateau is showing other signs of stress as it struggles to cope with the furious pace of economic activity that forms part of China's Western Development Strategy. Many mega projects are transforming the face of Tibet. The "pillar" industries of mining and timber processing have fed the rapid industrialisation of Tibet, bringing in its wake the assorted problems of deforestation, soil erosion, landslides, floods, acid rain and pollution especially of the water systems. These are creating ecological imbalances in the form of rising temperatures, retreat of glaciers and droughts caused by indifferent rainfall. Much of these will find their way to parts of the extended region. A particular area of concern for downstream countries could be the environmental degradation facing the Tibetan 'Three Rivers area' comprising the Yarlung Tsangpo, Lhasa River and Nyangchu basins in central Tibet, located in one of the most mineral resource-rich areas of China. One of the most intensely exploited areas in this region is the Gyama Valley with large polymetallic deposits of copper, molybdenum, gold, silver, lead and zinc. The Gyama valley is situated south of the Lhasa River, one of the five great tributaries of the Yarlung Tsangpo that

merges with it 130 kms downstream. The annual runoff in mega deltas such as the Brahmaputra and Indus is projected to decline by 14 per cent and 27 per cent respectively by 2050. This will have significant implications for food security and social stability given the impact on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture. These also raise the larger question about the cumulative impact of massive dam-building projects across the entire Himalayan region and the consequences of such intensive interventions in a region that is ecologically fragile and densely populated. The dangers of water accumulation behind dams could also induce devastating artificial earthquakes (Valdiya 1992). There is also disturbing new evidence emerging about dam-induced earthquakes. Recent research by Chinese scientists has revealed that the Zipingpu Dam may have triggered the Sichuan earthquake in 2008 that resulted in 80,000 casualties (Kerr and Stone, 2009). Would India and China care to learn from the Mekong River Commission's institutional history to invest the early decades in data-gathering projects which have contributed to strengthening transparency and, more importantly the notion of water as a regional public good? Another possible template in this regard is the Sino-Russian agreement of 2006, which established an emergency notification system in the wake of the severe pollution of the Songhua River in Russia due to a chemical plant explosion in China's Jilin province.

These only go on to underline the importance of developing a baseline database on water resources within the region. The capacity to predict water flows and water balance in any given transboundary river basin would hinge a great deal on addressing critical gaps in the knowledge base. But recent scientific studies have disturbingly brought out grave errors in current assessments of precipitation. High-altitude precipitation in the upper Indus basin was found to be higher by a factor of 10 than what is currently estimated. Such discrepancies are due to the lack of adequate meteorological stations in upper elevations, with datasets having to rely on a combination of satellite images and available measurements received from stations mostly located in the plains. The cumulative impact

of run-of-the-river dams also remains ill defined and little understood. The fact that these will require storage of large volumes of water for power generation has raised serious concerns downstream. Evidence is also emerging that such projects tend to retain substantial silt deposits, resulting in decreased sediment flows downstream. More than a million people in the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta are likely to be affected due to decreased sediment delivery and increased sea level rise by 2050. At the end of the day, while technical issues of measurements, flow patterns and runoffs have their importance, it is more often the more intangible perceptual aspects that create and entrench positions that can produce or retard cooperation at the transboundary level.

### Learning to Unlearn

The manner in which these difficult trade-offs are negotiated will decide whether the Kerala floods will be remembered as yet another disaster or if it can constitute a wake-up call for unlearning. The kind of choices that are made will ultimately decide the kind of flood resilience model the state ends up with. This will mean a capacity to not only question but also move beyond problematic models on water such as 'keeping people away from water' or 'keeping water from people', which have had only a mixed record. For instance, 'keeping water from people', the more conventional approach of building structural defences for flood prevention also had a rather mixed record as international experience tells us. While the building of dykes on the Danube, Europe's second largest river has had a somewhat limited measure of success,Vietnam has had a larger scale of dyke failures. In stark contrast to these problematic models is an interesting instance of innovation from Mozambique. Further, Mozambique could make only modest headway in discouraging construction in flood risk areas. In what could point to an alternative paradigm of responding to floods and institutionalising societal learning, is the use of a card game that was used to not just spread awareness among the young but also to instil the idea of living with floods.

Framing disasters principally as a technical problem can thus turn out to be a costly analytical cul-de-sac, shutting out the scope for deliberative engagements with a range of local governance actors with experiential knowledge of responding to floods. By potentially shutting out the prospect of alternative dialogues, flawed frames can end up unwittingly to benefit those who are most vulnerable and are directly at the receiving end of risks. Strengthening non-structural risk reduction techniques can go a long way in reducing loss of life and uncertainties. In particular, community risk assessments offer participatory methods to evaluate the nature and extent of hazards and risks and allows for an effective community engagement in risk governance. Grassroots-based disaster preparedness programmes are already using community-risk assessments as a means to reduce vulnerability and enhance coping capacity to hazard. Citizen biodiversity monitoring systems hold out all-round benefits in terms of accurate knowledge about the state of biodiversity, tracking variations based on observations at multiple sites both critical for improved decision making and more effective implementation (Couvet 2008). Importantly, informal social institutions need not necessarily replace formal institutions; rather they can play a supplementary role to bolster service provision. They can in fact perform a critical buffering function of oversight and supervision ceded by the state. They also hold the potential to reduce information asymmetries and enhance governance. Community networks can thus work with, and not necessarily be at cross-purposes with the state on public goods provision.

By and large, there tends to be disproportionate attention given to response strategies during a disaster while the 'pre' and the 'post' phases remain largely neglected. An effective disaster response strategy has to also rectify the intrinsically skewed nature of privileging technical solutions. A community-based flood risk management could go a long way in redressing this dominance of structural solutions. (Blaikie et al 1994, Lebel and Sinh 2009). A case in point is the successful community managed flood management model of Bangladesh that effectively reduced

**Vol.10    No.4    October - December 2018**
                **&**             **Social Science in Perspective**
**Vol. 11   No.1    January - March 2019**

vulnerability during the 2004 floods. Bringing in perspectives from outside the formal government structure and enabling participation from below can also help voice silences. For instance, volunteer and community groups can play in a range of disaster prevention from early warning, disaster response and post-disaster response. Informal volunteerism is likely to provide a much-need 'surge capacity' needed for disaster response and recovery. The role played by fishermen in Kerala flood rescue efforts is a case in point of the effectiveness of informal volunteerism at work. Similarly, BlazeAid, a community organization set up in the aftermath of the Black Saturday bushfires in Australia in 2009 provided crucial post-disaster assistance in the form of rebuilding rural infrastructure damaged by floods and other natural disasters. 70,000 volunteers took part in the massive post-flood clean-up drives in Kerala, which included cleaning debris from around one lakh buildings (First post 2019). Bangladesh has a 50,000-strong active volunteer force under its Cyclone Preparedness Programme that covers 13 coastal districts. A related new trend emerging is the rise of digital volunteerism, which is also helping to plug crucial gaps in flood risk response. An illustrative example is the live crisis map that graduate students of Tufts University produced in the immediate aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake that helped identify the scale and extent of damage. Communities play an active role in the planning and implementation of water, irrigation and sanitation projects in Brazil and Taiwan, representing a successful instance of what John Ackerman refers to as 'co-governance'. (Ackerman 2003)

By its very nature, approaches to enhance flood resilience will call for balancing the technical with the social perspectives. The social dimension is particularly critical since steps taken towards mitigation and prevention may have quite unintended pre-flood harm impact in the form of loss of income or devaluation of property. (van Doorn-Hoekveld et al 2016)And since disaster response is crucially about societal regeneration, re-engaging with the social has to be the first step towards people-centric adaptations. Such a reorientation will also recognise

society as a shaper of knowledge and not as a mere passive receiver. It is also vital to keep in mind the distributional effects of flood risk management. This can introduce vulnerability as a key concept and the 'capacity to be wounded' by looking at how different social groups are affected by policy interventions. By thus localising impact studies, it can allow for an inherently place-centric notion of socio-economic stress and impact. It is only when a diverse set of actors engage in extensive interactions and learn from such interactions that these processes can produce socially inclusive development outcomes.

One cannot overstate the importance of early action in flood response measures such as ensuring safe water supply, food, shelter and medical care. In Mozambique in 2000, severe floods were followed by rioting due to a widespread public perception of an abdication of responsibility on the part of the government. Logistical inefficiencies and coordination challenges in relief distribution further compounded reconstruction efforts in Haiti. Lack of sanitation, the mixing of sewage with floodwaters, risk of water-borne diseases such as cholera presented further grave challenges in the Haiti earthquake response. It is to Kerala's credit that there were no reports of outbreak of communicable diseases from the flood-ravaged areas. A great deal of the credit for this owes to the effectiveness of the state's healthcare system with decentralised monitoring at district levels playing an important part in averting major outbreaks.

But while effective disaster response is in and of itself critical, long-term measures that can play a vital role in preventing floods are no less important. These include measures to ensure erosion control, soil stabilisation, and drainage systems for irrigation among others (IEG 2010). Flood risk governance experience in Europe shows the increasing importance governments are giving to nature-based solutions to reduce run-off. These include protecting wetlands, widening natural flood plains and restoring reefs. Such adaptation measures have reportedly reduced

the damage from Hurricane Sandy in the US by an estimated $625 million. (Akpan 2017) Similarly, China's Sponge Cities programme brings the focus on imaginatively integrating green infrastructure to urban design. Another innovative disaster response is the manner in which the Philippine Red Cross used social media tools such as Twitter not just to locate flood sites but also to understand public perception and garner feedback. Flood risk maps can also be a useful policy tool to assess the magnitude of risk that people are exposed to by looking at the dimensions of health, livelihood and environment.[4]

**Beyond Theoretical Navel-Gazing**

The intellectual discourse on water too has been problematic because of its inability to project alternative scenarios as well as raise critical new questions. A straitened debate on water and an often-uncritical intellectual acceptance of this has unfortunately diminished the space for unlearning. Within these structural parameters, the role of people has thus been reduced to being passive recipients of knowledge flows. The mainstream thinking on water has tended to remain in a state of denial despite mounting evidence to the contrary. Social science research on water issues in South Asia has typically tended to focus on macro-level water issues such as droughts, floods, rivers, dams, irrigation etc. and have limited end-user involvement and end-user needs or problems. Issues of regional planning regarding rivers that are transboundary in nature often do not find a place in the research agenda and analysis. Studies on rivers avoid taking a comprehensive view of the river system as a whole. The river is often studied in isolation with little attempt to relate it to the ecological system of which it forms an integral part.

Unless some of these dominant interpretations are called into question, extant categories and conventional imageries will only be reified over time without respite. Synergies between science and traditional knowledge can for instance bring actionable ideas that can create bottom-up, inclusive approaches to questions of resource governance. Similarly,

building bridges between research and policy will also be critical to create institutional entry points for collective learning. Such an approach can, as John Dryzek points out, offer valuable lessons in social learning "for it does not rule out a variety of experiments in what sustainability can mean in different contexts, including the global context" (Dryzek 1997). This introduces a spatial dimension and a multiplicity of actors that go missing in meta-narratives. Such a complex systemic understanding recognises the validity of place-centric, contextual knowledge. Multiple pathways for learning are significant since "tacit knowledge is difficult to 'transport'… [and] tends to accumulate in specific places." (Rohracher 2006) It will above all create entry points for experiential learning and place context at the centre of the learning process. Decontextualised knowledge cannot convey the lived experiences and its capacity to community ownership gets severely limited. (Duffy and Jonassen 1992) This will allow for multiple scales, levels and actors and their iterative interactions. Rethinking scale as a category of practice, would as Brubaker and Cooper argue, define it as 'categories of everyday experience, developed and deployed by ordinary social actors' as against 'experience-distant categories used by social scientists'.

This will in turn mean not just problematising ways in which knowledge is produced and utilised in society but is in a fundamental sense also about what counts for knowledge. Recognising that 'there may be several valuable ways of knowing' has to form the basis of any interdisciplinary enquiry. This will also mean consciously eschewing "bipolar models of knowledge use" which as James Boggs notes, defines knowledge essentially as a transaction between two parties- "knowledge producers (social scientists) and knowledge users (eg., policy makers or decision makers)" (Boggs 1992 : 29). Such a dyadic framing of knowledge fails to recognise people as important repositories of knowledge, denying them agency as social actors of their own merit. The mainstream notion that knowledge and research have to in the ultimate analysis, be relevant and useful to policy makers as their end

user has dictated choices and predetermined terms of inclusion and exclusion. Thus, the need for multi-actor frameworks involving local communities, researchers, policy makers and development workers is all too evident. But what is arguably even more important is to get syncretic water conversations going among these diverse stakeholders. The notional distinction between research and the researched for instance has meant that research findings and local knowledge often talk past each other. The perception that research has to, in the ultimate analysis, be relevant and useful to policy makers has further constricted knowledge frames. These also call for governance arrangements to not only jump scales but also make the conceptual leap towards co-governance for more effective flood risk communication and coordination.

The 2018 Kerala floods lend an urgency to begin a broader conversation on India's resource choices, its drivers as well as determinants as well as its likely consequences for the life chances of local communities who tend to be at the receiving end of flood fury. This is essential since flood risk governance is fundamentally a crosscutting concept, which cannot be seen in isolation from critical issues of poverty reduction, land-use management, water supply, solid waste management and disaster prevention. Such a disciplinary turn could create valuable entry points for experiential learning (and unlearning) as well as for a whole set of missing issues that are currently invisible to the mainstream policy and research gaze.

## References

1. Ackerman, John. (2003): "Co-Governance for Accountability: Beyond "Exit" and "Voice", *World Development*, 32 (3): 447-463.

2. Ahmed, A U, K Zahurul K Prasad, S N Pudel and S K Sharma (2004): Synthesis of manuals on community floods management in BD, India and Nepal. *Asia Pacific Journal of Environment and Development 11.*

3.    Akpan, Nsikan, (2017): "Wetlands stopped $625 million in property damage during Hurricane Sandy", *Public Broadcasting Service, accessed* at https://www.pbs.org/newshour/science/wetlands-stopped-650-million-property-damage-hurricane-sandy-can-help-houston

4.    Blaikie P T, Cannon I Davis and B Wisner (1994): *At risk: Natural hazards, people's vulnerability and disaster*, Routledge, London

5.    Boggs, James (1992): "Implicit Models of Social Knowledge Use", *Science Communication*, vol. 14, no.1.

6.    Brubaker R., and Cooper, F., (2000): Beyond 'identity'. *Theory and Society* 29.

7.    Craig, Gary (2007), "Community Capacity-Building: Something Old, Something New…", *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 23, no.3.

8.    Dev, Rajesh (2007): "Negotiating Diversities through Institutional Strategies", *Eastern Quarterly,* Volume 4, Issue I, July - September.

9.    Dowsley, Martha (2008): "Developing Multi-level Institutions from Top-down Ancestors", *International Journal of the Commons*, Vol 2, no 1, January.

10.   Dryzek, John, (1997): *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses*, Oxford University Press.

11.   Dryzek, John S. (2002): "A Post-Positivist Policy-Analytic Travelogue", *The Good Society,* Vol. 11, No.1.

12.   Duffy, T.M. & Jonassen, D. eds. (1992): *Constructivism and the technology of instruction: A conversation*. Hillsdale NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

13.   European Union Floods Directive (2007): *accessed in http:// ec.europa.eu/environment/water/flood_risk/implem.htm*

14.   Firstpost. (2019): https://www.firstpost.com/india/kerala-after-the-

flood-70000-people-volunteer-for-clean-up-drive-in-kuttanad-aim-to-clear-debris-from-1-lakh-buildings-5063441.html

15. Ghani, M.U. Participatory Strategy for Flood Mitigation in East and Northeast India:case study of the gangesbrahmaputra-meghna basin, Farakka Dam Project, *Ministry of Water Resources, Govt of India* at http://209.85.175.104/search?q=cache:DzCRjTxvngoJ:www.unescap.org/esd/water/disaster/2

16. Huang X, et al, (2010): "Environmental impact of mining activities on the surface water quality in Tibet: Gyama valley", S*cience of the Total Environment.*

17. IEG (2010): *Responding to floods in West Africa: lessons from evaluation*. Washington, DC:IEG-World Bank.

18. Innis, Harold (1950): *Empire and Communications*, Oxford: Clarendon Press

19. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, (2007): *Contribution of Working Group I to the Fourth Assessment Report of the* IPCCaccessed athttps://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg1/en/contents.html

20. Klein, Naomi. (2007): *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, Toronto: A. A. Knopf, Canada.

21. Kurian, Nimmi (2018): "Uncharted Flows: Navigating the Downstream Debate on China's Water Policy", in in K. J. Joy et al, *Water Conflicts in Northeast India*, Routledge.

22. Kurian, Nimmi. (2017): "Addressing the Drought of Ideas on the Brahmaputra", *China-India Brief*, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, 24 October.

23. Lebel L and B T Sinh (2009): "Risk reduction or redistribution? F M in the Mekong region". *Asian Journal of Environment and Disaster Management,* 1, 23-39.

24.     Lundy, Mark, Marcia Veronica Gottret and Jacqueline Ashby (2005): "Learning Alliances: An Approach for Building Multi-Stakeholder Innovation Systems", *ILAC Brief*, August.

25.     Mishra, Dinesh Kumar (2011): "The people vs the environment", *Himal*, March.

26.     Newell, Peter and Joanna Wheeler (eds.) (2006): *Rights, Resources and the Politics of Accountability*, London: Zed Books

27.     Newell, Peter and Joanna Wheeler eds. (2007): *Rights, Resources and the Politics of Accountability*, London, Zed Books, 2007.

28.     Rammel, Christian et al., (2007): "Managing complex adaptive systems-A co-evolutionary perspective on natural resource management", *Ecological Economics*, 63: 9-21.

29.     Richardson, Heather Cox (2001): *Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North*, 1865-1901. Cambridge: Harvard University Press

30.     Rohracher, Harald. (2006): "Governing Sociotechnical change in regional innovation systems" in Tchalakov I, Mali M, Rohracher H eds *Governing Sociotechnical change in South-Eastern Europe*: *Contributions from a science and technology studies perspective, Sofia: East-West Publishers.*

31.     *Times of India*, (2017): "Causes behind Brahmaputra turning black could be natural: Union minister", 4 December.

**Footnotes**

1.     Rising temperatures are widely expected to bring alterations in the hydrological cycle and patterns of rainfall, affecting precipitation as well as runoff. A 3-5 metre rise in average sea level holds implications for coastal cities such as Dhaka and Kolkata with large population bases (Byravan and Rajan, 2008).

2.     They were so called owing to the suitcases made of cheap carpet

material that they carried. For further details, see Heather Cox Richardson. 2001. Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865-1901. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

3.  Each MOU is for a duration of five years and has to be subsequently renegotiated for continued release of data. The two countries have also set up the Joint Expert Level Mechanism, a decision taken during Hu Jintao's visit to India in 2006.

3.  The Implementation Plan on provision of hydrological information signed by India and China in 2014 also includes the provision for site visits. According to Article 12 of the Implementation Plan, "In order to ensure normal provision of hydrological information, if necessary, after mutual consultation through diplomatic channel, the parties may dispatch hydrological experts to each other's country to conduct study tour according to the principle of reciprocity." (Ministry of External Affairs 2014).

4.  The European Union Floods Directive makes it mandatory for all member countries to produce flood maps to create a region-wide 'framework for the assessment and management of flood risks'. (EU Floods Directive 2007).

# Common Property Resources And Environmental Justice in a World at Risk: Lessons from the 2018 Kerala Floods

**Janki Andharia &
Tania Teresa Mathews**

*This paper argues that incorporating a human rights perspective in understanding and framing disaster response affirms the rights and dignity of vulnerable people and can provide opportunities to transform societies and deepen equality in the aftermath of disasters. Laying the foundation of the discourse on disasters and climate change, the paper then moves on to the importance of environmental justice and the governance of Common Property Resources (CPRs) which together work towards environment sustainability and engendering community participation. Finally, it highlights the lessons learnt from the recent floods in Kerala, both in terms of the success of participatory recovery, and the shortfalls in mitigating disaster risk. The recommendations that follow seek to provide at least one frame of looking at the future planning process with the idea of risk-informed and climate-sensitive planning in the state.*

## Introduction

The floods in Kerala between June and August 2018 dealt a colossal blow to the state, exposing the fragility of its ecosystem given

the pre-existing diversity in its geography as well as the ongoing human interventions and processes that are considered 'markers' of its economic progress. As 12 of the 14 districts in the state contended with the floodwaters gushing from dams and supplemented by persistent and unprecedented rainfall that submerged or swept away entire homes and bridges, many parts were additionally devastated by a series of landslides[1]. Despite the enormous setback both in terms of human impact and economic cost, the emergency response and relief undertaken by the citizenry greatly supplemented the efforts of rescue and humanitarian assistance by personnel deployed in the region, garnering praise from all quarters.

However, the extent of damage also compel a serious reflection on causation and preparedness of the state to deal with an extreme weather event that Kerala experienced. The state also gathered criticism from many including the scientific community in terms of the increased vulnerability of many areas owing largely to inappropriate or unplanned land use keeping the idea of river basin managemnet in mind, excessive damming of rivers and accumulation of water in the reservoirs, the absence of an integrated hydrological plan (or its implementation) for water management around dams, and quarrying activities - all of which contributed towards an increased hazard risk. As the number of hydrological calamities, namely floods and accompanying landslides, constitute nearly half the average number of annual disasters, their frequent resurgence warrants urgent steps towards climate change adaptation (CCA) and improving the means of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Kerala's experience provides valuable lessons not just in terms of the importance of community participation in the recovery process, but also highlights crucial lacunae in the implemntation of its development goals which ignored the potential ecological and economic damage that were only elucidated by the disaster.

The most adversely affected in a disaster are communities that are marginalized even in the pre-disaster scenario (such as the

Muthuvans of Idduki or other tribes from Wayanad). Communities entrenched in poverty or with low means of income, following traditional livelihoods and subsistence agriculture are usually the most vulnerable groups. The reliance on their local environment for crucial resources makes them doubly disadvantaged and vulnerable in the event of a disaster. This paper argues that incorporating a human rights perspective in understanding and framing disaster response affirms the rights and dignity of vulnerable people and can provide opportunities to transform societies and deepen equality in the aftermath of disasters. Laying the foundation of the discourse on disasters and climate change, the paper then moves on to the importance of environmental justice and the governance of Common Property Resources (CPRs) which together work towards environment sustainability and engendering community participation. Finally, it highlights the lessons learnt from the recent floods in Kerala, both in terms of the success of participatory recovery, and the shortfalls in mitigating disaster risk. The recommendations that follow seek to provide at least one frame of looking at the future planning process with the idea of risk-informed and climate-sensitive planning in the state.

## The Global Context: Moving from Short-Term Disaster Response Strategies to Long Term Climate Sensitive Development

As the second decade of the 21st century draws to a close, the world is contending with rising inequalities, socio-political conflict and the effects of environment degradation. Global extreme poverty has been decreasing, but the rate of this decline has decelerated; while increased privatization in a globalized, neoliberal world has significantly contributed to flourishing industry and rising standards of living for the middle classes. This has been at the cost of the environment and the rising precarity of the already marginalized - rural poor and tribal communities. With the majority of the natural resources being claimed by the state or privatized, the loss of access to the community 'commons' has restricted those engaged in traditional livelihoods, who are also the worst affected because of their dependence on the environment and its natural resources to sustain themselves.

Data suggests that in a world 'at risk', climate related disasters have come to dominate the risk landscape to an extent where they now account for more than 80 percent of all major international reported disasters, with hydrological disasters alone accounting for over 40 percent of them. According to the Centre for Research in Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) in Belgium, more people are in harm's way, i.e., vulnerable, than they were 50 years ago. Building on flood plains, earthquake zones and other high-risk areas, has increased the likelihood that a routine natural hazard will become a catastrophe. Disasters force an estimated 26 million people into poverty every year. Climate change will further increase the magnitude and frequency of extreme events in the future. In the recent disaster in Kerala, official statistics indicate that 1.2 million people were displaced.

The World Atlas of Natural Disaster Risk of 2015, systematically analysed vulnerability to 11 natural hazards worldwide and calculated the risk they pose to lives and livelihoods, country by country (171 countries). The Atlas comprises over 300 maps of the risk of 11 types of natural hazards - earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides, floods, storm surges, sand-dust storms, tropical cyclones, heat wave, cold wave, drought and wildfire - as well as maps for multi-hazard risk. It also displays global hotspots and where a disaster is most likely to occur. The World Risk Index is calculated along 4 components:

1. **Exposure to natural hazards** such as earthquakes, hurricanes, flooding, drought and sea-level rise

2. **Vulnerability** as dependent on infrastructure, nutrition, living conditions and economic circumstances

3. **Coping capacities** as dependent on governance, preparedness and early warning measures, access to healthcare, social and material security.

4. **Adapting capacities** with respect to impending natural events, climate change and other challenges.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in a Special Report (2018) on 'Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius' has stated that given that the last 18 years have been the warmest since the documentation of the climate measurements began, and the 1 degree Celsius increase above pre-industrial levels since the mid-1800s[2], it would be crucial to limit further increase in global temperature to a maximum of 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial levels in order to keep global sea level rise 0.1 m lower by 2100. If left unchecked, global warming would cross the 1.5 degree Celsius increase, worsening the risks of heat-waves and drought, greater sea level rise, flooding and rainfall. Maintaining the temperature rise under 1.5 degrees could tremendously improve the condition of various delicate ecosystems like the coral reefs or the melting glaciers of the Arctic. Climate change adaptation (CCA) can only be achieved through paradigm shifts in the consumption and production processes of global resources - moving towards renewable sources of energy, constructing sustainable infrastructure and providing livelihood opportunities in the process. Urgent action alone can help reduce the risk of extreme climate events. The IPCC in its Special Report (2012) on Extreme Events (SREX) highlights the significance of vulnerability and exposure in manifesting extreme climate events into disasters. It also expounds on the impact of climate-induced disasters which include high-intensity hurricanes, extreme precipitation, forest fires, and heat-waves - posing increased risk to life and property. Extreme weather does not prove the existence of global warming, but climate change is likely to exaggerate it - by disturbing the flow of ocean currents, inducing hot and cold vortices forming tornadoes or extreme cold weather respectively, bolstering heat waves, lengthening droughts and causing more precipitation and flooding. Hurricanes or cyclones become more destructive as warmer ocean waters feed more energy to the storms;warmer air also carries more moisture for devastating rainfalls, while rising sea levels lead to more flooding. Geologists contend that we have already entered the era of Anthropocene - the sixth mass

extinction on a planetary scale with human activity as the major cause for the first time (Ceballos, et. al., 2015; Barnosky et. al., 2011).

This destruction is driven by several factors: extinction rates of flora and fauna are far above the long-term average; at the present rate, about 75 percent of species would become extinct in the next few centuries if the current trends continue. Increased concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by about 120 ppm since the industrial revolution because of fossil fuel-burning, leaving concentrations today at around 400 ppm and rising, is yet another factor driving this mass extinction. According to some research, we've had the largest impact on the nitrogen cycle in 2.5 billion years. Humans have dumped large amounts of plastic in all the water bodies and oceans that microplastic particles are now virtually ubiquitous. Plastics will leave identifiable fossil records for future generations to discover. With our heavy fertiliser use, the nitrogen and phosphorous in our soils has doubled in the past century.

Patterns of economic development, rising inequalities, and population growth are the most critical factors in explaining the disastrous impacts of the hazard events. Managing our relationship with the biosphere is critical - where the challenge is to balance global strategies with regional ones. What is that balance and how is to be established - are questions that form much of the debate around nature of development pursued and its global impact. With this information, how does the world prepare for disasters? The strategies for disaster risk reduction must be an integral component of comprehensive strategies for sustainable development. How will this be achieved?

There is a clear need to move beyond the generally widespread short-term approach to assessing disasters with a more global, political economy approach wherein aspects such as preparedness, protection of particularly vulnerable groups and risk management must be foregrounded in the context of both the analyses that are undertaken and future measures - not at a local scale but at a global level. The

dynamic changes observed in development planning and international cooperation in recent years involve the adoption of new frameworks such as the SDG agenda, Sendai Framework for DRR, Agenda for Humanity, and Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations (C-AAP) to name a few, and convergence across these frameworks and the various stakeholders at the national and international levels. Their focus on social, economic and environment sustainability, while 'leaving no one behind' necessitates an egalitarian approach to yield equitable outcomes at the grassroots. Balancing the two - the global and the local, however remains a fundamental challenge. And it is here that the idea of Environmental Justice and Common Property Rights become significant. Both are closely intertwined.

Historically, CPRs are those typically used by rural and/or traditional communities who depend on natural resource systems to sustain their livelihoods and have acquired or inherited skills and technical knowledge over generations of engaging with the natural resource system.

## Common Property Resources and Environmental Justice

Environment degradation and loss of traditional livelihoods at the grassroots, or "micro-level" issues are cumulatively responsible for "macro-level" concerns regarding the changing global climate and the degradation and pollution of the environment and the loss of its biodiversity (Runge, 1990; Ostrom et al, 1999). Such a micro-level instance of the "tragedy of the commons" - originally coined by British economist William Forster Lloyd in his lectures on population growth in 1833, thereafter popularized in academic literature by ecologist Garret Hardin in his eponymously titled 1968 paper - refers to the over exploitation of common property resources or common pool resources (CPR) which constitute the set of natural or human-made resources in a system that are typically 'rivalrous' and 'non-excludable' - differentiating them from private (rivalrous and excludable) and public (non-rivalrous and non-excludable) goods. However, the non-excludability of these resources is limited to a localised

community or group that typically accesses these resources for its consumption or livelihood, and whose norms govern the sustained and equitable access of all members to the resource - such as forests, fishing grounds and irrigation systems.

While Hardin (1968) was a landmark in the discourse on the use of common resources, and initially found much favour in academia, it assigns blame for the abuse of commons on their traditional users: the cumulative effect of promoting the individual user's self-interests in their appropriation of these rivalrous resources being the primary cause of its 'tragic' overuse - with the economic justification that the marginal utility or benefits derived by the user are significantly larger than any marginal cost borne by them. The arguments put forth in Hardin's paper and supporting literature thus legitimized the acquisition and management of common resources by non-commoner agents - chiefly the state and the private sector (Runge, 1990; Ostrom, et al, 1999). Runge cumulatively extends this notion of the tragic overuse of commons resources to the macro context - at the national or global level. However, unlike Hardin, he attributes the responsibility of the overexploitation of the commons not on the "commoners" but on the state and the role of private entities taking over the traditionally common properties of indigenous communities; empirical evidence and literature since the 1980s has criticised Hardin's thesis. Runge (1986; 1990) notes the case of the enclosure system in 15th and 16th century England and Western Europe and the consequent rise of private property systems which significantly declined the use of common pastures and woodlands that village communities across Europe had been dependent upon; additionally, Runge also cites examples of extensive deforestation in Latin American nations following state policies to acquire forest covered lands and the subsequent impact of privatization and the incapability of the state to manage the vast resources acquired. Rather than correcting the 'mismanagement' of the commons, the rise of state acquisition and private property further degrades the environment and widens the

inequalities between classes. This pattern is also reflected across the globe and especially rampant in developing economies.

Damodaran (1991) elucidates the same in the Indian context with the state acquisition of forests since the 1860s and the segregation of state and community rights over the forest resources. The Indian Forest Act, 1865 subsequently replaced by the Forest Act of 1878 were legislations that sought to "eliminate the rights of people" dependent on these lands prior to their acquisition by the British colonial administration, particularly those rights clashing with state interests (ibid). These lands - declared 'reserved' and 'protected' as forests were the large wastelands adjoining *zamindari* estates and village communities and had been largely common or community-owned properties. An NSSO study (1999) conducted in the 54th Round corroborates this, with an enquiry on common property resources particularly land resources in rural communities, defining common property resources as "all such resources which are meant for common use of the villagers" which had been freely available to the rural population prior to the British colonization and administration in India. These include village pastures and grazing grounds, village forest and woodlots, protected and unclassed government forests, waste land, common threshing grounds, watershed drainage, ponds and tanks, rivers, rivulets, water reservoirs, canals and irrigation channels. The report notes that the "extension of state control over these resources" resulted in the decline of the indigenous management and governance systems, thereby substantially decreasing CPRs available to the rural population. Damodaran (1991) notes that the state justified the "constitution of common lands into forest lands… to mitigate the free-rider problem through exclusion of user rights". This 'free-rider' problem that gives rise to the tragedy of commons phenomenon is however evaded in the context of traditional communities that have in place complex norms that govern their livelihoods and dependence on the commons and practice sustainable methods of resource use (Runge, 1990).

Damodaran (1991) and Runge (1990) therefore call for the need

to highlight this distinction to avoid confusing these 'free-rider' commons with ecologically and institutionally stable, common property resources. There is a fundamental distinction between these two types of common-access resources; in her seminal work, Ostrom (1990;1999) presents the complex and implicit governance structures and norms that constitute the management of common pool resource institutions - "natural and human-constructed resources in which (i) exclusion of beneficiaries through physical and institutional means is especially costly, and (ii) exploitation by one user reduces resource availability for others". Ostrom notes eight 'design principles' of common property resource management drawn from her observations of traditional communities' practices around the world (Ostrom, 1990; Cox, *et al*, 2010):

1. Well-defined boundaries: around the community of users and the resource system they utilize to ensure non-excludable access for all members of the group, but avoid the problems of open-access that 'free-rider' resources face (Damodaran, 1991)

2. Congruence between appropriation and provision rules and local conditions: i.e., proportional equivalence between benefits accrued to and costs borne by all members of the community thereby establishing equal rights and responsibilities.

3. Collective-choice arrangements: wherein community members utilize their comparative advantage through indigenous knowledge to devise the most efficient norms and guidelines on the management of the resource.

4. Monitoring: to critically track the compliance and effectiveness of the resource management practices and thereby make visible those who do not comply with the rules.

5. Graduated sanctions: the progression of incremental sanctions to appropriately deter participants from violation of community

norms and maintain cohesion. Graduated sanctions also "maintain proportionality between the severity of violations and sanctions" (Cox, *et al*, 2010).

6.  Conflict-resolution mechanisms: to complement the system of graduated sanctions and proportionality of benefits and costs, there is a need for an effective grievance redressal and conflict resolution mechanism especially given the rivalrous and non-excludable nature of common property resource systems.

7.  Minimum recognition of rights: that "external government agencies do not challenge the right of local users to create their own institutions" or enforce their rules on the community's management of the resource system (Cox, *et al*, 2010).

8.  Nested enterprises - i.e., that common property resource management units are arranged in a nested hierarchy - smaller common-property systems being nested in larger and still larger ones as in cases of pastoral and irrigation systems (ibid).

Thus, based on these principles put forth by Ostrom based on her observations of indigenous community management of resource systems, it may be understood that common property resources are effectively managed through people's engagement and collective action and therefore provide a suitable alternative or could complement privatization and state acquisition of these vast resources (Runge, 1986; Wade, 1986). Ostrom *et al* (1999) highlights a study by Sneath in 1998 of pastoralism in northern China, Mongolia, and southern Siberia, showing significantly larger degradation of pastures managed by state-owned agricultural collectives imposed in Russia and China and involve permanent settlements unlike in the Mongolian region where they are managed by traditional group-property institutions that involve large scale movements between seasonal pastures.

Common property resources in Kerala are largely within the domain of the coastal region and forests; the former concerned with the livelihoods of small fishing communities and their dependence on coastal waters and the lagoons. The continued survival of these fishing communities against large-scale industrial players is largely attributed to the collective action taken by the community members in preserving these common property resources they access. The latter is also significant considering the fact that nearly a third of the land in the state comprises forest cover. Kerala is home to a small and largely marginalized but significant tribal population, especially along the hills of the Western Ghats that border the state. The dependence of these tribal communities on the forests and other natural resources like rivers and ponds for their livelihoods is a controversial matter against the developmental goals of the state economy and the nation at large. Fortunately, with the aid of civil society interventions and initiatives of community members to promote dialogue on these contentious issues, tribal communities are now better equipped to secure their rights through legislation like the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 and Forest Rights Act, 2006.

In the context of Kerala, and for the country at large, the recognition of the right to common property resources and their management is a necessity for the welfare of communities that continue to sustain themselves on their traditional livelihoods as in the case of the small-scale fishing communities in the coastal parts and the tribal communities in the forest regions. The conflict of interests between the developmental priorities of the state that pander to the wants of private players in the market for the same resources against the welfare and needs of these inherently disadvantaged and marginalized groups necessitates civil society intervention and sustainable solutions that can enable their livelihoods to flourish, protect the environment, and prevent a 'tragedy of the commons' scenario.

### Rights and Duties: A Totalizing Concern

Environmental justice can be understood as the "fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, colour, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies" (USEPA). It necessitates that all individuals be equally protected from environmental and health hazards, thereby reducing vulnerabilities; and that they enjoy equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment to live, learn, and work in. Chopra *et al* (1989), characterise participation with one or more of the following: groups of people; adherence to a set of norms; and involving "empowerment and adjustments" between individual and group behaviour. Citing Olson (1965), which notes that small size and homogenous groups are optimal for collective action to effectively manage resources, they note that common interests of the group might influence its behaviour - thereby making a case for local communities directly affected by and dependent on the resource system to hold the rights of access and management of the core or stock resource and its fringes.

For instance, as Harris (2016) illustrates,environmental justice demands that people affected by pollution have a say in how the pollution is reduced or prevented, and it requires that affected people be allowed to participate in determining who benefits, and how, from the policies instituted to correct past pollution. Environmental justice movements begin at the grassroots,constituted by the affected citizens, civil rights activists, and environmentalists collaborating to secure the rights of low-income and minority communities to clean and safe environment. Historically the movement was documented and coined as such in the United States, however, examples of such mobilisation and grassroot-level participation for the sake of the environment can be found across the globe.These communities are typically moral economies characterized by a "subsistence ethic" and a tradition of conservationism

(Scott, 1976). Iconic examples in India alone include the forest conservation Chipko movement of April 1973 in Uttarakhand to prevent large scale deforestation; and the recent success of the Kadar tribal community in the Vazhachal Forest region in Kerala in acquiring Common Forest Resource rights and harnessing their indigenous knowledge of ethnobotany to support the Forest Department of the state in surveillance and management of the forest resources is an example of the Joint Forest Management System - a form of participatory management of common pool resources in India.

Environmental justice is interdisciplinary as it incorporates dynamic and complex scientific issues with equally complex issues contending with the history of socio-economic, political and cultural structures such as the distribution or accumulation of resources against race, economic class, and power. It arguably requires that the actual distribution of environmental benefits and burdens be fair. As Harris (2016) succinctly notes:

"Justice is about determining to whom rights are owed, and to whom associated duties should be assigned. It is about how much of the burdens of protecting those rights each actor with duties should bear. The just use of natural resources is even more pertinent in poor and marginalized communities where scarcities and pollution can be life-threatening … Justice is often about how policies are decided - procedural justice - and what comes from decisions and actions - consequentialist justice. To realize procedural justice, people's rights should be respected during decision-making, and individuals and communities affected by decisions should be allowed to participate in the decision-making process 'climate justice' is a totalising concern, that creates new leverage for late industrialisers, requires a proactive strategy, within a limited temporal horizon, embedded within an all-encompassing and radically challenging epistemology. It is, however forcing broad-scale transformations in terms of political contestation".

While the justice of the outcome may be hard to assess, it should at least avoid, what Moral and Social Philosopher and academic, Brenda Almond calls, 'striking inequalities' (Harris, 2016). People tend to value outcomes that they perceive to be just; most often when they are perceived to benefit one's community, even if only in the long term. The Native Americans embrace the Seventh Generation Principle which is the essence of the sustainable development agenda - the choices and decision making with regard to the current use of resources is to be made keeping in mind the needs of seven generations into the future. Sustainability and environmental justice thus work in tandem.Common Property Resources are integral to the discourse on sustainable development since they enable local or community level initiatives and collective action to shape the efforts towards conservation of resource systems while also allowing the community members to benefit from the core resources and its fringes in an equitable manner. CPRs are typically used by rural and/or traditional communities who depend on natural resource systems to sustain their livelihoods and have acquired or inherited skills and technical knowledge over generations of engaging with the natural resource system. In the context of the sustainable development agenda, the recognition of CPR rights would enable these oft-marginalized communities to develop local solutions to improve their socio-economic well-being while simultaneously taking corrective steps to protect the environment.

**The Human-Rights Based Approach to Disaster Risk Reduction**

According to a UNISDR Input Report (2014), human rights-based approach to disaster risk reduction may have the potential to decrease a country's vulnerability to hazards. This approach focuses on three key elements: non-discrimination; participation; and accountability. Therefore, irrespective of several policies on natural disasters, if fundamental issues such as human rights protection and empowerment of local communities are not tackled, the effectiveness of disaster risk reduction strategies will be weighed down (da Costa and Pospiezna, 2014).

In the aftermath of the disaster events of 2004-05, chief among them being the Indian Ocean tsunami (2004), and Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma (2005) there was increased recognition that disaster response involves more than just delivery of humanitarian assistance. Critical issues pertaining to human rights that have emerged in past crises and during disaster management processes include discrimination in aid provision on the basis of gender, age, or ethnicity; enforced and often unsafe relocation and resettlement; sexual and gender-based violence; loss of documentation; and lack of access to legal protection, health services, shelter, clean and safe water, education, or sufficient monetary compensation, among others. Moreover, it was found that the longer the period of displacement, greater the risk of human rights violations, often the result of inadequate resources, or in appropriate policies, neglect or oversight (IASC, 2008).

A growing understanding of the need to respect, uphold and promote the human rights of those affected by natural disasters thus emerged from a series of missions and evaluations by the Representative of the UN Secretary General on the human rights of internally displaced persons which reflected a lack of awareness on the relevance of human rights norms in the context of natural disasters. The UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) thus adopted Operational Guidelines on Human Rights and Natural Disasters in June, 2006, to facilitate guidance to national and international agencies engaged in humanitarian assistance so as to better enable them to protect the rights of disaster affected individuals.

The Guidelines thus sought to bridge the gap between humanitarian action in emergencies and the standards for protection of human rights in conflict situations, thereby providing specific guidelines on addressing human rights concerns arising from natural disasters. They are informed by provisions in relevant international human rights law such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenants on Civil

and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Additionally, the Operational Guidelines also draw from relevant regional human rights conventions and standards such as the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the Sphere Humanitarian Charter, Minimum Standards in Disaster Response, the IFRC Code of Conduct and the IASC IDP Policy[3]. As a consequence, affected individuals can seek protection and assistance from their governments.

**Lessons from Kerala floods**

As a coastal state with a varied topography of mountains, rivers, and back-waters, Kerala has a high dependence on climate sensitive sectors such as fisheries, agriculture, forests and plantations. The livelihoods of the poor and marginalized labour depend on these sectors. With a population of 3.3 crores, residing in a geography of 38,863 sq.kms (density of about 860 per sq. km).The state is affected by the winds, sea erosion, soil piping, (KSDMA, 2016) low productivity, compounded by quarrying, sand mining, reclamation of wetlands, and rapid changes in land-use and land-cover - both legal and illegal. The state's total area accounts for only about 1 percent of the country's total area, however it stretches along the Malabar coast for approximately 580 km, varying in width from approximately 30 to 120 km. It is bordered by the states of Karnataka in the north, Tamil Nadu to the east, and the Arabian Sea in south and west. The high population density, rising demand for housing, rapid expansion of infrastructure and a high density of dams on rivers without comprehensive spatial planning processes create conditions that make the state vulnerable to both disaster and climate change.

The state is one of the most socio-economically developed among other Indian states with a high literacy rate, HDI, and other welfare indicators. The floods in July-August 2018 are considered to be the worst in 100 years. Weeks of heavy rainfall caused dams to open their

floodgates, triggered landslides in the mountains, and swamped the coastal regions of Kerala. The media reported loss of over 500 lives and evacuation of over a million people. Could better planning and preparedness have avoided disaster or at least minimized the grave consequences?

*What Kerala Can Learn:* The audit report revealed that, in Kerala, dam-break analysis was not conducted in respect of any of the 61 dams in the state (1980). It is worth noting that there are 184 Flood Forecasting Stations in India. However, there is not a single flood forecasting station in 10 of the states including Kerala (Pandey and Sengupta, 2018). Furthermore, the drainage systems in residential areas are not adequate. Improper sewage treatment in the residential areas, results in the clogging of storm water drains, which lose their capacity to carry extra load of flood water. Also, the solid waste management in the state is substandard and epitomizes the common property crisis, begging the question - "who does the waste belong to?'  Furthermore, the canals are severely polluted and filled with water hyacinth. In addition, unchecked civil constructions for different 'developmental' purposes also impedes the functioning of the drainage systems. This kind of absence of macro-level strategy and planning and its adequate implementation is one of the areas that the state needs to make progress in.

Kerala needs to recognize that construction of flood water drains is as important as construction of roads and other infrastructure while expanding a city or a residential area. This understanding also needs to devolve at the level of the Panchayats. Also, low lying areas should ideally be used as drainage basins and not for construction activities in the name of development. Flood plain wetlands need conserved at any cost since they are unique ecosystems and play an important role in the hydrology of the region. Moreover, unscientific and uncontrolled sand mining of the river beds caused the lowering of the river bottom drastically and the water spread area has been reduced considerably.

As a result, the velocity of the flowing water increases manifold and reaches the lower regions immediately after a heavy rain. Understanding that the environmental destruction of the flood plain wetlands and hills in the catchment areas (rain fed areas) aggravated the present flood situation needs to inform futre . The water holding capacity of the inland flood plains, wetlands and paddy fields have drastically reduced due to reclamation and blocked drainage systems. Also, the water holding capacity of the over bidden earth on the hills have reduced due to the uncontrolled quarrying and violations of the environmental law.

In order to tackle these issues, Kerala needs to focus on building macro level strategies for appropriate land use planning and effective management of resources in convergence with micro-level planning.

Dynamic reservoir operations strategy for individual reservoirs as well as combined strategy at river basin level is to be developed to enhance their utility. Plans for both monsoon and non-monsoon periods are needed to keep a check on its functioning. For flood control, the strategy/protocol/operating procedure must look into the monsoon trends, time period etc. to increase effectiveness. Drought proofing at river basin level and ensuring e-flows shall be the priorities for reservoir operations during non-monsoon periods. Furthermore, in order to ensure implementation of strategies, participatory institutional mechanism is required.

Another interesting technique to enhance the resilience of the state to floods is through the practice of Kerala's indigenous activity - *pokkali* farming. It is a unique farming system that produce salt and flood resistant rice and shrimp alternated on the same farms in Kerala's tidal-water tracts. Pokkali rice is tolerant to soil salinity and submergence and thus is very suitable for climate adaptive agriculture. On high tide or river flooding, it holds its grain-bearing head upright above water for about ten days, while the plant itself bends over and collapses. This particular system, therefore, plays a great role in maintaining the

ecosystem of farm tracts (Vijayan, 2017; Jena, 2016; Ranjith, Karunakaran and Sekhar, 2018). Thus, perhaps there is a need to promote this farming system to ensure agricultural resilience and ecological balance.

*What Kerala Floods offer:* The disaster response and recovery in Kerala was indeed commendable. The rescue operations led by the state officials along with the rescue efforts carried out by the army, navy and air force were timely and effective. The team of medical doctors and other  professionals worked round the clock to serve and support the affected. Apart from this, Kerala demonstrated how community involvement and use of local capacities and volunteers can play a significant role in disaster response. The fisher-folk proactively used their indigenous knowledge and skills to save lives during the floods. Their grit and desire to reach out were indeed admirable and inspirational. Moving beyond the speed with which it responded to the crisis and how the state mobilised its own capacities, the state's ability to leverage its decentralised model of development planning, for long term recovery while ensure accountability to the affected population is an approach that has been adopted and briefly mentioned which promises to be a unique governance innovation and is still unfolding as this paper goes into print.

The Accountability to Affected Populations, is an initiative taking shape in an effort of Government to build Kerala Back Better, as more resilient state with the participation and feedback from people affected by the flood. This initiative has created a system to collect information on the post-disaster needs and feedback of the affected communities taking into account gender and diversity of the communities, with a comprehensive set of common tools and protocols that map the needs sectorally. The system rolled out across the districts impacted by floods with the involvement of Kudumbashree,the Self-Help Group network of the Local Self Government Department (LSGDs),. The system provides

real time information to select line departments of the Government of Kerala, as well as the State Disaster Management Authority. This pioneering initiative in India is institutionalized within Kudumbashree, enabling a connection between ongoing development planning processes and humanitarian response and long term recovery. It is also expected to contribute to preparedness and resilience-building for future disasters, should they occur.

The geographic and population coverage is vast - 489 most affected Grama Panchayaths/Municipalities/Municipal Corporations and 1% of the affected populations (19,869 out of 5.5 million)[4] will be reached. They will provide feedback and deepen the idea of people-led recovery and reconstruction planning in Kerala. The 'feedback dash board' available to the Revenue Department, the LSGD, Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) along with district collectors, would ensure that by 2019-20, all the 489 Grama Panchayath plans are risk informed and will have included feedback from the affected people such that local risks are reduced and disaster risks, minimised. The State Planning Board and Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) are important partners[5]. The 13th working group notified for Gram Panchayat Development Plan planning via the Government Order of September 29, 2018 will be supported to develop climate sensitive plans and Gram Sabhas discussions on environmental decision making. This pioneering initiative in India is institutionalized within Kudumbashree, enabling a connection between ongoing development planning processes and humanitarian response and long term recovery. It is also expected to contribute to preparedness and resilience-building for future disasters, should they occur.

**Conclusion**

The Kerala floods of 2018 was devastating. The impact of the flood could have been considerably reduced had the state incorporated and implemented DRR strategies in development. Improper sewage and

drainage management, unplanned and unscientific constructions, excessive quarrying, etc. resulted in increased damage that otherwise could have been avoided. Thus, the paper argues for an approach to DRR that places the community at the centre of DRM, strengthens preparedness for response, interconnects hazard risks, environment and land use and suggests much more work on strengthening institutional capabilities across all levels. This provides at least one frame of looking at the future planning process with the idea of risk informed and climate sensitive planning in the state within the well acknowledged "Kerala model of development".

## References

1. Barnosky, A. D., Matzke, N., Tomiya, S., Wogan, G., O., Swartz, B., Quental, T.B., Ferrer, E.A. (2011): "Has the Earth's sixth mass extinction already arrived?" *Nature*, 471(7336), 51-57. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21368823

2. Ceballos, Gerardo, et. al. (2015): "Accelerated Modern Human-Induced Species Losses: Entering the Sixth Mass Extinction". *Science Advances*, American Association for the Advancement of Science. 1 June 2015. https://www.advances.sciencemag.org/content/1/5/e1400253.full.

3. Chopra, K., Kadekodi, G.K., Murty, M.N. (1989): "People's Participation and Common Property Resources", *Economic and Political Weekly.* pp. A189-A195.

4. da Costa, K, & Pospieszna, P. (2014): "Finding the missing thread: the inclusion of a human rights-based approach in tackling climate change mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction". https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/49949

5. Cox, M., Arnold, G. and Tomas, S.T. (2010): "A Review of Design Principles for Community-based Natural Resource Management", *Ecology and Society.* Volume 15(4): 38.

6.  Damodaran, A. (1991): "Tragedy of the Commons and Comedy of the Common Property Resources", *Economic and Political Weekly.* September 21, 1991. pp. 2213-2215

7.  Field, C. B., V. Barros T.F. Stocker, D. Qin, D.J. Dokken, K.L. Ebi, M.D. Mastrandrea, K.J. Mach, G. K. Plattner, S. K. Allen, M. Tignor, and P.M. Midgley (Eds.) (2012): *Managing the risks of extreme events and disasters to advance climate change adaptation.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

8.  Hardin, G. (1968): "The Tragedy of the Commons", *Science.* 162(3859): pp.1243-1248.

9.  Harris, P.G. (2016): Environmental justice: Vitally important, but difficult to define. Essay drawing from Harris, P.G. (2016): *Global Ethics and Climate Change*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press and works cited therein. March 8, 2016. Retrieved from: https://mahb.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/MAHBBlog_EnvironmentalJustice_PHarris_Mar2016.pdf

10. IASC (2008) *Human Rights and Natural Disasters: Operational Guidelines and Field Manual on Human Rights Protection in Situations of Natural Disaster.* Inter-Agency Standing Committee. March 2008. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/legacy_fileshuman_rights_and_natural_disasters_operational guidelines_and_field_manual_on_human_rights_protection_in_situations_of_natural_disasters.pdf

11. Jena, Manipadma (2017): Climate-Smart Pokkali Farming Needs Machines. *India Climate Dialogue.* https://www.indiaclimate dialogue.net/2017/10/16/mechanise-climate-smart-farming-food-security/

12. KSDMA (2016): Kerala State Disaster Management Plan Available at http://sdma.kerala.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Kerala%20State%20Disaster%20Management%20Plan%202016.pdf

**Vol.10   No.4   October - December 2018**
           **&**            **Social Science in Perspective**
**Vol. 11   No.1   January - March 2019**

13. Lloyd, W.F. (1833): *Two Lectures on the Checks to Population.*

14. MoE&F (2011): *Report of the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel,* Ministry of Environment and Forest (Rep). Government of India.

15. MoE&F (2013): Report of the High-Level Working Group on Western Ghats. Ministry of Environment and Forest (Rep). Government of India.

16. NSSO (1999): "Common Property Resources in India", NSS 54th Round. January - June 1998. National Sample Survey Organisation, Department of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India. December 1999.

17. Olson, M. (1965): *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups.* Harvard University Press.

18. Ostrom E., *et al* (1999): "Revisiting the Commons: Local Lessons, Global Challenges", *Science.* Volume 284. May 1999. pp. 278-282.

19. Ostrom, E. (1990): *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

20. Pandey, K., and Sengupta, R. (2018): Economic and environmental aspects of Pokkali Rice-Prawn production system in central Kerala". *International Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Studies.* 08-13. https://www.fisheriesjournal.com/archives/2018/vol6issue4/PartA/6-3-48-108.pdf

21. Runge, C.F. (1986): "Common Property and Collective Action in Economic Development", *World Development.* Vol 14, No.5, pp. 623-635.

22. Runge, C.F. (1990): "Common Property Resources in a Global Context", *Staff Papers Series.* Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics. University of Minnesota.

23.  Sajeev, T.V., and Alex, C. J. (2017): "Mapping of Granite Quarries in Kerala, India: A ctitical mapping initiative". https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327622074

24.  Scott, J.C. (1976): *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*. Yale University Press, 1979.

25.  USEPA (n.d.) Environmental Justice. United States Environment Protection Agency. https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice

26.  Vijayan, Roshni. (2016): "Pokkali Rice Cultivation in Kerala". *Agricultural Update*, vol. 11, no. 3. July 2016. pp. 329-333.

27.  Wade, R. (1986): "The Management of Common Property Resources: Collective Action as an Alternative to Privatization or State Regulation", Discussion Paper, Research Unit, Agricultural and Rural Development Department, Operation Policy Staff, World Bank. May 1986.

**Footnotes**

1.  According to the PDNA Report (October 2018) between June 1 and August 18, 2018, Kerala received cumulative rainfall that was 42% in excess of the normal average. The heaviest spell of rain was during 1-20 August, when the state received 771mm of rain. The torrential rains triggered several landslides and forced the release of excess water from 37 dams across the state, aggravating the flood impact. It ffected 5.4 million people, displaced 1.4 million people, and took 433 lives (22 May 29 August 2018). The seven worst hit districts were- Alappuzha, Ernakulam, Idukki, Kottayam, Pathanamthitha, Thrissur and Wayanad. Nearly 341 landslides were reported from 10 districts. Idukki, the worst hit district, was ravaged by 143 landslides.

2.  'Rapid, unprecedented change needed to halt global warming - U.N.', Nina Chestney, Jane Chung. Reuters. October 8, 2018.

https://www.reuters.com/article/us-climatechange-ipcc/rapid-unprecedented-change-needed-to-halt-global-warming-u-n-idUSKCN1MI022

3. IASC, Implementing the Collaborative Response to Situations of Internal Displacement, Guidance for UN Humanitaran and/or Resident Coordinators and Country Teams September 004 (hereinafter IASC IDP Policy)·

4. The Grama Panchayaths/Municipalities/ Municipal Corporations are reached through a phased approach:

   - 104 gram panchayaths of Alapphuza and Wayanad (Phase-1)

   - 385 gram panchayaths of Kottayam, Pathanamthitta, Ernakulam, Idduki and Thrissur (Phase 2) Dec to Jan 2019

   - 489 gram panchayaths of Alapphuza, Wayanad, Kottayam, Pathanamthitta, Ernakulam, Idduki and Thrissur (Feb March 2019)

5. In addition UNICEF, the JTSDS of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Riddhi Foundation, Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities-Network (CDAC-N) and Sphere India are playing a supportive role until all functions are institutionalised.

# Understanding Disasters and Resilience: Towards Rebuilding Kerala

S. Janakarajan

*Today, urbanization, industrialization and all other needs such as development of rural and urban infrastructure demand land. And, the demand for land is rising progressively, more than ever before. The land use change has become the central issue which is often unrecognized or taken for granted" without realizing its socio-economic, ecological, environmental and climatological consequences. The key elements that are affected in the process of land use changes are declining area under forest, decline in overall bio-mas production, distortion of given natural drainage systems and watersheds, top soil erosion, changes in soil and soil moisture conditions, disturbance in the geological formations, disturbance in the wild life habitations etc. Most important however is the rise in temperature leading to overall climatological and rainfall conditions, changes in farming practices and agricultural employment, changes in conditions and characteristics of groundwater regime, livelihood insecurity etc. Therefore, it is the combination of all these factors which contribute to floods, landslides, and droughts.*

**Introduction**

The problem of ecological and environmental degradation pose a severe threat to basic human living: Its ramification is indeed much more severe in the less developed countries that are afflicted with chronic problems of political instability, demographic pressure, lack of political will, high level of illiteracy, unceasing poverty, increasing degree of urbanization and urban poverty, rapid Industrialization, lack of basic needs and basic infrastructure, high illiteracy and low level of awareness, women subordination, high degree of corruption at all levels, poor health care and poor social security system, high population density with poor rural and urban infrastructure and the looming climate change threat. The growing menace of environmental and ecological degradation needs to be addressed in this context.

Natural resources (or what may be called *natural capital*) are nature's gift to the humanity which is used in every economic activity. All critical functions that are vital for human existence such as hydrological cycle, decomposition and recycling process, crop pollination etc are the result of direct eco-system services which the humanity is enjoying thanklessly. The so called growth, development etc. has been made possible only because of services provided by different ecosystems. But do we ever respect our eco-systems? For most of us and in particular policy makers the natural resources are given and infinite. The state and central governments and those who drive policies from behind (including economists in and out of World Bank) are so carried away that the growth is fabulous and that poverty and malnutrition could be eradicated simply by pushing the growth factors upwards. But have they ever considered that the so called growth and development are only gross which did not include damage caused to our natural capital. Who will pay for it? The nature beyond a point will not recover and recycle. At that stage the ecosystems will misfire. How will the market take care of the system when nature hits back by way of "disasters"?

So far, markets have failed to respond to disasters such as heat waves, droughts, floods and landslides.

**Let's think of some key natural resources / endowment**

- Forests and forest streams
- Small water bodies in particular tanks
- Rivers and river pollution
- Estuaries, brackish-water lakes and Creeks
- Mangrove forests
- Coastal ecology and marine ecosystem
- Groundwater depletion and contamination
- Soil moisture
- Soil pollution / erosion
- Wet lands
- Clean Air
- Carbon space

All these are eroding, shrinking and or lost permanently. The governments (both state and central) in India do invest a great deal every year towards rejuvenation and recovery of natural capital. Expenditure made towards recovery and rejuvenation are called investments and hence added into the calculation of GDP and growth rate of the economy, but unfortunately natural capital is never recovered but on the contrary they are eroding continuously.

The key question: What is the value of this natural capital which we are losing every year?  How many trillion dollars? Even if you have money to spend, can you create them?  These are baffling questions with no answers.

Ecological and environmental protection and security are as much important as that of economic development and growth. Every production

(as well as consumption) involves use of natural capital. But the key issue is to reach a trade-off point between growth and ecological and environmental sustainability. This is the central issue which is also very challenging to achieve in a competitive world.

**Land Use and Land Cover Change - The Key**

That the changes in land-use over time can contribute significantly to regional climate change conditions are by and large unrecognized. Land - Water - human relations and interactions are the key for human civilization and socio-economic development. From a rudimentary human society which involved "hunting and gathering" to a most modern society in urban settlements, land use changes are the basis and played a key role. Today, urbanization, industrialization and all other needs such as development of rural and urban infrastructure demand land. And, the demand for land is rising progressively, more than ever before. Thus the land use change has become the central issue which is often unrecognized or taken for granted" without realizing its socio-economic, ecological, environmental and climatological consequences. The key elements that are affected in the process of land use changes are declining area under forest, decline in overall bio-mas production, distortion of given natural drainage systems and watersheds, top soil erosion, changes in soil and soil moisture conditions, disturbance in the geological formations, disturbance in the wild life habitations etc. Most important however is the rise in temperature leading to overall climatological and rainfall conditions, changes in farming practices and agricultural employment, changes in conditions and characteristics of groundwater regime, livelihood insecurity etc. Therefore, it is the combination of all these factors which contribute to floods, landslides, and droughts.

In the arid and semi-arid regions (and conditions), the problem starts with rise in temperature, which may not necessarily be due to changes in local land-use and bio-mass conditions but predominantly due to land-use changes elsewhere in the region. In the particular context

of South India it may be disturbance in the Western Ghats leading to temperature rise. But in the hilly and elevated regions, the issue starts with land-use changes leading to temperature rise, droughts and floods.

*The key questions in this perspective are,*

● *What are the distortions made to the Western Ghats in the last few decades?*

● *What are its impacts on surface run-off (high-current flash floods), landslides, bio-mas production, soil erosion, soil moisture conditions and agricultural production conditions?*

It may not be easy to answer these questions in a straightforward manner. But let me figure out the fundamental causal links that have contributed to devastating conditions in the State of Kerala. Yes, it is absolutely disastrous! The Kerala Chief Minister informed the State Legislature that the total loss of human lives was 483 and 14 people were still  reported to be missing. The total economic loss was estimated at more than the Plan outlay of the state for the year 2017-18 which was Rs.26,500 crore. About 400,000 people were displaced due to floods and landslides. Thousands of cows and buffaloes, goats, sheep and chicken were also lost along with numerous pet animals. Indeed, the cumulative damage  on the affected families due to human loss, psychological stress, health of the people, loss of properties, livelihoods and social and economic impact of displacement are incalculable.

Let us see in the next few pages the extent to which the conditions in the Western Ghats have been distorted and its consequences.

**About Western Ghats**

The Western Ghats, which is regarded as the Water Tower of South India, runs over a length of 1600 km, covering a total area of about 160,000 sq km. Western Ghats is one of the ecologically very sensitive zones in South Asia and one of the richest hot spots in the world for

bio-diversity. This is also the place where all the crucial rivers of South India originate. Historical records show that about three quarters of the land area of Kerala was under dense forest up to 18th century (Kerala forests and wildlife department, 12 August 2015). Three of the world's *Ramsar Convention* listed *wetlands-Lake Sasthamkotta, Ashtamudi Lake* and the Vembanad-Kol wetlands-are in Kerala. Kerala's rainfall averages 2,923 mm (115 in) annually. Rainfall in some of Kerala's drier areas the average rainfall is only 1,250 mm (49 in); But the the mountains of the eastern Idukki district receive more than 5,000 mm of rainfall.

### Primary Reason for the Disastrous Condition in Kerala in 2018

**Declining area under forest and rapid changes in Land Use and Land Cover in Kerala**

A study carried out by T V Ramachandra of Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, concludes that there has been a massive reduction in the area under forest since 1973. This study confirms that the area under forest in Kerala has shrunk to the extent of 9064 sq km (906,440 hactares) since 1973.  According to a study carried out by the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, rapid erosion of forest cover is bound to have a devastating impact on Kerala[1].  This study indicates three important changes:

(i)   Between 1973 and 2016, Kerala lost 906,440 hectares (9064.4 sq.km) of forest land, which is 24% less as compared to what existed in 1973. On the other hand, area under plantation gone up steeply from 1850 sq km in 1973 to 9999 sq km in 2016.

(ii)  Another perilous change during this period is the area urbanized - which has shot up rapidly from 95 sq km in 1973 to 4136 sq km in 2016; It is important to remember and concede the fact that the steep increase in urbanization at the cost of forest area indicates more built up area (such as

buildings, bridges, roads etc) which in turn contributes to high run off and high intensity flash floods during monsoon months.

(iii)  Simultaneously, the open area declined substantially from 6143 sq km in 1973 to 2103 sqkmin 2016.

This study clearly demonstrates the extent to which the nature has been encroached and distorted as consequence of which flash floods occur repeatedly in Kerala. See also the poster presentation[2]

Another interesting study[3] carried out by Mohan Kumar (2005) establishes the fact that there has been a steady change in the land use pattern in favour of agricultural expansion at the cost of forest degradation. In particular the area under plantation crops such as coconut, rubber, arecanut have gone up dramatically during the period 1955-2000. At the same time area under forest has dropped substantially at the rate of 5000 hectares per year during the past several decades. Thus the study concludes, "The consequences of deforestation, which also has been widespread in the state, include frequent flash floods and landslides, soil erosion, and silting of reservoirs, causing serious ecological and environmental problems and complex feedback effects on agricultural production".

Krishnakumar, A, Revathy Das, and Dhanya.T.Dharan (2017), in their study[4] clearly demonstrate that the land use and land cover change in the high lands of Kerala would prove to have dangerous consequences: "Land use change with special reference to forests and paddy wetlands in Neyyar and Karamana river basins of Thiruvananthapuram district during the respective periods of 1905-2000 and 1968-2013 were analyzed through Survey of India toposheets and LISS imageries using Geographical Information System. The detailed analysis has revealed that the area under forests and paddy drastically decreased from 33% to 7% and 10% to 2% respectively"… "Forests and Wetlands referred to the respective 'lungs' and 'kidneys' of the landscapes, but are

continuously exploited unscientifically in search of profits and means of subsistence. These ecosystems play a central role in functioning of the biosphere, provide various environmental services by regulating climate, hydrological and biogeochemical cycles and directly and indirectly contribute to socio-economic development" (p.190)

**Secondary Reasons**

There are also other reasons for the disaster which could be regarded as secondary reasons. They are discussed below

**(1) Poor early warning system**

There are reports which suggest that the weather and climate forecasts were inadequate to get one prepared to face the threat of heavy downpour and floods. I cannot accept this as a reason in the internet era where you can get instant information by getting in touch with many international meteorological and climate monitoring agencies such as NOAA, INCOIS, WMO, NASA, BBC etc. Let us see what the forecasts were by the official agencies in India: IMD indicated that they had issued a red alert and orange alert warnings for Aug 13th and 14th (heavy to very heavy rainfall in isolated places) in Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kottayam and Ernakulam, Idukki and Wayanad districts). The CM's claim was that while the IMD forecast for 9 to 15 August indicated only 9.85 cm of average rainfall, the actual was much more at 35.22 cm. But the key question is whether the State was prepared for the Red Alert?

**(2) Bad reservoir operations**

Seemingly, this is an immediate reason. All the major dams were opened at a time causing severe flood and inundation in the downstream. What was worse, when the flood gates of the major reservoirs were abruptly opened, the official agencies / reservoir managers had no idea of its impact on the downstream? Had the authorities carried out risks and vulnerability and impact analysis of such abrupt dam opening, the reservoir operations by the PWD would have been more rational. In the

end, the worst affected districts were Idukki, Ernakulam, Thrissur, Alappuzha, Kuttanad and Wayanad. Idukki dam created the maximum damage. Apparently, the operational rules for dam opening during critical periods do not seem to exist.

### (3) CAG Report on Kerala land and reservoir management

According to the CAG report, the disaster could have been prevented but for the poorly managed reservoirs ((https://cag.gov.in/content/land-management-kerala). The CAG also blames on the ineffective and outdated forecast system. The CAG indicates that such an occurrence took place not only in Kerala but in many other states as well. All dam managers would like to fill their reservoirs during the monsoon months and use the water till the onset of the next monsoon. In August 2014, both the Central Water Commission and the India Meteorological Department had forecast heavy rainfall upstream of the Hirakud dam, on the Mahanadi in Odisha. But this warning was not taken seriously and the dam authorities maintained the water level much above the safe limit with a view not to risk scarcity during the following summer. But the government paid huge price due to abrupt opening of the floodgates of the Hirakud dam. Similar stories could be heard from Gujarat and Rajasthan (2017) and Chennai (2015).

### (4) The role of multi-purpose dam projects

What is critical to remember and concede is the fact that dams are multi-purpose projects such as storage of water, hydro power generation and flood control (and moderation). But, the PWD tends to forget the last one. In the case of Kerala, as the dams were getting filled the officials were indeed happy that their dams were getting filled. Yes, it would have been happy news during the normal year. But unfortunately, the officials failed to carry out the correct calculations despite orange and red alerts from IMD. In fact, the officials must have thought that *after all*, the Idukki dam was getting filled up after a span 25 years.

### (5) The dangerous miscalculation

The cost of paying towards disaster if the reservoirs are abruptly opened is much more than the cost that the state would be paying in case of storage is less than FRL in the reservoirs. This is the lesson which all the states should learn. The question is whether the wisdom would prevail.

### (6) Raising population density

Population density in Kerala is the third highest in the country (859 per sq km) next only to Bihar (1102) and West Bengal (1029). Even in Tamil Nadu, which is the most urbanized state in the country, the population density is only 555 per sq km. This clearly shows that the Kerala state is more land scarce: This may be partly because, over 50% of the geographical area in Kerala state is classified as forests of several kinds (including plantations). Still population per kilo meter of forest area in Kerala is far better (1699) compared to many major states barring the north eastern states.

### (7) Declining land space

Encroachments on the hills and mountains, promotion of tourism in the prohibited area, quarrying and other commercial activities are regarded as the principal reasons for flood damage. Extensive encroachments in the floodplains of rivers have created havoc; In particular, Munnar, Wayanad and Idukki areas and close to water spread areas of water bodies including dams which are regarded as the instant reasons for severe damage; We call it a disaster!

### (8) Official disturbing policy

The draft policy on scientific mining released by the State Planning Board proposes to encourage geo-mapping of mineral resources in the state and minimize environmental damage. The new Scientific Mining Policy describes itself as a three legged stool. Leg one is uninterrupted

supply of extracted natural materials like mineral, rock and value added products - the essential inputs in mineral based industries and in keeping and making modern infra-structure. The second leg is minimizing the environmental damage, while the third one is minimizing the social impact of mining and quarrying operations. The policy also aims at stimulating a 5 per cent in Gross State Domestic Product on account of mining activity by augmenting investments in the sector through private participation (Planning Board of Kerala)[5]

National Mineral Policy 2008 allows a greater participation of private sector: "The National Mineral Policy, 2008, declared by the Government of India (GoI) replaces the National Mineral Policy, 1993. The new policy allows for large presence and participation by the private sector in the mining sector in order to augment the contribution of mining sector to the National Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and more employment for the skilled and semi-skilled or unskilled people in the employable age group and secure supply of minable minerals and rocks for the mills, smelters and factories"

The Kerala policy which is in tune with the national policy aimed at a growth of 5% in GSDP on account of mining activity in the State (Kerala Scientific Policy, 2015, Draft, Govt of Kerala).

**What is flood?**

In the context of increasing flood related disasters all across South Asia, understanding flood is important. Flood is a hydrological concept. Stagnant water is not a flood. A pond or a lake when it stores water we call it Pond or lake. But if the same lake or pond receives water after it is encroached for purposes of constructing industries, hotels or houses, we call it flood. Most importantly, flood refers to flowing water. Hydrologically, floods may occur due to over flowing water from water bodies such as rivers, lakes, ocean etc. When water crosses their given boundaries floods occur. Floods can also occur in rivers when the flow rate exceeds the capacity of the river course. Some floods develop slowly,

Vol.10   No.4   October - December 2018
                   &         Social Science in Perspective
Vol. 11  No.1   January - March 2019

while others such as flash floods, can develop in a quick moment, and even without any visible signs of rain. Therefore, in order not to get caught in the "floods" it is necessary that we respect the water bodies. Encroachments of any kind into the given boundaries of water bodies (including floodplains) should be avoided. In the case of Chennai flood 2015 as well as Kerala flood 2018, it is the clear case of encroachments which caused serious flood devastation.

## Impending Loss due to flood exposure

The World Resources Institute developed a tool for flood analyzer along with four Dutch research organizations: (https://www.wri.org/blog/2015/03/world%E2%80%99s-15-countries-most-people-exposed-river-floods). The flood analyzer estimates realistic percentage of country's GDP loss due to exposure to flood. Floods in 164 countries have been analyzed and ranked and the top 15 countries accounting for 80% of flood damages have been identified. All the 15 countries are least or less developed countries. The GDP exposed to flood is the highest in India (4.84%), followed by Bangladesh (3.48%) and China (3.28%). Indeed, the extent of GDP exposed to floods in future (in the course of next 50 years) will be enormously high due to utter lack of preparedness and unscientific approach, massive development programmes induced by extensive infrastructural developments, urbanization and industrial programmes. The added threat is the global warming induced climate change which may increase the frequency of occurrence as well as the degree of intensity of floods. In such an event, more the development, the more intensive and extensive would be flood damage. "Using a middle-of-the road scenario, the Analyzer estimates that India's current $14 billion in GDP exposed annually could increase more than 10-fold to $154 billion in 2030. Approximately 60 percent of that increase could be caused by socio-economic development"[6].

## Disaster Management - Flaws

Disaster management simply means rescue, relief and

rehabilitation. The disaster management policy revolves around these three issues and never goes beyond. Yes, they are important. But lessons learnt from the past extreme events are more important in order to minimize the losses in all future extreme events. Furthermore, it is extremely necessary to concede the fact that the state has encouraged in the past couple of decade's mindless expansion of mining and quarrying, tourism, housing development and so on in the areas vulnerable to flood and landslides? The key questions are, is it possible to reverse such expansion and developments"? If not, will state prevent at least such developments and expansions in future?

What is most important is to carry out a risks and vulnerability mapping in case of contingencies such as the one which many states have experienced (the last minute opening of the reservoirs). If such a real time risks and vulnerability mapping is prepared, the PWD will not dare to open the reservoir in the most critical final hours.

**Building Resilience**

What is the biggest hurdle in building resilient communities in countries such as India where at least one-third of the population live in poverty or below poverty line (that is 430 million people). This is much higher than the US population in 2018 which is 327 million and more than half of entire Europe's population in 2018 which is 742 million.  Most of those who occupy vulnerable areas such as flood plains, river banks, low lying areas such as water sheds etc are the poor and homeless who migrate to cities on the hope for a better survival conditions. In effect, rural poverty is converted into urban poverty and contributes enormously to the pressure on urban infrastructure. In addition, the governments and the "markets" (in mutual collaboration with each other) occupy such public spaces for promotion of the so called development. As a measure of building resilience it is important that this process is stopped. Increasing demographic pressure and population density are biggest concerns.  And, it is very critical that we at least comprehend now that

higher economic growth and damages to ecology and environment are positively associated and so also directly related to increased exposure to disasters such as floods, landslides and droughts.

**Pathways for Way forward**

- First of all, one should recognize and concede that the Welfare State in a democratic governance is the *protector* of ecology and environment (and, all other natural capital) rather than a mere provider under the public doctrine principle

- It is very important that each State learns from the past events of extreme events and prepare a *realistic* pathway for *maintainable* growth and development

- Being the monsoon dependent agriculture, Indian farmers are going to get affected very seriously due to temperature rise of 1.5 Degree Celsius (plus). As a consequence, more intense extreme events such as droughts and floods could be expected. Under these conditions, the need of the hour is to frame a more proactive climate policy and so also for the protection of natural capital, in particular high lands and the climate sensitive Western Ghats.

- In addition to promulgation of policies, the State should reduce or *eliminate the gap* between policy and practice

- Need more effective *law enforcement and monitoring mechanisms* rather than new laws

- It is extremely vital to build a *scientific and credible data base* on long-term temperature and rain fall variations, on land use and land cover changes, long term changes in soil moisture conditions, long-term changes in bio-mas production, frequency and degree of intensity of occurrence of droughts and floods and long-term changes in agricultural practices and income

levels of farmers. The State, research organizations / Universities and NGOs should be more active in creating **DATA BANK** on all these important "climate and climate stress indicators" and "natural capital"

● More proactive policies are needed to secure the livelihoods of rural and urban poor

● For local problems, *solutions should emerge from below* and cannot be imposed from above and one should go beyond mere expressions of normative concerns.

**Concluding Observations**

And, do we ever care for our nature? We develop some momentary love and attachment to nature only when we encounter disasters such as high intensity droughts, floods and landslides. Nonetheless, very rapidly we forget and learn no lessons from the past events. It is very critical that we concede that distorting nature would contribute to more disastrous extreme events. And it is also very critical for us to recognize that forests and overall vegetative cover, soil structure and thick soil moisture conditions, watersheds and water bodies are incredible carbon sinks, the loss of which would contribute to increase in carbon foot print and rise in temperature. The worst affected people (as we see today) under these failing conditions are the vast majority of rural and urban poor (the marginalized sections of the society). The most affected rural poor, eventually migrate to urban areas, converting rural poverty into urban poverty. And, unfortunately they are also blamed for expanding slums, encroachments and for adding pressure on the urban infrastructure. Reversing this trend is challenging but necessary.

**Footnotes**

1.    Four Decades of Forest Loss - Droughts in Kerala, Energy and Wetland Research Group, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian

Institute of Science, Bangalore; http://wgbis.ces.iisc.ernet.in/energy/.

2. See also, Ramkrishnan, R and T V Ramachandra, *Four Decades of Forest Loss: Droughts in Kerala,* Energy and Wetland Research Group, Centre for Ecological Sciences,Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore; Web: Url: http://wgbis.ces.iisc.ernet.in/energy/(Poster Presentation)

3. Mohan Kumar, B (2005): Land use in Kerala: Changing scenarios and shifting paradigms, *in Journal of Tropical Agriculture* 421(1):1-12. January 2005

4. "Land Cover Change Analysis with Special Reference to Forests and Paddy Wetlands of Neyyar and Karamana River Basins, Kerala, SW India Using GIS and Remote Sensing", in. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications* , Volume 7, Issue 11, November 2017

5. http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/content/413354/kerala-scientific-mining-policy-2015-draft/

6. (https://www.wri.org/blog/2015/03/world%E2%80%99s-15-countries-most-people-exposed-river-floods).

450

# Post-Flood Vision of a New Kerala

**C.P. Rajendran &**
**Kusala Rajendran**

*The 2018 flood has been termed as a worst disaster to hit Kerala in the last hundred years. Although the primary cause of this disaster is attributed to the natural forces, the impact was accentuated by the existing environmental conditions. Over the last several decades, the human-induced environmental changes have been so pronounced in Kerala. The rivers including the entire water systems and forests have been increasingly impacted by the dams, constructed both for irrigation and hydro-electrical purposes without respecting the ecological sensitivity that existed in the Western Ghats. The traditional industrial units and corresponding investments have contributed to the pollution of water and air. The exponential growth of real estate in Kerala not only made the conventional agricultural sector sick, but it also led to vulnerable ecosystems being interfered by anthropogenic activities. The unregulated construction activities have also led to increased quarrying and river sand mining resulting in land reclamation that made the wetlands and paddy fields disappear. With the result, 'Kerala' known for its varied ecosystems and biological diversity is now gradually*

*turning itself into a large unitary metropolis divorced from nature. The 2018 flood is a grim reminder that any future developmental models of the State must take vagaries of climate into account, and to make human progress without triggering an ecological disaster. Kerala must think about how to implement an advanced environmental protection system through the development of non-polluting high-tech industry, alternate energy sources, waste recycling, sustainable agricultural practices and a strong ecotourism industry supported by innovative legislation, linking conservation and reforestation, following a path as provided by green economics and opt for alternate "degrowth" optionsin our quest for the reconstruction of a new Kerala.*

**Introduction**

A series of severe floods ravaged Kerala in July and August 2018, chiefly due to unusually high rainfall from 1 June 2018 to 19 August 2018. This was about 42% higher than the normal. Considered to be the worst flood disaster in the state in nearly a century (last being in 1924), one-sixth of the total population was directly affected by the disaster.More than 350 people have died and more than a million have been evacuated and the flood destroyed **906,400 hectares** worth of crops. According to India Meteorological Department, Kerala received 2346.6 mm of rainfall from 1 June 2018 to 19 August 2018 in contrast to an expected 1649.5 mm during this season.The rainfall over Kerala during June, July and 1st to 19th of August was reported to be 15%, 18% and 164% respectively, above the normal. The first phase of flooding occurred towards the end of July. Subsequently another spell of intense rainfall was recorded at several locations on the 8th and 9th of August 2018. According to the report of Central Water Commission, places like Nilambur in Malappuram district, Mananthavadi in Wayanad district, Peermade, Munnar and Myladumpara

in Idukki District and Pallakad in Palakkad District respectively registered a rainfall of 398 mm, 305 mm, 255 mm, 254 mm, 211 mm on 9th August. During this late phase (August 8to10, 2018) of high rainfall, flood conditions escalated on to Mananthavadi and Vythiri in Wayanad District.

The mountainous parts of the state witnessed widespread landslides and slope failures resulting in nearly 500 deaths and damage to property that included collapsed bridges and inundated cities and villages. Even after the floods the distress seemed to be continuing in the form of an unusual lowering of water level in the rivers, and wells drying up and caving. Slow slips seemed to be continuing to happen in some hilly locations (mostly in the district of Idduki) where more than 1,000 landslides had occurred. The water levels in majority of dams were almost near their Full Reservoir Level (FRL) and 35 of Kerala's 54 dams that had been overflowing had to be opened all at once, exacerbating an already dangerous situation to the level of a great calamity. The atypical second spell of rains from August 10, which normally should mark a waning phase, is what made the 2018 monsoon atypical, which had worsened the flood situation.

Nature in its destructiveness did not discriminate between mansions, even if they were made of imported marble, and the hutments of the poor. In the exclamations that were heard on social media videos from those witnessing the slow slide of large houses down slopes, followed by complete silence as the structures disappeared beneath piles of debris, one could sense the end of a dream - the opulence of the Gulf-returned *nouveau riche* Malayalis. The flood also washed away all the hierarchical barriers of caste and religion, with the people forced to rediscover a sense of community, assistance and accommodation - together typifying the sort of social character the state lost sometime in the late 1960s. Has Kerala learned anything from this unprecedented disaster? The silver lining seems to be that the post-flood Kerala is witnessing a healthy debate on how to rebuild the State that too following a sustainable growth trajectory and maintaining an environmentally healthy landscape that allows for the unhindered flow of rivers.

In an unfortunate turn of events, the social cohesion and altruism shown by the Kerala society during the days of disaster proved to be only skin-deep, as some of the recent events seem to suggest. We are referring to the reception it gave to the Supreme Court's verdict on excluding women of menstruating age from entering the shrine at Sabarimala. Kerala's reputation as being a forward looking and evolved society has indeed taken a beating and its society now appears highly polarized on the caste lines. Clearly this situation does not auger well for a society that has to get ready to meet immense challenges, both in the social and economic fronts, which are interwoven with the sustainability of the environment. In the wake of future extreme climatic events, it is imperative that all elements of the society including its social, cultural and political classes embrace changes beyond their differences in their respective dicta.The society cannot afford to be distracted by politically motivated non-issues that can only be deterrents in the path to progress. Kerala must return to its constructive path towards realizing such causes as it had done in the past moments of crisis.

In this essay we will briefly look at the factors of why an excessive spell of rainfall had evolved into a flood of disastrous proportions and discuss why we need to look at new measures to mitigate the impacts of any future hazards of this sort especially in the background of climate change. We will be looking at some of these alternate options in our quest for the reconstruction of a new Kerala that will also constitute a post-flood vision for new Kerala.

**Climate Change: A New Normal**

While the incidence of extreme rain events in India is on the rise, with further intensification expected by the end of the century, observations also indicate an overall decline in the mean rainfall levels. The weakening monsoon circulation, increasing frequency of El Niño events and accelerated air pollution and land-use changes are believed to be the major factors contributing to the decline in the rainfall. This juxt a position

of increased frequency of extreme rainfall events and overall decrease in mean rainfall suggests that alternating spells of flood and drought are going to be a fixture of the Indian subcontinent's future. Because of its geographical location and its densely populated coastal regions, Kerala must bear the full brunt of these changes as climate is likely to see-saw between these two extremes.

A normal monsoon in Kerala provides about 2000 mm of rain, but by middle of 2018 August, the state received about 2350 mm - an excess of 42 per cent. Thus, we cannot overlook the fact that the current flood was associated with an abnormal phase of monsoon. In a typical monsoon season, the state receives its maximum showers in the months of June and July. But this time, the showers not only spilled over to August, but it rained with an accelerated intensity during August 9 and 17. The rains received on these eight days that departed from the regular pattern by about 300 per cent made all the difference.

The monsoon distribution, in general, is not spatially uniform in India and it shows spatial variation in its intensity. This variability of the monsoon makes the Indian subcontinent one of the most vulnerable regions in the world. It is the opinion of the experts that the monsoon variability has 'amplified' in the recent decades. Observational evidence indicates a decrease in the northern summer (June-September) mean rainfall. Observations during the last couple of decades (1950-2015) suggest that there is significant decline of 10-20% over the central Indian region. The decline in mean rainfall is ascribed to a weakening monsoon circulation, which in turn is attributed to a "combination of factors" like the warming of the Indian Ocean, increasing frequency of El Niño events, increased air pollution and land use changes. The experts have also predicted an overall intensification of extreme precipitation over most parts of the subcontinent by the end of the century (e.g. Roxy et al., 2017, Athreefold rise in widespread extreme rain events over central India, Nature Communications, vol. 18, and references therein).

There is also an increasing realization that these spells of extreme

climatic events are linked to warming environment induced by human activity. A rapid warming trend is also associated with the equatorial Indian Ocean that contributes to the increase in moisture content in the atmosphere. Some studies have pointed to the role of the local surface warming over the Indian subcontinent that also increases the local humidity levels for the frequency of extreme events although the actual process is much more complicated with several feedback systems play their individual roles. A major puzzle has been the contradictory situation in which the frequency of extreme events is sustained despite an observed decline in monsoon circulation. We must remember that 41 per cent of India's districts were reeling under drought conditions when Kerala had a phenomenal downpour. The numbers of low-pressure systems that can evolve into depressions that influence the distribution of monsoon rains are below average this year. The researchers suspect that the increased warming up of northern Arabian Sea that strengthen the westerlies drive up surges of moisture supply leading to spatially variable extreme rainfall episodes in the Indian subcontinent.Given the uncertainties in climate science it is imperative that we need to make rapid strides in predictive models of these phenomena.Thus, describing the current Kerala flood as a "one-in-100-year flood event" may not be apt, as the global factors that affect the climate are changing and we are not looking at the same 100-year window in future

## Growing Environmental Vulnerabilities

The 2018 floods also educate us on how a climatic *phenomenon can* spiral into a tremendous environmental *disaster.* Floods are caused by climatic changes, but their effects are amplified by weather by human-induced factors, in particular the unscientific use of the land, which is of course a limited commodity in Kerala. Over the last several decades, mostly because of the increasing population density, environmental changes have been so pronounced in Kerala, that much of its landscape has been altered beyond recognition. Rivers and their constituent components such as catchments and watersheds have been increasingly impacted by dams built for irrigation and hydroelectric purposes.

Traditional industrial units and their attendant investments have shown very little regard to ecological sensitivity and with no serious laws that prevent their activities they contribute to the pollution of water and air.

Disregard to well-studied long-term environment protection programs have received very little attention in the unabated onslaught on Kerala's natural systems. Thus, the 2011 report by Madhav Gadgil, a renowned ecologist, and his team that investigated environmental conditions in the Western Ghats was almost ignored. Their report, based on detailed investigations had recommended that the entire region be declared "ecologically sensitive", and that mining, quarrying and construction of dams be banned to conserve biodiversity. By failing to accept and implement this report, the Government of Kerala missed a historical opportunity to show its commitment to the protection of environment, which would have earned it larger dividends and global recognition. Anyone who visits these mountainous regions of Kerala, regarded as the hallmark of its natural beauty would agree that the unchecked 'developmental' activities have altered their faces, affecting their aesthetic appeal and adding to the ecological stress. Construction activities gained acceleration in recent years and the unabated quarrying have destabilized the slopes. For anyone who visits the landslide affected areas post 2018 rains, it is not difficult to understand how the excessive quarrying and unplanned land use practices have made these slopes vulnerable to landslides.

The factors contributing to the rapid environmental degradation are social, cultural and economical and they make a good case study on how these factors are interrelated. Most important among the driving factors is the exponential growth of real estate. It not only forced the conventional agricultural sector to regress but it also led to anthropogenic activities that started to rapidly interfere with the ecosystems. The contribution of agriculture to the State's economy, which constituted about 60 per cent at the time of formation of the Kerala is now reduced to a mere 10 per cent. Undoubtedly, the social and economic changes in Kerala that followed

the Gulf boom were major catalysts in its transformation. The demand for increased construction led to more quarrying and mining of the river sand. Changing styles of livelihood, especially decreasing interest in agriculture led to alternate land use practices and there was rampant reclamation of wetlands and paddy for construction purposes. Eventually, Kerala, known for its varied ecosystems and biological diversity, gradually turned itself into a large, unitary metropolis, divorced from nature. If we scrutinize the State's built up area vis-a-vis its actual requirement, it is interesting that in a state with a population of three crore, there is a staggering sixteen lakh houses that are locked up with no one living there.

The most affected communities in this transition from a pro-agriculture to largely a service-centered commercial economy are the forest and coastal dwellers, whose livelihoods depend on the sustenance of their respective ecosystems.The forest dwellers (*adivasis*) are now being pushed to the edge, with inadequate resources to sustain their traditional farm based economy. As for the Government's schemes on welfare of *adivasis*, the history will record them as miserable failures. Together with the depletion in the quality of the environment there is also the threat from the spread of rare, communicable diseases recently reported in the state, is regarded a consequence of its degrading natural systems.

**Lessons learnt from the disaster and the way forward**

So, what are the lessons we have learned and what is the way forward? It is important that for the hilly districts of Idukki and Wayanad, both the local and state authorities should rely on scientific reports on the landslide vulnerabilities to reach decisions on land allocations for various constructions. In these decisions, local soil properties and slope stability should be important factors to be considered in arriving at decisions, rather than political expediency.It is important to bring in restrictions on machine-mediated quarrying activities. A blue print that demarcates areas suitable for habituation and those to be left untouched should help strictly implementing the basic tenets of land zonation. A

comprehensive masterplan on land utilization strategy based on a clear environmental vision needs to be prepared at macro and micro-levels to ensure that encroachment is minimal. These documents should contain clear guidelines for constructions, including recommended designs of houses that will match with local landscape and scenery.

The Government's lackadaisical approach is causing a slow death of yet another equally important ecosystem of Kuttanad in the coastal part of central Kerala - a region located 2 to 0.5 m below the sea level that suffered the most during the recent flood. The Kuttanad Package submitted by the M.S. Swaminathan Foundation was meant to be an action plan to reinvigorate paddy cultivation, along with the promotion of aquaculture, cattle and vegetable farming without generating much ecological distress. One of the important goals of the proposal was to reduce the impact of flooding. Like the Western Ghats, Kuttanad is also subjected to land grabbing (mostly by reclamation of estuary) and constructional activities by the real estate mafia in Kerala. According to a report prepared by the Sastra Sahitya Parishad, the estuarine part of the area has been reduced by 40 per cent and the depth is reduced by 3.5 m. All these changes are affecting the movement of water and contributing to the flood havoc, not to speak of the alarming deterioration of biological diversity that will ultimately affect the livelihood of local population.

Talking of the movement of water, it is high time that we re-evaluated the role of Thaneermukkom bund in regulating the flow. It is unclear how a structure originally meant to be a 'regulator' has tuned to a 'bund'. It is pointed out that in the first 14 years the 'bund' was opened only for 14 days and during the six years that followed, it was kept open for 44 days. With the result, the estuarine part on the southern part of the bund has lost all its salinity and it has turned into a fresh water pond that facilitated the growth of invasive bugs and vegetation. The hindrance caused by the bund has also made the estuarine part a cesspool of toxic waste of fertilizers and pesticides. Tourism centered on houseboats has also contributed to the decline in ecological sustainability. There are

about 1000 houseboats that operate in the backwater, in a space that can support only about 100 houseboats.

In the post-flood context, we also hear a lot about rebuilding Kerala, but there seems to be a lack of direction on what sort of developmental model the state should aspire to, particularly against the backdrop of global climatic and ecological changes. Although Kerala on its own cannot be a major player in the mitigation of climate change, it can do a lot to reduce its impact locally. The state must think seriously about how its water bodies can be saved from further encroachment and pollution. A way of turning the wetlands as a great resource is to use them as carbon storage centres and help reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Clearly these are innovative steps towards reducing the carbon footprint, an important agenda in the action plan for tackling the global climate.

Scientific conservation methods to protect the forests and biodiversity in the Western Ghats, which is subjected to encroachments mostly mediated through political networks, should be an important consideration. That a lot of the recent controversies and scandals in the state have been centered on the legalities of settlements in hilly regions itself belies the seriousness of this problem. The political parties of Kerala have let themselves be manipulated by various business interests in rejecting the Gadgil Committee's recommendations, which provided a clear and scientific roadmap to preserve the stability of, and promote ecosystem services in, the Western Ghats. Furthermore, it would have given the local bodies and the Panchayats enough power to decide on such issues and that would have also curbed corruption and nepotism to a great extent.

Because such floods could recur, the state will have to develop more efficient warning and alert systems. Surprisingly, despite having a set of government-funded scientific institutes, the state did not have proper flood-maps that could have helped send more accurate alerts to the people. It is a matter of concern that very little scientific data is being collected on various phenomena that occurred *during* and right after the

flood. It is important that the government agencies generate flood maps for all the river basins in the state and keep updating them. More effective communication methodology needs to be developed to improve flood risk literacy. Regional flood maps serve as a great medium for public engagement for communicating the magnitude of the risk and to generate cautionary warnings.

Finally, it is also a fact that the dams in Kerala, like elsewhere in India, do not have *rule curves* - the operating criteria, guidelines and specifications that govern the storage and release functions of a reservoir and which would be particularly useful during flood conditions. Although the Central Water Commission has a different view many experts have suggested that the deluge is not entirely of nature's making, and the impact is amplified because of faulty dam management. Instead of releasing water slowly at regular intervals dozens of dams (35 out of its 39 dams) were opened at one go when water reached danger levels, which led the flood waters to reach the nearby regions at a much faster rate than expected.It is high time we developed scientific management protocols for reservoirs. We need to factor-in meteorological forecasts into the computer models to predict the rate at which water flows into reservoirs and how much water needs to be stored. A table in the performance audit report (CAG) shows that out of 61 dams in Kerala, none had Emergency Action Plan or O&M Manuals. Kerala had also stated, in response to audit query from CAG of India, "No dam-break analysis was conducted in respect to any of the 61 dams in the state."

In the backdrop of human induced changes, it is more likely that we will be witnessing such extreme events more frequently. As geologists like Prof. Daniel Parsons (University of Hull, UK) has pointed out, "One of the most striking things from the videos and images emerging from the area is the brown colour of the flood waters and the extreme damage caused by landslides… that geomorphology - the processes of erosion and deposition that shape the Earth's surface - is sensitive to rainfall

intensity, so more frequent and more extreme floods mean more rapid changes across our landscapes". He further says, "Flooding is a challenge across individual, local, regional and global scales, and is set to increase in the future and its impacts will become more damaging. We need solutions across each of these scales to improve individual and societal resilience - so when flooding does occur it isn't the disaster we are currently witnessing unfold in Kerala". When the flood occurred, a general tendency was to describe it as "the worst in 100 years". This may not suitable descriptor of flood risk and it fails to communicate the newly discovered uncertainties inherent in the changing climate and the changing patterns of rainfall. We no longer can assume a "static, steady-state system" associated with the response pattern of the rivers.

**A Green Future**

Kerala is endowed with variety of natural landscapes and our natural environment is our most precious inheritance. We have a commitment to safeguard them for the benefit of future generations. Much of the success in this regard will depend on how to maintain cleaner air and water along with a thriving greener country that will be a safe haven for animals and plants. In the process we will have to learn how to use our land sustainably. Why don't we use the post-flood period as an opportunity to evolve an Environmental Plan for the next 25 years that will enunciate our long-term approach to various issues including land utilization, soil degradation, recycling, resource utilization, minimizing waste, extreme weather conditions (flooding and drought)? Taking a leaf out of United Kingdom's 25-year environment plan, such a document can come up with bold initiatives on environmental land management, new utilization rules for water, reducing the environmental impact of pesticides, introducing technologically driven new agricultural practices, introducing methods for soil health, restoration of water bodies and wetlands, developing flood management solutions, maintaining the sustainability of drainage basins, increasing and incentivizing water efficiency, development of geo-heritage sites and parks, helping schools to generate

nature-friendly campuses, achieving zero-avoidance of plastic waste, recycling and usage of waste water etc. This plan can be developed as an extension of the existing "Green Kerala Mission" that is already being drawn up by the State Government.

Overall, and all things considered, the disaster should be taken as a grim reminder that any developmental models the state adopt here on must take the vagaries of the climate, which have become the new norm, into account, as well as strive to make human progress without triggering ecological disaster. At a fundamental level, the lesson from the 2018 floods is clear in that any future developmental plan must take the uniqueness and diversity of the environment into account. Ultimately our success will be evaluated on how we manage our limited resources for the welfare of the people without sacrificing the environmental sustainability. This goal can be accomplished only by implementing an advanced environmental protection system through the development of non-polluting industries, adoption of alternate energy sources, waste recycling, sustainable agricultural practices and a strong ecotourism industry supported by innovative legislation and linking conservation and reforestation.

Such alternate "degrowth" options have to be considered more closely in the quest for the post-flood reconstruction of a new Kerala that has now provided an opportunity to set a new example for India. In the coming fifty years the world that presently remains beholden to fossil fuel mode of production will slowly emerge into ecological economics. And, Kerala with its collective wisdom and its unique social evolution should be in the forefront of that revolution and set an example for the whole country. The 2018 event is a grim reminder that the climate change related disasters are here to stay and that any future developmental models cannot ignore this aspect. It has become a new norm that must be taken into account for the sustainable progress of humans without triggering ecological disasters. The 2018 flood provides us an opportunity to right a wrong that we have committed in the past.

# On the Threshold of a Grand Opportunity: Salience of an Approach to Rebuilding Kerala

**M.A. Oommen**

*The present unprecedented disaster happened when Kerala launched its Thirteenth Five Year Plan when the country chose to dismantle the planning process and embraced a market mediated development. An approach paper was already out before this. Any paper without a vision for Kerala and silent on long-term policy choices could not be counted upon to turn the challenges facing the state into a great opportunity. Kerala needs bold and dynamic policy choices. A green state backed by a green economy that will have the full support of the well-meaning citizens will have to spell out its long-term rebuilding vision, major objectives and priorities besides the strategic options envisaged. The purpose of this paper is to throw some insights that could be useful in developing an approach to rebuild Kerala. This brief paper proposes a few guiding principles of approach that are germane to the rebuilding process and then identify just four priority areas.*

Rebuilding is different from repairing. This paper outlines the contours of an approach to the rebuilding project underway in Kerala which was caused by a wave of devastating floods and landslides in

August 2018 which washed away in a jiffy 4% of the state's GSDP affecting 5.4 million people and displacing 1.4 million while traumatizing 1260 villages and crippling rural life that comprises 52% of its population. We know that this state which is only a little over 1% of India's geographical size has a fascinating human development narrative which has given it a unique place in the development literature. Probably, less well known but equally *sui-generis* is Kerala's rich bio-diversity, one of the most valued resource on this globe, its geographical landscape, accommodating 44 river systems, beautiful lagoons and lakes majestically walled off by the Western Ghats from which the rivers originate and which is home to a rare combination of flora and fauna in this planet. Kerala created history in this world when the Communist Party ascended to power through the ballot box in 1957. To be sure, the first ministry unobtrusively as it were riding the wave of a process of expanding public sphere, public reason and enhancing freedom that successfully fought the worst forms of the caste-class iniquities and oppression world ever witnessed. From today's rebuilding launching pad we may recall that the last sixty years saw several social and economic events like the growing inflow of foreign remittances from mid 1970s, (in 2018 it was over $15 billion) the heralding of remarkable reforms like abolishing landlordism, universal literacy, affordable health care and ushering in decentralised people's plan for deepening democracy to mention the most prominent. This period coincides with a consumption-induced capitalist paradigm of development that lifted its growth but significantly affected its ecological viability and threw open a regime of commodification of health, education and environment. The ecosystems and resource base of lakes, lagoons, rivers and forests have suffered irreparable loss due to encroachment and indifferent management. No wonder there was social failures like widening inequalities the marginalization of the most vulnerable sections of society, increase in the crime rate (from 13.3% of all-India in 2014 to 14.7% in 2016), atrocities against women and children, high magnitude of suicide rate, mounting road accidents and so on. The present unprecedented

disaster happened when Kerala launched its Thirteenth Five Year Plan when the country chose to dismantle the planning process and embraced a market mediated development. An approach paper was already out before this. Any paper without a vision for Kerala and silent on long-term policy choices could not be counted upon to turn the challenges facing the state into a great opportunity. Kerala needs bold and dynamic policy choices. A green state backed by a green economy that will have the full support of the well-meaning citizens will have to spell out its long-term rebuilding vision, major objectives and priorities besides the strategic options envisaged. The purpose of this paper is to throw some insights that could be useful in developing an approach to rebuild Kerala. This is but indicative and certainly not exhaustive.

That the Government of Kerala produced the Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) Report a fairly comprehensive document in record time with the support of an able team of experts drawn from eleven UN Agencies, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid is no mean achievement. This document provides the foundational launching pad for making a sound approach, a powerful strategy and stable policy framework not only to move ahead for disaster risk reduction and recovery but also for building a new Kerala. It is for the government and the people of the state to give it the shape and structure that the situation warrants. The report does not seem to tolerate red-tape, and corruption. Five months have elapsed and no official approach document is available in the public domain for discussion. This brief paper proposes a few guiding principles of approach that are germane to the rebuilding process and then identify just four priority areas.

## 1.0. A Venn Diagram Approach Underpinned by Transparency Guarantees

While adversarial politics is part of democratic practice, extremely divisive and polarizing approach will be unhelpful especially in a rebuilding

context. I think the state needs a ***Venn diagram approach*** illustrated below for taking the project to successful fruition.



Figure :1
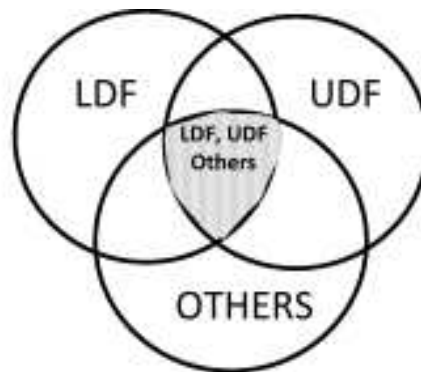
For facilitating this the most important prerequisite is to ensure some *transparency guarantees.* There is also need to perfect new political idioms through discussions. No society can meaningfully function without some presumption of trust and openness that citizens can expect. Transparency guarantees is an instrumental freedom "in preventing corruption, financial irresponsibility and underhand dealings" [Sen 1999:.40]. In the present context the first step to win the trust of the people including the opposition political parties is to place some transparency guarantees in the public domain. Certainly a dominant rent-seeking politics and the growing disregard for rule of law cannot be the basis for rebuilding Kerala.

A white paper that will spell out the sources and uses of funding along with a frank critique of fiscal management of the past as well as the differentia envisaged under the new dispensation is the need of the hour. We know that the state did not achieve any of the targets fixed in its Medium Term Fiscal Plan. Heavy tax revenue loss due to tax evasion and avoidance (in the gold sector in 2016-17 alone there was an estimated transaction worth Rs.2924.8 crore that was outside tax

network as per the CAG Report). The yawning gap between interest payments and pension payments since 2009-10 is a matter of serious concern for the state government in the present context and must be brought to the notice of the civil servants as well as the public of Kerala. Raising the retirement age to 60 years, suspending the five year pay-revision commission for some time till we  come a good way with the rebuilding process have to be re-examined in the present context. Persistent savings in budget allocations and imprudent demand for supplementary grants are signs of poor fiscal management. That the State Disaster Management Authority constituted in  2011, utilized only a little over 43% of the funds in the test-checked districts by the CAG from April 2012 through March 2017 shows the continued inefficiency of this institution which can be tolerated only at our risk. An honest review of fiscal management may be made, from which new reform options should emerge.

The PDNA estimates an expenditure of Rs.31000 crore for five years at the 2018-19 prices. This works out to Rs.6200 crore per annum. If we consider that 35% of this cost will be accounted for by the beneficiaries and the private sector the actual cost will be only Rs.4030 crore per annum at constant prices and allowing a 5% rate of inflation the estimate for 2019-20 will be only Rs.4321 crore. My hunch is that this will be below 3% of the budget for 2019-20. Given Kerala's tax revenue potential to be mobilized through prudent fiscal management and the enthusiastic response to finance the recovery and rebuilding project by the people including the diaspora the goal is not an uphill task. But it is important to tell the people how the various sources of funding that have been lined up, the KIIFB (Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board), whose mandate is outside the rebuilding project, but whose role remains to be clarified in the rebuilding context the working of the Kerala Bank and so on will have to be made explicit. The KIIFB apparently with a good technical bearing has approved 469

projects costing Rs.39714 crore till December 2018. It has an ambitious programme of market borrowing. But only three of the projects seem to be self-liquidating. The implications need be debated.

The Chief Minster's Disaster Relief Fund (CMDRF) is heading towards Rs.3,400 crore. If the government employees and some dedicated diaspora contribute to the funds at regular intervals  a steady flow of funds could be ensured. The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is being explored and could easily yield Rs.150 crore per annum. Utilization of the National Disaster Response Fund, additional funds via centrally sponsored schemes and several other expected sources have to be spelt out in detail. The scheme of additional taxation notably via the 1% of cess on GST for next two years, the magnitude of borrowing envisaged beyond FRBM ceilings and so on call for a white paper which will spell out in detail the trajectory of funding that is being envisaged. This is the best way to promote accountability, transparency and trust. The rationale of the White Paper is because public money has to be spent with wisdom, faithfulness and efficiency.

## 2.0. Recapturing the Renaissance Ethos

A common refrain  in recent months widely heard from all vocal sections notably from the ruling and opposition political parties is to recapture the spirit of renaissance in Kerala. This indeed is  timely. Lest it becomes a part of the usual political rhetoric one need to clarify what recapturing renaissance means in the present context. I think it is discovering and rediscovering the essence of humanity which has been under a cloud in recent times. We know that the process of renaissance in Kerala gave a culture shock to a community steeped in hierarchy and unfreedoms of the worst order. Like the Enlightenment of Europe that threw up reason against religious fundamentalism, Sree Narayana Guru brought out the significance of freedom for human beings who were deeply enslaved by caste-class iniquities. His fervent plea was to get enlightenment and reasoning through education thereby seeking  to strike

a mortal blow to the holy/unholy or touchability, untouchability divide. The terms 'Manushya Jyatai' and 'Sadhu Janam' coined by the Guru connote the suffering humanity and no wonder almost immediately echoed by Ayyankali and copied by several social reformers like Vakom Moulavi who were working towards freeing their communities.

In the present context, it is important to admit that Kerala has receded if not slipped significantly from the spirit of renaissance. The moot question is whether Kerala will sink preconceived religious prejudices and fundamentalism and widen the public sphere imbued with public reason for the common good? You create new norms and values only through public debates that honour reason and justice. Fundamentalists be they religious or political can never engage in reasoned debates and arrive at sound norms and values.

### 3.0. Undergird your strong points and Remedy your weak links

Logically, the best approach is to build on your strong points and strengthen your weak links. By this token *inter-alia* two important strong points to be noted are : (a) to build on local governance and decentralised planning system and (b) to foster and rally the solidarity force and voluntarism displayed during the floods especially like that shown by the fisher folk whose selfless actions (4537 fishermen with 669 boats) saved over 65000 lives something unheard of in the history of crisis management in the world. Among the many weak points we may mention the ecological overkill that considerably disfigured the bio-richness and beauty of Kerala and the social failures in integrating the tribals, fisher folk and other historically marginalized communities in the process of development. As the PDNA Report notes:

"Focusing on the particular vulnerabilities of the excluded offers an opportunity to establish a human right-based approach to recovery and rehabilitation" [p.47].

In this short note I may identify four priorities.

## 4.0. Identifying four priorities

### (i) Make  the Local Governments the Epicenter of  Recovery and Rebuilding

The local government or the third tier of governance in Kerala comprising nearly 22000 elected representatives have the strong legacy of an institutionalized multi-stage planning process that has widened the avenues of people's participation. This tier has been the recipient of over 25% of the state's investible resources and  should be natural partners in the recovery process. Although local government system of Kerala certainly has empowered women they still do not control the levers of change which can come out only through transforming gender relations. Will the women wall be the harbinger of change?

The current debates and literature are silent on the challenging issue of urban governance in Kerala. Several problems of Kerala arise out of the failure to address the issue of sprawling rural-urban continuum. Kerala's urban population increased from 4.7 million in 1981 to 15.9 million in 2011, a 3.4 times increase in three decades. Urban Kerala has the highest monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) in India with accelerating demand for consumer durables and conspicuous consumption. This has added to solid, liquid and electronic wastes which are unbearable by any standard. The rebuilding team should not bypass this. In the floods the panchayats have been in the forefront of rescue and search operations and must be roped into as natural partners in the rebuilding project. Now that the state government had already initiated a second plan campaign and a District plan initiative for all the 14 districts enlisting the cooperation of the Local governments meaningfully is possible, it is not difficult to  revive the gram sabha spirit of the past  as part of this exercise. The plan funds have to be reprioritized and reworked. I think the tremendous doability and action power of the people can be calibrated best for reconstruction only through the local governments which are pathologically getting compromised to a low level

equilibrium working as subordinate agents. They have to be made active partners rather than as subordinate agents in the rebuilding project.

We have to rope in the resilience of the local people and keep their motivation intact lest we fail. Reconstruction of 17000 new houses and repair of 46000 houses, Anganwadis, health centres, schools etc have to be done during the next 5 years. Every day solid waste of the order of 10044 tons are produced in Kerala at the local level. There is no abatement to the growing garbages. Removal of the colossal disaster debris be they beddings, broken furniture white goods or e-waste is a persistent problem which only the local governments can manage. Those regions deeply affected by floods like Kuttanad[1] and those affected by landslides as in Wayanad and Idukki can be salvaged and developed only through equipping local governments. Similarly the recovery of lakes (e.g. Vembanad) can be done only with the spirited cooperation of the local governments. It is important to recall that the people's commission on Vembanad eco-system recommended the constitution of a joint committee of District Panchayats of Alappuzha and Ernakulam to restore Vembanad and make it useful and livable. The PDNA has quite thoughtfully recommended the creation of 70 housing facilitation centres at the rate of one for two blocks and green technologies centres in every village. To avoid a fragmented approach and facilitate coordination, the manner of dovetailing the Nava Kerala Mission, notably the Harita Kerala Mission that seeks to integrate waste management, organic farming and water resource management the Clean Kerala Mission and the Suchitva Mission into a functional entity is immediately needed. Every panchayat should have the expertise to develop local level recovery planning and development. The massive rebuilding of the expertise and resources is a herculean challenge which KILA (Kerala Institute of Local Administration) and IMG (Indian Institute of Management in Government) must take on hand. But you have to make local governments the hub of the recovery programme and the local government elected representatives made the agents of rebuilding.

Section 55 of the Kerala Municipality Act provides for the creation of a state Development Council presided over by the Chief Minister with the Chief Secretary as Convener and comprises all ministers and leaders of panchayats and municipalities. Both UDF and LDF have atrophied this institution. Kerala is now on the threshold of a historic moment and the State Development Council can be made the umbrella organization that will integrate the Nava Kerala Mission and the local governments to serve as the centre-piece of the rebuilding project.

### (ii) Making Kerala a Green State

The major plank of the recovery project is to make Kerala a green state as the PDNA report suggests. Rebuilding a green economy cannot be done without understanding the havoc that has been done to the land-use pattern as well as to its beauty and resilience. Reminiscent of Keats' words 'a thing of beauty is a joy forever', Kerala has to be made an outstanding tourist  destination besides a thing of joy for the people of the  universe in the years to come. Human beings have to rely on Nature's resources for survival, but aggressive inroads  invites its wrath like landslides and floods. It also destroys livelihood and creates dystopia (e.g. Eloor, Alappad). The land use and water management of Kerala whose natural division into coastal land, a special ecological mosaic, midland that has 41 west-flowing rivers to enrich it and a high-land of unique forest system destroyed by the migrants from other parts of the state are facing serious threats. The most striking trend is the sharp decline in the area under paddy from over 35% of the cropped area on the eve of the formation of the state a position maintained upto mid 1970s, which fell to a low 7% during the last three years. Unlike the rice cultivation in other parts of India, in Kerala it is done on a water shed basis which commands the highest environmental value per hectare in the world [Costanza, R *etal* (1997)]. The paddy lands of Kuttanad, Kole, Pokkali, Kaipad, Ela etc., provide unique watersheds. They serve as natural drainage paths for flood waters, and conserve ground water

and are essential for the preservation of a rich variety of flora and fauna. Unfortunately these valuable resources are fast disappearing. The water scarcity that Kerala faces today is largely linked to this paddy reclamation. The policy makers of Kerala apparently have been feigning ignorance about these existential threats. Although the Kerala Conservation of Paddy Land and Wet Land Act was passed in 2008, which itself was very late in the day, not much has happened except to ratify all illegal transgressions even after 11 years. We should realise that the quarrying, metal crushing and sand mining lobbies are endangering Kerala's eco-system. A well designed land use policy and a comprehensive mining policy have to be made as part of the project. Instructively the Seventh Report of the Legislative Environment Committee (2014-16) regarding the working of the quarries neither analyses, nor addresses the issues directly or in detail. The manner in which the government and the political parties of this state responded to the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (2011) (popularly called Gadgil Committee) report which is a well substantiated and convincingly argued document to put it mildly was irrational and shameful. Placating vocal voter interests can never be the way to building common good and sustainable development. How can any one interested in the sustainable development of this region ignore the geospatial data base and the well-balanced participatory policy guidelines of this scientific report and rebuild Kerala? The PDNA recommends an integrated water resource management approach to build around the theme such as 'room for river' and 'making space for water' as the basis for addressing flood protection instead of creating fresh dams. This approach followed by comprehensive eco-sensitive land use policy and a new policy for building construction based on disaster resilient construction techninques is the need of the hour. It is important to explicitly note that through the state water policy recognised the need to 'integrate the problems and propects ofwater resource systems by considerig the river basin as the basic unit of planning' nothing has happened. We may have to start from here.

### (iii) Social Democracy, Social Justice, and Caring for the Poor

The recovery and reconstruction vision statements must explicitly put social justice as their priority. Why the tribals and for that matter the historically marginalized remain neglected is a question that needs to be raised now with added emphasis. It does not speak highly of Kerala's development that as per 2011 census the tribals of Kerala has the highest percentage of dilapidated and unlivable houses. Indeed the disasters have brought to sharp focus once again the vulnerabilities of the poor in general as well as of the elderly, women, the transgender and the disabled. Given Kerala's ageing phenomenon the three million migrant labour will have to continue to be part of our development for years to come. They will have to be duly provided for. Economists are never tired of establishing the importance of the sum-total of value-added and its growth. I think development becomes really value-added only when the poor are genuinely lifted up into the mainstream of society and the economy. Rebuilding has to be seen as a great opportunity to put an end to social exclusion through structural reforms along with short-term measures that will relieve the impact of the disaster immediately.

Given  the dramatic climate changes underway in the planet and Kerala's visible resource mismanagement and policy failures of the past, it is important to have a dedicated team of political leaders and bureaucrats under the Chief Minister to head the reform process, keep in readiness a dedicated early warning system and disaster management system that will quickly respond to the needs of the elderly, disabled and of the community in general.

### (iv) Towards an Accident Reducing Road Policy

This priority may sound awkward in the present context. Even so, I have no difficulty in putting as a top priority a workable road accidents reduction policy as part of the Rebuilding project. We lost 433 precious lives in the floods of 2018. We cannot also forget that during 2018 nearly 43000 people were fatally injured and 4800 persons lost

their lives. This is not something that we can happily write home about because we have been in this traffic situation for two decades now. We need to place a Road Reconstruction Policy that will reduce this everyday killing as part of our rebuilding project.

To conclude, I remain that the quality of rebuilding of development depends on politics. Gramsci famously said that politics means conscious action (Praxis) in pursuit of a social goal. The rebuilding regime of political praxis in Kerala has to understand fully the meaning of this. A white paper and transparency guarantee document must be issued to win public confidence. Placating vocal voter interests can never be the way to building good and sustainable development. Reviving the spirit of renaissance means making public health and public education the centre piece of development as Scandinavian countries have successfully demonstrated. We have to make Kerala a thing of beauty and joy for the people of this planet. A dedicated team of chosen ministers and bureaucrats under the Chief Minster as an integral part of Social Development Council that makes the Nava Kerala Mission as its viable component can deliver the new era. There is the way, if there is the will.

**References**

1.    **Sen Amartya (1999)**: *Development as Freedom,* Oxford University Press.

2.    **Costanza, R *etal* (1997)**: 'Changes in Land Utilisation Pattern and the future of Agriculture' (in Malayalam), cited in George Thomas (2010) in *Bhoomi - a Public Property*, KSSP, Thrissur.

**Footnotes**

1.    It is important to note that in 2013 the FAO has designated Kuttanad agriculture as a globally important Agriculture Heritage System and is one of the 26 sites in the Asia Pacific Region.

# Rebuilding of Kerala through Ecological Civilization

**V.S. Vijayan**

*Development civilization at the expense of nature has certainly created wealth (in a few hands) and gave 'comfort' for a few. In India in 2012, we had 1.53 lakh millionaires and 59 billionaires, whereas in 2017 it has gone up to 2.45 lakh and 136 respectively. While these are the shining part of the development civilization in India, the other side of India is mired in poverty, slums, and filth from waste mountains, pollution, suicide, rape and a seemingly incorrigible corrupt system. The most disastrous consequence of development paradigm that we have been following is that, today mother's milk is polluted, embryo in the mother's womb has toxins and, the umbilical cord of the new born baby has about 287 chemicals of which 180 are carcinogenic. Altogether, 493 different kinds of chemicals were located from baby to grandfather. Therefore, it is in this background one should think of rebuilding Kerala which was devastated by the floods and landslides. The question is; should we continue to have this kind of fossil fuel based GDP oriented development paradigm ravaging the natural resources, polluting the air, water, soil, and food resulting mainly in the creation of a few rich while pushing the life of majority in to appalling misery.*

## Background

One of the most irreversible damage caused to man and nature is the Industrial Revolution of a revolution based on fossil fuel energy (such as coal, natural gas and petroleum), which ultimately created a centralized platform for development giving way for accumulation of wealth at the expense of nature, consequently severing the very umbilical cord between man and nature.

In 1858, Karl Marx, following Fraas, wrote: "Cultivation when it proceeds in natural growth and is not consciously controlled leaves deserts behind it".Subsequently Marx and Frederick Engels wrote on the environmental issues the like very climate, soil degradation, air and water pollution, over exploitation of natural resources, over population, deforestation, desertification, industrial toxins, and the destruction of species and ecosystems. Significance of this statement is that all these observations that the whole world face today at an alarming rate came almost a century after the Industrial Revolution of 1750s.

Al Gorey in 2006 in his Oscar winning film the "Inconvenient Truth" reveals *inter-alia* how higher is the carbon dioxide presently in the atmosphere than in the past 6,50,000 years, using *Antarctic ice coring* data (*"Annual Mean Carbon Dioxide Data", NOAA/ESRL; Amos, Jonathan (2006-09-04);* "*Deep ice tells long climate story", BBC News).* Carbon dioxide level increased from pre-industrial levels of 280 parts per million by volume (ppmv) to about 396 ppmv in 2013 (Environmental Protection Agency, USA, 2015).

The inevitable need for a brake in the onward march of industrialization was, probably, brought in by Rachel Carson in 1962 through her much acclaimed sordid narration of the use of chemical pesticides and how they kill the man and nature.

Of course development civilization at the expense of nature has certainly created wealth (in a few hands) and gave 'comfort' for a few. In India in 2012, we had 1.53 lakh millionaires and 59 billionaires, whereas

in 2017 it has gone up to 2.45 lakh and 136 respectively. Automobile industry has certainly registered an impressive growth; the number of cars shooting from 3 lakh to 400 lakh between 1950 and 2010.

Sky scrapers, multi-storeyed malls challenging the West, huge mansions, flyovers, metros, highways, hospitals, industries of various hues and, all such infrastructures have increased incredibly, mostly at the cost of non-renewable resources polluting our environment and food. GDP grew up, from 3% of the 1950 to 9.59% in 2009. Although it crashed to 4.74% in 2014, all out attempts are being made to bring it up to 8%, even higher, in 2020.

While these are the shining part of the development civilization in India, the other side of India is mired in poverty, slums, and filth from waste mountains, pollution, suicide, rape and a seemingly incorrigible corrupt system.

According to 2011 census data, child death before the age of five every year was 21 lakh due to diarrhoea, typhoid, malaria, measles, pneumonia; slum dwellers about 4.26 crore; homeless 2.76 crore; people without a toilet is 70% (PRI's the World, 2016);40% childrenunder the age of 5 are stunted (Water Aid Report 2015),17 million with moderate malnutrition (India Health (Report 2016); Undernourished population in India was 250 million (FAO, 2012) and, suicide during 2005 - 2012 was 2, 84,694 (National Crime Records Bureau).

These apart, was the heavy toll on the agro-biodiversity; India had around 1,10,000 varieties of rice. Only a few (around 1500?) are left currently in pockets in North-East and in tribal colonies where green revolution has not reached. Fortunately large scale cultivation is confined hardly to 30 hybrid varieties. Forests have dwindled. In Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka alone, 40% of the forest was lost during the period from 1920 to 1990, due to one or more of the factors such as mines, quarries, illegal constructions, encroachments and tree felling. All these lead to climate change, water shortage, soil erosion, dying of rivers etc.

Wetland scenario is still worse.In India, 38% of wetlands were lost within 10 years from 1991 to 2001 (Vijayan *et al.*, 2004). In Kerala alone, the State had around 7,53,386 ha of wetlands in 2004 (Mohanan, 2004, Govt. of Kerala, 2013), whereas it has gone down to 3,71,185 ha in 2011 (MoEF, 2011; Govt.of Kerala, 2013). The loss is 3,82,201 ha (51%); that too within 7 years. The loss of Paddylands between 1975 and 2017 is 7.00 lakh ha, totalling about 10, 82,201 ha.

Pollution level is appallingly high. A study of 1700 fishes from 140 wetlands from 14 States showed none was free from either heavy metals or pesticides (Vijayan *et al.*, 2004). 60 percent of India's water-sources (which are routinely monitored) have poor "bio-chemical oxygen demand", an indicator of organic pollution; about 68 percent have faecal coliform; 79 percent metropolitan cities had very high levels of particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide, causing air pollution (Annual Report 2011-12, Central Pollution Control Board).

The most disastrous consequence of development paradigm that we have been following is that, today mother's milk is polluted, embryo in the mother's womb has toxins and, the umbilical cord of the new born baby has about 287 chemicals of which 180 are carcinogenic (9 December 2009; Environmental Working Group USA). Altogether, 493 different kinds of chemicals were located from baby to grandfather.

Therefore, it is in this background one should think of rebuilding Kerala which was devastated by the floods and landslides. The question is; should we continue to have this kind of fossil fuel based GDP oriented development paradigm ravaging the natural resources, polluting the air, water, soil, and food resulting mainly in the creation of a few rich while pushing the life of majority in to appalling misery.

**Basic Ecology of Kerala**

Kerala's ecology is dependent mainly on two physical features, namely the ecology of the Western Ghats which run across the length

of Kerala except a gap in Palakkad (remember that is why Palakkad is facing higher temperature and less rainfall compared to other parts of Kerala), and the 41 rivers that originate from the Ghats and emptying in the Arabian Sea, although with enormous man-made blocks and hindrances on the way.

Therefore, the Western Ghats (WG) and these rivers and their flood plains, wetlands (ponds, tanks, canals, streams and rivulets) have to be given special attention for building a resilient Kerala.

A few most essential vital points for the sustainable use of the resources of the WG and the wetlands in the State - the life-line of Kerala - and the related areas are listed below. Please note that the Sálim Ali Foundation does not stand against development, we insist that development should be sustainable and should not be at the expense of the total destruction of our forests, wetlands and environment.

**Major policies to be adopted for rebuilding**

At the outset six major policies are required for the protection of environment and ecological security of the State.

1. Hill Conservation Policy, Strategy, Action Plan and an Act to implement the same. This could be worked out with the participation of local communities, apart from experts. Time: 6 months

2. Land Use Policy: A draft of the Land use Policy was submitted to the Government in 2009 by the Kerala State Biodiversity Board. A Committee Chaired by the then Chairman, Kerala State Biodiversity Board (Dr. V.S.Vijayan) was appointed by the Revenue Department for formulating the policy. A copy of the same is given in annexure 1. This may be reviewed and implemented within 6 months. Once this is in place, most environmental problems will have solutions.

3. Kerala State Wetlands Wise-use Policy, Strategy and Action

Plan to be formulated within six months with public participation. Necessary acts and rules to implement the same may also have to be formulated.

4.  Kerala State Sustainable Development Policy, Strategy and Action Plan to be formulated and implemented.

5.  Apart from these, the existing Kerala State Organic Farming policy, Strategy and Action Plan adopted in 2010 has to be taken up seriously and implemented with will and determination.

The most vital point is a determined shift from the present development paradigm which destroys all our natural resources to a sustainable development paradigm conserving our natural resources to the maximum extent possible.

Action required in each area is given in the following sections

### Western Ghats

#### I.  Mining & quarrying

1.  In the Western Ghats (WG), in Zone 3 new mining can be permitted but only for scarce minerals not available in the plains with strict social audit and EIA. (ESZ, Ecologically Sensitive Zone 1,2,3 as described by the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel)

2.  The existing quarries in Zone 1 & 2 shall be banned immediately. And, no new licences shall be issued.

3.  Quarrying licence in Zone 3 can be given but after a review, case by case and Cumulative Impact Assessment Studies.

4.  Ban all illegal stone quarries immediately, which appear to be more than half of the existing quarries.

#### II.  Land use in the WG

5.  Change of land use from forest to non-forest use or

agriculture to non-agriculture shall not be permitted, except for agriculture to forest, and, except when extension of existing village settlement areas to accommodate increase in population of local residents.

6.    Respecting the commitment made at the all party meeting and the Government's decision in 1992 for regularising the land encroached up to 1.1.1977 shall be implemented after careful examination of the revenue records. This should be done very carefully as there are already umpteen allegations of irregularities.

7.    In any case, encroachments on the slopes having 30° or more and those blocking the water course must be evicted.

8.    In the case of Sabarimala, there is a dire need for regulating the annual number of pilgrims in a year as the area cannot probably support more than a lakh in a year. In the wake of allowing women pilgrims to the temple, which in any way is welcome, additional facilities have to be provided for which further forest land shall not be granted under any circumstances for the sake of the ecology of the entire area.

## A. New buildings and roads in the WG

9.    New railway lines and major roads shall not be allowed in Zone 1 & 2 of the WG, especially at the expense of forests, grass lands and wetlands. However, in Zone 3 such constructions can be allowed subject to the regulations of the government and social audit.

10.   New hotels and resorts shall not be constructed on the hill sides or water courses blocking water flow.

11.   They shall be not at the cost of forests and wetlands.

12.   In any case, high rise buildings shall not be allowed anywhere in the WG.

13. Roads and other infrastructural expansion plans must have EIA scrutiny, assessing especially ecological costs and public benefits.

14. Develop regional systems for handling hazardous, toxic, biomedical wastes as well as recyclable wastes. Local authorities should be made responsible and accountable for these.

### B. Industries in the WG

15. New hazardous or toxic waste processing units shall not be allowed in Zone 1 & 2; existing ones should be phased out within six months.

16. New polluting (red and orange category) industries shall not be allowed in Zone 1 & 2; existing industries should switch over to zero pollution by 2020 and be subject to strict regulation and social audit.

17. All the industries situated on the bank of rivers should be made pollution free within a year, otherwise they should be closed down. Licence for new industries can be given only after confirming that they are pollution-free.

### III. Power/Energy

18. Run of the river schemes can be taken up, after Cumulative Environmental Impact Assessment (CEIA) with maximum 3 m height to serve local energy.

19. No new hydropower project can be permitted anywhere in the WG.

20. Promote solar / biomass sources for decentralized energy needs.

21. Dams and thermal projects that have crossed their viable life span (for dams the threshold is 30-50 years), outlived

their utility, underperforming, silted up beyond acceptable standards, etc. to be decommissioned in phased manner.

22.   Please note that decommission is not demolition. Both are quite different. For the former, we have to follow the guidelines given by the International Commission for Dam Decommissioning.

**Process involved in decommission of a dam** are assessment of: *(a) Structural safety* due to age, weakness, structural problems, construction defects, *(b) Reservoir siltation:* inability to store water as envisaged, *(c) Reduction in benefits* due to poor design, inefficient turbines, *(d) Economic costs:* a balancing of the maintenance cost and the benefits that the society currently get, *(e) Ecological damage* caused to biodiversity and other economic loss. All these require in-depth studies by expert committees in the related areas, and finally the government has to take a call on this by assessing all the reports. It is not just demolition of the dam as many people are worried about.

23.   Special Economic Zones and new hill stations shall not be allowed in the WG considering that the entire area is already saturated and it cannot take any further burden as it has reached its carrying capacity.

24.   Alternatives for plastic bags should be made cheaper and popular and, production of plastic bags stopped and use of plastic bags banned within a year.

25.   Conversion of public lands to private lands shall not be allowed.

**IV.  Forests**

26.   Water conservation should be the most important objective of the forest management. Accordingly evolve and implement an ecosystem and landscape based approach for forest management.

27.  Ensure watershed and biodiversity conservation in the catchments. Afforestation of catchments of dams and rivers should get priority.

28.  The planters holding extensive lands under coffee, tea, rubber, cardamom in the high ranges and high altitude areas shall carry out assisted eco-restoration of catchments so as to improve flows and heal land degradation in a phased manner.

29.  Ensure one-third of the land area of the State is kept under forest (excluding plantations of all types) as envisioned in the National Forest policy, 1988.

30.  The existing forests shall be conserved in totality and no forest shall be de-notified for any schemes including laying roads, irrespective of their public appeal.

31.  However, in the least important ecologically sensitive areas, as suggested by the WGEEP (Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel), laying of roads can be considered for unavoidable public interests, but only after Environmental Impact Assessment.

**V. Wetlands and Paddy lands**

32.  Post flood disaster rebuilding of Kerala should treat conservation and sustainable use of wetlands more seriously than ever, because of the bitter experience and lessons from the disaster. Had we protected the wetlands and paddy lands, the magnitude of the flood disaster would have been reduced to at least 50%. By reducing the wetlands and paddy lands (*Wetland loss in Kerala in 7 years between 2004 and 2011 is* 3,82,201 *ha and, paddy lands between 1975 and 2017 is 7.00 lakh ha)* totalling about 10, 82,201 ha, the State has lost that much area for holding water

during rains and floods. It may be remembered that the only natural features that can hold water during flood and rain are the wetlands and forests. Therefore, it is imperative to make sure that these vital features be considered seriously while planning rebuilding of Kerala. A few most indispensable points are given below:

33.  Formulate a Kerala State Wetland Conservation and Wise-Use Policy, Strategy and Action Plan and make necessary changes in the existing rules to implement it.

34.  Ban reclaiming wetlands any further except purely for public purpose fully supported by the Government or public institutions of the Government with the full approval of the LSG.

35.  In the Amended Act, 2018 of the Kerala State Conservation of Paddy land and Wetland Act 2008, those provisions which lead to further loss of wetlands and paddy lands should be amended further to make sure that wetlands and paddy lands will be completely protected.

36.  In case of absolutely essential roads across the wetlands, consider alternatives such as fly overs without constructing bunds and sluice gates.

37.  Any project executed before 2008 but had to be stopped since the Act came into existence, allow completion of those without expanding it.

38.  Restore all wetlands reclaimed since 2008 after the State paddy land and wetland conservation Act came into existence.

39.  Encourage sustainable utilization of wetlands by participation of local communities ensuring economic benefits to the

people who live in the surroundings as demonstrated by the Biodiversity Board in 2009-'10 in Veliyankode Panchayat in Malappuram.

40.  Create a Wetland Register for each Panchayat as promised in the LDF Election Manifesto. Such a register should be with the Panchayat who should be made responsible and accountable for the conservation of wetlands in the respective Panchayats.

41.  Complete the work of data bank on a war-footing within another six months as promised in the Election Manifesto of the LDF.

42.  At no cost shall the paddy lands be reclaimed for any other purpose, including expansion of highways. In most essential areas, resort to fly-overs without filling paddy lands or wetlands can be considered.

43.  It must be born in mind that the paddy lands, apart from using for cultivation of paddy, can be used for fisheries and poultry (duck) as already demonstrated elsewhere in the country.

44.  Apart from these benefits, wetlands and paddy lands serve as a source for recharging wells and ponds which no other natural feature can do, except of course rain which is unpredictable quite often.

45.  It may also be noted that the ecosystem service values of wetlands and paddy lands is Rs.90.1 lakh per ha, that too every year. The values of all types of wetlands and paddy lands in the state put together is Rs. 2.75 lakh cr. every year, more than double this year's budget!

46.  Therefore, it is more than justifiable that the State give a

portion of these values to the owners of wetlands and paddy lands as a reward for keeping them. This will encourage the owners to preserve them rather than selling or reclaiming.

## VI. Agriculture

47.  Every inch of cultivable land in the State should be cultivated.

48.  All fallow land should be converted for cultivation, either for paddy or vegetables depending on the local conditions and water availability.

49.  Switch over to organic farming and make sure that food crops are converted into organic within 3 years, during the period of the present Government and the cash crops within another 3 years.

50.  This would be possible, only if a Mission for Organic Farming as envisaged in the Organic farming policy of the State is set up with a time targeted mission to work independently but in tandem with the Agriculture Department.

51.  Tapioca and other tubers shall not be encouraged on steep slopes (>30°), as when they are harvested, the soil get loose and washed off during rain. Farmers who shift such cultivation to plain land should be given financial compensation, especially for small landholders.

52.  Must evolve a time bound programme to make the State self-reliant in vegetable production and, to make sure that it is achieved during the period of the present Government.

53.  Set up a *Department for Urban Agriculture* focusing on agriculture development in the urban areas.

54.  All the houses must have some cultivation of vegetables

according to the availability of land including space on the terrace.

55. Houses with large lawns and flower gardens must have vegetable cultivation at least in 50 % of the area.

56. Provide compensation to the farmers who switch over to organic cultivation during the first one or two years when the production is likely to be reduced.

57. Subsidies intended for the fertilizers be given to the organic farmers to help in the organic farming.

58. Take a strong decision that production within and import of chemical fertilizers and pesticides from outside the State should be reduced in line with the expansion of organic farming area in the State.

59. Municipal/corporation waste (to be called resources for organic manure) be separated at source and distributed to villages free of cost for production of organic manure.

60. Educational centres, starting from schools must cultivate vegetables/paddy according to the space availability.

61. Make sure that the water channels be cleaned, blockades cleared for free flow of water. This should be the prime responsibility of the LSGs. This would do enormous help to the farmers.

62. Insist on using traditional varieties of paddy, vegetables and fruits and give financial support in the form of rewards for such farmers. It is to be noted that in the face of climate change, only traditional variety will have the resistance power to cope up with which they gained over decades.

63. Protect all the remaining pokkali fields for sustainable

integrated farming, as these are the areas used for eco-friendly rice - fish culture.

64.  Provide a small amount as a monthly support to the farmers who practically live on farming which depend heavily on weather which is quite unpredictable, of late.

65.  Provide a certain per cent of the annual ecosystem services of paddy land to the owners as a reward for conserving the wetlands, as the benefits are drawn by the society.

66.  Declare paddy lands as "Paddy Reserves" without affecting the ownership of the land as promised in the LDF manifesto.

67.  Write off the loans taken by the farmers affected by the deluge and landslides

68.  Genetically Modified Crops shall not be allowed anywhere in the Western Ghats and other parts of Kerala.

## VII. Coastal Ecosystem Management

69.  The State Coastal Zone Management Authority should take stringent action against the violators and has to take effective measures to monitor and check violations.

70.  The functioning of the State Coastal Zone Management Authority has to be decentralized by establishing District level Authorities with adequate legislative and financial powers to monitor and to implement the Act.

71.  The reclamation of lakes and coastal wetlands should be banned totally and the existing boundaries are to be identified and fixed using advanced technologies including satellite mapping to prevent further encroachment.

72.  Strict guidelines shall be formulated to control mining of

strategically important heavy minerals, namely black sand (such as limonite, monazite and rutile) and industrially important minerals, namely glass sand (white sand - silicates) and, the same may be enforced strictly.

73.    To prevent human settlement in CRZ, separate fishing townships with all facilities required for the fishing communities should be developed outside the No Development Zone of the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ).

74.    Notwithstanding the new coastal zone notification reducing the no-development zone to 50 meter, if the Coastal Zone have to be protected, a minimum of 200 meter from the HTL is to be earmarked as no-development zones.  This area should not be utilized for any other purpose, except for fishery related activities of the coastal fisher folk.

75.    No reclamation or constructions after 1991 should be regularized. This has particular relevance where industrial clearances are sought from the MoEF.

76.    Restoration of beaches and protection of sea shore through natural shields such as mangroves and typical coastal vegetation have to be promoted with the participation of coastal communities.

77.    In no case shall granite walls be constructed to protect the shoreline, which is ineffective and cause immense damage to the already fragile WG ecosystem.

**VIII.    Pollution Control**

78.    Industrial effluent disposal in the coastal water bodies has to be curtailed. Existing industries should be made zero pollutant within a year and the new ones must be zero pollutant.

79. Sewage collection and treatment mechanisms have to be made mandatory for house boats operating in the backwaters.

80. Local bodies should take urgent measures to control the solid waste generation and take eco-friendly measures for proper recycling or disposal of the wastes.

81. Beach Clean-up programmes should be initiated with the help of civil society organizations and coastal communities.

82. Coastal tree shield with indigenous coastal vegetation of a minimum of 10 m width should be promoted in areas of human settlements, with the participation of local communities.

## IX. Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use

83. By-catch reduction methods should be made mandatory in trawl nets to reduce the loss of biodiversity, especially the destruction of RET (Rare, Endangered, Threatened) species.

84. Principles of Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) and Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) should be adopted to manage marine fisheries of Kerala coast to sustain the productivity.

85. Special Economic Zones in certain potential fishing areas and fishermen hamlets for complementing high-tech projects should not be encouraged.

## X. Combating climate change

86. Integrated coastal area development programme covering socio-economic conditions of fisher-folks in coastal areas with participation of the local communities should be launched immediately.

87.  Considering the impending sea level rise, adaptation strategies including a proper rehabilitation programme should be in place soon.

For

## XI. For Responsible Tourism

88.  The responsible tourism guidelines should be revised, if necessary in the light of the recent flood and landslide, and followed for all the tourism initiatives in the coastal and marine areas.

89.  The number of houseboats in backwaters should be strictly limited, based on carrying capacity studies and strict rules and regulations for waste management, especially in backwater tourism using house boats, shall be formulated and enforced.

90.  All house boats shall run on non-conventional energy sources such as solar and be fitted with green toilets/safe disposal of the wastes.

## XII. Housing

91.  Houses should not be allowed on terrains with more than $25^{\circ}$ slope on the WG.

92.  It shall not be on the water course, blocking the water flow.

93.  Buildings shall be sited at a minimum of 100 meter from the rivers.

94.  In the case of rivers with dams, the maximum point where the water spread reaches at the time of opening the dams fully, may be marked and no buildings shall be permitted inside the water spread area.

95.  The building code of 2005 may be revised with provision to:

(a) Make sure that all buildings are environment-friendly, using minimum non-renewable material such as granite stones, steel, and sand. It is not to ban constructions of buildings, but to reduce the use of such material.

(b) All the new houses and the existing ones should have solar panels to meet at least 75% of the power requirement. Government must come forward with attractive schemes to support those belonging to BPL.

(c) Every house should have a roof water harvesting scheme.

(d) Waste management schemes be made mandatory for the flats with segregation at source as organic and inorganic. The former be given to the farmers for production of organic manure in the neighbouring villages.

(e) Collection and dispersal of the waste from the houses and flats should be the responsibility of the ward members and the Panchayats/ Municipalities/ Corporations.

(f) Maximum size of a house should be fixed depending on the number of members in the family. And, the license should be given only if it conforms to the rules.

## XIII. Industries

96. Industries of any type shall not be located on the river banks obstructing the water flow.

97. Each district must have a site for industrial development, considering the water availability.

98. Promote industries that do not depend much on ground water.

99. Encourage industries using local resources.

100.   All industries must be zero polluting and shall not pollute air, water or food.

## XIV. IT hubs

101.   Instead of setting up huge IT centres in one or two cities, causing pressure on housing, water supply and transportation, decentralise them across the State even at block level. This has immense social and environmental advantages.

## XV. Transport

102.   In the case of roads and railway lines in the mid lands and plains, they should not be at the expense of paddy lands and wetlands.

103.   Where the need occurs for expansion of roads at the expense of wetlands or paddy lands, alternatives should be sought of including fly overs.

104.   When the need for connecting two villages on either side of a large wetland or paddy lands, a bridge may be constructed on pillars but no bunds with sluice gates should be thought of. Water flow shall not be prevented. We have already paid dearly for such blunders during the recent floods.

105.   Roads already in use shall be converted to climate and eco-friendly in a phased manner to provide efficient and safe transportation reducing consumption of fuel, traffic congestion and environmental pollution.

106.    All roads under the various panchayats, PWD and NH which are in poor condition should be repaired on a war-footing and made weather proof, and climate resilient to the extent possible, with a guaranty for at least 15 years.

107. There should be safe pedestrian and cycle paths all over the State.

108. Bridges and Culverts in dangerous condition should also be repaired / replaced instead of going in for high investment new corridors and roads.

109. Public transport system should continue to be run by the Public Sector, but should be made more efficient, comfortable, keeping strict time schedule and, should be subsidised, considering the burgeoning fuel cost.

110. The public transport system should be made so comfortable and cheaper and the roads are laid and maintained so perfectly that it attracts senior officers and other office goers to commute daily and of course, the general public.

111. Renewable energy and non-polluting transport systems should be introduced, especially CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) for vehicles in a phased manner. Strict enforcement of pollution control norms is needed.

112. While the existing roads through the forests, wetlands and mangroves may be maintained well, no new roads or rail lines shall be permitted at the cost of these valuable ecosystems.

These points if implemented, Kerala will become the first in the country adopting an ecological civilization and naturally on its way to achieve sustainable development. In such an event, the impact of calamities as in the last year would be the minimum.

# August 2018 Floods and Landslides in Kerala: From Emergency Response to Reconstruction and Recovery

**N. Vinod Chandra Menon**

*The August 2018 floods and landslides in Kerala have been reported to be the worst flood after the devastating "flood of 99" in 1924 when Kerala had only the Idukki dam. In spite of the flash floods which happened in July and in August because of the heavy rainfall, the unprecedented rainfall in the first and second week of August resulted in the devastating floods and landslides on 15th August 2018. The opening of the shutters in all dams in Kerala when the water levels in the dams had reached near high flood levels, when all the 14 districts in Kerala were facing the red alert issued by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), has raised several questions on the lack of effective coordination between the central and state agencies, especially those responsible for dam safety, irrigation and water resources, disaster management, hydro-electric power generation by the dams, etc. This paper provides an overview of the impact of the floods, damage and loss caused by the floods, and the strategies of the Government of Kerala to undertake the post-flood rehabilitation, reconstruction and recovery in the affected districts.*

### Introduction

The monsoon entered Kerala on 29th May 2018, and Kerala had witnessed relatively severe pre-monsoon showers before the regular onset of the monsoon season. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) was monitoring the rainfall as usual and was issuing routine alerts and warning depending on the rainfall pattern in various parts of the country. The rainfall was high in June and July 2018 and in a few villages in Wayanad and Idukki, landslides also happened because of the high rainfall. The water levels in the dams in Kerala were reaching high flood levels in August and the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) had issued alerts and early warnings indicating very high rainfall in the first and second weeks of August.

During the period 8th to 15th August, the normal rain in Kerala was expected to be 98.4 mm, but actual rain during 8th to 15th August 2018 was 349.7 mm, indicating an excess rain of 255%. On 16th August, the normal rain was expected to be 13.5 mm even though the actual rain on that single day was 137 mm, indicating an excess rain of 915%. On 17th August, the normal rain was expected to be 14.5 mm but the actual rainfall was 76 mm, indicating an excess rain of 424%.

In Independent India, no state has ever before witnessed all the districts in the state facing a Red Alert issued by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) as was seen at 1.30 pm on 15th August 2018. The following table indicates the alarming situation caused by the unprecedented heavy rainfall during the month of August 2018. The excess rain during these days created stress on the dams in Kerala which were already facing high Flood Risk Levels, forcing the authorities to take the decision to release the water from the dams.

| Aug 8 - 15 Excess Rain : **255%** | | Aug 16 Excess Rain : **915%** | | Aug 17 Excess Rain : **424%** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Normal 98.4mm | Actual 349.7mm | Normal 13.5mm | Actual 137mm | Normal 14.5mm | Actual 76mm |
| | | | | Rainfall figures are statewide averages | |

The authorities took the decision to release the water from the dams on 15th August after the red alert was issued for all the 14 districts of Kerala by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) because of the very high rainfall threatening to overtop the dams where the water levels were already reaching high flood levels. All the dams in Kerala opened the shutters and a huge quantity of water was released from the dams breaching the river banks, destroying crop lands and damaging houses, roads and bridges and uprooting trees, lamp posts and power supply transmission networks which also resulted in disruption of water supply in several flood affected districts. In some parts, the water was released from the dams without providing advance warning to government officials, elected representatives and local level functionaries causing panic among communities threatened by the rising water levels in the rivers and even in the urban and peri-urban areas in the catchment areas of the dams.

The initial estimates of the areas and population affected suggested that about one-sixth of the population of Kerala must have been impacted by the floods and landslides. It was confirmed much later that 1259 villages out of 1664 villages (75.66%) in Kerala were impacted by the floods. 511 GramaPanchayats in 7 worst affected districts of Kottayam, Pathanthitta, Alappuzha, Ernakulam, Thrissur, Idukki and Wayanad out of the total 941 Grama Panchayats in Kerala reportedly were affected by the floods. Kerala has 941 Village Panchayats (Grama Panchayats), 152 Block Panchayats and 14 District Panchayats; in the urban areas it has 87 Municipalities and 6 Corporations, a total of 1200Local Self Government Institutions. The number of Census towns in Kerala increased from 99 in 2001 Census to 461 in 2011. The number of Urban Areas in Kerala has now become 520. The increasing trends in urbanization has seen the simultaneous increase in the aspirations of people to build pucca houses with RCC roofs in the urban, peri-urban areas and even in the rural areas. The foreign remittances sent by the people of Kerala from abroad, especially from the middle east countries, have further accelerated investments in pucca houses in most parts of Kerala.

There was overwhelming response in emergency search and rescue and evacuation by elected representatives, government officials, youth and first responder agencies including the armed forces personnel, NDRF personnel, coast guard, police, fire and emergency services, fishermen, Kudumbashree members, volunteers from Indian Red Cross Society, and general public from diverse sections of the society. Relief camps were established to provide shelter for more than 14.5 lakh people who faced the onslaught of the floods and landslides. In one of the largest rescue operations mounted in natural disasters in any state, the concerned Ministries of the Government of India deployed 40 helicopters, 31 aircrafts, 182 teams for rescue, 18 medical teams of defense forces, 58 teams of NDRF and 7 companies of Central Armed Police Forces along with over 500 boats and necessary rescue equipment.According to the state government's estimate, a total of 4,537 fishermen participated in the rescue operation with 669 fishing boats and managed to rescue more than 65,000 marooned people from various districts.

The Government of Kerala announced that Rs. 10,000 will be given as emergency cash support to the families of people who took shelter in the relief camps. The flood affected people were also provided Family Kits with food and Non food items and "Back to Home Kits" when they returned to their homes from the relief camps after the flood waters receded. The uninsured losses to agriculturists, artisans, petty traders, micro enterprises and small businesses appear to be enormous and these people will find it difficult to restore their livelihoods in the absence of appropriate support.

The Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) was inundated with the flood waters and the aircrafts were grounded. The airport was not able to operate for a few weeks. The Cochin airport is in a low lying area and the Disaster Management Plan for the Cochin International Airport (CIAL) and similar critical infrastructure must be reviewed and revised to ensure that appropriate Standard Operating Procedures are incorporated in the Disaster Management Plans of such establishments.

The high rainfall in Kerala from 8th August 2018 onwards leading

to extremely high water levels in the dams in Kerala was described as the cause of the unprecedented floods which affected several million people across the state. The high water levels in the dams, combined with heavy inflows into the reservoirs and extremely heavy rainfall forced the opening of shutters in all the dams simultaneously in Kerala.

The weak areas of governance which resulted in the unprecedented flood disaster, reportedly the worst in more than a century, cannot be overlooked.Changes in land use, quarrying, sand mining, stone cutting, blasting, violation of construction regulations on the river banks, silt deposits in rivers and water bodies, deforestation, etc. increased the ecological fragility in the eco sensitive areas. The coordination between various agencies of the Government of India and agencies and institutions of the Government of Kerala must be strengthened to avoid the recurrence of such incidents. Early warning systems, accurate forecast using Doppler radar data, Automatic weather stations, micro weather tracking and nowcasting using remote sensing and satellite imagery and weather variability monitoring models need to be strengthened. The convergence of Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), Bio-diversity Management and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Practices and mainstreaming them with the local development plans at the district, gramapanchayat and village levels must be ensured.

The release of enormous volumes of water from the dams caused land subsidence, fissures, decline of ground water aquifer levels, disappearance of water from wells, changed course of rivers, river erosion and damage to infrastructure, assets and amenities. The loss of lives, disruption of livelihoods, collapse of traditional cottage industries like handloom and handicrafts and the misery faced by the flood and landslide affected communities was unexpected and the people were not prepared to face such an unprecedented flood.

**The Impact of the Floods and Landslides**

It has been reported in the media that the floods in Kerala caused damage to Panchayat Roads to the extent of more than 82,000 kms

while the roads maintained by the Public Works Department saw damage to over 14,000 kms of road length. More than 221 bridges were reportedly damaged by the floods. The crop damage in the agriculture sector was estimated to be over 52,000 hectares. The power supply, water supply and telecommunication infrastructure also suffered damage and destruction. The drinking water sources like wells were damaged due to contamination with flood waters and due to the overflowing of septic tanks.

The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank made a preliminary assessment of the damage caused by the floods at Rs. 25,046 Crores. The World Bank and Asian Development Bank team covered the flood impact on 11 key sectors like housing and public buildings, urban infrastructure, rural infrastructure, irrigation and water resources, power, transport, health, livelihoods, natural environment & bio diversity and cultural heritage. The damage assessment by the World Bank ADB Team across the various sectors shows the extent of damages.

In the Transport sector it was Rs. 8557 Crore (Rebuilding state roads:  Rs 7647 Crore and Rebuilding National Highways: Rs 910 Crore); In the Agriculture sector (Rs. 2093 Crore); Livestock (Rs 154.7 Crore); Fisheries (Rs. 225.4 Crore); Industries (MSMEs) (Rs 641.9 Crore); Handloom & Coir (Rs. 9.8 Crore); Tourism (Rs. 676.9 Crore); Housing (Rs. 2534 Crore); Public Buildings (Rs 191.1 Crore); Urban Infrastructure (Rs. 2093.1 Crore); Rural Infrastructure (Rs. 5216.4 Crore); Irrigation & Water Resources (Rs. 1484 Crore); Power (Rs. 353.1 Crore); Health (Rs. 280 Crore); Livelihoods (Rs 3801.7 Crore); Environment (Rs. 452.2 Crore); Cultural Heritage (Rs. 86.1 Crore). The total damage estimated amounted to (Rs. 25,046 Crore)

The disaster impact can be seen from reportedly 82.000 kms of Panchayat Roads damaged, 14000 kms of PWD Roads damaged, 221 bridges damaged, damage to crops in 52,000 hectares, damage to power supply, water supply and telecommunication infrastructure, damage to wells due to contamination with flood waters and overflowing septic tanks and loss of lives and disruption of livelihoods.

Special efforts must be made to seek the guidance of geologists, civil engineers, structural engineers, geo-technical engineers and hydrologists to assist the District Collectors in identifying villages and settlements which may have to be relocated based on the fissures, subsidence, debris flows, landslide history, drainage pattern and other relevant parameters. The Kerala floods and landslides have provided an opportunity for rebuilding Kerala.

A detailed Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) was carried out for the Kerala Floods, led by the Government of Kerala, with representatives of the United Nations, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid. The PDNA assessed the damages and losses caused by the floods and estimated the total recovery needs as Rs. 31,000 Crore. The break up of the PDNA assessment is given below.

**Social Sectors**

Housing, Land and Settlements: Rs. 5,443 Crore; Health and Nutrition: Rs. 600 Crore; Education and Child Protection: Rs. 214 Crore; Cultural Heritage: Rs. 80 Crore; Sub Total: Rs. 6,337 Crore.

**Productive Sectors**

Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock: Rs. 4,498 Crore; Sub Total: Rs 4,498 Crore.

**Infrastructure Sectors**

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: Rs. 1,331 Crore; Transportation: Rs 10,046 Crore; Power: Rs 353 Crore; Irrigation: Rs 1,483 Crore; Other Infrastructure: Rs 2,446 Crore; Sub-Total: Rs. 15,659 Crore.

**Cross Cutting Sectors**

Environment: Rs 148 Crores; Employment and Livelihoods: Rs 3,896 Crore; Disaster Risk Reduction: Rs. 110 Crore; Gender and Social Inclusion: Rs 35 Crore; Local Governance: Rs 32 Crore; Sub-Total: Rs.

4,221Crore; Total: Rs 30,715 Crore; Integrated Water Resources Management: Rs 24 Crore; Grand Total: Rs 30739 Crore, Rounded Off to Rs. 31,000 Crores

**Fund Mobilisation for Post Flood Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Recovery**

The resource requirement for recovery for addressing the damage caused by the floods and landslides was estimated at Rs. 31,000 Crore in the PDNA by the United Nations agencies. Prime Minister, Home Minister and MoS, Home in the Government of India declared allocation of Rs. 500 Crore, Rs. 100 Crores and Rs. 80 Crore respectively after their visits to the flood affected areas. The Government of Kerala reportedly has Rs. 786 Crore in the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) as allocation to the state from the Government of India. The funds expected from other sources are as follows:

It is expected that the Government of Kerala will be able to raise Rs. 7,200 Crore from the World Bank, Rs. 400 Crore from the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund, Rs. 2,500 Crore from the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Rs. 1,500 Crore from the Panchayat Development Fund, Rs. 1,000 Crore from the Goods and Service Tax Cess and Rs. 2,000 Crore from the Plan Flood Deficit, making a total expected resource mobilisation of Rs. 15,900 Crore. The Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund (CMDRF) has also raised resources to the tune of about Rs. 3,400 Crore. The post-flood rehabilitation, reconstruction and recovery is dependent on the availability of funds for undertaking the reconstruction of damaged infrastructure, destroyed buildings, roads and bridges and other amenities.

The Rebuild Kerala Initiative has set up a crowdfunding portal (see https://rebuild.kerala.gov.in) to mobilise funds for school rebuilding, livestock replenishment, house rebuilding, and for supporting anganwadis.

It is estimated that the Government of Kerala will collect about Rs. 15,900 Crore through various funding options as follows:

- World Bank: Rs. 7200 Crore
- Rural Infra Development Fund: Rs 400 Crore
- NABARD: Rs 2500 Crore
- HUDCO: Rs 1300 Crore
- GST Cess : Rs 1000 Crore
- Panchayat Development Fund: Rs 1500 Crore
- Plan Fund Deficit: Rs. 2000 Crore
- **Estimated Total Resource Mobilisation : Rs 15,900 Crore**

The Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India sanctioned Rs. 1800 Crore under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) for 2018-19 for Kerala for creating 5.5 Crore person days of work.

**Rich Social Capital in Kerala**

About 76,285 houses were cleaned by 136,885 Kudumbashree volunteers. The Kudumbashree team cleaned 2,165 public buildings.1,773 families were provided with shelter by Kudumbashree members in their own homes. The Kudumbashree Constructions with all women team have built 70 houses for the families whose houses have been destroyed by the floods and are planning to construct 700 houses.

It has been reported that 4357 fishermen became miracle saviours of marooned people in the worst flood affected districts by bringing 669 boats on trucks from the coastal districts of Kerala and rescuing 65,000 marooned people and bringing them to the safety of relief camps. Elderly people, women, youth and people from all sections of the society irrespective of caste, class, gender and age came forward to extend help to the flood affected people. People from other states, Non Resident Indians from foreign countries and the Malayali diaspora abroad reached out by contributing in cash and kind to help the flood affected people of Kerala.

Community kitchens were organized by charitable trusts, Non Governmental Organisations and corporate sector entities. Hundreds of thousands of volunteers reached out in response to the call from young district collectors to extend their support to the relief efforts during the immediate post flood days. More than 80 humanitarian assistance organisations from different parts of the country came together and extended their support during the post flood relief and rehabilitation phase working closely with more than 182 local organisations in Kerala. Inter Agency Groups were established by Sphere India in 10 districts under the chairmanship of district administration officials starting from the first meeting of civil society organisations chaired by the District Collector, Wayanad on 16th August 2018.

The reconstruction challenges being faced by the flood affected communities are the following:-

The Land Use Plan Maps, Flood Inundation Maps and Landslide Maps in the worst affected districts were not available in most districts.

The study of changes in geo-morphology and hydro-morphology after the floods and landslides in the flood and landslide affected areas needs to be carried out to ensure that the reconstruction efforts are not rebuilding risk.

The Study of subsidence, soil piping, fissures, liquefaction, changing course of rivers and other trends in the flood and landslide affected areas are extremely important in the reconstruction and recovery efforts.

The Landslide Susceptibility and Slope stability in landslide affected areas also needs to be studied to ensure that the landslides do not recur in fragile areas during the coming monsoon months.

Relocation possibilities and cluster housing options must be explored in land scarce situations because the landslide affected areas have become extremely fragile.

In the flood and landslide affected areas, there is a need to shift

from dependence on supply driven solutions to demand driven solutions through multi-stakeholder engagement and consultations, especially with disaster affected communities.

There is also a critical imperative to shift from reliance only on structural engineering solutions to increased acceptance of social engineering approaches through consensus building with disaster-affected communities.

A pragmatic reconstruction and recovery strategy must review land use maps, flood inundation maps, landslide maps and analyse the geo-morphology, hydro-morphology, satellite imagery and remote sensing, susceptibility and slope stability for considering the approvals for rebuilding of destroyed and damaged houses.

It has been found in the recent years that most of the funds earmarked for disaster management are being utilised by the state governments and Union Territory administrations for post-disaster relief efforts. There is a need for reviewing the allocation of funds for disaster management and strengthen disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in multi-hazard prone areas. It is seen that hydro-meteorological disasters are becoming more frequent and their intensity is increasing. Even though the lives lost in disasters is reducing over the years, the devastation caused by natural disasters on infrastructure, assets and livelihoods is increasing in an exponential manner.

The financial health of the Government of Kerala indicates that there is a need to evolve very radical and pragmatic steps for ensuring financial discipline in the state.

**The Suggested Architecture for Nava Keralam**

Communities must be centre-staged in community-led, owned and managed plan formulation, design, development, implementation and monitoring. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Climate Change Adaptation

(CCA) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must drive development planning at the local level.Special attention needs to be given to the marginalised and weaker sections, elderly, differently abled people, palliative care patients, etc.

Rainwater harvesting must be made mandatory for all new houses constructed in Kerala.Solar panels for individual houses and micro grids at the local levels with the possibility to sell saved surplus energy to the Electricity Board must also be considered.Buildings of all new public institutions like Hospitals, Health Centres, Schools, Anganwadis etc. must be made disabled friendly.In coastal areas, mangrove plantations must be promoted with support of local Panchayati Raj Institutions.Appropriate solid waste management solutions must be adopted by Urban Local Bodies and Panchayati Raj Institutions through a multi-stakeholder engagement and inclusive consultative process.

The Kerala society showed during the floods and landslides in 2018 that humanitarian considerations are supreme in the face of the devastation which did not polarise or divide the disaster affected communities on caste, class or gender differentials. The society as a whole made special efforts to address the needs and concerns of people among the vulnerable sections. The elderly people, widows, palliative care patients and people with disabilities were taken care of by the volunteers and rescue teams. The psycho social care and mental health care of traumatised people who lost their assets, crop lands and houses received the attention of specialised institutions and specially trained mental health professionals.

The Nava Keralam initiative must be grounded on eco-friendly sustainable development and organic agriculture with special consideration of endangered bio-diversity in the Western Ghats in Kerala. All new construction in Kerala must be undertaken with building permissions granted by local bodies only on compliance of the provisions of the National Building Code 2016, building byelaws along rivers and

coastal areas and development control regulations. Scientific application of tools and techniques for monitoring reservoir levels, inflow into the reservoirs from rivers, water levels in rivers and rainfall forecasts and "nowcasts" must be encouraged. Effective mechanisms for improving coordination between Central Water Commission (CWC), Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB), Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA), Kerala Dam Safety Authority and Kerala Coastal Zone Management Authority and other relevant Central and State government agencies must be explored.

Improved surveillance and monitoring using sensors, models and satellite imagery and remote sensing, and application of Scenario Analysis, Expert Systems and Artificial Intelligence must be ensured. Rebuilding Kerala must build on inherent strengths of Kerala's "**social capital**": Kudumbashree self help groups, Community Based Organisations, *tech savvy youth*, start up companies, senior citizens, elected representatives of ULBs, PRIs, Gram Panchayats, District Panchayats and Legislative Assembly, cadres of political parties, fishermen, ex-service men, media, multi-disciplinary professionals, faith based organisations, spiritual leaders and their disciples.

## Summing Up

Kerala's development trajectory from the hitherto pursued lop-sided development strategies must change to eco-friendly sustainable development pathways. This must be the new mantra of Rebuild Kerala Initiative. Sub-district level disaster management plans must be formulated at all levels by undertaking risk assessment, risk remediation and risk reduction approaches and incorporating disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and management of extreme weather events in micro level development planning. Resource Centres must be established at every block and Gram Panchayat level in worst affected districts with backward and forward linkages as has been attempted now with the establishment of Housing Facilitation Centres.

There is an urgent need for establishing a 2018 Flood and Landslide Museum and Recovery Lab with digital documentation of land use maps, flood inundation maps, landslide maps and archiving documents, reports, good practice insights, anecdotal documentaries etc. on the floods and landslides. "Smriti Vans" must be established in memory of those who lost their lives in the floods and landslides so that the memory of the floods and landslides will live through the ecological restoration efforts nurtured by the local communities as a grim reminder of the potential devastation that can recur if we take nature for granted once again. The repeat of the 1924 floods took 94 years. We must do everything possible to make sure that such disasters do not recur again. This can be ensured only through collective consensus for a new eco-friendly development pathway which puts the larger public interest as its foundation.

**References**

1.	Government of Kerala, United Nations, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Union *Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid: Kerala, Post Disaster Needs Assessment Floods and Landslides August 2018*. Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, October 2018

2.	Kerala State Planning Board, *Economic Review 2018*, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, January 2019

3.	K.P.Kannan (Ed) (2018): *Kerala in Transition, Essays on Economy, Polity and Society,* Laurie Baker Centre for Habitat Studies & Centre of Science and Technology for Rural Development, Thiruvananthapuram.

# The 'New Kerala' Should be a Modern Welfare State

**B. Vivekanandan**

*A dynamic, statesmanly political leadership would invariably endeavour to make catastrophic situations, created by big calamities, into turning-points and new opportunities and move ahead with a determination to re-organise or rebuild the existing state system, keeping in view not only the question of how to repair the damage caused by the catastrophe, but also how to pave new ways for augmenting the general welfare of the whole population.*

### The Flood Disaster

Kerala is at such a juncture, engendered by a devastating flood disaster, and its terrible accompaniments, like a row of 537 landslides in the Western Ghats, caused by 12 days - long torrential rains all over the state, between 8th and 20th of August 2018. It has made all 44 rivers of the state in spate, and made all 42 major dams, and most of the 40 minor dams, in the state to lift their shutters to prevent more serious disasters. Reports say that 483 people have died and more than 57,000 homes and shops have been destroyed or damaged due to these floods and landslides. It has damaged about 10,000 kms of PWD roads, besides many bridges. In the agriculture sector alone, the loss suffered has been over Rs. 3646 crores. It is estimated that in order to restore the *status quo ante* the state would need more than Rs.25,700 crore.

To combat the flood havoc, the people of Kerala has shown a commendable sense of unity, cutting across all divides, which was manifest in abundance during the rescue and rehabilitation operations. A shining saga among them was the selfless devotion displayed by the fishermen of the Kerala coast, who have voluntarily jumped into the fray with their small fishing boats, their only means of livelihood. Their dare-devil actions during the rescue operations have already become a legend.

**Partly Man-made**

The flood disaster in Kerala, in August 2018, has been partly man-made. In 2011, an expert Committee on Environment, headed by Madhav Gadgil, has specifically notified 17 areas of the Kerala region of Western Ghats, including Munnar, as ecologically fragile zones and recommended that this should be preserved undisturbed. But, in violation of this stipulation, vested interests were allowed to encroach and build up resorts and tourism centres, and other constructions, in these earmarked ecologically fragile areas, which has seriously disturbed the ecology of the Western Ghats. These activities were complemented by a large-scale stone quarrying all over the foothills of Western Ghats, in violation of these recommendations. The stone mining mafia gangs have grown up in large numbers and flourished everywhere, with the connivance of those who were in authority from time to time. The impact of mining activities in these quarries on the ecologically fragile areas of Western Ghats has been instant. When rocks in the foothills are mined by using powerful dynamites, it would inevitably shake the ecologically fragile areas at the top and also in the neighbourhood. Indeed, most of the 537 landslides in the Western Ghats, during those 12 traumatic days, took place due to this activity. Many people, and many homes, perished instantly due to these landslides. That is another facet of how this disaster has partly been man-made.

Other contributory factors which added to the intensity of floods have been filling up of fertile paddy fields in the state, to help the real

estate businessmen to build high-rise buildings, causing shrinking of space for water percolation during the monsoons, and the blocking of natural outlets of water. The large-scale road-widening in the state from 8 metre wide two-lane roads to whopping 45-60 meters wide, 4-lane and 6-lane tarred roads all over the state, has also reduced the water percolation space. When natural outlets of water get blocked in such ways, by the overdrive of upstarts for luxury and pleasure, water would find its own way to flow, which can cumulatively take only the form of floods. These are other facets of how this disaster has partly been man-made.

In the circumstances, the government of Kerala should suitably rectify these mistakes, and get back to the Gadgil Committee recommendations and implement them faithfully and honestly, and stop all activities in the ecologically fragile zones of Western Ghats. It should strictly stop all stone-quarrying activities in the foothills of Western Ghats. Equally important is to accord overriding importance to environmental protection in all development policies of the government in future.

**PWD Role in Restoration**

In the restoration activities, a pivotal role should be assigned to public sector institutions. Transparency and public accountability in spending should be ensured to preserve public confidence in all pertinent spending. The repairing of damaged roads and bridges should necessarily be assigned only to the State Public Works Department, and, wherever necessary, also to the CPWD, to make the repair work corruption-free, and of high quality. The state PWD should be brought back to the centre of doing public works activities, and should be well-equipped, as a policy, to perform that role in future in a corruption-free manner. This is also an opportunity to strengthen the public sector in the state.

**Fund Raising**

In the fund raising drive to do the repair, the government should

refrain from reckless borrowing from whoever offers loans to the state, without proper assessment of their intentions.

## Need for Grants and Donations

The support Kerala needs today for rebuilding the State is not debilitating loans, but grants, cess and voluntary donations from inside Kerala, from other States of India and from abroad, particularly from reputed international solidarity foundations of Social Democratic Parties of Europe, which have a record of extending humanitarian help to victims of natural calamities. People of Kerala, and the Non-Resident Keralites abroad have responded positively to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's appeal for support to repair the damage, and to rehabilitate the victims of floods. In a spontaneous expression of solidarity with the people of Kerala, almost all State governments in India have responded spiritedly to the appeal of the Chief Minister. Many countries abroad have also indicated their intention to help Kerala to overcome the difficulties caused by the flood disaster. But, the Narendra Modi government, which is not familiar with, nor subscribes to, the principle of international solidarity, has thrown a spanner into such potential offers of open humanitarian support from abroad. But, the state leadership should strain every nerve to harness such support in forms of grants and donations for this purpose, from any part of the world. In a shrinking world, international solidarity actions are the would be norm in people-to-people relations in future.

## Don't Take New Loans From World Bank

But, on the option of taking loans for the purpose, the government of Kerala should not rush for that easy option to overcome the present problems, and put the State's finance on the track of bankruptcy in the coming years. Since the floods in Kerala, we see the World Bank officials hovering around the government premises to thrust more loans on Kerala's shoulders by exploiting the present situation of the state. But, the government of Kerala should show the wisdom to reject such phoney

overtures from the World Bank, and its associates, because its motives are malevolent.

Therefore, I strongly urge the government of Kerala to reject new loan offers from the World Bank. I would explain the context. Some years ago, I had the opportunity to meet Dr.Bruno Kreisky, former Chancellor of Austria, an outstanding world statesman and a staunch supporter of the development of the developing countries, in Vienna. During our conversation pertaining to the World Bank loans for third world development, Dr.Kreisky told me about the existence of a nexus between the World Bank and the giant automobile manufacturers of Europe and America, and about the motive behind the World Bank loans for the widening of motorable roads in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. In an evaluation of future car markets in the world, the giant car makers of the West have found that, as car consumption in the developed countries of the West have reached a saturation point, their potential car market would be the populated developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. They have assessed also that to promote a massive expansion of their car and lorry sales in future, a big widening of motorable roads in the developing countries would be a pre-requisite. The strategy they hatched, in collaboration with World Bank, was that, without spending any money from their pocket, they would achieve their objective of getting widened roads in all developing countries, for expanding their car market, through the provision of World Bank loans to the developing countries earmarked for the purpose. What does it mean? It means, the debt burden and the repayment liabilities are on the shoulders of the people of the developing countries, and the direct beneficiaries of it are the big car and lorry manufactures of Europe and the United States.

Kerala Government's ongoing road widening activities in the State, with World Bank loans, from its present 8m to 45-60 meters wide, under the garb of 'development' is basically to promote the car market interests of big car companies of the West, after making the people of Kerala

and their children, to carry more and more debt burden on their shoulders. Should a Left government in Kerala also continue to support the market expansion interests of these big car companies of Europe and United States this way?

It has been reported that, during the recent floods in Kerala some of those newly widened roads in Kerala, built with World Bank loans, got damaged, and the World Bank officials have approached the Government of Kerala, with the advice to take more loans in the name of the people of Kerala, to repair the same roads, for the same purpose. Therefore, I urge the Left government of Kerala not to take more loans from the World Bank to serve the market interests of the car companies of the West.

Kerala's debt burden today is ₹1,86,453 crore. Adding to it with further loan from the World Bank, for expanding the car market of Western car companies, is, ideologically and rationally, not acceptable.

**The 'New Kerala' Should be a Welfare State**

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has declared that, by making use of the present opportunity, he would target the construction of a "New Kerala". But, he has not elaborated it. What he aims at by stating it, needs more clarity. Certainly, simply by repairing the damage that took place during the recent floods in the State, would not get established a "New Kerala". What we should strive for is to build Kerala as a modern Welfare State, which would ensure uniform social protection to one and all, from the "Cradle-to-the grave". It would mean that, a benign Kerala State would increasingly assume the main responsibility of the welfare of all people in the State through appropriate, public funded, institutionalised mechanisms.

It would also mean that the government would assume direct responsibility for the provision of social security, healthcare, medical care, education, social services, pensions, family allowances, child allowances, etc; for everyone in the State. And, all these provisions should

be funded substantially from the state revenues. The system is in successful operation in all Scandinavian Social Democracies like Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland.

## The Swedish Experience

In a country like Sweden, "the cradle-to-the-grave" Welfare State System works like this: The Welfare State benefits begin to reach a person as soon as a person is born. The sequence of it is like this. As soon as a child is born, the mother receives a gift packet from the government, with the official seal on it, containing baby clothes and other baby care items needed for the new born. After the child's birth, the parents begin to receive a child allowance, every month, for the healthy growth of the child. They receive this allowance till the child reaches 17 years old. The child's education is free; the study material is free; daily school lunch is free; and the public transport for all school going children is free. After the completion of education, it is the responsibility of the government to find him/her a gainful job, failing which, till such time a job is provided, the government is duty-bound to pay a maintenance allowance for him/her. When a person becomes a wage-earner, a reverse order begins and he/she becomes a tax-payer, thereby a financier of the Welfare State System. On retirement, a person gets about 65% of salary as pension, which means that the person can maintain almost the same standard of living after retirement. Healthcare of all Senior Citizens is free. Social Services provided to him are also free. When a person dies, the funeral/burial expenses are also met by the State. That is how the 'cradle-to-the-grave' welfare state system operates in Sweden.

Social security system in Sweden encompasses the right to work, right to education, a decent place to live, and so on. Under the system, the entire population is insured against illness. Everyone gets equal opportunity for education. The system protects all employees from work related accidents and sickness. All employees are entitled to compensation for industrial injury. Housewives are entitled to annual

holidaying at any tourist spot in the country at the governmental expenditure. All mothers receive maternity grants. Under a family law, either father or mother is entitled to 7-monhs leave, with full pay, after the birth of a child.

There is highly developed pension scheme in Sweden. Under the old-age pension scheme, all old people are entitled to a pension. Similarly, all disabled people, after the age of 16, are entitled to a pension. If a person is fully disabled, he/she would get a full disability pension, which is equal to the old-age pension. Similarly, parents are entitled to childcare allowance, if they themselves nurse their disabled children.

In Sweden, medical care is free, except a nominal prescription fee.

A notable feature of the Swedish welfare state system is that it is attuned to promote egalitarianism in society. The application of the Steeply Progressive Income-tax system, and the solidarity wage-structuring, has substantially reduced the income disparity between the take-home pays of the low-paid and high-paid employees.

Indeed, it is worth sending a few experts from Kerala State Planning Board to Sweden, to study and report the nitty-gritty of how the Welfare State System is organized, operated and funded there, as an input to make Kerala as a Modern Welfare State.

However, I hope, the Kerala Chief Minister would attune his "New Kerala" concept to make Kerala a Welfare State, based on equality, equal justice and solidarity, in the coming years.

# Sustainable Agriculture : Past Lapses and the Way Ahead

**Mary George**

*Rural Kerala is in debt. Farmers are more deeply indebted. National Sample Survey Organisation Survey, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Survey etc. throws light to the grave situation of Kerala agriculture. The most backward tribal districts of Kerala - Idukki and Wayanad - are the worst victims of flood of 2018. Flood devastated Kerala agriculture and its dependents, looks for alternatives. Kerala has always been food deficient. Plantation sector has also been failing after the removal of Quantitative Restriction on imports (QRs) of 824 agricultural commodities after signing the WTO Treaty in 1995. A new, scientific look at agriculture, with a shift to high value crops, without discarding the traditional varieties, without eroding ecological balance, is what Kerala is looking for.*

After observing the honour and gifts bestowed upon the celebrities of World Cup Narendra Shekhawat (2011)[1] commented to 'hell with the World cup'; to 'hell with the celebrations'; to 'hell with all the free land and money' being showered by different governments on the players. He asked "how can I jump, scream, have gallons of beer and cheer for the nation when a few kilometers away the farmers and feeders of my

country are taking their own lives in hordes?" (The Hindu, April 24, 2011) In Kerala on 9th August 2018, when the state was about to submerge under flood waters, the Chief Minister was busy signing licenses for liquor manufacturing. When this became a contentious issue Minister E.P. Jayarajan went to the extent of saying that if needed more licenses would be given so that Kerala becomes self sufficient in liquor production. Does he know that Kerala is the State with the highest per-capita intake of liquor? Does he, know that in the late 1970's and early 1980's Kerala produced rice to satisfy around 42 percent of her requirement, which has declined to mere 10 to 15 percent of the requirement by 2017 -18? Self-sufficiency in food grains or liquor which is accorded first priority in the Election Manifesto of the LDF?

**Basic Features of Kerala Agriculture**

Kerala agriculture is characterised by low scale and low productivity. Around 96 percent of operational holdings are below one hectare (Economic Review 2018, Appendix Table 2.30). The problem is exacerbated by weather and market risks. Around 80 percent of the area under cultivation does not have access to irrigation. Ramesh chand etal (2017)[2] highlights the finding of the National Sample survey on situation Assessment Survey of Agriculture households (NSS-SAS), that 13.9% farm households in India experienced negative return from crop production during 2012-13. Non-farm income comprised 40% of the income of farm households, but access to non-farm sources of income is highly skewed as about 40 percent of farm households reported zero income from such sources. In the case of Kerala, non-farm source of income in the rural sector is significant with its absence.

Kerala, with a total geographical area of 38.8 Lakh hectares, suffers seriously from the hazards of soil erosion due to factors like high but erratic rainfall, undulated topography, indiscriminate deforestation, encroachment by land lobby, unchecked and illegal quarrying and sand and other mineral mining. Planning Board (1984)[3] reported that watershed method was followed as the method of planning and execution

of soil conservation measures. Out of the total geographical area 38.9% or 15 lakh hectares were identified as erosion prone. Only 75,000 hectares or 1.9 per cent of the erosion prone land underwent soil erosion treatment until mid 1980's. (Report of the High Level Committee on Land and Water Resources, State planning Board, 1984)

**Food Security at Risk**

The land utilization statistics of the state underlines that 24.84 lakh hectares or 66.5 percent of the geographical area is under various crop cultivation. Cropping pattern underwent radical shift between 1952-53 and 2016-17. Area under food crops which was 7,88,190 hectares in 1952-53, increased to an all time high of 9,26,350 hectares in 1970-71. Around this time area expansion reached a peak and there after declined to 8,01,699 hectares by 1980-81. It further declined to 5,59,450 hectares in 1990-91 and to 1,71,398 hectares by 2016-17. At present only 6.6 per cent of the total cropped area is under paddy cultivation. Thus Kerala's food security is highly at risk. Food security, according to United Nations Committee on World Food security is realized " when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Nutritional dimension is all the more important. To reach this goal, U.N recommends to promote sustainable agriculture as a sustainable development goal (SDG) by 2030. Food security according to UN can be reached only by doubling of food output by the stipulated period by developing countries like India. In the Indian Federal set up Kerala is going to be the worst victim of food insecurity. Food security Act 2013, promises to give money worth of secure food, if the centre fails to safeguard food security provisions of states through Public Distribution System. When the centre fails to procure food grains from within the country or outside how can states find sources of getting it? Hence Food Security Act does not guarantee right to food of the citizen. Similarly, for fruits and vegetables, Kerala heavily depends on neighbouring states. Excessive and unscientific use of crop protection chemicals by

greedy and unscrupulous farmers results in high level contamination of food grains, fruits and vegetables which enter the food chain of Kerala. While India is identified as a country with high incidence of cancer, Kerala has 3 times higher cancer incidence than the national average, mainly because of the pesticide contaminated food intake.

**Plantation Crops Sector under Stress**

Major plantation crops in India are rubber, coffee, tea and cardamom. Government of India from 1940's and 1950's encouraged Kerala to concentrate in the cultivation of plantation crops as the topography and climatic conditions of the state are suitable for that and that there is comparative advantage to India when compared to other producing countries. These crops are also of great economic importance and play a vital role in bringing foreign exchange through exports and generate employment to millions. These plantation crops together occupy 7.05 lakh hectares, accounting for 34.6 per cent of the net cropped area in the state. (Appendix 2.4) Economic Review 2018) Kerala's share in the national production of rubber is 78 per cent, cardamom 88 per cent, coffee 21 percent and tea 4.7 percent in the year 2017-18 (Appendix 2.11 economic Review 2018). In the recent years, ailing plantation industry is yet another cause of worry. Cost of production in the plantation sector has been rising rapidly, thanks not to any modernisation programme, but to increasing labour and welfare costs which together makes up  65% of the total cost of production. Plantation industry in Kerala accounts for 33 percent of agricultural GSDP. It directly employs 3.5 lakh workers. Out of the total plantation crop production of the country, 45 percent is the contribution of Kerala. Therefore, technology up-gradation and modernisation, value addition etc are very essential for the sustainability of the industry. 2019-20, state Budget has mentioned about the creation of a CIAL model corporation for value addition of rubber. Similar other projects are to be launched for the sustainability of the other crops. Branding of coffee announced in the  State Budget is a consolation for the coffee sector. Many more new innovative start-ups are essential for the growth of farm income and non-farm sources of income and employment in the state.

### Contribution of Primary Sector to GSDP

Agriculture underwent drastic changes over the years. Shift in cropping pattern, slow growth, stagnation ,recovery etc. have been the crucial features exhibited by agriculture. Shares of each sector to gross state Domestic Product will reveal the relative performance of each sector where agriculture is the major component of the primary sector

**Table  1 : Sectoral Distribution of Gross State Value Added (at constant prices 2011-12) (Rs. in Lakh) Area Production and Productivity, Principal crops:**

| Item | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-2017 | 2017-18 |
|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|
| | | | | | | (P) | (Q) |
| Primary Sector | 15.19 | 14.4 | 13.29 | 13.35 | 11.34 | 10.94 | 10.85 |
| Secondary Sector | 27.3 | 26.53 | 26.3 | 25.89 | 27.21 | 27.25 | 27.40 |
| Teritary Sector | 57.45 | 59.06 | 60.38 | 60.76 | 61.64 | 61.81 | 61.75 |
| Total GSVA | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 |
| At Basic Pries | | | | | | | |
| **Total GSVA** | | | | | | | |
| **At Basic Pri.** | 33629311 | 35635473 | 37165147 | 38586962 | 40648007 | 42545868 | 45074499 |

When Table 1 is examined, the relative share of primary sector is found declining from 15.19 in 2011-12 to 10.85 in 2017-18.

### Area Production and Productivity of Principal Crops (1980-81 to 2016-17)

Kerala's unique and diverse agro-climatic conditions permit it to go for a variety of crops. Earlier food crops occupied a premier position in cropping pattern. But now food crops comprising rice, tapioca and pulses accounts for only 10.12 per cent of the total cropped area, while cash crops-cashew, rubber, pepper, coconut, cardamom, tea and coffee-occupy 61.6 per cent of the cropped area. (Eco. Review, 2018). When

15 major crops are taken into account they cover more than 80 per cent of the cropped area of the state.

**Table 2 : Compound Growth Rate of Area, Production and Productivity of Principal Crops (1980-81 to 2016-17)**

| Crops | Area | Production | Productivity |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rice | -4.16 | -2.57 | 1.66 |
| All Pulses | -6.86 | -6.46 | 0.43 |
| Turmeric | -1.007 | -0.042 | 0.975 |
| Rubber | 2.68 | 5.97 | 3.20 |
| Tea | 0.064 | 0.45 | 0.39 |
| Coconut | 0.62 | 2.21 | 1.58 |
| Areconut (1979-2017 | 2.62 | 14.07 | 11.16 |
| Pepper | 1.61 | -0.003 | -1.58 |
| Ginger | -2.89 | -0.39 | 2.58 |
| Tapioca | -3.99 | -1.67 | 2.43 |
| Benana | 4.497 | 2.913 | -1.52 |
| Other Plantain | 1.49 | 4.021 | 2.397 |
| Cashew nut | -3.56 | -0.97 | 1.112 |
| Coffee | 0.644 | 2.702 | 2.045 |

*Source: Eca Review various years*

When Table 2 is analysed, a single crop which lost largest area between 1980-81 and 2017 -18 is rice in which case compound growth rate of area decline was -4.16. Area under rice declined from 8,01,700 hectares in 1980-81 to 1,71,400 hectares 2016-17. When tapioca lost its area by -3.99 percent, cashew lost it by -3.56 per cent. Food security is endangered when rice and tapioca lost area under cultivations on a large scale. Similarly, nutritional security is at risk when area under all pulses declined by -6.86 percent. Pulses are protein rich and the major source of protein for marginalised classes. Production of Pulses is encouraged by the Central government under "rainbow revolution" to overcome India's highest level of malnutrition among world nations. Major crops which underwent area expansion are banana (4.49%) rubber

(2.68%), arecanut (2.62%) other plantation (1.49%) and coffee (0.64%). Inspite of the decline in area under cultivation, because of the improvement in productivity, the decline in production was less than the percentage decline in area between the two periods for those crops which largely lost area under cultivation.

Why massive shift has taken place from food crops to non food crops. Various reasons are cited for this. Joshi et al (2003) found that when a hectare of rice cultivation in one season requires 105 labour days, that required for wheat is 44 labour days. Joshi P.K and Ashok Gulati (2003)[4] "From Plate to Plough; Agricultural Diversification in India" (IFPRI Conference). Agriculture wages in Kerala are akin to wages in the west. But in the West man days are replaced by Machine hours largely. Scarcity of agricultural labour coupled with high cost of labour and other inputs made rice cultivation a loss making enterprise and area under rice was mostly shifted to other crops or kept follow. Rapid urbanization of Kerala added fuel to fire. Land prices sky-rocketed and it became a better asset than even gold. Land market was booming and people found it better option to sell land and keep the proceeds in the bank.

**Input use and productivity**

When labour cost has been exorbitant prices of other inputs have also been very high.

### Table 3 : Price and Consumption Trend of Chemical Fertilizers (2015 to 2018)

(Prices Rs./ Metric Ton)                                    (Consumption in Metric Ton)

| Item/Year | Prices | | | Consumption | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 |
| Urea | 5413 | 5684 | 5900 | 1,30,547 | 78580 | 138213 |
| Amonium sulphate | 13,000 | 13,000 | 13140.18 | | | |
| Phosphorus | 7200 | 7680 | 7327.63 | 48879 | 43192 | 43295 |
| Potash | 16000 | 12167 | 11868.35 | 81004 | 58644 | 60472 |

*Source: Economic Review 2018 (Appendix 2.21; 2.22)*

*\*Urea and Ammonium sulphate represent nitrogenous fertilizer and hence consumption of both comes under Nitrogenous fertilizer.*

From the table it may be understood that high price of chemical fertilizers results in lower consumption. Before and after globalization price increase of fertilizer was absorbed by increased subsidy. But, the NDA Government's declared subsidy policy has been one of gradual reduction and final elimination of subsidy. Therefore price rise of any fertilizer, other things being equal, results in reduced consumption. Chemical fertilizer has a catalyst's role in raising productivity, if it is applied as per recommended doze, accompanied by irrigation.

**Irrigation**

Kerala agriculture is a gamble in the monsoon. Normal rainfall years are coming down. Irrigation potential created (IPC) is high as there are forty four rivers and 36 dams in the state. But irrigation potential utilised (IPU) is very low.

**Table - 4 : Net Area Irrigated (Source Wise) (in hectare)**

| No. | Source | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 |
|-----|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1 | Govt. Canals | 88817 | 63403 | 76761 |
| 2 | Private Canals | 774 | 932 | 612 |
| 3 | Tanks | 48459 | 49657 | 49773 |
| 4 | Wells | 133529 | 122478 | 123115 |
| 5 | Other Sources | 142254 | 141291 | 141745 |
| 6 | Total | 4,13,833 | 3,77,761 | 3,92,006 |
| 7 | Gross Irrigated Area | 4,83,648 | 4,97,386 | 5,39,874 |
| 8 | Net Area Irrigated to net Area shown (%) | 20.45 | 18.74 | 19.21 |
| 9 | Gross Irrigated area to gross cropped area (%) | 18.40 | 19.25 | 20.92 |
| 10 | Irrigated area under paddy to total irrigated area | 31.12 | 26.35 | 26.93 |

*Source: Economic Review: 2018*

*Appendix Table 2.69*

Net irrigated area is around 20 per cent when 44 per cent is the

**Vol.10   No.4   October - December 2018**
**&**          **Social Science in Perspective**
**Vol. 11  No.1   January - March 2019**

national average. At the all India level 93.6 per cent of the rice cultivation is irrigated while in Kerala it is only 26.93 per cent in 2017-18. Low level of irrigation, low level use of chemical fertilizers etc. mean low level of production investment which throws light on the distress situation of Kerala Agriculture. If production investments were high, price disadvantages could be overcome with productivity advantages. But, because of the low input use in agriculture, most of the crops enjoy lower productivity than the national average. Swaminathan (1971)[5] asserted that the synergistic package of practices comprising the use of seeds of high yielding hybrid varieties with adequate and timely supply of plant nutrients through fertiliser and water followed by adoption of suitable agronomic technology and prophylactic measures as well as post-harvest technology of storage, processing etc.are the pivot of successful agriculture. The synergy or the mechanism that makes the whole something very much more than the sum of the parts is a potent tool in the nature of getting the large effect from small resources. The release of synergetic-interactions provides the best possible means of enhancing the cost benefit ratio of developmental strategies (M.S.Swaminathan; 1971; synergestic effect of co-ordinated use of Fertilizers and other inputs; Fertilizer News, January 1971 P.45.

**Declining Institutional Credit**

Credit is the mobilizer of agricultural resources and life-line of production. But there are many a ways of diversion of agricultural credit to non-agricultural zones. Yet another challenge is the increase in investment credit in relation to production credit. When production credits are meant to meet input costs and other related expenses, investment credit are not crop loans. Hence, farmers approach non-institutional lenders who charge exorbitant rates on loans. Once a farmer falls in the clutches of such money lenders, there is no escape from them. The pattern of agricultural credit would be clear from the following table.

**Table-5 : Break up of Production & Investment credit (Rs. Crores)**

| Year/Item | Production credit | Investment credit | Column 3;Column 5 | Total Credit |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2013-14 | 36872 | 6019 | 14.03 | 42891 |
| 2014-15 | 41685 | 7395 | 15.07 | 49080 |
| 2015-16 | 41854 | 10519 | 20.08 | 52373 |
| 2016-17 | 40410 | 13860 | 25.54 | 54270 |
| 2017-18 | 48243 | 18847 | 28.09 | 67089 |

*Source: Economic Review; 2018;  Appendix 2.23*

Table elucidates the increase in the investment credit at the expense of production loan or crop loan.

**Table-6 : Yearly Average Index Number of Prices Received and Prices Paid by Farmers (in Rs.)**

| Year | Index of Prices Received by farmers | Index of Farm Cultivation cost | Index of Domestic Expenditure | Index of prices paid by farmer | Party Index as column 2 to 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2007 | 2746.00 | 9135.00 | 3061.00 | 5288.00 | 52.00 |
| 2008 | 3167.00 | 10036.00 | 3394.00 | 5837.00 | 54.00 |
| 2009 | 3083.00 | 11468.00 | 3640.00 | 6460.00 | 48.00 |
| 2010 | 5117.00 | 14959.00 | 4398.00 | 8109.00 | 63.00 |
| 2011 | 4743.00 | 17447.00 | 4715.00 | 9070.00 | 52.00 |
| 2012 | 6008.00 | 20422.50 | 5376.58 | 10478.42 | 57.08 |
| 2013 | 8272.25 | 22407.33 | 5879.50 | 11447.67 | 72.08 |
| 2014 | 7706.08 | 20422.50 | 5376.58 | 10478.42 | 57.08 |
| 2015 | 7730.75 | 25773.42 | 6493.17 | 12936.25 | 59.83 |
| 2016 | 8862.25 | 27106.75 | 6844.08 | 13620.00 | 65.08 |
| 2017 | 9019.50 | 28122.17 | 6984.83 | 14015.00 | 64.17 |
| 2018 | 5117.00 | 14959.00 | 4398.00 | 8109.00 | 63.00 |
| 2010 | 4743.00 | 17447.00 | 4715.00 | 9070.00 | 52.00 |

*\* Average of monthly indices up to June 2018*
*Source: Economic Review various issues State planning Board 2018*

## Farm distress and its determinants

Agrarian distress in India, particularly in Kerala may be associated with low agricultural prices and consequently poor farm incomes. Supply side factors like low credit availability, low input use and low productivity are equally important. Prices play a key role in affecting the incomes of farmers. In the last two years, inflation in agculture is much lower than, overall inflation. Rangarajan et al (2019)[6] observe that the implicit price deflator for gross value added (G VA) in agriculture was 1.1% while it was 3.2% for total GVA in 2017-18. The advance estimate for 2018-19 show that the implicit deflator for GVA in agriculture is 0%, and 4.8 % for total GVA. In fact, agriculture GVA growth was at 3.8% for both nominal prices and constant prices in 2018-19, giving the price deflator of 0%. (Rangarajan and S. Mahendra Dev 2018; Removing the roots of Farmers' Distress, The Hindu Jan 28/2019). Market prices for general agricultural commodities have been lower than their minimum support prices. Those who get the benefit of the minimum support prices are those farmers with marketable surplus. Since 96% of the Kerala farmers have less than one hectare, farmers with marketable surplus are very small in number. Because of productivity advantages, when output increases beyond the market demand at a price remunerative to farmers, market price declines. In the absence of an effective price support policy, farmers meet with this type of low returns year after year. To overcome this, there should be sustained increase in output on the one hand and sustained increase in price support on the other.

## Rural Kerala in Debt

NSSO's Debt Deposit Survey of rural and urban households (2012), placed Kerala in high debt category states. In rural Kerala, the average debt of a household is Rs.1,47,402. When other charges are added to it total amount to be repaid becomes Rs.2,97,752. Debt burden of rural Kerala varies between rural agricultural households and rural non-agricultural households. Out of the rural agricultural households 68.07%

is under debt. Average debt burden is Rs.4,41,589 and it becomes Rs. 6,48734 when the total amount to be repaid is taken into account. 49.10% rural non agricultural households are in debt. Average debt is Rs. 1,41,029. Debt along with interest rate and other dues make it Rs. 2,87,212. These findings are corroborated by the findings of NABARD in its All India Rural Financial Inclusion Survey 2016-17. Kerala, with 56% rural households under indebted condition comes 6th among the states of India, topped by Telangana with 79% households in debt.

**Loan Waiver - A Poor Solution**

The amount of loans taken from institutional and non-institutional sources for agriculture exceeds agricultural requirements. This indicates that a part of the crop loans is spent on non-agricultural purposes. A more worrisome finding of NSS surveys on Investment and Debt-(NSS-I &D) is that the loans taken by cultivators from non-institutional sources which involve high interest rate is rising faster than from institutional sources. Rameshchand et al (2017)[7] found that much of the growth in household demand in rural India has been debt-ridden and not supported by growth in income (Rameshchand and S.K. Srivastava 2017), "Think Beyond Loan Waivers" (The Hindu, July 20, 2017). Very often good number of eligible farmers are excluded from agricultural loans and also subsidy/loan waiver benefits etc. CAG, reports many startling findings with regard to identification of eligible farmers for loans, Kissan Card beneficiaries, loan waiver beneficiaries etc. According to CAG, 13.46% of the accounts which were actually eligible for the benefits under the Scheme were not considered by the lending institutions while preparing the list of eligible farmers. Out of those who enjoyed the privilege of debt waiver, 8.5% were neither farmer nor eligible for any benefits, similarly, 34.28% of the beneficiaries were not issued debt relief certificates which would have entitled them to fresh loans. Further, NSS-SAS study found that about 39% of farmers borrowed only from non-institutional sources.

**Divided Opinion on loan Waivers**

Economists and policy makers are divided on loan waiver policy. Former R.B.I governor, Raghuram Rajan had negative views on debt waiver. Reasons he cited are: First, loan waivers have "reputational consequences, that is, they adversely affect the repayment discipline of farmers, leading to a rise in defaults in future. Second, earlier debt waiver schemes have not led to increase in investment or productivity in agriculture. Third, after the implantation of debt waiver schemes a farmer's access to formal sector lenders declines, leading to a rise in their dependence on informal sector lenders. Based on the lessons learnt from the two major loan waiver policies of Independent India, one in 1990 and the second in 2008 Ramakumar makes certain valid observations. In September 2018, agricultural non-performing assets (about 8%) were far lower than in industry (about 21%). Further agricultural NPA's were on a continuous decline between 2001 and 2008. In 2018 RBI sources reported that around 80 percent of the NPA's were accounted for by the industrial sector.

In the recent years when agricultural growth rate is very low or negative, farmers are in great distress. MahaKarshaka rallys and agitations are on the rise. This pinpoints the gravity of the distress. Some of the state Governments, have already implemented loan waiver policies. Eleven states have announced schemes for loan waivers. In Kerala, distress is mounting up. Wynad and Idukki and the other districts badly hit by floods are in great distress and farmer suicides become frequent.

**Measures to Promote Sustainable Agriculture**

Sustainable solution to indebtedness and agrarian distress are to raise agricultural income and to enhance access to non-farm sources of income. The low scale of farms necessitates that some cultivators move from agriculture to non-farm jobs. Improved technology, expansion of irrigation, crop diversification towards high value crops etc are measures to improve farm income. Important steps that may be taken by the government to redress the distress of farmers are:

### Reasonably High  Minimum Support Price

Announcing higher minimum support price is not enough. Because, in that case MSP benefit will reach only large farmers with marketable surplus. As Punjab did in 2017, government should purchase all food grains at the MSP. This facility should be extended to all crops, whether in distress or not. This will enable farmers to have some income that make agriculture meaningful. Unless there is a procurement guarantee and the farmer can count on the government to purchase his produce, the MSP has little meaning on the ground.

### E-NAM or Electronic National Agricultural Marketing

E-NAM, is expected to find solutions to all problems afflicting agriculture and is supposed to be fully operative all over India from 2018. But so far very few steps are taken by the Centre as well as by the states to prepare the needed single electronic platform for sale across the country. The central government along with state Government has to create congenial atmosphere and infrastructure for the smooth functioning of the E-NAM Plat form. Essential facilities include

- Facilities to assure the quality standards as per national and international standard stipulation.

- Those who directly deal with the market-producer (sellers) and ultimate buyers, must get remunerative prices, grading, direct payment of sale prices, transporting product to the buyers destination etc are some of such measures. Central government plans to introduce E-NAM in selected 585 'mandis'. For this needed infrastructure must be prepared and provided by the state government. State government has to ensure that

- With a single licence, trading from any part of the state or country must be possible.

- Transaction fee remitted in any one point must be sufficient to trade in any of the part of the country.

- Infrastructure, demands huge investments. Vegetables and fruits need refrigerated go-downs, grading and assaying (quality testing), grading, branding etc should keep international stipulations.

E-NAM is partially implemented in Karnataka. Comparing to other states farmers are getting 16% higher price for agricultural commodities in Karnataka. If E-NAM is made fool proof, farmers' income appreciation would be several times higher than this, because, there middle men between the producer and buyer will disappear. These middle men get commission from both and exploit both producer and buyer. It is middle men mafia' which made Indian agriculture in deep crisis. If E-NAM is introduced, and properly run it would make Indian agriculture environment friendly and human friendly.

**Improve Water Use-Efficiency**

Per capita availability of water is decreasing in India. In 1999, the average per capita availability of water was around 2,200 cubic meters (cm) which has fallen to about 1829 cm. in 2018. It may further go down as population increases. It may fall down to 1340 cm and 1140cm respectively in the years 2025 and 2050. Though Kerala has achieved replacement rate of growth of population, because of the influx of migrant population, water need may rise. If per capita availability of water falls below 1700 cm, then the state will be considered "water stressed" and if it falls below 1000 cm then "water scarce". Water use efficiency is very low in India and it is worse in Kerala. Irrigation potential created in Kerala is much larger than potential utilized. More crop from every drop should be the norm of water use and every source of water harvesting must be tapped. Polluted water courses should be given re-birth through purification measures.

- Value addition of agricultural products and creation of non-farm employment opportunities. This will raise farmers' income on the one hand and more employment in the rural sides.

● Mixed farming. Instead of growing mono crop, simultaneously grow a few crops like rice, fish and poultry. Income loss from one source would be made up by gain from other. Loss minimisation and income maximisation is sought from mixed farming.

● Creation of producer companies for value addition like the one announced in the budget 2019-20, viz, CIAL model rubber value addition company

● Coconut based products. Starting from virgin coconut oil, more than 40 value added products may be turned out from this single resource many of which would capture world market. 'Neera' is in crisis simply because of wrong policy pursued by the present govt.

● Land Banks: Those who leave their land fallow may be tempted to hand over the land to the land bank, without loosing ownership rights. Lease- land cultivation should be promoted. Rent collected, after deducting the service cost may be transferred to land owner which becomes his revenue. LDF, in its Election Manifesto, promised to bring in cultivation every unit of fallow land.

● Proper soil test and soil health card should be introduced. After knowing the nutritional status of each region, suitable organic and inorganic manures may be applied as per the recommended doze for each crop. Chemical fertilizers are like Allopathy medicines. Application of recommended doze, as prescribed, would do wonders.

● Compulsory certification of organic agro-products. Every organic producer should get the opportunity to produce his own brand. To speed up the process of organic certification, government through Agriculture officer should extend help, technical and monetary.

Maintenance of ecological balance necessitates maintenance of wetlands. Palakkad district which accounts for 38 percent of the remaining paddy fields in the state was the minimum affected by the floods of 2018 July-August. The change in land use pattern and water management has resulted in a sharp decline in the area under paddy from 35 percent of the cropped area in the 1960 to 6.6% in 2018. If agriculture is any goal, then paddy land conversion should be banned. Climate change, water scarcity etc that Kerala faces today is largely linked to paddy land conversion. The Kerala Conservation of Paddy Land and Wetland Act 2008 should be rigorously implemented with retrospective effect. Gadgill Report of 2011 should be implemented. Illegal quarry mafia may be prosecuted and taken under custody and the fund needed for re-building Kerala be collected from them. Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) report, prepared by a team of 76 international experts in collaboration with the state government estimated flood loss as 31,000 crore. Finance minister calculated the fund needed as one lakh crore, which seems to be more accurate when we consider the period needed to regain the loss in terms of area, crops, houses and lively-hoods lost.

Crop diversification is a double edged sword. It improved farm income on the one hand and ecological balance on the other. Kerala, instead, moves from crop diversification to crop concentration. Crop diversification is socially and economically beneficial, when complimented by infrastructure facilities, finance and technical support especially for local micro-enterprises, which are engaged in processing, storing, grading and packaging.

- Kudumbashree (women self & help groups in Kerala), has successfully adopted crop diversification. Mary George (2007)[8] found 147 varieties of Kudumbashree micro-enterprises. Among them most sustainable were crop diversification lease-land enterprises. (Mary george 2007; Technological sustainability of women enterprises under kudumbashree programme of

Kerala ; Report submitted to DSIR, Minister of science and Technology, Govt of India)

- Strict sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards are to be adopted to make agricultural products and agro-based value added products internationally competitive.

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment programme Mission should be entrusted with the duty of water harvesting, recycling of drainage water, cleaning up of water courses etc. In order to safe guard farmers' crops from wild animals protective mechanisms may be created with MGNREGP work force. Construction of concrete trench between forest and crop land to prevent the entry of wild elephants is one such measure. Similar, suitable precautionary constructions may be made to prevent the encroachment of wild-boar, monkey etc.

- Agricultural budget must attract at least 33% of the plan Fund- because sustainability of any country/ state, ultimately depends on sustainable food security, safe environment etc.

- Mechanization of agriculture and making agriculture a white collar job are essential to attract youth to agriculture. A corpus Fund for agriculture should be created. Whenever salary revision is undertaken, for govt and quasi-govt employees, deserving sum should be directed to the corpus fund. This fund may be used to give bonus, festival allowance, crop insurance etc to the farming sector.

- Karshaka Labour Bank of Vadakkancherry model may be formed. In the process of mechanization of agriculture agricultural workers may be given training for the proper use of inputs including pesticides and fertilizers.

- Information technology platform may be widely used to give

fast information on climate change, demand/supply/price variations within the country and across countries.

More than 80 per cent of the farmers in Kerala grow their corp with rain water. A new Rain fed agricultural Atlas released in 2018 reveals the 'sheer negligence' toward rain-fed areas which is leading to lower incomes. According to Ashok Dalwai, CEO of the National Rain-fed Area Authority and the Chairman of Committee on Doubling of Farmers Income "Farmers in rain-fed areas are receiving 40% less of their income from agriculture in comparison to those in irrigated area" This observation calls for the attention of the Government to invest more in research and development in rain-fed agriculture.

**Conclusion**

Rural Kerala is in debt. Farmers are far more deeply indebted. National Sample Survey Organization survey, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development survey etc throws light to the grave situation of Kerala agriculture. The most backward tribal districts of Kerala-Idukki and Waynad-are the worst victims of flood 2018. Eight thousand farmers in Waynad and fifteen thousand in Idukky are under the threat of eviction owing to non-repayment of bank/co-operative loans. Most of them are in the clutches of money lenders. Sino-Indian team of economists Shengen Fan,Ashok Gulati and S Thorat, in their study found that in India, investment is very low in health, education, and rural roads. Though public investment was very high in green revolution period, latter it was drastically cut. This has adversely affected the farm sector growth. As a result, as Pulapre (2019) puts it the price of food has historically been high for Indians at the bottom of the income distribution. This has held back industrialisation and the desirable shifting of population away from farming to other activities (The Hindu, Feb.8, 2019). Flood devastated Kerala agriculture and its dependents, looks for alternatives. Kerala has always been food deficient. Plantation sector has also been failing after the removal of Quantitative Restriction on

imports (QRs) of 824 agricultural commodities after signing the WTO Treaty in 1995. A new, scientific look at agriculture, with a shift to high value crops, without discarding the traditional varieties, without eroding ecological balance, is what Kerala is looking for.

**References**

1.     Narendra Shekhawat (2011): *The Hindu*, April 24.

2.     Rameshchand et al (2017): National Sample survey on situation Assessment Survey of Agriculture households (NSS-SAS).

3.     Planning Board (1984): Report of the High Level Committee on Land and Water Resources, State planning Board.

4.     Joshi P.K and Ashok Gulati (2003): "From Plate to Plough", Agricultural Diversification in India (IFPRI Conference).

5.     Swaminathan (1971): M.S Swaminathan; 1971; synergistic effect of co-ordinated use of Fertilizers and other inputs; *Fertilizer News*, January 1971 P.45.

6.     Rangarajan et al (2019): (Rangarajan and S. Mahendra Dev 2018; Removing the Roots of Earners Distress, *The Hindu*, Jan 28/2019.

7.     Rameshchand et al (2017)[7] - (Rameshchand and S.K. Srivastava 2017, "Think Beyond Loan Waivers", *The Hindu*, July 20, 2017).

8.     Dr. Mary George (2007)[8] - (Mary George 2007; Technological sustainability of women enterprises under kudumbashree programm of Kerala. (*Report submitted to DSIR, Minister of science and Technology,* Govt of India)

9.     Pulapre Balakrishnan, (2019); *The Hindu*, Feb.8, 2019.

# Social Protection in Post-disaster Situation in Kerala

**Udaya S. Mishra**

*The social protection in Kerala on the premises of the recent floods, and Ockhi disasters are critically examined from a policy perspective. Out of fourteen districts, 12 districts were severely affected by the floods that occurred in August 2018. The large-scale flooding has affected the livelihood of millions of people and caused huge damage to physical and natural infrastructure of the state. The human death tolls rose to more than 500, and the loss of livestock is still to be estimated. The concept of social protection, and its components are discussed and it is followed by various programmes implemented in the state and country and its ground level operations. Reorientation of social protection programmes in response to post disaster situations, the strategies for strengthening social protection, and the challenges in the implementation of programmes are the major aspects discussed in this paper.*

## Introduction

Social protection is one of the foremost concerns of the state government to ensure that vulnerable population gets appropriate and effective support to overcome financial insecurity. All countries have their own social protection schemes. In India, most of the social protection

schemes are implemented through the state governments or local self governments. In fact, the efficiency of the state governments along with the institutional infrastructure towards its execution really determines the success of the programme implementation. In this paper, an attempt is made to reflect on the significance of the social protection mechanism in Kerala in the context of recently happened disasters.

Social protection generally constitutes policies and programmes that seek to reduce poverty and vulnerability of those at risk and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalized by promoting and protecting livelihood and employment, protecting against hazards and sudden loss of income, and improving people's resilience to withstand risks.

The major components of social protection are labour market programmes, social welfare programmes, social insurance, and social safety nets. The labour market programmes constitute the measures that are aimed at enhancing employment opportunities and protection of the rights and welfare of workers. Preventive welfare programmes are basically the preventive and development interventions that seek to support minimum basic requirements of the poor. Social insurance seeks to mitigate income risks by pooling resources and spreading risks across time and classes. Social safety nets are stop-gap mechanisms or urgent responses that address effects of shocks on specific vulnerable groups.

The need to strengthen social protection has been renewed in the post-disaster period. In Kerala, the disasters have made severe damage to the individual well being, and it may have serious implications towards impoverishment of a large section of population. This situation should be prevented at any cost. Because, once the population confront poverty, it is rather difficult to re-build their socio-economic profile equivalent to the pre-disaster situation. Again, the poverty consequence is muti-dimensional in nature. The risk arises from the disaster and is all pervasive. It touches all spheres of livelihood assets particularly the physical capital, natural capital and financial capital. Unless government

take proactive actions by strengthening social protection measures, it would be very difficult to mitigate the distress condition aroused from these disasters.

In this context, it is necessary to revisit the implementation of social protection programmes in Kerala, and rework it if required and make sure that social protection alleviates poverty among the vulnerable sections in the state.

**Risk and Vulnerability**

During disaster situations, vulnerabilities can emerge at multiple levels as shown in Table 1. From past experiences in different parts of the world, it is realized that risks usually associated with disaster may be broadly classified as individual risks, economic risks, environmental and natural risks, and political and governance risks. Each of these risk has its own vulnerabilities as mentioned in the Table 1 and the coping strategies required by the state differ accordingly. If the disaster is new to the population, the risk would be severe for the people and takes time to overcome it. In the case of Kerala, the recent floods was an entirely new experience for the present generation and this unexpected event has made severe damage to family's livelihood giving rise to vulnerability that can have serious potential for many people landing in miseries of poverty.

**Table 1 : The social risks and associated vulnerabilities
at the time of post disaster situation.**

| Social risks | Vulnerabilities |
|---|---|
| Individual life cycle | Hunger, illness, disability, old age, death |
| Economic | Unemployment, underemployment, low and irregular incomes, economic crises |
| Environmental and natural | Typhoons, drought, floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruption |
| Political and governance | Armed conflicts, crime, corruption, social exclusion and discrimination |

In post disaster situation, it has also been noticed that the magnitude of risks varies across different sections of population, and the risk is more among the vulnerable sections like children, and old aged population in general. However, women and marginalized groups are the most affected by the risk factors. Table 2 shows the major possible social risks that can be confronted by various vulnerable groups in post disaster situation in any population.

**Table 2 : Major social risk affected by the vulnerable groups in disaster situation**

| Group or Sector | Risks and Vulnerabilities |
|---|---|
| Children: 0 - 5 years old 6 - 14 years old | Illness and death, hunger and malnutrition, stunted growth Poor education quality |
| Youth: 15 – 24 years old | Low human capital, unemployment and underemployment, substance abuse |
| Elderly: 65 years old and above | Illness and death, low or lack of income |
| Women | Large family size, domestic violence, unemployment and underemployment |
| People with disabilities (PWDs) | Low human capital, unemployment and underemployment, lack of access to services |
| Indigenous People | Dislocation due to armed conflicts, natural disasters, development projects, lack of shelter and housing, access to water and sanitation |
| Rural and Urban Informal Communities | Dislocation due to armed conflicts, natural disasters and demolitions, lack of shelter and housing, access to water and sanitation |

In the case of Kerala, the major vulnerable groups affected by the recent floods are children, youth, elderly and women. Perhaps, the children and the elderly are the most affected sections in the population as of any disaster. Most of the schools and hospitals in the affected regions were closed during the disaster period. Illness and death tolls

rose slightly in the severe affected areas, but such information were not given public attention. The prevalence of illness has increased substantially. There are many families still living in shelters given by other people or voluntary organizations.

**Social Protection Programmes**

There are many studies which examined the functioning of social protection system in developing countries like India and Kerala in particular (Agarwal, 1990, Arjun S et al, 2006, Gopal 2006, John, 2004, Kannan 2015, Nair R 2010, Rajan 2002, Sarkar 2004, and Tharamangalam 2011). Even though, these studies were not examined from the context of a disaster situation, it offers some insights regarding the evolution and prevailing condition of social protection in the study area.

While considering social protection, the usual thoughts coming to one's mind would be the government programmes implemented at the ground level. Most of the social protection measures in the country were initiated after 1970s. The food and nutrition programmes particularly the public distribution systems (TDPD), Mid-day meals, Integrated Child Development Schemes (ICDS) have made substantial impact on the poor in Kerala as of other states in the country. The housing programmes like IAY for rural areas, and the self-employment programmes like Swarna Jayanti Grameen Swarojgar Yogana (SGSY), Self-help groups, Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), and Swarna Jayanti Shahri Rojgar Yojana (SJSRY) have a remarkable impact but not without its short-comings. Several employment programmes were initiated since 1970s were later merged into NREGS programmes in rural areas.

In the case of Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yogana (RSBY), all poor workers and their families are covered. This scheme is funded by central and state governments with a ratio of 75:25. The scheme provides in the cashless insurance cover upto Rs 30,000 per month for hospitalization. Migrant workers are also covered within the scheme

using smart care. All pre-existing diseases are covered in the scheme. This programme has received encouraging response among the common people in the country.

Universal social security programmes were only recently initiated by the central government. In 2015, the central government has introduced a life insurance scheme named PM Jeevan Jyoti Yojana. Also, started an accident insurance scheme named PM Suraksha Bima Yojana, and a contributory pension scheme for unorganized sector workers named Atal Pension Yogana.

In Kerala, almost all social protection programmes and schemes are implemented through the Kerala Social Security Mission, a charitable society under Government of Kerala headed by honorable minister for social justice and health. The major schemes implemented by this agency at present are Cancer Suraksha, Snehapoorvam, Thalolam, Aswasakiranam, Hunger Free City, Vayomithram, Karunya Deposit, Prathyasha, Snehasanthwanam, and Samashwasam. The two programmes that received much attention recently would be the Disability certification camps and Disability Census 2014-15. All these initiatives are for senior citizenes, children, differently abled, women and persons with chronic illness.

**The Need for Reorientation**

All the above mentioned central and state programme initiatives must be re-designed to suit the post disaster situation in the state. It is generally an accepted fact that in post-disaster situation, the social protection measures become shock responsive and therefore must focus on the following major areas to reduce the vulnerability conditions.

- Finance: Exploring whether and how the intervention might be funded

- Targeting: Considering who the intervention is designed to reach

- Data management: The merits  and challenges of using the readymade databases

- Transfer values: Determining how much support to provide

- Payment/Distribution Mechanism:  How the support will reach the target recipients

- Coordination: Linking all relevant sectors

- Communication: Discussing the intervention with Communities

In the case of finance, anticipation of potential funding requirement must be conserved seriously. Before you secure timely and predictable financing for shock responsive social protection, it is important to establish or strengthen systems for need analysis and funding requirements.

The channels of financing can be (i) Contingency funds: Funds that can be called upon in emergency must be accompanied with clear allocation of responsibilities for ensuring that they are adequately resourced and disbursable in a timely manner. (ii) Contingency credit lines: the release of emergency credit might offer liquidity in aftermath of disaster. iii) Disaster insurance: Insurance remains an alternative through which cost of responding to disasters can be smoothed

Targeting the intervention group is another aspect. A core principle of an effective shock response is to be clear about who needs assistance and what support they require. This means making good use of vulnerability assessments and need assessments. Authorities responsible for emergency response have processes for deciding where to go and whom to support. An important question then is whether the social protection sector can contribute as an effective alternative or complement to these processes from its experience with supporting chronically poor and vulnerable households. Further, it is also pertinent to recognize the advantage and challenges that might emerge in different contexts which needs anticipation of potential funding requirements.

Data management is crucial in planning. Government and intervening agencies often explore whether data bases that have been compiled for one primary objective such as storing data about the beneficiaries of a social assistance programme-can also be used in response to a crisis. The usability of these data bases is closely associated with the way that beneficiaries of the original programme have been registered and targeted. The five issues that needs consideration is (i) Relevance (Does it contain the right variables), (ii) Completeness (Does it contain data on all people/households in the affected area or in need), (iii) Data currency (Is the information up to date), (iv)Accessibility (Can the information be accessible to people who need it) and (v) Accuracy (Is it free from errors).

Transfer Values determine the extent of support needs to provide to the target population.Humanitarian intervention aim to ensure that those affected by the crisis receive assistance that meets their needs. Subject to the availability of resources there has to be an inevitable trade-off between scale and value - supporting all those in need with less or providing adequately to fewer people. This calls for a coordination and harmonization of transfer values across the responses.There can be a vertical expansion which entails top-ups of the existing beneficiaries. A Horizontal expansion involves inclusion of new beneficiaries. Another alternative is the fresh component of assistance that is non-existent

Payment Distribution Modality is another important aspect. The System may vary from staff travelling to communities for distribution of physical cash or goods, to payment service providers such as banks/ post-offices, to electronic means of transfer to individual's bank accounts. Each combination of disbursement means has its implication for appropriateness accessibility, robustness and degree of integration. The challenges are (i) How best can you maintain the delivery of the routine social protection intervention in the event of a shock; (ii) How can you make sure that the emergency assistance is channeled through the

same system which neither compounds the burden on the routine intervention nor suffers from the similar disruption.; (iii) If emergency assistance is delivered through a different system will it create any unacceptable difference between the support offered to routine social protection and emergency beneficiaries

Another important aspect would be the proper coordination of all relevant sectors, for improved coordination attention needs to be paid to improving understanding of one another's fields, and strengthening engagement between programmes and its delivery system

Strong communication with the community is important when humanitarian assistance is delivered through social protection programmes, particularly when there are multiple delivery channels. If social protection system and programmes are used for shock response then considerable attention needs to be paid to ensure improved coordination. Attention needs to be paid to improving understanding of one another's fields and strengthening engagement between programmes and its delivery system.

**Conclusion**

Even though we have many social protection schemes and programmes the overall expenditure on these schemes is very limited. Even in the country, the overall public expenditure on social protection excluding the public health care is only 1.5 percent of the country's total GDP. This share of expenditure is relatively lower when compared with many middle income countries of the world (ILO, 2015). Kerala state also faces scarcity in public funding for social protection schemes. It is high time to consider the various options for generating more funds for the purpose.

Many arguments are alive in the discussion on effective implementation of social welfare programmes in the state. The well-known model named, the residual view, usually takes relative advantage to a

great extent in the context of the scarcity of public finance in the state. As per the residual view the social welfare services are to be provided only when individual's needs are not properly met through other social institutions, mainly the family. Social welfare schemes should not be provided until all other measures are completely exhausted. As of the United States of America executing, funds and services should be given on a short period and should be withdrawn immediately after the individual or family regains their ability to manage themselves. In the disaster period the relief funds were mostly distributed in biased manner in many parts of the state. Most of the personnel in local government took a stand that some persons who are capable to manage themselves, need to be given government assistance. However, some other grama panchayats have a stand to provide universal assistance.

The institutional models are also relevant to some extent. Individual's problems arise out of the factors that are not within his/her control. The disaster came because of environmental factors. Individual efforts are not enough to overcome this disaster. The need for social institutions are required for environmental protection and building public infrastructure.

In Kerala context, it is not possible to organize the whole programmes of social insurance, residual welfare, personal social services and medical care solely by the local self-government or state government. Public private partnership would be considered as better options for better results in terms of both quantum and quality of schemes. For this, state government ideologies have to be moulded towards the interest of general public, and the emerging globalized socio-political environment. Non-government organizations which are very much involved in the welfare of marginalised sections of the community have to be part of the welfare programme initiatives.

In the implementation of programmes and schemes, the views of people with regard to fund utilization is worth considering. It has been

argued that social protection funds do not reach the real target population. In reality, it is a waste of government funds. Very often there is no match between the risks and programmes. Many programmes are implemented without understanding the magnitude of the needs of the vulnerable population.

Among wage employment programmes, NREGA is the most effective one than any other previous programmes implemented in the state. This programme could empower women substantially in terms of improvement in their financial situation and building social networks. Even senior citizens, irrespective of gender, were able to transform their social status from a non-productive person to an economically active person. This programme has less corruption, and no contractor or middle man is involved in the execution of activities. Accountability is a must in all process of implementation. Social auditing is strict in the programme. One of the issues that came to light in Kerala is that most of the works are carried out for not building public infrastructure, but for activities in private land or properties. This is against the actual visualization of the programme. Very often, at the implementation phase, local self-governments could not find the useful public task for the NREGA works. In those places, the work is only with the intention to provide jobs to the local people. In the post disaster situation we should reconsider the current way of implementation of this programme towards building the public infrastructure and preserving the natural resources. In the areas unaffected by disaster, this programme may extend to agriculture sector particularly in rice cultivation and livestock keeping to ensure the food security of the state.

Finally, the state needs a revisit of its all social protection programmes and schemes. The programmmes must be redesigned according to the demand and needs of the population at the grass root level. Mere implementation of the programme as it is designed in the centre may not be effective. In fact, more dialogues and intellectual exercises are needed for reorientation and effective implementation of

existing programmes to make the most of it. It is high time for the state government to shift their priority from their latest renaissance agenda to the core development and livelihood issues of the state.

**References**

1.    Agarwal, B. (1990): "Social security and the family: Coping with seasonality and calamity in rural India". *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *17*(3), 341-412.

2.    Arjun Sengupta, KP Kannan, and Ravi Srivastava (2006): "A major national initiative", *Economic and political weekly*, Vol41, no32, August 12.

3.    Arun, S., & Arun, T. G. (2001): "Gender issues in social security policy of developing countries: Lessons from the Kerala experience". *International Social Security Review*, *54*(4), 93-110.

4.    Devika, J., & Thampi, B. V. (2007): "Between 'Empowerment' and 'Liberation' - The Kudumbashree Initiative in Kerala", *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, *14*(1), 33-60.

5.    Gopal, M. (2006): "Gender, ageing and social security". *Economic and Political Weekly*, 4477-4486.

6.    International Labour Organization (2015): *World Social Protection Report 2014-15.*

7.    John C.P (2004): "Social Security and Labour Welfare with Special Reference to Construction Workers in Kerala", *Discussion Paper No. 65*, Kerala Research Programme on Local Level Development, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram

8.    Justino, P. (2007): "Social security in developing countries: Myth or necessity? Evidence from India". *Journal of International Development: The Journal of the Development Studies Association*, *19*(3), 367-382.

9.    Kannan K.P (2015): "Corporate capitalism in the name of social security", *Economic and political weekly,* Vol. 50, No 12, March 21.

10.   Kannan, K. P. (1995): "Declining incidence of rural poverty in Kerala". *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2651-2662.

11.   Kannan, K. P. (1995): "Public intervention and poverty alleviation: A study of the declining incidence of rural poverty in Kerala", India. *Development and Change*, *26*(4), 701-728.

12.   Kannan, K. P. (2007): "Social security in a globalizing world". *International Social Security Review*, *60*(2 3), 19-37.

13.   Kannan. K.P & Vijayamohanan Pillai, N (2007): "Evolution of Social Security in the Lap of Public Action: Recounting the experience of Kerala. *MPRA_paper_9691*.pdf

14.   Kannan. K.P & Vijayamohanan Pillai, N. (2007): "Social security in India: The long lane treaded and the longer road ahead towards universalization". *MPRA_paper_9601*.pdf

15.   Kumar, S. V. (2003): "Economic security for the elderly in India: An overview". *Journal of aging & social policy*, *15*(2-3), 45-65.

16.   Minimol, M. C., & Makesh, K. G. (2012): "Empowering rural women in Kerala: A study on the role of Self Help Groups (SHGs)". *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, *4*(9), 270-280.

17.   Mohanan Pillai S (1996): "Social Security for workers in unorganized sector: Experience of Kerala", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 31, No. 31 (Aug. 3, 1996), pp. 2098-2099+2101-2107

18.   Nair, R. (2010): "Public intervention for food security: the case of Kerala". *Journal of Social and Economic Development*, *12*(1), 43-71.

19.   Prasad-Aleyamma, M. (2011): "A market place for migrants:

Mobility, settlement and social protection in Kerala". In *Migration and Social Protection* (pp. 164-182). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

20. Rajan, I. (2007): "Population ageing, health and social security in India". *Centre for Development Studies Discussion Paper*, *3*.

21. Rajan, S.I. (2001): "Social assistance for poor elderly: How effective?" *Economic and Political Weekly*, 613-617.

22. Rajan, S.I. (2002): "Social security for the unorganized sector in South Asia". *International Social Security Review*, *55*(4), 143-156.

23. Rajan, S.I., Perera, M., & Begum, S. (2002): "Economics of pensions and social security in South Asia: Special focus on India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh". *Fourth Annual Conference," South Asia Network of Economic Research Institutes (SANEI), Dhaka, Bangladesh, August* (pp. 28-29).

24. Sarkar, S. (2004): "Extending social security coverage to the informal sector in India". *Social Change*, *34*(4), 122-130.

25. Tharamangalam, J. (2011): "Is Food Insecurity in Kerala a Myth?". *Economic and Political Weekly*, 69-71.

# Rebuilding Kerala: Need to Integrate Animal and Human Health

**Gayathri Balagopal**

*Among all pathogens that affect human population, nearly 60 per cent are transmitted from animals. The World Health Organisation argues that the interconnectedness between humans, animals and the environment could be a source of diseases such as leptospirosis, scrub typhus, Kyasanur Forest Disease, Lyme disease, Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever, rabies, avian influenza, brucellosis etc. that spreads from animals to humans through direct contact, water and air, which impacts public health and livelihood. As a result of changing agricultural practices, human settlement near or in forests, improper management of water bodies and inadequate waste management practices, the spread of vector-borne infections like dengue and chikungunya are on the rise. After the 2018 floods in Kerala, there was a spurt in zoonoses like leptospirosis and scrub typhus. Given that Kerala has one of the highest human population densities, is highly urbanised and that people were likely to live in close proximity to livestock, poultry, companion animals and wild animals, in future, the state is likely to witness the emergence or re-emergence of new and existing zoonoses. This article examines public expenditure on*

*zoonoses surveillance and control of vector-borne disease, size of livestock population, size of at-risk population who were employed in occupations that involved contact with animals and vectors and the cases due to zoonotic and vector-borne diseases across districts. In rebuilding Kerala, it is imperative to formulate and implement policies which integrate animal and human health with the environment.*

## Introduction

Among all pathogens that affect human population, nearly 60 per cent are transmitted from animals. The World Health Organisation argues that the interconnectedness between humans, animals and the environment could be a source of diseases such as leptospirosis, scrub typhus, Kyasanur Forest Disease, Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever, rabies, avian influenza, brucellosis etc. that spreads from animals to humans through direct contact, water and air, which impacts public health and livelihood. As a result of changing agricultural practices, human settlement near or in forests, improper management of water bodies and inadequate waste management practices, the spread of vector-borne infections like dengue and chikungunya are on the rise. Anthropogenic and natural changes to the ecosystem can result in increased interaction between reservoirs, vectors, pathogens and human hosts, with vectors selecting anthrophyllic hosts over zoophyllic hosts (Morse 1995). According to Dubbal *et al* (2014), there is a public health and economic risk associated with close relationship with humans and a wide range of animals like pet animals, companion animals, wild animals and synanthropic animals in developing countries. In addition, food-borne infections are a source of concern, with pesticide residues in plant-based food, antibiotic residue in animal-based food and bacterial contamination in water, plant- and animal-based food.

Factors like rainfall and temperature are known to play a role in

**Vol.10   No.4   October - December 2018**
              **&**             **Social Science in Perspective**
**Vol. 11   No.1   January - March 2019**

creating favourable conditions for breeding of vectors like mosquitoes. In a study on five states, namely, Kerala, Haryana, Punjab, Gujarat and Rajasthan, it was found that Kerala had the highest number of dengue cases probably due to having more breeding spaces for mosquitoes, suitable temperature ranges (23.5–30°C) and short incubation period particularly during rainy seasons(Mutheneni *et al* 2017). In addition, the higher transmission of dengue during monsoon and post monsoon period was influenced by rainfall and ambient temperature in these states (Chakravarti *et al* 2012). Besides seasonality, certain practices like collection of water in containers within the house or compound was found to a statistically modifiable predictor of the occurrence of chikungunya in a house, according to a study conducted in rural areas of Thiruvananthapuram district in Kerala (Anish *et al* 2011).

Deforestation is often accompanied by introduction of agricultural activities and plantation industries, which bring in human settlements near the edge of the forest. Further, people are employed in economic activities like gathering non wood forest products and transporting logs from the forest. Literature highlights the role played by policy such as the conversion of forest land to plantations in the late nineteenth century, conversion of forest land to grow food crops in the 1940s, creation of new settlements in forests in the 1950s and 1960s and development of irrigation and transport systems in forested areas in the twentieth century, in deforestation in Kerala (George and Chhattopadhyay 2001). These changes to the eco system exposes people to animal reservoirs like fox and bats, ticks that were zoophyllic and vectors that flourish in dense vegetation. Thus the opportunities for transmission of pathogens increase (Patz *et al* 2000). In Kerala, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary has experienced deforestation due to conversion of forests to plantations between 1920 and 1973, which has resulted in a loss of forest cover of nearly 23.1 per cent (Satish *et al* 2014). The loss of forest cover signifies that animal population in the forest may have been affected, with a reduction in predator population like leopards and tigers and increase in their prey

like deer. This could be a factor behind outbreak of Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD) and Lyme disease in Wayanad. Both these diseases are spread through the bite of ticks. With the encroachment of human population into or near forested areas, they serve as new hosts for ticks, which then transmit these diseases. In 2013, there was an outbreak of Lyme disease in Wayanad among workers in a coffee plantation and villagers did highlight the growing menace of deer population near their habitation (The Times of India 2013). Kerala had to deal with an outbreak of a highly fatal zoonotic disease, Nipah virus transmitted from fruit bats to humans, which is related to ecological imbalances like loss of natural habitat of fruit bats.

According to the Inter-State Migrant Survey in Kerala, there were 25 lakh migrant workers in the state (India Today 2017). Inter-state migration of labourers to Kerala from states where diseases like Kala Azar, cholera are known to be endemic could also be risk factors for the emergence of these diseases (Sukumaran and Pradeep Kumar 2015). International migration and travel can also serve as a conduit for carrying highly infectious diseases. Recently, a man who had worked in a slaughter house in United Arab Emirates and returned to Kerala was admitted to hospital with Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever (The New Indian Express 2018).

The growing problem of roadside dumping of municipal waste is a reality in most parts of Kerala. With most local bodies adopting the no-bin approach to waste, lack of centralised waste management systems due to citizen protests and with households not being aware of managing food wastes in their homes, a large amount of garbage is dumped on the streets. The Swachhta Status Report highlights that 87.7 per cent of rural households and 75.7 per cent of urban households in Kerala did not have garbage disposal arrangement (NSSO 2016). While many households in the state will have arrangements within their premises to dispose of food waste, those households that lack such arrangements

or lack awareness tend to dispose their garbage on the roadside. This has contributed in the growth of stray dog and cattle population and in attracting rodents. Dogs, cattle and rodents can transmit leptospirosis to human population.

After the 2018 floods in Kerala, there was a spurt in zoonoses like leptospirosis and scrub typhus. Given that Kerala has one of the highest human population densities and likely to live in close proximity to livestock, poultry, companion animals and wild animals, in future, the state is likely to witness the emergence or re-emergence of new and existing zoonoses. This article examines public expenditure on zoonoses surveillance and control of vector-borne disease, size of livestock population, size of at-risk population who were employed in occupations that involved contact with animals and vectors and the cases due to zoonotic and vector-borne diseases in Kerala.

## Public Expenditure On Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme and National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme

Recognising the public health implications of zoonotic diseases, the Government of India has allocated Rs 100 crore to surveillance, control and prevention of zoonotic and neglected tropical diseases in the budget 2018-19, which marks a doubling of allocation from the previous year. In addition to this, in 2018-19, the central government allocated Rs 4779 crore towards communicable diseases which includes National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP). Table 1 presents information on actual expenditure by Kerala and the other South Indian states from the approved and available budget on Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) and National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP) in 2016-17.

**Table 1 : Share of approved and available budget spent by states on Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) and National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP) in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and All-India, 2016-17 (as %)**

| States | Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme | | National Vector Borne  Disease Control Programme | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Expenditure from approved budget | Expenditure from available budget | Expenditure from approved budget | Expenditure from available budget |
| Kerala | 88.1 | 72.8 | 73.8 | 56.4 |
| Tamil Nadu | 78.9 | 66.5 | 213.9 | 88.9 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 106.2 | 106.2 | 66.8 | 42.8 |
| Telangana | 90.6 | 75.2 | 71.7 | 47.2 |
| Karnataka | 88.4 | 74.4 | 96.7 | 72.6 |
| All-India | 80.5 | 65.1 | 80.9 | 50.6 |

*Source: Financial Management Report 2016-17, National Health Mission*

In the case of IDSP, among all the South Indian states, the share spent from approved and available budget was higher than the national average. However, expenditure from approved and available budget on IDSP was lower in Kerala than Andhra Pradesh, which spent more than the approved and available budget. Surveillance performs an important task in early identification, which then enables prompt public health responses. Clearly, the under utilisation of the budget for IDSP is a matter of concern in Kerala, which has witnessed outbreaks of zoonotic and vector-borne diseases like leptospirosis, scrub typhus and dengue. Further, expenditure from the approved and available budget on NVBDCP was lower in Kerala and Andhra Pradesh than the other South Indian states. This presents a challenge to strengthen efforts to control vectors at source.

In the 2018-19 budget, Kerala allocated Rs 352.4 crore to veterinary services and animal health, Rs 15 crore to insurance of livestock and poultry, Rs 4.8 crore to disease investigation among animals. While we do not have information from survey reports like National Sample Survey on the extent of insurance coverage of livestock and poultry population, the livestock census provides data on the size of the population.

**The Size of Livestock, Poultry and Companion Animal Population in Kerala**

The increasing number of some zoonotic and vector-borne diseases among human population highlights the need to focus attention on the health of livestock and companion animals, as incidence of some of these diseases among animals can have adverse effects on dairy, egg and meat production as well as cause disease among population engaged in animal-related occupations in the state. Kerala has witnessed a decline in livestock population between 2007 and 2012 (Ministry of Agriculture 2014).Related to the shift in cropping pattern from paddy cultivation, which needed work animals to cash crops (Nair 1990). The move away from paddy resulted in a lowered demand for work animals (Nair 1990). In this context, we need to understand the size of livestock, poultry and companion animal population in Kerala.

Information from the 19th Livestock Census 2012 showed that there were 27.35 lakh livestock, 242.81 lakh poultry, 9.23 lakh dogs, 4681 stray cattle, 2.68 lakh stray dogs and 2.30 lakh rabbits in Kerala (Table 2).

**Vol.10    No.4    October - December 2018**
**&**                          **Social Science in Perspective**
**Vol. 11    No.1    January - March 2019**

**Table 2 : Number of livestock, poultry, dogs and veterinary institutions in Kerala, district-wise, 2012**

| District | Livestock | Poultry | Dogs | Rabbits | Stray cattle | Stray dogs | Veterinary institutions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kasaragod | 120687 | 685297 | 40119 | 3509 | 1189 | 9331 | 42 |
| Kannur | 161706 | 798259 | 47897 | 8526 | 135 | 14753 | 91 |
| Wayanad | 116603 | 404289 | 25658 | 13805 | 70 | 3520 | 28 |
| Kozhikode | 155899 | 1122398 | 32287 | 10565 | 166 | 15956 | 89 |
| Malappuram | 239112 | 3276239 | 20151 | 24429 | 455 | 15198 | 110 |
| Palakkad | 293467 | 3512994 | 69553 | 6732 | 157 | 26772 | 100 |
| Thrissur | 256826 | 3185833 | 81344 | 19844 | 210 | 32833 | 118 |
| Ernakulam | 248722 | 4270568 | 100405 | 22558 | 468 | 16647 | 105 |
| Idukki | 206222 | 527015 | 61047 | 39697 | 1566 | 14753 | 61 |
| Kottayam | 189875 | 1509805 | 77864 | 24106 | 54 | 10924 | 85 |
| Alappuzha | 137652 | 1532185 | 71063 | 11954 | 50 | 24354 | 81 |
| Pathanamthitta | 119119 | 643571 | 65748 | 8802 | 0 | 11548 | 60 |
| Kollam | 220402 | 1070243 | 87055 | 12688 | 49 | 49582 | 83 |
| Thiruvananthapuram | 268870 | 1743232 | 143168 | 23329 | 112 | 31749 | 99 |
| Kerala | 2735162 | 24281928 | 923359 | 230550 | 4681 | 268944 | 1152 |

*Note: Total livestock covers cattle, buffalo, sheep, goat, pig, horses& ponies, mules, donkeys, camels, mithun and yak and total poultry include total birds in the poultry farms and hatcheries; Data on veterinary institutions is for 2011; Veterinary institutions include District Veterinary Centres, veterinary hospitals, veterinary dispensaries, veterinary polyclinics, mobile veterinary hospitals and mobile veterinary dispensaries*

*Source: Ministry of Agriculture, 2014, 19th Livestock Census, 2012*

It is clear that poultry constitutes a large share of animals reared by people. Further, around 43 per cent of poultry are raised in backyard poultry production, which means that these birds live in close proximity to human population (Ministry of Agriculture 2014). Nearly 19.5 lakh households in Kerala keep backyard poultry production (Ministry of

Agriculture 2014). Among the livestock population in Kerala, cattle (48.6%) and goats (45.6%) accounted for a larger share.

Livestock population was highest in Palakkad, Thiruvananthapuram and Thrissur; poultry population in Ernakulam, Palakkad and Malappuram; dogs in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Kottayam; stray cattle in Idukki and Kasaragod, and stray dogs in Kollam, Thrissur and Thiruvananthapuram. Malappuram and Thiruvananthapuram had the largest number of households with backyard poultry (Ministry of Agriculture 2014). Districts that had the largest number of veterinary institutions in the state were Thrissur, Malappuram, Ernakulam and Palakkad, which more or less corresponds to the size of livestock population and poultry.

### Workforce in the Animal Husbandry, Meat Processing, Leather Tanning and Veterinary Activities

Information on sectoral contribution to Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) illustrates the meagre and declining share of the agricultural sector in Kerala (Table 3).In 2011-12, less than 10 per cent of Kerala's NSDP was from agriculture and allied sector, which is much lower than the All-India share. The highest contribution to the state's NSDP was from the services sector (72%). Among the South Indian states, only Tamil Nadu (8.7%) has a similar pattern of low share of agriculture and allied sector to NSDP (Government of Tamil Nadu 2017) .

**Table 3 : Sector-wise share of Net Domestic Product in Kerala and All-India, 2004-05 to 2011-12 (as %)**

| Sector | Kerala | | All-India | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2004 - 05 | 2011 - 12 | 2004 - 05 | 2011 - 12 |
| Agriculture and allied | 16.5 | 8.5 | 19.9 | 14.7 |
| Industry | 22.3 | 19.5 | 25.2 | 24.1 |
| Services | 61.2 | 72.0 | 54.9 | 61.2 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

*Source: Government of Tamil Nadu, 2017*

The data on share of agricultural households among rural households will show the extent to which agriculture remains important in Kerala. Information from National Sample Survey Office (2015) reveals that Kerala (27.3%), Tamil Nadu (34.7%) and Andhra Pradesh (41.5%) had the least share of agricultural households among rural households and Rajasthan (78.4%), Uttar Pradesh (74.8%) and Madhya Pradesh (70.8%) had the highest share. Kerala (34.5 %), West Bengal (30.3%) and Tamil Nadu (43.2%) had a relatively lower share of agricultural activities (cultivation and livestock activity) in the total average monthly income per agricultural household (NSSO 2015). In Kerala (83.9%), West Bengal (91.5%), Jharkhand (86%) and Bihar (85.3%) had a higher share of agricultural households which possessed land holdings of less than one hectare (NSSO 2015). Clearly, there has been a shift away from the agricultural sector in Kerala, which makes it more important to preserve the workforce who depend on it. Figure 1 shows that agricultural households in Kerala undertake cultivation (92.6%) along with other economic activities like working for salary elsewhere (47.6%), livestock rearing (51.6%), other agricultural activity (60.7%), non agricultural enterprise (27.2%) and other activities (53.3%), attesting to the importance of non farm employment.
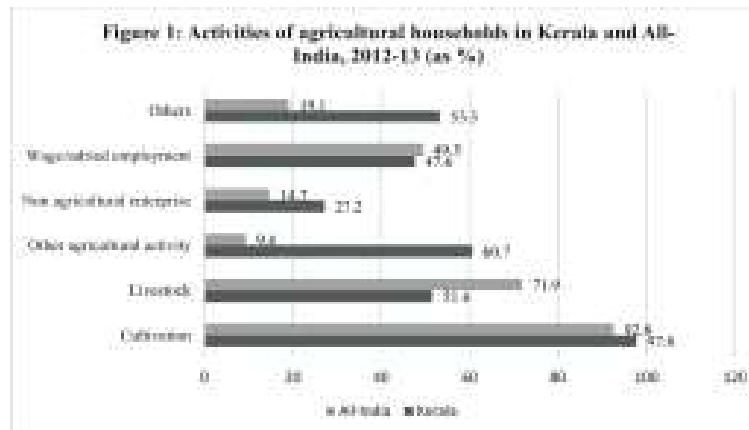


Source: NSSO 2015, Report No.569: Some Characteristics of Agricultural Households in India, January-December 2013

The fact that nearly half of agricultural households were engaged in livestock rearing, points to the need for ensuring that animal health care practices are adopted so that animals and people who work with them remain healthy. The economic shocks to agricultural households that result from animal disease and human ill health, can lead to lower productivity and fatalities. With Kerala being one of the leptospirosis endemic states, and as it is transmitted from cattle, rodents and dogs to humans, efforts must be taken to prevent this disease. While cases of anthrax and brucellosis have not been documented recently in the state, surveillance efforts must be strengthened, as anthrax among cattle and humans have been reported from Andhra Pradesh. In 2018, 13 people were hospitalised for suspected anthrax in Andhra Pradesh (https://www.ndtv.com/andhra-pradesh-news/13-with-suspected-anthrax-infection-hospitalised-near-visakhapatnam-in-andhra-pradesh-1843513 ).

It is not just people engaged in livestock rearing who are at risk of contracting zoonotic and vector-borne diseases, but also those who work as farmers, agricultural labourers, in the animal slaughter and meat processing sector, in forestry and logging, hunting of animals, wholesale business of live animals, leather tanning industry and veterinary activities. Cultivators and agricultural labourers are exposed to infections from farm animals, ticks and from mosquitoes,which breed in stagnant water collected for irrigation. Workers who are in direct contact with live or dead animals are vulnerable to contracting diseases from these animals and insects which thrive on these animals like ticks and mites. For instance, a person who works in the animal husbandry sector and is involved in the maintenance of these animals can get diseases like anthrax, brucellosis, leptospirosis, avian influenza as well as tick- and mite-borne infections like scrub typhus and Crimean Congo Haemorrhagic Fever (CCHF). People employed in the slaughter of animals, meat processing industry and leather tanning industry are exposed to the same risk as those in animal production. Those engaged in forestry and logging face the risk of animal bites and tick-borne diseases like scrub typhus, Lyme disease and Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD) as well as mosquito-borne diseases like malaria and dengue which thrive in dense vegetation. People

employed in the veterinary sector are in direct contact with animals in the course of treating them and are vulnerable to acquiring diseases from infected animals if they do not observe safety protocols.

The Census of India 2011 shows that in Kerala, 1.18 lakh people (75,591 main workers and 42,681 marginal workers) were directly working in animal production like raising of cattle, buffaloes, sheep and goats, pigs, poultry and other animals and another 40,078 people in forestry and logging (Table 4).

**Table 4 : Industrial classification of main and marginal workers in work related to animal husbandry, forestry, wholesale market for live animals and veterinary activities in Kerala, across social group, 2011**

| Industrial category | General | | | Scheduled Caste | | | Scheduled Tribe | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Main worker | Marginal worker | Total | Main worker | Marginal worker | Total | Main worker | Marginal worker | Total |
| Cultivators | 544932 | 125321 | 670253 | 16386 | 6422 | 22808 | 16288 | 4605 | 20893 |
| Agricultural labourer | 919136 | 403714 | 1322850 | 212417 | 86849 | 299266 | 65509 | 30520 | 96029 |
| Animal production | 75591 | 42681 | 118272 | 4185 | 2549 | 6734 | 1299 | 918 | 2217 |
| Support activities for animal production | 102 | 42 | 195 | 33 | 25 | 58 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Hunting trapping & related activities | 222 | 42 | 264 | 30 | 6 | 36 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Forestry & logging | 31035 | 9043 | 40078 | 6033 | 1880 | 7913 | 2601 | 1602 | 4203 |
| Processing and preserving of meat | 4349 | 1473 | 5822 | 96 | 58 | 154 | 18 | 14 | 32 |
| Wholesale of agricultural raw materials and live animals | 14003 | 1931 | 15934 | 205 | 72 | 277 | 52 | 16 | 68 |
| Tanning and dressing of leather | 4674 | 691 | 5365 | 367 | 105 | 472 | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| Veterinary activities | 4447 | 217 | 4664 | 511 | 19 | 530 | 67 | 0 | 67 |

*Source: Census of India 2011*

There were 13.2 lakh agricultural labourers and 6.7 lakh cultivators in the state. In Kerala, 15,934 people worked in wholesale of raw materials and live animals. Relatively smaller number of people were engaged in hunting of animals and leather tanning. Less than 5000 people were employed in veterinary services. Among Scheduled Castes (SCs), there were 2.9 lakh agricultural labourers, 22,808 cultivators, 7913 employed in forestry and logging and 6734 workers in animal production. Scheduled Tribes (STs) were mainly found in forestry and logging (4203) and animal production (2217). There were 96,029 agricultural labourers and 20,893 cultivators among STs. Among all workers in the state, 21.8 lakh were engaged in occupations that exposed them to risk of contracting zoonotic and vector-borne diseases. In the event of these at-risk workers contracting these diseases, the situation of informal workers are precarious. Informal workers like agricultural labourers, slaughter house workers, loggers etc. do not have access to paid leave in case they fall ill, which leads to loss of wages for the duration of their treatment. In addition, if they do not have access to subsidised public healthcare, expenditure on treatment can adversely affect their household income. Moreover, if the disease can transmit from human-to-human, then their household members and neighbourhood members are likely to contract it, since population density is very high in Kerala.

Which are the districts that have a larger number of workers who are vulnerable to zoonotic and vector-borne diseases? Table 5 reveals that Idukki, Palakkad and Malappuram had the highest number of cultivators. The number of agricultural labourers were highest in Palakkad, Idukki, Malappuram and Wayanad. Kottayam, Thrissur and Thiruvananthapuram had the highest number of workers employed in animal production. The largest number of workers in forestry and logging were in Palakkad, Malappuram and Thrissur.Workers involved in animal slaughter and meat processing were concentrated in Thrissur, Ernakulam and Malappuram. A larger number of people working in wholesale of raw materials and live animals were found in Kozhikode, Malappuram and Thrissur. Thiruvananthapuram, Thrissur and Kollam had a larger share of people employed in veterinary services.

**Table 5 : Industrial classification of main and marginal workers in work related to animal husbandry, forestry, wholesale market for live animals and veterinary activities in Kerala, district wise, 2011**

| District | Industrial classification | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Cultivators | Agricultural labourer | Animal production | Support activities for animal production | Hunting trapping & related activities | Forestry and logging | Processing and preserving of meat | Wholesale of agricultural raw materials and live animals | Tanning & dressing of leather | Veterinary activities |
| Kasargod | 23732 | 38774 | 3032 | 22 | - | 1838 | 116 | 326 | 164 | 132 |
| Kannur | 36549 | 82988 | 9087 | 16 | 16 | 3269 | 291 | 1339 | 731 | 261 |
| Wayanad | 52759 | 101630 | 6796 | 8 | 6 | 947 | 138 | 431 | 58 | 137 |
| Kozhikode | 26543 | 64198 | 8821 | 6 | 24 | 2503 | 480 | 2545 | 469 | 346 |
| Malappuram | 57567 | 117405 | 6702 | 14 | 24 | 4294 | 719 | 2150 | 259 | 336 |
| Palakkad | 67805 | 249949 | 8776 | 20 | 89 | 4848 | 480 | 1599 | 1305 | 329 |
| Thrissur | 41786 | 73941 | 12747 | 9 | 36 | 4068 | 741 | 1696 | 801 | 562 |
| Ernakulam | 50423 | 71391 | 9733 | 6 | 33 | 3867 | 731 | 1573 | 762 | 473 |
| Idukki | 100917 | 145698 | 5208 | 4 | - | 1608 | 136 | 480 | 30 | 186 |
| Kottayam | 49991 | 63052 | 15620 | 17 | 3 | 3310 | 489 | 1317 | 159 | 271 |
| Alappuzha | 25237 | 71706 | 6376 | 38 | 9 | 2206 | 296 | 464 | 421 | 275 |
| Pathanamthitta | 41414 | 55455 | 5230 | 10 | 10 | 1624 | 88 | 198 | 26 | 164 |
| Kollam | 56693 | 92193 | 7912 | 12 | 9 | 2782 | 348 | 1013 | 66 | 529 |
| Thiruvananthapuram | 38837 | 94470 | 12232 | 13 | 5 | 2914 | 769 | 803 | 114 | 663 |
| Kerala | 670253 | 1322850 | 118272 | 195 | 264 | 40078 | 5822 | 15934 | 5365 | 4664 |

Note: Workers include main and marginal workers; Processing and preserving of meat includes mutton-slaughtering and preparation, beef-slaughtering and preparation, pork-slaughtering and preparation, poultry and other slaughtering, preservation, processing and canning of meat, production of hides and skins originating from slaughterhouses, rendering of lard and other edible fats of animal origin, production and processing of animal offal, production, processing and preserving of other meat and meat products
Source: Census of India 2011

**Animal and Vector-Borne Diseases in Kerala**

Data from the IDSP Annual Report 2017 reveals that routine surveillance had detected highest number of cases of leptospirosis in Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra (NCDC 2017). The National Health Profile presents information on some vector-borne and zoonotic diseases like malaria, dengue, chikungunya, Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and rabies. Kerala along with Tamil Nadu has a large number of dengue cases (Table 6). This draws attention to the need for focussed state action on vector control and to utilise central allocation efficiently. In the case of other vector-borne diseases like malaria and chikungunya, the number of cases is lower in Kerala when compared to other South Indian states. But there have been three rabies deaths in Kerala. While rabies can be transmitted through dogs, cats, bats, wild animals etc., in India most cases are a result of contact with infected dogs. In 2015, there were 1.25 lakh dog bite cases in Kerala (Deccan Chronicle 2016). A study in Kozhikode revealed that among all the animal bite cases, more than three-fourth of cases were bitten by dogs, 11.9 per cent by fox, 7.6 per cent by mongoose and 3.4 per cent by wild pigs (Ramakrishnan *et al* 2017). Among those who reported dog bites, 97 per cent were bitten by stray dogs (Ramakrishnan *et al* 2017). This suggests that there has been inadequate government attention to preventive health like animal birth control and garbage disposal in public spaces, which encourages stray dogs as well as vaccination of companion animals (like dogs and cats).

**Table 6 : Cases and death due to select vector-borne and zoonotic diseases in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and All-India 2017 (as absolute numbers)**

| State | Malaria | | Dengue | | Chikun-gunya | Japanese encephalitis | | Rabies |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Cases | Death | Cases | Death | Cases | Cases | Death | Deaths |
| Kerala | 1194 | 2 | 19973 | 37 | 78 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Tamil Nadu | 5449 | 0 | 23294 | 65 | 120 | 127 | 2 | 3 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 16913 | 0 | 4844 | 0 | 1147 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Telangana | 2688 | 0 | 3083 | 0 | 663 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Karnataka | 6529 | 0 | 17265 | 5 | 32170 | 23 | 0 | 15 |
| All India | 842095 | 104 | 157996 | 253 | 63679 | 2180 | 252 | 97 |

*Note: Death due to Chikungunya are not reported in India*
*Source: CBHI 2018, National Health Profile*

Nearly two-fifth of households in Kerala reported experiencing severe problem of mosquitoes and flies when compared to 62.4 per cent in Andhra Pradesh, 47.4 per cent in Karnataka and 59.1 per cent in Tamil Nadu (NSSO 2014). Vector control measures by the state was inadequate in Kerala when compared to other South Indian states. Only 16.5 per cent of households in Kerala reported that government agencies took efforts to control problem of mosquitoes and flies when compared to 54.5 per cent in Tamil Nadu, 34.6 per cent in Andhra Pradesh (undivided) and 29.1 per cent in Karnataka (NSSO 2014).

*Temporal and Regional Variations of Zoonotic and Vector-borne Diseases in Kerala*

The IDSP data presents information on zoonotic and vector-borne diseases like leptospirosis, scrub typhus, Kyasanur Forest Disease, Japanese Encephalitis (JE) malaria, dengue and chikungunya. The number of leptospirosis cases and deaths have increased by 125 per cent and 158 per cent respectively from 2013-2018 in Kerala (Table 7). After the natural disaster in Kerala in 2018, there was an outbreak of

leptospirosis, which is a bacterial infection transmitted by rodents and other animals such as cattle and dogs to humans. The close links that leptospirosis has with floods is established when we examine the month-wise data on leptospirosis cases in Kerala. The number of leptospirosis cases increased from 80 in May to 247 in August and reached a peak of 856 in September 2018, coinciding with the floods (http://dhs.kerala.gov.in/pdf2018/data_24112018.pdf). The increase in leptospirosis cases also point to another concern - livestock and companion animals' health, as it affects these animals as well. Scrub typhus is spread to humans through the bites of infected chiggers. While the cases due to scrub typhus have increased between 2013 and 2018, it can be seen that there was a decline after 2015.

**Table 7: Cases and death due to select vector-borne and zoonotic diseases in Kerala, 2013-18**

| Communicable diseases | | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Leptospirosis | Cases | 814 | 1075 | 1098 | 1710 | 1408 | 1833 |
| | Death | 34 | 43 | 43 | 35 | 80 | 88 |
| Scrub typhus | Cases | 68 | 433 | 1149 | 633 | 340 | 226 |
| | Death | 0 | 6 | 15 | 3 | 5 | 4 |
| Kyasanur Forest Disease | Cases | 1 | 6 | 102 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| | Death | 0 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Japanese Encephalitis | Cases | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| | Death | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Malaria | Cases | 1634 | 1751 | 1549 | 1540 | 1177 | 789 |
| | Death | 0 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| Dengue | Cases | 7938 | 2548 | 4114 | 7218 | 21993 | 3834 |
| | Death | 29 | 13 | 29 | 21 | 165 | 32 |
| Chikungunya | Cases | 247 | 264 | 152 | 124 | 54 | 52 |

*Note: Data for 2018 is for January- October 2018*
*Source: http://dhs.kerala.gov.in/pdf2018/data_24112018.pdf*

Information presented in Table 8 shows that there were inter-district variations in cases and deaths caused by zoonotic and vector-borne diseases across the districts in Kerala. The data points to higher cases of leptospirosis in Pathanamthitta, Kozhikode, Thiruvananthapuram and Alappuzha, indicating that it was dispersed across regions and not concentrated in a particular region. Deaths due to leptospirosis was higher in Kollam and Kozhikode. Pathanamthitta and Alappuzha were badly affected by the floods, which enabled the spread of leptospirosis. In the previous year also, the highest number of leptospirosis cases were reported from Thiruvananthapuram, Alappuzha and Kozhikode(http://dhs.kerala.gov.in/pdf2018/data2017dhs.pdf). Thiruvananthapuram has a high livestock and dog population, which can transmit leptospirosis.

**Table 8: District-wise data on select zoonotic and vector-borne diseases in Kerala January- October 2018**

| District | Leptospirosis | | Scrub typhus | | Japanese Encephalitis | | Malaria | | Dengue | | Chikun gunya |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Cases | Deaths | Cases | Deaths | Cases | Death | Cases | Deaths | Cases | Deaths | Cases |
| Kasaragod | 28 | 2 | 3 | - | - | - | 136 | - | 634 | 3 | - |
| Kannur | 35 | 1 | 8 | - | - | - | 109 | - | 328 | 3 | 1 |
| Wayanad | 108 | 3 | 16 | 1 | - | - | 15 | - | 40 | - | - |
| Kozhikode | 243 | 12 | 25 | - | 4 | 2 | 87 | - | 237 | 3 | - |
| Malappuram | 183 | 5 | 5 | 1 | - | - | 84 | - | 822 | 9 | - |
| Palakkad | 93 | 7 | 6 | - | - | - | 22 | - | 281 | 7 | - |
| Thrissur | 80 | 11 | 1 | - | - | - | 68 | - | 194 | - | 32 |
| Ernakulam | 77 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 80 | - | 167 | - | - |
| Idukki | 30 | 3 | 3 | - | - | - | 21 | - | 51 | - | - |
| Kottayam | 106 | 1 | 7 | - | - | - | 24 | - | 114 | 1 | 1 |
| Alappuzha | 225 | 5 | - | - | 1 | - | 22 | - | 126 | 1 | 1 |
| Pathanamthitta | 280 | 9 | 4 | - | - | - | 32 | - | 356 | 2 | - |
| Kollam | 115 | 16 | 6 | 1 | - | - | 31 | - | 235 | 1 | - |
| Thiruvananthapuram | 230 | 11 | 142 | 1 | - | - | 58 | - | 249 | 2 | 17 |
| Kerala | 1833 | 88 | 226 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 789 | 0 | 3834 | 32 | 52 |

*Source: http://dhs.kerala.gov.in/pdf2018/data_24112018.pdf*

While the earlier outbreak of scrub typhus was concentrated in Wayanad, by 2018, the highest number of cases was found in Thiruvananthapuram (142) and Kozhikode (25). In 2017 the largest number of scrub typhus cases were reported from Thiruvananthapuram and Wayanad (http://dhs.kerala.gov.in/pdf2018/data2017dhs.pdf). Scrub typhus is usually associated with those living near, working in or visiting forested areas where chigger mites are found. So the large number in Thiruvananthapuram raises questions on whether there has been increase in economic activities in forests or whether chiggers have become resistant to insecticides used in agricultural farms. Further, a decline in chiggers' usual host population and availability of new hosts like humans could be a factor in the large number of cases of scrub typhus in Thiruvananthapuram. The few cases of JE were concentrated in Kozhikode district. While the number of cases due to malaria was higher in Kasaragod and Kannur, dengue cases were higher in Malappuram and Kasaragod. Thrissur had the largest number of chikungunya cases. In 2017, Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Palakkad had the highest dengue cases (http://dhs.kerala.gov.in/pdf2018/data2017dhs.pdf).

In addition to the size of the livestock population, regional variation in zoonotic and vector borne cases could be associated with population density, urbanisation, land use changes, changes in agricultural practices, rainfall, garbage disposal practices, urbanisation etc.

As Kerala has the third highest human population density (860 persons per sq km) after Bihar and West Bengal, people are likely to live in close proximity to livestock and poultry, companion animals and wild animals. Among all districts the highest human population densities were found in Thiruvananthapuram, Alappuzha, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Ernakulam, Kollam and Thrissur (Figure 2). Idukki, Wayanad and Pathanamthitta have the lowest human population densities.

Figure 2: Density of human population (per square km) in Kerala, district wise, 2011
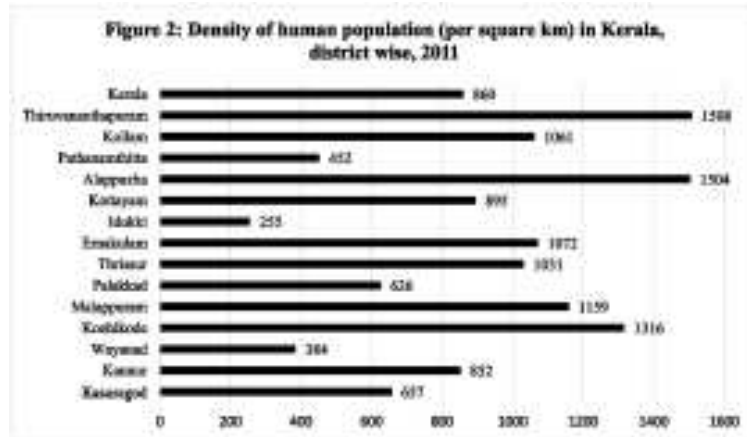
*Source: Census of India, 2011, District Census Handbook, Kerala (http://www.census india.gov.in/2011census/dchb/DCHB.html)*

High population densities combined with large livestock population increases the contact between humans and animals, which in turn increases the likelihood of zoonotic disease transmission if good practices in animal health and in handling of animals are not followed. Districts that have a high human population density, like Thiruvananthapuram, Alappuzha and Kozhikode also had a high number of leptospirosis cases. Thiruvananthapuram also had a high number of scrub typhus and dengue cases.

Data from the Census of India, 2011 reveals that Kerala was one of the most highly urbanised states in India after Tamil Nadu, with 47.7 per cent of the population residing in urban areas. The districts with the highest proportion of population living in urban areas were Ernakulam (68.1%), Thrissur (67.2%) and Kozhikode (67.2%).  Among these districts, only Kozhikode has a high number of people affected by zoonotic and vector-borne diseases. Notably, urbanisation increased by nearly 28 percentage points in Kozhikode between 2001 and 2011, which suggests that land use changes and high human density could be possible explanations.

## The Way Forward in Rebuilding Kerala: Integrating animal and human health with the ecosystem

The floods of 2018 presents an opportunity to Kerala to develop an integrated approach to animal, human health and the ecosystem, which is called the One Health approach. The marked increase in zoonoses like leptospirosis and scrub typhus as well as vector-borne diseases like dengue during the floods and the period following it are not an unexpected phenomenon in the state. Leptospirosis, scrub typhus and dengue cases have witnessed an increase over a period of time pointing to anthropogenic and possibly natural changes to the ecosystem, which has brought animals, vector, pathogens and human hosts into close contact with each other. In rebuilding Kerala, it is imperative that the state takes efforts to control these zoonotic pathogens at their animal source and vector-borne diseases with a coordinated multisectoral approach across departments of health, agriculture, animal husbandry, environment, forest & wildlife, fisheries, water supply and sanitation and food safety. For instance, in the control of leptospirosis which is spread through rodents, dogs, cattle and wild animals, there has to be coordinated action among the ministries of health, animal husbandry, forest and agriculture.Vaccination is available for pet dogs and cats as well as livestock against leptospirosis. Some agricultural practices could be vector-friendly and hence before any large scale scheme is implemented, Centre for One Health Education Advocacy Research and Training (COHEART) and entomologists should be consulted for vector control. In the case of rabies and leptospirosis, the ministries of health, animal husbandry and Kerala Total Sanitation and Health Mission and local self government institutions will need to develop a strategy to register all pet animals like dogs and cats, ensure that pet animals are vaccinated, implement birth control and vaccination of stray dogs, and enforce waste management protocols across the state. As people who work in forestry and logging, government employment programmes and live near forests are vulnerable to scrub typhus, KFD and Lyme disease, the ministries of forest and wildlife, animal husbandry and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme under National Livelihood

Mission will need to work out strategies to minimise tick and chigger bites among such workers. As backyard poultry comprises a large share of poultry production in Kerala, the department of animal husbandry and health have to educate people about correct and safe poultry rearing practices.

The Government of India has not given zoonoses and vector-borne diseases the attention that it deserved in health policy. The National Health Policy 2017 mentions only management of zoonotic diseases like rabies, need for surveillance of outbreaks and treatment protocols for vector-borne diseases. One Health approach to animal and human health does not find mention in the National Health Policy 2017. It has been noted that intersectoral mechanisms to operationalise One Health approach were not coordinated at the national level(Chatterjee *et al* 2016).

Kerala has taken a step in the right direction with establishment of Centre for One Health Education Advocacy Research and Training in 2014 at Wayanad under Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University. However, this approach needs to be operationalised across sectors. The example of Bangladesh's 'Strategic framework for One Health approach to infectious diseases in Bangladesh' in 2012 offers some pointers.For the One Health approach to succeed in Kerala, it is important to involve communities in surveillance, changing unhealthy agricultural and animal husbandry practices, and protection of forest wealth with least economic disruptions to communities. Involving people in the process of integrating animal and human health is the way ahead.

### References

1.  Anish, TS, Vijayakumar, K and Itty Amma KR Leela (2011): "Domestic and Environmental Factors of Chikungunya-affected Families in Thiruvananthapuram (Rural) District of Kerala, India" , *J Glob Infect Dis.* 3(1): 32–36.

2.  Central Bureau of Health Intelligence (2018): "National Health Profile 2018", New Delhi: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

3.  Chakravarti A, Arora R, Luxemburger C. (2012): "Fifty years of dengue in India",*Trans R Soc Trop Med Hyg*, 106: 273–282.

4. Chatterjee, P, Kakkar, M, Chaturvedi, S. (2016): "Integrating one health in national health policies of developing countries: India's lost opportunities", *Infectious Diseases of Poverty*, 5(87 ): 1-5.

5. Deccan Chronicle (2016): Kerala: Dogs bit 3.98 lakh people in last 3 years, Rohit Raj, November 5 2016.

6. Dubal Z B, Barbuddhe S B and Singh N P. (2014): Important Zoonotic Diseases: Prevention and Control, Technical Bulletin No. 39, Goa:ICAR Research Complex for Goa.

7. George, P.S. and Chattopadhyay, S. (2001): Population and Land Use in Kerala. In: Growing Populations, Changing Landscapes: Studies from India, China and the United States,Washington DC: National Academy of Sciences, 79-106.

8. Government of Tamil Nadu (2017): Tamil Nadu Human Development Report 2017, Chennai: Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission

9. https://www.ndtv.com/andhra-pradesh-news/13-with-suspected-anthrax-infection-hospitalised-near-visakhapatnam-in-andhra-pradesh-1843513

10. India Today (2017): Migrant workers face challenges in Kerala: Workshop (https://www.indiatoday.in/pti-feed/story/migrant-workers-face-challenges-in-kerala-workshop-939635-2017-06-07)

11. Ministry of Agriculture (2014): 19th Livestock Census, 2012, Vol. 2, New Delhi: Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries

12. Morse, S.S. (1995): "Factors in the emergence of infectious diseases", *Emerg. Infect. Dis*. 1, 7"15

13. Mutheneni, SR, Morse, AP, Caminade, C, Upadhyayula, SM. (2017): "Dengue burden in India: recent trends and importance of climatic parameters", *Emerging Microbes & Infections*,  6 : 1-10

14. Nair, KN. (1990): Cattle Development in Kerala: Trends and Prospects, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 25 (35-36): 2005-2010.

15. National Centre for Disease Control (2017): IDSP Annual Report 2017, New Delhi: NCDC

16. National Sample Survey Office (2015): "Some Characteristics of Agricultural Households in India, January-December 2013", 70th Round, Report No.569 (70/33/1), New Delhi: NSSO

17. National Sample Survey Office (2014): "Drinking Water, Sanitation, Hygiene and Housing Condition in India 2012" , 69th Round, July-December 2012, Report No 556 (69/1.2/1), New Delhi: NSSO

18. National Sample Survey Office (2016): "Swachhta Status Report 2016", New Delhi: NSSO

19. Patz, JA, Graczyk, TK, Geller, N, Vittor, AY.(2000): "Effects of environmental change on emerging parasitic diseases", *International Journal for Parasitology*, 1-11

20. Ramakrishnan LV, Shakir L, Chandran P, Thavody J. (2017): "Profile of Mass Casualties of Animal Bite Cases Reported to a Tertiary Care Institution from April 2014 to March 2015 in North Kerala", *India. Int J Med. Public Health,* 7(1): 33-7

21. Satish, KV, Saranya KRL, Reddy CS, Hari Krishna P. Jha, CS, Prasada Rao PVV. (2014):"Geospatial assessment and monitoring of historical forest cover changes (1920–2012) in Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, Western Ghats, India", Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

22. Sukumaran, A and Pradeepkumar A.S. (2015): "One Health approach: A platform for intervention in emerging public health challenges of Kerala state", *International Journal of One Health*; 1:14-25.

23. The New India Express (2018): Man with Congo fever under treatment in Thrissur, December 4 2018 (http://www.newindian express.com/states/kerala/2018/dec/04/man-with-congo-fever-under-treatment-in-thrissur-1906815.html)

24. The Times of India (2013): Lyme disease outbreak in Wayanad, Rajeev KR, March 2, 2013 (https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kozhikode/Lyme-disease-outbreak-in-Wayanad/articleshow/18758675.cms)

# Employment and Livelihood in Kerala: Issues and Options

**M. Suresh Babu**

*The recent natural calamity in Kerala raises further questions on the economy's ability to generate jobs and provide stable livelihood. However, it also provides an opportunity to recast the trajectory of development. A possible area to explore in this context would be forge stronger links between agriculture and industrial sectors. Agriculture alone will not be sufficient to address the questions of poverty and inequality. It is becoming increasingly crucial to focus immediate attention on agro-industries. Such industries, established along efficient value chains, can increase significantly the rate and scope of industrial growth. Agro-industrial products offer much better prospects of growth than primary commodities. In addition, the marked trend to break down production processes into specific tasks opens up new opportunities for Kerala to specialize and take a more profitable part in global trade, provided we meet increasingly stringent market requirements.*

The incongruence between output growth and employment growth has been a problem with the Kerala's model of development. While the economy witnessed structural transformation since 1980-81, with a sharp reduction in the share of primary sector in GSDP the corresponding

decline in employment share has not taken place in primary sector. Kerala did not experience a sequential growth process. Even though service sector emerged as the engine of growth it did not provide employment matching with its income. The question of employment generation got compounded as the process of industrialization failed to take off with the share of income from secondary sector not commensurating with the level of employment in the sector. Service sector's growth has led to a peculiar situation with the  overall econnomic growth continuing to maintain a trend rate of around 6% with most of the commodity production sectors either declining or stagnating. This growth of service sector has also triggered the process of urbanization with the urban sector almost doubling itself during the last decade with the share of urban population shooting up from around 26% in 2001 to 48% in 2011, an 83% increase which is a historical high, and puts the share of urban population in the state roughly 50% larger than the national average.

Despite the structural transformation, the economy continues to be sluggish in generating enough jobs. The unabated decline in the agriculture sector and stagnant industrial sector leaves the only booming service sector as the prime employment creator. Unpacking the service sector shows that its growth rate is fuelled by a narrow base, that is, in terms of expansion of healthcare and transport facilities. While demographic factors such as increasing aged population and growing morbidity have contributed to the growth of health care sector transport sector has grown due to higher public investments in roads. The lack of dynamism in the modern service sector casts a shadow on the sustainability of service sector growth and its ability to generate employment for educated youth in the state.

**Structure of the economy**

The quick estimate of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at constant (2011-12) prices during 2016-17 registered a growth rate of 7.41 per cent in 2016-17 compared to 6.60 per cent in 2015-16. In current prices the GSDP has registered a growth rate of 10.59 percent in

2016-17. Consequently the per capita GSDP at constant (2011-12) prices in 2016-17 was 140,107, registering  a growth rate of 6.88 per cent in 2016-17. At current prices, the per capita GSDP in 2016-17 registered a growth rate of 10.04 per cent over the previous year. At constant (2011-12) prices, per capita State income has been higher than the per capita national income. Thus in terms of the growth of the economy we find that there exists a rate of growth that is higher than the national average. The arguments of a paradox of higher rate of developemnt co-existing with lower levels of growth does not seem to hold good for recent time periods for Kerala.

**Figure 1. GSDP Growth Rate**
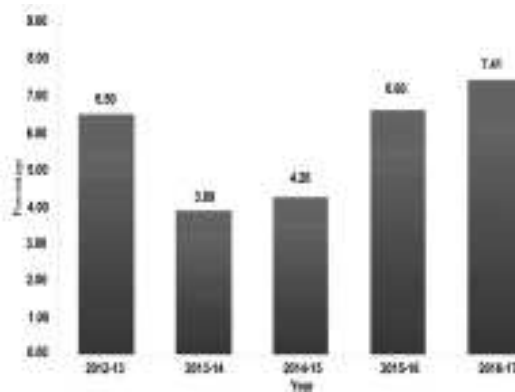


*Source: Kerala state planning board, Economic Review 2017*

**Figure 2: Sectoral Distribution of Valued Added**
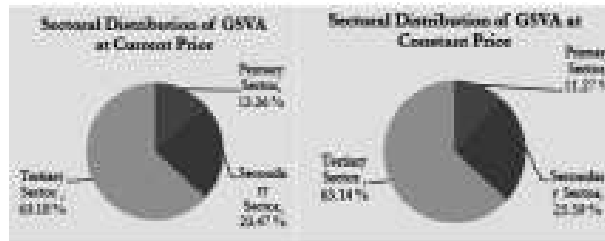


*Source: Kerala state planning board, Economic Review 2017*

The higher rate of growth of the economy is fuelled by an expanding service sector. Sectoral decomposition of gross state value added (GSVA) shows that the contribution to GSVA of the tertiary sector increased from 62.59 per cent in 2015-16 to 63.18 per cent in 2016-17. During the corresponding period the contribution of secondary sector declined from 24.59 per cent to 23.47 per cent. An analysis of annual sectoral growth rate of GSDP shows that tertiary sector recorded the highest rate of growth of 6.7 per cent in 2016-17. Interestingly during the same period, the growth rate in primary sector increased from (-)11.2 per cent to 5.19 percent. This is mainly because of the increase in production of some of the crops, live stock, fishing and aquaculture. However, if we examine a slightly longer time period we find that during the period 2013-14 to 2015-16, the share of tertiary sector has increased from 60.43 to 63.66 per cent and the share of primary sector decreased from 13.45 per cent to 12.07 per cent and secondary sector from 25.81 to 24.27 per cent.

**Employment**

Given the specatcular growth performnace of the economy, it is expected that the rate of growth of employment would be at a rate that would reduce the unemployment in the economy. This assumes significance as the service sector which is the dominant sector also comprises of a'modern services sector' apart from the traditional sectors, which generates activities that provide employment for the educated work seekers. Given the preponderance of educated employment seekers in Kerala, growth of service sector is thus viewed as a favorable situation. The evidence however, is to the contarary.

**Table 1 : State/UT wise unemployment rate based on UPS Approach**

| Andhra Pradesh | 3.9 | Telangana | 2.8 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Karnataka | 1.5 | Puducherry | 4.9 |
| Kerala | 12.5 | All India | 5 |
| Tamil Nadu | 4.2 | | |

*Source: Fifth Annual Employment-Unemployment Survey (2015-16), Govt. of India.*

In table 1 we present the  unemployment rate in Kerala and other southern states in comparison with the all India levels. It is striking to note that Kerala has the unemployment rate, based on UPS approach in the southern region. In fact it has crossed double digits at 12.5 percent, compared to that of 1.5 percent in Karnataka, which is the lowest rates in the region. All the southern states have unemploymnt rates less than the national rate of 5 per cent. Puducherry's rate which is the highest among states in the southern region excluding Kerala is less than half of Kerala's rate. This clearly shows that the generation of jobs is just not enough to absorb the increasing work force in Kerala.

**Table 2 : Employment in the Organised Sector in Kerala**
**(Lakh Persons as on 31st March)**

|        | Men  | Women | Total |
|--------|------|-------|-------|
| 2010   | 6.67 | 4.48  | 11.15 |
| 2011   | 6.66 | 4.45  | 11.11 |
| 2012   | 6.4  | 4.49  | 10.89 |
| 2013   | 6.31 | 4.57  | 10.88 |
| 2014   | 6.52 | 4.77  | 11.29 |
| 2015   | 5.74 | 5.62  | 11.36 |
| 2016   | 6.83 | 5.02  | 11.85 |
| 2017   | 6.64 | 5.09  | 11.73 |

*Source: Kerala state planning board, Economic Review 2017*

Viewed from a slightly different perspective, it is often argued that the generation of more jobs in the organised sector is an indicator of better quality jobs in an economy. Organised sector provides social security and better working conditions than the unorganised or informal sector. Thus workers in this sector enjoy better previleges and job security vis-à-vis workers in the informal sector. Growing sectors in an economy at times generates low quality jobs, which might reduce the unemployment , but would persist the vulnerablities. From table 2 it is evident that the rate of growth employment in the organised sector in

Kerala has been only marginal since 2010. In fact we find that in a number of years (four years) the absolute level of employment in organised sector declined. One positive trend that is visible is that the number of women workers in organised sector has increased mraginally over the years. Thus it is evident that not only the unemployment rate is high in Kerala, but also the extent of jobs in the organised sector has also grown at a slower pace, indicating the low quality of jobs being generated.

**Figure 3: Percentage of work seekers in Kerala by Educational Level SSLC & above**
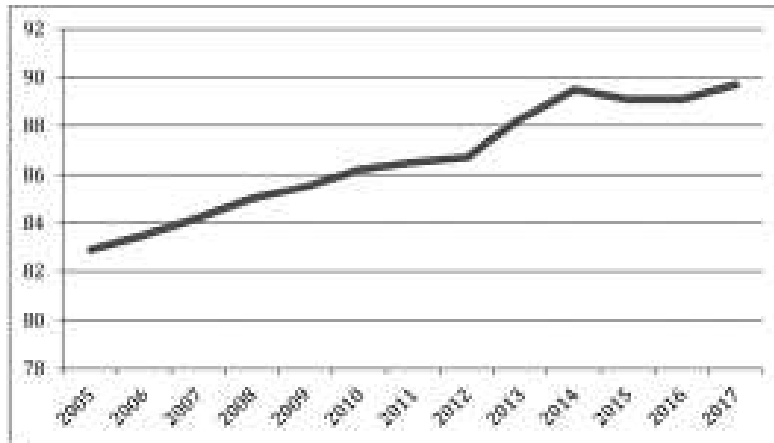


*Source: Kerala state planning board, Economic Review 2017*

The supply of jobs have to be matched by demand for jobs in terms of the skills and preferences of the job seekers. In this context Kerala faces a unique situation as the jobseekers are more educated compared to other states in India. Figure 2 reveals that almost 90 percent of work seekers in Kerala have educational qualifications of SSLC and above. This percentage has grown over time. We find that in 2005 the percentage of work seekers with qualifications above SSLC was 82 which has increased by nearly 10 percentage points in the last 10 years. This poses two challenges for the economy. First, the economy has to generate sufficient quantity of jobs to absorb the increasing workforce

and second, the kind of jobs generated needs to match the higher skills acquired by the work seekers. The structural change that has taken place in the economy has to accommodate these two issues. We find that in Kerala's case both the challenges remain to be addressed.

## Shrinking production base

The question of employment and livelihood is related to use of resources in the state. The changes in land use pattern as protrayed in table 3 in Kerala were unprecedented during the past decades in terms of deforestation, increase in area as current fallow, increase in area under non-agricultural land, decrease in both net area sown and gross cropped area resulting in decline in cropping intensity. The declining cultivable area, predominance of tiny and fragmented holdings, decline in work force in terms of reduction in agricultural labour and cultivator has made farming more vulnerable.

### Table 3: Land use pattern
### Land use Pattern in Kerala (Area in Ha)

| Sl.No | Classification of Land | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | Percentage of Geographical area | Change in area between 2015-16 and 2016-17 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Actual | Percentage |
| 1 | Total Geographical Area | 3886287 | 3886287 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | Forest | 1081509 | 1081509 | 28 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | Land put to non-agricultural uses | 434646 | 441934 | 11 | 7288 | 2 |
| 4 | Barren and uncultivated land | 13100 | 11780 | 0.3 | -1320 | -10 |
| 5 | Permanent Pastures and Grazing land | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6 | Land under miscellaneous tree crops | 2663 | 2450 | 0.06 | -213 | -8 |
| 7 | Cultivable waste | 99499 | 101379 | 3 | 1880 | 2 |
| 8 | Fallow other than current Fallow | 55258 | 55530 | 1 | 272 | 0.49 |
| 9 | Current Fallow | 70003 | 72008 | 2 | 2005 | 3 |
| 10 | Net area sown | 2023073 | 2015482 | 52 | -7591 | -0.38 |
| 11 | Area sown more than once | 604504 | 568518 | 15 | -35986 | -6 |
| 12 | Total cropped Area | 2627577 | 2584000 | 66 | -43577 | -2 |
| 13 | Cropping Intensity (%) | 130 | 128 | 0 | | |

*Source : Directorate of Economics and Statistics*

The stagnation in production sectors of the economy, which has contributed to low absoprtion of workers is evident from the case of agriculture, the most recent trend of which is shown in table 4. In agriculture, area under production of food grains has declined by more than half from 3.3 lakh hectares to 1.6 lakh hectares between 2000-01

and 2014-15 while that of coconut has fallen from 9.3 lakh hectares to 7.9 lakh hectares. Area under major spices - like pepper, cardamom and ginger and also tea - has also declined. Similarly, the number of livestock has fallen from 34.8 lakh to 27.3 lakh during the period.

**Table 4 : Area, Production and Productivity of Principal Crops**

| Sl.No. | Crops | Area(Ha) | | Production(T) | | Productivity (Kg /Ha.) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 |
| 1 | Rice | 196870 | 171398 | 549275 | 437112 | 2790 | 2550 |
| 2 | Pulses including Tur | 3764 | 1738 | 4265 | 1711 | 1133 | 984 |
| 3 | Pepper | 85948 | 85207 | 42132 | 34065 | 490 | 400 |
| 4 | Ginger | 4986 | 5147 | 22044 | 20478 | 4421 | 3979 |
| 5 | Turmeric | 2603 | 2631 | 7112 | 6506 | 2732 | 2473 |
| 6 | *Cardamom | 39730 | 39080 | 19500 | 17147 | 491 | 439 |
| 7 | Areca nut | 99126 | 97696 | 132453 | 116839 | 1336 | 1196 |
| 8 | Banana | 59835 | 57157 | 536155 | 489322 | 8961 | 8561 |
| 9 | Other Plantains | 57683 | 57138 | 411626 | 395806 | 7136 | 6927 |
| 10 | Cashew nut | 43090 | 41660 | 24733 | 27944 | 574 | 671 |
| 11 | Tapioca | 69405 | 68664 | 2662610 | 2529729 | 38363 | 36842 |
| 12 | **Coconut | 790223 | 781495 | 5873 | 5379 | 7432 | 6883 |
| 13 | ***Coffee | 84987 | 84976 | 69230 | 63476 | 815 | 747 |
| 14 | $Tea | 30205 | 30205 | 57898 | 61505 | 1917 | 2036 |
| 15 | # Rubber | 550840 | 551050 | 438630 | 540400 | 796 | 981 |

**Production in Million Nuts, Productivity in Nuts/Ha*
* Spices Board, # Rubber Board, *** Coffee Board, $ Tea Board*
*Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics*

**One Possible Option**

Given this context the recent natural calamity in Kerala raises further questions on the economy's ability to generate jobs and provide stable livelihood. However, it also provides an opportunity to recast the trajectory of development. A possible area to explore in this context would be forge stronger links between agriculture and industrial sectors. Agriculture alone will not be sufficient to address the questions of poverty

and inequality. It is becoming increasingly crucial to focus immediate attention on agro-industries. Such industries, established along efficient value chains, can increase significantly the rate and scope of industrial growth. Agro-industrial products offer much better prospects of growth than primary commodities. In addition, the marked trend to break down production processes into specific tasks opens up new opportunities for Kerala to specialize and take a more profitable part in global trade provided we meet increasingly stringent market requirements.

A significant proportion of state funds are now used to support agricultural production inputs - primarily seeds, fertilizers and irrigation systems. Little attention has been paid to the value chains by which agricultural products reach final consumers and to the intrinsic potential of such chains to generate value added and employment opportunities. However, participation in value chains implies both opportunities and pitfalls for Kerala. The prospect that lead firms such as brand owners, innovators and system integrators may appropriate increasing shares of rent and therefore further widen the gap is very real. Another danger is that SMEs (including farmers) will face difficulties as international supermarkets, retailers and buyers govern the access to markets by setting up food safety and quality standards that impose a substantial cost of compliance.

One opportunity resides in the fact that, in pursuit of lower transport and transaction costs, TNCs increasingly subdivide and relocate production processes in developing regions. In addition, modern chains require smooth product flows, high standards and error-free production. Consequently, lead firms are willing to invest in knowledge transfer to the benefit of local industries, institutions and service providers. Other opportunities exist in niche markets, both domestic and foreign, particularly for specialized and natural products found only in Kerala. Small farmers can also participate in these chains that yield higher incomes. Given the present context in Kerala there exists a need to explore these new options, learning from the development experience of other emerging economies.

# Citizenship and Reimagination of Keralam

**P. Sanal Mohan**

*Keralam's tryst with floods in July-August 2018 posed unprecedented questions on several aspects of the social and political life of Keralam. These questions are important in the larger context of the efforts of the Government of Keralam to initiate reconstruction of Keralam that is referred to as 'Construction of New Kerala'. Spurring new thoughts on social life in Keralam, the phase of reconstruction as announced by the Government of Keralam gave lot of reasons for the affected people who had been historically marginalized to expect something very new. In other words, the post flood situation demands reimagination of a new Keralam. Such a situation demands a critique of Keralam's social and economic development, famously referred to as 'Kerala Model of Development' as it evolved historically. The challenges faced in the post flood situation unsettle the prevailing consensus on citizenship and its various manifestations in Keralam. This paper seeks to analyse the questions of citizenship particularly probing the experiences of the marginalized sections of Keralam as it became decisive in the context of 2018 floods in Keralam.*

Citizenship is the most decisive factor that determines the quality of life in modern democracies. The institutional paraphernalia of the

governments help deepen the idea of citizenship through their practical policies aimed at transforming the lives of the citizens. The idea of citizenship becomes much more complex under such situations than the conception of citizenship as an individual's belongingness to a polity. Although the idea of democratic citizenship is egalitarian, the structured and hierarchized practices have defined the everyday life of citizens in many modern democracies.

In India the idea of citizenship gained ground through the anticolonial political mobilization of thetwentieth century. The last seven decades of postcolonial democratic experience has placed citizenship as a serious political issue. Often thought of as a settled political question, several aspects of citizenship are contested in India today, especially when delivery of social goods and welfare activities targeted at different social groups is considered. The citizens confront a variety of problems in their everyday life in accessing the social goods granted by the state. One could even say that to large segments of the population the state is experienced as an everyday phenomenon influencing their lives. Therefore the problems of citizenship have become serious problems to be confronted although often times they are not recognized in their complexity. From the late twentieth century onwards the idea of citizenship was stretched to its limits in India thanks to different social movements especially that of Dalits and Adivasis. It is appropriate here to mention the environmental movements in India that challenged the official wisdom and offered a critique of the reigning ideas of economic development that was at the cost of forests and other natural resources that can't be reproduced or that are non-renewable. Such movements, protracted in character, may assume significant momentum in the wake of challenges unleashed by powerful events such as the climate change induced 'natural disasters'. Keralam is not an exception to this general situation of the social movements although the dominant social classes in Keralam often deny such a phenomenon. It is possible that in the twenty first century the environmental problems might give rise to social movements that could

bring together disparate social groups and classes. However, it is generally acknowledged that the poor and vulnerable sections become the worst victims of natural calamities and effects of climate change as they do not have necessary resources to fall back up on.

This paper seeks to analyze the questions of citizenship particularly probing the experiences of the marginalized sections of Keralam as it became decisive in the context of 2018 floods in Keralam. Their efforts to survive the flood and its aftermath were severely constrained by the lack of adequate resources which were related to their conditions of existence in Keralam itself a product of their own history. One of the important historical reasons for this has been their alienation from property. In liberal democratic theory, ownership of property is fundamental to the idea of citizenship or citizenship comes along with property. However, in India citizenship and exercise of the rights of the citizens were tagged to ownership of property only in the colonial times. While it is important to divest property qualification from citizenship, ownership of property can't be undervalued in India where historically large segments of the people were prevented from owning property due to the religious ideology of caste. In Keralam the institution of caste slavery prevented the slave castes from owning land. A considerable number of Dalits, both Christian and Hindu with slave caste ancestry were structurally prevented from owning land. These were the castes that provided physical labour in Keralam historically. If may be reiterate that their social and economic vulnerability was directly linked to the historical antecedents that have not been adequately analyzed and understood in Keralam. This has had disastrous consequences for these social groups, large majority of whom were agricultural labourers who experienced a raw deal at the hands of the government of Keralam led by the communists when land reforms were implemented. Large majority of the agricultural labourers from the Dalit communities received only homesteads, as they were not rent paying class of tenants. This homestead of lands was not enough for them to evolve as independent peasants. The extent of these homesteads was

never more than ten cents in villages and five cents in towns and municipalities, which became overcrowded as decades passed by and population grew.

It may also be stated that peasant classes that are visible among Dalits were largely due to their migration to the hills of the former native state of Travancore or to the hills of Malabar.  Even in these instances we may not come across a class of middle peasants emerging. Instead we may count them only as small and marginal peasants as the ownership of land was on an average less than three acres.. However, the important point to be noted is that such efforts of Dalits owed in most cases to their own initiative and not due to the support of the post independent state.Those Dalits who moved out of their ancestral villages mostly in the native state of Travancore,could develop as peasants and were able to claim their rights as citizens in the process against several odds in the late 1940's and early 1950's. It may be noted here that in some cases the Dalit Christians could develop their social movements as they could own landed property and become small and marginal peasants through migration and thereby liberating themselves from the dependence on the upper castes, both Christians and Hindus. In this example the crucial point is the ownership of property that allowed the hitherto enslaved Dalit Christians to articulate their agency. In other words, in caste society the idea of citizenship will remain a forbidden fruit unless it is welded to the ownership of property for the oppressed castes. It is in this context that I wish to consider citizenship and property in the context of caste. It is necessary in this context to point out that when discussions on the economic and social development of the slave castes were discussed after the abolition of slavery even in the 1870's, the officials of the Travancore and Cochin native states felt that ownership of landed property was essential to develop them as 'civilized' people. I shall mention further that right from the mid nineteenth century onwards when the Protestant missionaries began to work among Dalits they had observed the need for landed property to liberate the slave castes of

Travancore and Cochin. It was equally true for the slave castes in the British Malabar too. We may cite here an example from the history of a late colonial Christian missionary organization. From the late 1930's when the Jesuit missionaries laboured among the Pulayas in Chirakkal, a few miles north of Kannoor town, one of them observed that…" if we want to make out of these wretches, good Christians and decent and respectable citizens… we must aim at, try in course of time to enable them to live in a decent house of their own; to possess a little piece of land **something** anyhow, that may be the foundation, the starting point, for them to rise rung by rung in the ladder of social life"[1]. In the second decade of the twenty first century now in the background of floods and their aftermath the question of ownership of property becomes crucial.

Keralam's tryst with floods in July-August 2018 posed unprecedented questions on several aspects of the social and political life of Keralam. These questions are important in the larger context of the efforts of the Government of Keralam to initiate reconstruction of Keralam that is referred to as 'Construction of New Kerala'. Spurring new thoughts on social life in Keralam, the phase of reconstruction as announced by the Government of Keralam gave lot of reasons for the affected people who had been historically marginalized to expect something very new. In other words, the post flood situation demands reimagination of a new Keralam. Such a situation demands a critique of Keralam's social and economic development, famously referred to as 'Kerala Model of Development' as it evolved historically. The challenges faced in the post flood situation unsettle the prevailing consensus on citizenship and its various manifestations in Keralam.

Let me analyze the post flood situation by studying the experiences of the marginalized sections of Keralam society. In the subsequent sections of the paper, I will argue that the deficit in citizenship that the marginalized sections had experienced historically becomes complicated when faced with the fury of natural disasters. The

**Vol.10    No.4    October - December 2018**
               **&**                **Social Science in Perspective**
**Vol. 11    No.1    January - March 2019**

marginalized sections do not have access to resources to overcome destructions caused by disasters of great magnitude such as that happened in July-August 2018. In order to explore possibilities of resolving such situations similar to that happened in the 2018 July floods, we need to begin with a radically different notion of citizenship.

**The need for re imagining Keralam**.

Imagination is a word often used in critical social science to buttress the argument that larger collectivities such as nation states or for that matter any community, gets formed in the process of them being imagined by people, which is a long drawn out process. Today this would appear as a statement of the obvious. However, we live in a particular context in which even such reiterations become politically and academically significant as people attribute immutability and eternity to prevailing institutional forms and social practices. More importantly, it needs to be reiterated that such forms are liable to fundamental changes and also that they were constituted at particular historical moments. It is in this context that I argue that the value-loaded images of Keralam that are in circulation today need critical analysis to find out the momentous flaws that were often glossed over in the euphoria created by such images. The political community in Keralam, has reached a situation where in, it is no longer possible to move ahead with the ideas of Keralam that were uncritically accepted although some sections of scholars have been critical of such a perspective. Most notably, the critiques were directed against the idea of" Kerala Model of Development". While it is important to preserve the gains of postcolonial transformations of the society, polity and economy, with their roots in the colonial transformations, it is necessary to think afresh critically about the challenges ahead. It is in this context that the question of reimagination of Keralam becomes imperative. Now let me open up the question of re imagination. I have used the word reimagination in this paper as much of the discussion in Keralam in the post flood situation hovers around the problem of construction of a

new Keralam. It is this idea of building a new Keralam that makes it necessary for us to think about reimagination of Keralam. Much of it has to be done by relocating ourselves in the margins of Kerala society. Following Homi Bhabah, I will argue that margins are places where things begin and not spaces where things end. Therefore, any idea of new Keralam has to begin from the visibility afforded by the margins. In fact this is nothing new as scholars have been focusing attention on the limits of the hither to achieved social and economic developments of Keralam. The critiques of Kerala model of development have shown its limits reiterating the fact that the fruits of developments in Keralam did not benefit the Adivasis, Dalits and the fisher people. Likewise it is argued that the developments did not benefit women of certain social groups. If the pattern of social and economic development followed in the state did not benefit a significant sections in Keralam, it would mean that there were a number of crucial factors that prevented the marginalized from accessing the fruits of development or the benefits of development reaching them.  However, these questions were never problematized. Therefore, in the current situation when we reimagine a new Keralam we have to address the problems of the marginalized communities and social groups in Keralam. It is in this context that I wish to problematize the idea of citizenship in contemporary Keralam.

While there is an agreement about the fact that the idea of equal citizenship was very central to the development of the historically oppressed social groups in India, it has been observed by scholars that the attribute of citizenship was not given out to all social groups equally. In spite of these differences, the idea of citizenship is fundamental to the further development of the oppressed social groups. This is spectacular in a situation in post colonial India where civil society has become 'closed and completely elitist.'[2] Closely following this is the crucial distinction made of real and formal citizenship. Here in fact equal citizenship becomes the real issue. This according to Chatterjee is due to a fundamental shift in the manner in which democracy was defined

historically. He proposed the path breaking concept of the politics of the governed that has analytical potential in contrast to the traditional definition of democracy. A significant aspect of the postcolonial history of Dalits and other historically, oppressed groups has been interpreted by historian Gyanendra Pandey as their conversion to citizenship. However, he also notes the limitations of this idea of citizenship[3]. Developed in western political theory and practice, the ideas of democracy and citizenship have been naturalized in the colonial world following the long nineteenth century. India is a classic example of this intricate process. Without going into the complex history of it, I wish to state that not everyone was equally poised to evolve as citizens. It is here that we come across the problem of communities that remained as privileged ones and communities that continued to exist with their historic "backwardness'. Both these began to pose serious questions to our understanding of citizenship vis-a- vis modern state. Modern state is the site where these contradictions are to be resolved. However such conflicts were never resolved fully, and the civil society became the arena where such conflicts were articulated. Needless to say that civil society became increasingly elitist and exclusive. It may be argued that a similar process was at work in Keralam also, that made the civil society in Keralam in the postcolonial times particularly elitist.The oppressed caste movements that contributed substantially to the development of modern civil society in Keralam, through an inversion of history, got alienated from civil society and became, in turn, almost external to it. In the absence of social movements articulating their problems historically in the civil society, it was difficult for the Adivasis to evolve as modern citizens. Probably it was in the last decades of the twentieth century and in the first decade of the present century that the citizenship of Adivasis became a central issue in the politics of Keralam. The point to be noted is that the substantive issues affecting the community had to wait for such a long time to be articulated. This showed the deficit in the democratic citizenship of Adivasis who were historically alienated

from the agrarian society but integral to modern system of power represented in the plantation economy in Keralam. Their alienation from the agrarian society does not mean that their labour was not used in agricultural production in many parts of Keralam. Nevertheless, there is a curious way in which their ethnic identity got merged with the plantation working class identity that posed serious questions to their social existence as modern citizens. In a way we need to ask the question; what are the ways in which the stigmatized social groups could claim citizenship in modern society? We may identify a similar situation in the case of the fisher people in Keralam.

Historically at the margins of the land system and opened to the sea, the fisher people had a liminal space open to them. On the Keralam's coast they had a history of being open to external influences though they might have existed in a reclusive manner when it comes to their relations with the agrarian communities. However, in the twentieth century we observe them developing social movements that critiqued the prevailing notions of domination based on caste. I wish to argue that the formal aspects of citizenship, which was extremely technical, prevented a substantial section of the oppressed people from realizing substantive social citizenship. This created a situation of their becoming increasingly alienated.

In the postcolonial social and economic development, Dalits and Adivasis got limited to their particular enclaves that demand an exploration of spatial aspects of citizenship. It may be argued that modern democratic citizenship of postcolonial times could not resolve the historically accumulated problems that the marginalized sections of Keralam experienced. Therefore inspite of much hyped transformation of Keralam they remained vulnerable. The problems of marginality in terms of public sphere and spatiality were never addressed in Keralam.

The inadequate conception of citizenship has made matters worse for the marginalized sections that could not develop themselves as a

substantial economic class. The same reason might perhaps explain why a powerful middle class did not emerge from their rank and file. It is here that issue of social citizenship become quite crucial. What are the implications of social citizenship in Keralam? Ideas of social citizenship would require the creation of more egalitarian structures that will address the problems of the disadvantaged groups although liberal ideas of citizenship may critique this as it provided more room for the intervention of the state through welfare policies. In spite of this it is important that state support is extended to under privileged sections which is a concern of social citizenship.

**Spatiality of Social Existence.**

I wish to further argue that the spatiality of physical and social life as it evolved in Keralam was crucial in the post flood rehabilitation and relief works. This situation was a product certain history of spatiality in Keralam. For example most Dalit settlements in the wetland regions of Keralam are located on the narrow bunds of the paddy fields. In many such places in the Kottayam and Alappuzha districts several hundreds of houses were completely submerged under water and the people had to be rescued and sheltered in camps opened in schools and other public buildings. We may recall here the issues discussed in the previous sections of this paper that historically those from the slave castes who were harnessed as suppliers of physical labour in the wetland system were settled on the embankment of the paddy fields and that form of settlement continues even today as land has become costly and scarce making it difficult for people to move out even if they want to do that. One might also mention that their long historical connection with this particular geographical setting would prevent them from moving out. Yet, we also have examples of thousands of people from the slave castes who were part of wetland rice production moving to the hills and settling there as agriculturists.

In places where the government offered houses to Dalits and other

marginalized sections through the programme of One Lakh Houses, such settlements were situated mostly on lands that were not really suited for agriculture or lands that were of inferior quality particularly in terms of availability of water and other basic facilities. Amounting to spatial marginalization, this had deleterious effects on the people thus relocated. Another crucial aspect in relation to social life in Keralam is the spatial identification of individuals and families as expressed in their family names/ house names. Large majority of the oppressed slave castes derived their house names from that of their masters. Often times family names have been derived from features of land or trees or other natural elements similar to a totem, to use an anthropological expression, which is typical of agrarian social life. These house names become markers of cultural significance that distinguishes individuals and families locating them in the specific socio-cultural space. This particular aspect of family names/ house names could constitute an important aspect of cultural citizenship. It is again important to note that even people without much landed property can also have a house name connoting to land. These examples have been mentioned to show the significance of land ownership and property in the evolution of citizenship in Keralam, which is distinct in certain respects from property qualification that decided franchise historically.

When it comes to post flood reconstruction it is necessary to consider these aspects of social and cultural citizenship that is quite fundamental to Keralam. The question of spatiality is crucially connected with the fundamental question of human dignity. It is necessary to ask if in the situation of floods and their aftermath we encounter issues of human dignity articulated specifically reminiscent of the phase of anti-caste mobilization in twentieth century Keralam.

**Human Dignity**

Dignity of the oppressed castes was one of the central questions of the anti caste social movement of the twentieth century. We find the same ideas being expressed in a forceful manner in the writing of

missionaries who worked among the Pulayas and other slave castes. According to a perceptive missionary, "the most important thing was to treat the oppressed caste people as human beings, respect them and their rights and also to give them their just wages"[4]. It may be noted that the missionary had brought together the problems of the symbolic and the economic aspects of social life together in the analysis of caste question. Further, we should also understand the continued significance of human dignity as a contested problem even in the twenty first century. I may mention here the protracted land struggles in Keralam beginning in the last decade of the twentieth century spearheaded by Dalit and Adivasi organizations in which the question of human dignity is second to none. I wish to elaborate a few problems related to the problem of space in the context of our concern with human dignity. Historically, the slave castes in Keralam lived in small huts, which one 19th century observer compared to a large basket turned upside down. Ethnographic information collected in Dalit settlements also testifies to the fact that even in the mid twentieth century the large majority of them lived in small huts built of thatched roof which was supported by four poles. There was hardly any idea of separate rooms and other amenities, which would mean that there was no question of built up space available to people. This would also mean that the idea of privacy may not have developed in a big way among them.. A dignified life would require access to built up space that is necessary for life to flourish.

If we analyze the manner in which space was controlled in the caste system - separate and distinct settlements of slave castes away from that of the upper castes without access to water, roads and other facilities - soon we realize the ubiquitous nature of spatial inequality. In a way, dignity of individuals and social groups was denied by monopolizing the space. The same practice could be reproduced when it comes to bodily practices, control over spaces of social interaction and the higher levels of aesthetic creations and knowledge production. It may be noted that the separate settlements that are euphemistically

referred to as colonies in the post independence phase where the occupants are mostly from the oppressed castes give an extreme example of spatial inequality, which undermine human dignity. Over the decades there developed a sort of ghettos out of these settlements. It has been reported that in many places such settlements were submerged during the floods of 2018 and people had to be relocated in the government run relief camps. These camps became the sites where spatial inequality was reproduced making it impossible for people to associate with one another freely as they were conditioned by certain fixed notions of exclusive social space. Is it possible to think of relief camps as liminal spaces where people could overcome pre-existing notions of spatial inequality? However, in the narratives that were widely circulated we understand that although people were ready to sink their differences in the face of calamities brought in by the floods, the differences soon returned to haunt them once they were forced to share space.

In the 2018 July - August floods the pre-existing forms of spatial divisions became more explicit although spatial inequality has always been therein Kerala historically. This particular idea of spatiality got worked out in fields as diverse as ownership of land, agriculture, use of natural resources, construction of houses, sartorial culture, food, sexuality and affective dimensions of human life. It may be mentioned that several aspects of these spatial configuration went into the making of what is often referred to as Malayali cultural practices. Hegemonic in nature, these cultural practices that defined the general features of social life in Keralam was challenged by anticaste movements beginning in the twentieth century although they had some precedent in the mobilization of the protestant missionaries against slavery and spatial inequality. However, several aspects of the dominant culture got normalized and eventually integrated with the value system of the emergent middle class in Keralam which continue to maintain caste and class privilege. Most recent challenges to this consensus could be seen in instances of land struggles in various parts of Keralam as

mentioned before. One possible question that could be asked is the relevance of this particular argument to the proposed reconstruction of Keralam. While the construction of new Keralam as a significant political project, unless we offer a critique of caste/class privileges in Keralam that made ubiquitous forms of domination as normal, it would be well-nigh impossible to create a new Keralam.

New Keralam has to be thought of in terms of some radical alternatives along with reconstruction of houses and new built spaces. Needless to say that reconstruction of damaged and destroyed houses is important and essential for the well being of the people who have become homeless. At the same time what is more important is the possibility of imagining Keralam as a place where more egalitarian modes of living could flourish. Such a mode of living could be imagined by bringing into consideration the question of recognition. In modern social theory when the question of dignity is analyzed particularly in the context of structural inequalities, often scholars emphasize the need for recognition. People who are oppressed on account of various reasons - historical and contemporary - are to be recognized in terms of their essential humanity which alone will bestow dignity on them. What is the significance of this in a caste society? In a caste society there are structural instruments that limit the reach of the idea of dignity. In other words deficit of dignity attributed to the oppressed caste people can erode their humanness, which in turn can create misrecognition. This question will take us to some of the fundamental issues related to the current phase of social and economic changes in Keralam as well as the historical evolution of different social classes in particular a middle class in Keralam. There prevails in Keralam a situation of misrecognition of the oppressed caste people that could fatally undermine their sense of dignity. However, if we follow the narratives of the oppressed castes shared within such communities we get a different idea of human dignity. It seems following ethnographic evidence that in spite of misrecognition slave castes could retain their

sense of dignity which was articulated through a range of religious and social mobilizations of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Closely following this, I wish to identify the ideas of social justice. Usually social justice is a notion that tends to offer a corrective approach to certain historical wrongs. Yet, the idea is not to repeat the historical mistakes or oppressions but to guard against all forms of domination and violence in future. Therefore, today social justice can't exist as a stand alone concept, but it has to be thought through along with issues of environmental justice very seriously. There were times when people used to debate social justice and environmental problems as trade offs. However, the 2018 floods and their aftermath loudly proclaimed the need for considering environment problems as much as we consider the needs of the marginalized sections of society or broadly the needs of human society. Such a realization dawns on people today as we observe the worst sufferers of natural calamities including floods are the marginalized groups who are without much resources to cope up with such challenges. Their vulnerability is bound to increase in future as we face the staggering truth of climate change. In addition to this, when we consider other aspects of floods it is true that it's effect was not confined to certain sections of the society alone but in areas where it turned out to be a deluge, it affected everyone. But the historically marginalized sections did not have the required resource base to overcome the post flood situation. It is in this context that we need to address historical dimensions of spatial inequality that are to be seriously considered.

**Conclusion**

The massive efforts of the government and society in Keralam to reconstruct the state in the aftermath of the devastating floods of 2018 July - August is highly laudable in spite of the financial crunch and several other odds facing this Herculean task. Yet, we find the strides towards a better future for the flood-affected people in spite of several shortcomings noted in the implementation of the proposed schemes. It is here that

we in Keralam are to be guided by a different notion of citizenship, which will enable the government, and people at the helm of affairs to approach the flood affected people from a different perspective. They are not target groups of policies of governmentality, but they are to be treated as citizens claiming to substantive aspects of citizenship such as cultural and social citizenship discussed in this paper. Capable of providing a different idea of rehabilitation, such a perspective will help overcome issues of spatial injustice and inequality that has a long history in Keralam which was aggravated in the context of the flood and its aftermath.

Similarly the preparedness of the state to meet eventualities should be guided by the ideas of recognition and dignity, which are inalienable aspects of the lives of the people, whether rich or poor. Deficit in the idea of dignity was visible in the post flood situation when the relief camps were closed and in many cases people were asked to return to houses, which were unsafe. On many occasions the state agencies were unwilling to accept the judgments of the affected people and the estimates of the damage by the former fell short of the actual losses people suffered. This happened mostly in the case of people from the marginalized communities. There are several significant practical problems that people who were relocated to relief camps had to face and one of which was shortage of toilets. People and governments in Keralam boast of the high quality of life in Keralam but when it comes to sanitation the claims of the people as well as government soon those of the appear to be hollow.

One central question here is the inability of the people to transcend certain mindsets that have been the creation of caste world view that does not find anything wrong in the manner in which filth is treated in Keralam. Along with this we could also talk about the negligence of public rest rooms and other facilities in Keralam. This actually points to a deficit in the understanding of people in Keralam regarding the dignified life of citizens to which all are entitled. It demands an aesthetic approach towards such issues of everyday existence, which alone can

resolve the outstanding issues of waste management in Keralam. One major problem discussed in the camps has been inadequate number of rest rooms along with lack of running water and proper cleaning of the facilities. In fact it is a major point that shows the failure of civilized existence in Keralam. Even in normal times there will not be sufficient number of clean rest rooms in public buildings and public spaces that are converted into relief camps during natural calamities such as floods. These are problems that have never been addressed properly in spite of the tall claims about social and economic development in Keralam. I have taken a single example to show how the state fails in one of the most important aspects of dignified life of people in an everyday context. Let us add on to this medical emergencies and a host of other questions where dignity of the poor and marginalized sections are violated on an everyday basis even in normal conditions. Therefore, any thinking on New Keralam will naturally have to address issues of citizenship, recognition and dignity of the people particularly that of the marginalized sections as the core issues that will transform social life in Keralam.

**Footnotes**

1.    Rev. Fr. J. Taffarel SJ (1950): *Jottings of a Poor Missionary*, The City Press, Mangalore, pp.103-4. Emphasis in the original.

2.    Partha Chatterjee (2004): *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, pp.4-9.

3.    Gyanendra Pandey, "Time of the Dalit Conversion" *Economic and Political Weekly* Vol. 41, No.18 (May 6-12, 2006), pp. 1779+1781-1788

4.    Rev. Fr. J. Taffarel SJ (1950): *Jottings of a Poor Missionary*, p.109

# A Green Energy Future for Kerala

**G. Madhusoodanan**

*The study involves four steps. Assessing renewable energy supply potential over the projection time frame. Modelling of a business-as-usual demand scenario. Modelling of a curtailed demand scenario to assess maximum potential for demand reduction through focused measures in energy conservation, energy efficiency, and carrier substitution. Carrier substitution is considered when the end use activity is transferred from one energy carrier to other energy carrier (for example, from transport fuel to electricity, diesel pumps to electric or solar pumps, etc). Matching the supply options with curtailed demand across energy carriers for electricity, heat and transport fuels. Kerala can meet over 95 per cent of its energy demand with renewable sources by 2050. The findings of the study indicate that Kerala can meet over 95 per cent of its energy demand with renewable sources by 2050.*

The World Institute of Sustainable Energy with the support of WWF India concluded a one-year research study in Kerala in 2012-2013 to assess the future energy scenario for Kerala. It was an attempt to model the energy requirement (across power, transport, agriculture, industry, domestic and commercial sectors) of Kerala up to 2050 in order to assess the feasibility of meeting 100 per cent of the state's energy demand with renewable sources.

The approach to the study involved four steps:

- Assessing renewable energy (RE) supply potential over the projection time frame

- Modelling of a business-as-usual (BAU) demand scenario

- Modelling of a curtailed demand scenario to assess maximum potential for demand reduction through focused measures in energy conservation (EC), energy efficiency (EE), and carrier substitution (CS). Carrier substitution is considered when the end use activity is transferred from one energy carrier to other energy carrier (for example, from transport fuel to electricity, diesel pumps to electric or solar pumps, etc)

- Matching the supply options with curtailed demand across energy carriers for electricity, heat and transport fuels.

The central finding from the study is that Kerala can meet over 95 per cent of its energy demand with renewable sources by 2050. The following figure shows the final supply sources that can effect this transformation.

**Figure A:** Supply Sources for Final Energy Scenario
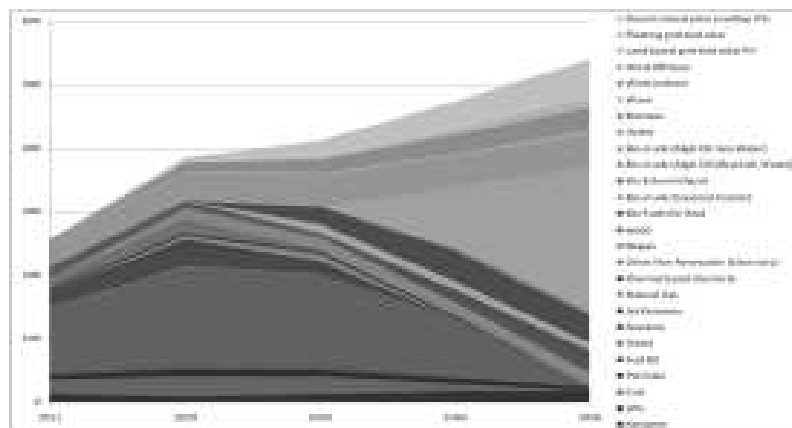
The key highlights of this scenario are

● 100 per cent electricity requirements for the state can be met with RE. The main resources are onshore and offshore wind, grid-tied and decentralized/off-grid solar, large hydro, small hydro, biomass and wave energy.

● 100 per cent of transport fuel requirements can be met by second and third generation bio-fuels. Considering the state of biomass to liquid and algal oil based technologies, and related technology access issues, it is assumed that these technologies will be available only by 2030. Sea based algal oil is emerging to be the main fuel supply option of the future. This assumption is consistent with past studies and the global energy report, which has assessed commercial availability of these algal based bio-fuels technologies by 2030.

● Over 70% of the total heating requirements (both for cooking and industrial processes) are met by biogas, wood and surplus bio-fuels.

The other key findings of the report are covered subsequently.

**Renewable Supply potential**

Table A below shows the assessed RE potential of the state

**Table A: Summary of RE Potential of Kerala by 2050**

| Technology | Supply Potential (2050) | Remarks |
|---|---|---|
| Electricity | Billion Units | MW (CUF) |
| Grid Tied Solar PV (Wasteland) | 5.99 | 4,273 (16%) |
| Grid Tied Solar PV (Grassland) | 3.56 | 2,543 (16%) |
| Floating PV Panels | 5.39 | 3,845 (16%) |
| Rooftop PV (Domestic) | 18.33 | 13,079 (16%) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Roof top PV (Institutional) | 25.32 | 18,066 (16%) |
| Solar Water Pumping | | 304 (400 hrs) |
| Onshore wind (Farmland) (WPD> 200) | 5.98 | 3,103 (22%) |
| Onshore wind (No Farmland) (WPD>300) | 0.86 | 447 (22%) |
| Onshore Wind (Plantations) (WPD>200) | 8.60 | 4,465 (22%) |
| Offshore wind (WPD >250) | 29.4 | 13,447 (25%) |
| Biomass gasification | 0.21 | 37.2 (65%) |
| Biomass Combustion | 0.62 | 101 (70%) |
| Existing Hydro (Large and Small) | 11.2 | 1,998(65%) |
| Small Hydro | 2.55 | 583 (50%) |
| Wave | 0.37 | 420 (10%) |
| Tidal | 0 | 0 |
| **Total** | **107** | |
| **Heat** | **TJ (Max)** | |
| Biomass Combustion | 12,206 | |
| Biogas | 18,600 | |
| **Total (Heat)** | **30,806** | |
| **Fuels** | **TOE (Max)** | |
| Bio-Crude | 296,539 | |
| Bio-Gasoline | 15,520,075 | |
| **Total** | **15,816,614** | |

The potential of grid-tied wind and solar energy was assessed using geographical information system (GIS). For the analysis, stringent land use and land availability criteria are considered in addition to standard technical constraints. Off-grid potential assessment is a tabulated exercise. Bioenergy assessment assesses biomass residue availability based on anticipated future trends in agricultural use. The biofuel potential

assessment is based on assessed technology parameters of biomass to liquid technologies and algal oil based biofuel processing. Hydro potential assessment is based on the understanding that the only prospective new potential seems to be small hydro power. Wave energy potential estimation is based on assessment done in past studies.

**Business-as-Usual Demand Projections**

The BAU demand projections for Kerala indicate that the transport sector accounts for a little over 50 percent of the total energy demand of the state even in the base year 2011. This is very atypical and unexpected but validation of derived fuel demand data (from a bottom up assessment) with actual fuel use seems to indicate a good match. The BAU projections indicate an increase of about 5.5 times in total energy from 2011 to 2050. For the transport sector, the increase during this period is almost 7 times. Table B and Figure B summarize the result of the BAU demand projections:

**Table B: Energy demand for the BAU Scenario**

| State Energy Demand (PJ) - BAU | 2011 | 2020 | 2030 | 2040 | 2050 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Transport | 128.2 | 225.2 | 329.3 | 520.9 | 853.5 |
| Domestic | 54.4 | 66.7 | 94.5 | 131 | 169.3 |
| Commercial | 12.2 | 27 | 53 | 88.7 | 134.1 |
| Industry | 48.3 | 75.5 | 90 | 104.8 | 119.7 |
| Agriculture | 2 | 2.2 | 2.5 | 2.7 | 2.8 |
| Public and Bulk | 2.6 | 4.1 | 6.8 | 10.5 | 15.1 |
| **Total** | **247.7** | **400.8** | **576.2** | **858.6** | **1294.5** |

**Figure B :** Supply Sources for Final Energy Scenario
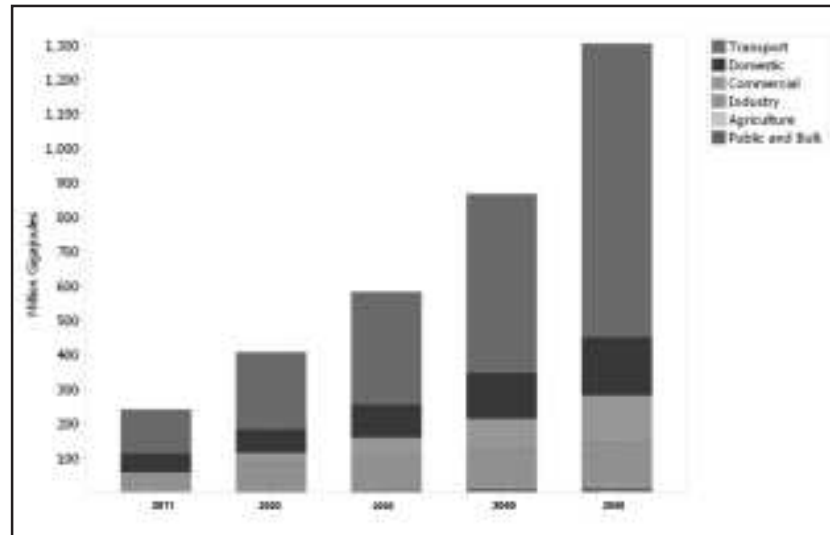


## Curtailed demand projections

In contrast, the curtailed demand scenario indicates an increase of 2.2 times over the projection period. The curtailed demand was assessed after factoring in aggressive interventions in the BAU scenario. These interventions did not assume any reduction in economic output (or growth) but only assumed a reduction in energy intensity and better resource optimization. In economic terms, these interventions represented alternatives that effectively decoupled economic growth (GDP) from energy resource use. Table C and Figure C summarize the result of the curtailed demand scenario

**Table C:Energy demand for the Curtailed Demand Scenario**

| Curtailed Energy Demand (PJ) | 2011 | 2020 | 2030 | 2040 | 2050 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Transport | 128.2 | 204.8 | 208.8 | 253.3 | 313.7 |
| Domestic | 54.4 | 63.4 | 63.9 | 73.3 | 87.7 |
| Commercial | 12.2 | 20.6 | 36 | 49.2 | 54.1 |
| Industry | 40 | 81 | 79.3 | 73.9 | 63 |
| Agriculture | 2 | 2 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.8 |
| Public and Bulk | 2.6 | 3 | 5.1 | 8 | 11.6 |
| **Total** | **239.4** | **374.8** | **395.1** | **459.5** | **531.8** |

**Figure C :** Sectoral Energy Demand Projections
(Curtailed Demand Scenario)
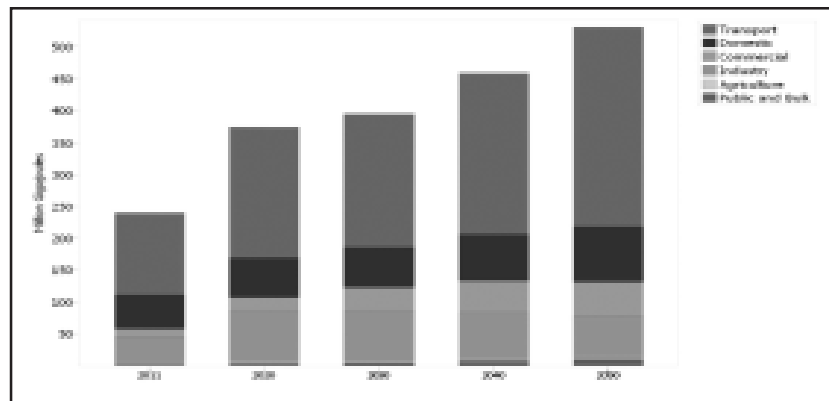


On a broad level, the project findings indicate that while the existing pattern of growth (BAU growth) would lead to overdependence on fossil fuels, aggressive interventions in energy efficiency, energy conservation and carrier substitution can curtail demand significantly. More importantly, the curtailed demand scenario has the potential to drastically reduce the state's dependence of fossil fuels to achieve a near 100 per cent RE supply by 2050.

# Exacerbated Flood Damage in Kuttanad in 2018: Causes, Consequences and Caution for the Future

**N.C. Narayanan**

*The paper hinges on hind sight and history of development interventions to understand the reasons that deepened the unavoidable disaster of August 2018 Kerala floods. It mostly compiles the available literature over a time of the most affected region of Kuttanad. The development interventions in Kuttanad in the past two centuries to make it into a rice-centric economy has led to many hydraulic changes that accentuated the situation when floods hit Kerala in August 2018. The paper distances from the ongoing discussions on post-flood relief and rehabilitation and instead examines the deeper triggers of floods based on the historical evolution of land use. The major intervention is the reclamation of Lake commons that substantially reduced the flood absorption area, hydraulic control structures like salinity barrier/floodspillway, roads/ permanent embankments that fragmented the wetland ecosystem and blocked smooth drainage of water. It is high time that decision-makers took stock of such process-oriented reflection of land use in different regions in Kerala to understand the triggers of contextual destructions and plan fundamentally different development interventions in the future.*

## 1. Introduction

Kerala was devastated by the floods of 2018 where most of the districts were partially affected. The unusually heavy rain induced by the low-pressure systems in the Bay of Bengal (which by itself is linked to warming of the oceans), the landslides that occurred in multiple areas along the Western Ghats and simultaneous opening of dams across the state are believed to have led to this unprecedented disaster. The antecedent rainfall received till July has given bountiful of inflows into the major dams and at the same time saturated the soil limiting further infiltration. In the worst affected flood, the state has seen since 1924, more than 480 people lost their lives with a preliminarily estimated economic loss of more than Rs. 200,000 million. It is in twelve of the fourteen districts in Kerala major loss has occurred and one of the worst hit regions was the Kuttanad region. The floods saw a mass evacuation of about 2.7 lakh people from the Kuttanad region within two days[1] to 673 relief camps. Without getting into the current debates on relief and rehabilitation, we explore the historical roots of the increasing floods and place it with in the larger political economy of development of Kuttanad. This is done with a review of the available literature on reclamations and other interventions in the region over a period of time. We focus on some of the writings before two to three decades to highlight the academic insights ignored and that could point better sensible planning to face future disasters. Section 2 explores the political economy of reclamations, especially the huge loss of water spread areas due to measures for facilitating double cropping. Section 3 illustrates the environmental consequences of rice-centric development of Kuttanad. Section 4 opens up the discussions to the larger physiography, land use interventions and the intricate relationship of the process and concludes with some concrete suggestions on measures as pointers to deal with disasters in future.

**2. Development of a Rice-Centric Economy** *that Exacerbated Floods*

**Political economy of Reclamation and Shrinkage of Lake Commons**

Kuttanad is a low-lying and water-logged region, transformed into a vast sheet of water of varying depths during the monsoon season (Pillai and Panicker, 1965:26-7). It is highly fertile land, replenished by silt brought by four rivers that originate from the western ghats; the area was found to be well suited to rice cultivation from early days.It is considered the only place in the world where rice cultivation is done up to 2 meters below sea level and is declared as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System by the Food and Agriculture Organization. Nearly 57% of Kuttanad falls under the Alappuzha district, 30 % in Kottayam district and remaining 13% in the Pathanamthitta district (MSSRF 2007). The region has high population density and rapid pace of urbanization with thirty seven out of the 45 Panchayaths (including municipalities and Kochi Corporation) having population densities of over 1000 persons per km2 with some exceeding 3000 persons/ km2. (Census, 2011). Three topographic areas identifiable in Kuttanad: the dry lands, the wetlands, and the water spread.[2] The wetlands are called *Padasekharams.* The rice fields reclaimed from marshes as well as backwaters are called *polders*. A sheet of water covers the agricultural land of Kuttanad when there is no cultivation. Outer bunds have to be built and the water bailed out in the beginning of every cultivation season. Reclamation of land for cultivation and flood control used to be undertaken by private farmers, with assistance from the state (Pillai and Panicker, 1965). Over a period of time Kuttanad became the rice bowl of the state and a rice-centric economy evolved here.
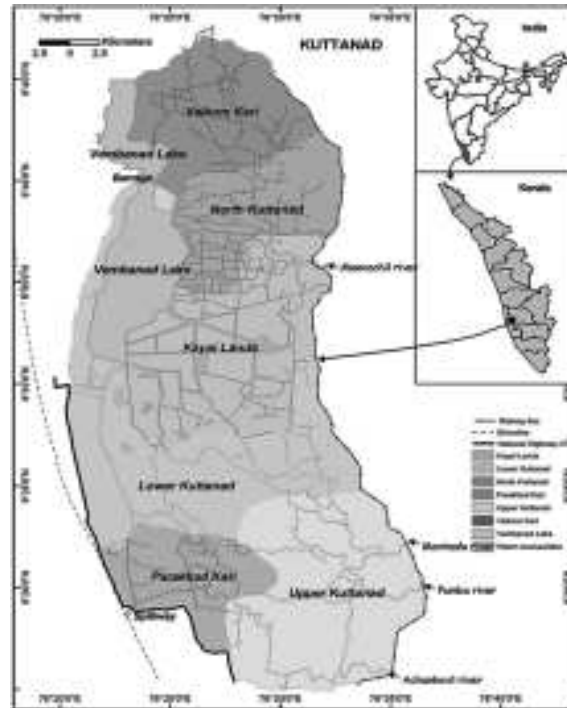
*Figure 1.Kuttanad Wetlands [Source: Narayanan et.al (2011)]*

Lake Vembanad serves as an extensive nursery for marine prawns and also sustains a lucrative fishery. For centuries fishing has been an important occupation for the population of the area. There are both subsistence and commercial fisheries in the backwater area (KWBS, 1989; Kannan, 1979). Historically Kuttanad is a densely populated area by reason of the scope for multifarious economic activities like rice cultivation, fishing, coir making etc. The traditional agrarian structure until the mid-20th century was hierarchical and caste based; land being owned or possessed only by upper caste Hindus or Syrian Christians. (Kannan, 1979). Records of reclamation are available from 1834 when the government of Travancore advanced loans for reclamation and by the dawn of the 20th century almost 2300 ha of Vembanad lake was reclaimed

(GOK, 1971:5). The initiative for institutional reforms came from the monarchy and by 1850, as a consequence of this policy, a major share of the cultivated land and the whole of the wasteland came under the State. This led to the emergence of a class of independent farmers who reclaimed the backwaters of Kuttanad for rice cultivation through operations which required large capital investments (Pillai and Panicker, 1965).

We critically examine a pioneering study regarding this (Pillai and Panicker, 1965) to understand the process. According to the study, the increasing pressure of population on land during the last century and the exhaustion of shallow backwaters for reclamation purposes compelled the people to venture into the deeper waters of the Vembanad lake. These are known as the 'New Reclamations'. (Pillai and Panicker, 1965:13). Without a discussion of the class dimension of the people who ventured this, it will seem that these are land-hungry peasants in search of extending the margins of agriculture for subsistence farming. The study placed the process in a global dimension and commented that "unlike the European and Japanese reclamations, undertaken with the aid of the most modern techniques and backed by all the financial and organisational resources of the State, the reclamation of the Vembanad lake in Kuttanad was a masterpiece of private entrepreneurship undertaken by adventurous farmers with slender resources and crude techniques.[3] (Pillai and Panicker, 1965:13)

Let us examine the story of the first reclamation in Kuttanad to understand the social relations of its origin and the active role of the state.

> The pioneer in Vembanad reclamation was one Eravi Kesava Panikkar belonging to the Chalayil family, one of the *leading landed aristocrats* in Kuttanad. He was 'an unusual person who *commanded great respect and influence.*' His very first effort bears an eloquent testimony to his innovative genius. It was a project to reclaim that portion of Vembanad which was situated at the mouth of the Cennankari river…. He proceeded to erect a barrier across the river at its mouth with local materials and manual labour…. *He had to face the opposition of the local population*

**Vol.10**    **No.4**    **October - December 2018**
                      **&**             **Social Science in Perspective**
**Vol. 11**    **No.1**    **January - March 2019**

*who filed a case against him for diverting the course of the river. Sir Raja Rama Rao, the then Dewan Peishkar, conducted an enquiry and personally inspected the site. But the farsighted Peishkar was more impressed with the potentialities of development, which this flash of genius had opened up than outraged by the offence of law. Fully alive to the problem of land shortage and food scarcity in the State, he saw in this novel adventure a new vista of possibilities.* Contrary to all expectations, instead of reprimanding the offender, the Peishkar congratulated Mr Panikkar and *blessed his adventure…* Encouraged by the success of his first venture, Mr Panikkar set about other reclamation schemes also. The legal proceedings against him proved to be a blessing in disguise, for he found in the person of his *defence counsel* Mr. Kavalam Neelakanta Pillai a *worthy partner* in this enterprise. The next block which he reclaimed was called after the statesman Peishkar Raja Ramapuram.... This is the beginning of the history of kayal reclamation which is not only highly romantic but from the point of view of economic development one of the most important things in Travancore History. (Pillai and Panicker, 1965:6-17, italics added**)**

This story, apart from the romantics that the authors see, reveals some political economy dimensions of the early reclamations. The 'influential leading aristocrat' diverts the course of a river on which 'the local population' depends for their needs. The Dewan (Prime Minister of the then princely state of Travancore) makes personal inspection, and then congratulates him, leading to more reclamation with another 'influential' person who is a lawyer too. Naming the project after the Dewan was a way of showing gratitude. There was a repetition in the early 1940s when Mr Thomas Murikkan was given permission to reclaim 1,800 acres of backwaters into three polders (GOK, 1971:6-7; Abraham, 1980:27). He named these polders after the Queen Regentess and her two sons. This is one of the reclamations that was attempted in the deeper parts of the Lake and that needed meticulous organization of resources including labour.  There is no doubt about the adventurous nature of farmers'

economic rationale behind this enterprise. The reclamation of land from water turned out to be more economic than the purchase of cultivable rice fields at high prices. The cost of reclaiming land in those days of cheap labour was much lower than the going price of rice fields and the entire initial investment on a reclamation project could be reimbursed from the net income over one or two seasons (Pillai and Panicker, 1965:20). The authors portray the initiative of the farmers as follows:

The initiative came from a few individual entrepreneurs with slender resources. The only aid at their command to conquer the invinsible Vembanad consisted of *crude indigenous implements and flimsy materials.* It is a miraculous feat that the*y* conducted the exacting operations of bunding, draining, ploughing and irrigating this lake area with the help of country canoes, wooden wheels, ancient ploughs and emaciated bullocks. (Pillai and Panicker, 1965:21, italics added)

However, we note the huge lapse of not even mentioning the role of labour in this statement and the previous one. Who are 'they' who conducted the operations? The technology was crude, mainly a chain of water wheels used to drain the water with labour playing the most crucial role.[4] The processes by which the impoverished labour was drawn into the adventures of the wealthy farmers are yet to be written in the studies on Kuttanad history.

The role of the state according to Pillai and Panicker was 'shy and passive at the beginning'. Later, according to the study, the State also encouraged the movement by simplifying the procedure for *appropriating* backwaters for reclamation purposes… Though the State came into the picture at an early stage, the role of the State was passive and shy. In recent times the State has taken an active interest in promoting this enterprise. Among the encouragements given are the *exemption of reclaimed lands from taxes during the first five years after reclamation, concessional rates of taxes during subsequent years, loans for cultivation and subsidies for pumping* (Pillai and Panicker, 1965:20-2, italics added).

The ecological threat to the Cochin Port noted by the Madras government led to suspension of reclamation activities for a nine-year period from 1903. Later continuation, strongly encouraged by the Travancore government, is mentioned in all studies (TSM, 1940; GOK, 1971; Pillai and Panicker, 1965). This reveals the powerful interests involved in the enterprise, able to influence and change government policies. A government publication also proudly claimed that the reclamations were the result of a steady policy inaugurated by the government and that successive Dewans sought to continue with such conversions to rice fields (TSM, 1940). It is important to note that the government, by allowing this 'appropriation by concessions and loans' of land in fact provided the capital for the whole enterprise. 'Capital' however, as Marx argued, *is not a thing, but rather a definite social production relation*, belonging to a definite historical formation of society, which is manifested in a thing and lends this thing a specific social character. Capital is not the sum of the material and produced means of production. *Capital is rather the means of production transformed into capital*, which in themselves are no more capital than gold or silver in itself is money. It is *the means of production monopolised by a certain section of the society*, confronting living labour power as products and working conditions rendered independent of this very labour power, which are personified through this anti-thesis of capital (Marx, 1974:814-15, italics added).

Thus the history of reclamation of Kuttanad also provides the background of the powerful landed interests, landless workers and crude technology in which the rice economy evolved. The introduction of motorized pumps in 1912 was a major impetus to the reclamation process (GOK, 1971: 8). A British engineer who visited Kochi saw the plight of Kuttanad cultivators, brought some kerosene engines from England and modified these to a 'box and para' pumping facility. The model is even now prevalent with later changes to crude oil, diesel and to electric motors from 1950 (Abraham, 1980:24). However, other technological developments were minimal in Kuttanad up to the introduction of Green Revolution technologies in the 1960s. The initiation

of mechanical pumping and the advent of electricity to aid the farmer extended the scale of operations. From a farmer perspective it continued to be a risky operation and from 1910-1940 many such entrepreneurs incurred heavy debts and even went bankrupt, until the government of Travancore brought in the Debt Relief Act and saved many of them from complete destruction (Abraham, 1980: 21).

The cultivation was done only in alternate years with a fallow time of 10 to 20 months, but from 1940, with the flow of rice from Burma disrupted, the state banned fallowing and insisted by law on annual cultivation (Abraham, 1980:26). The acute scarcity of food grains during the period of World War II and the 'Grow More Food' campaign gave impetus to reclamation and by 1945, 8,000 ha of Lake Vembanad were converted to rice fields (Pillai and Panicker, 1965:19). As encouragement to farmers, 25% of pumping costs were paid back to the farmers as subsidy (Abraham, 1980:26). Government began trying various measures to augment rice production by reclaiming new areas, including forested hills in uplands and backwaters in Kuttanad, the best example being the sanction given to the huge reclamation of 700 ha mentioned earlier. A measure that affected farmer profitability was the 'quota' that used to be collected from 1942-1953 from rice farmers, which was a specific quantity of rice at controlled price to be distributed through ration shops at reasonable prices to consumers (Abraham, 1980). However, the considerable rise in the price of rice in Kuttanad during the war period in the 1940s boosted Kuttanad cultivation; the farmers were able to compensate the losses in previous years, could mobilize a big marketable surplus and wage payments were converted to cash (Jose, 1979:4). Consequent to the reduction in area and depth, the total volume of the backwater lying between Alappuzha and Azhikkode has been reduced from 2.45 km$^3$ in the beginning of 20th century to 0.56 km$^3$ in 1985 (Gopalan, 2002), a decline of almost 77 percent. The estimates of sedimentation suggest a decline in the water holding capacity of the lake, which increases the frequency and severity of floods (KSSP, 2017).

**Table 1 : Area reclaimed for various purposes from Vembanad Estuary**

| Period | Area Reclaimed (ha) | |
|---|---|---|
| | Agriculture, Shrimp farms, housing, etc. | Harbour and urban development |
| 1883-1903 | 2226.72 | |
| 1912-1931 | 5253.15 | |
| 1920 - 1936 | | 364.37 |
| 1941-1950 | 1325.00 | |
| Till 1970s | 5100.00 | |
| 1970-1984 | 800.00 | |
| 1900-1984 | 1500.00 | |
| 1978 | | 10.78 |
| 1981-1985 | | 319.04 |
| 2000 | | 25.00 |
| Total | 16204.87 | 719.19 |

*Source: KSSP (2017).*

To sum up the discussion, the land-use interventions were directly related to the reigning policies devised to address the developmental needs of different periods. The 'grow more' food campaign in the 1940s encouraged extension of cultivation to wastelands like forests and low-lying marshes, which was considered a sign of progress - of 'conquering nature'. The Green Revolution strategies, the building of engineering structures to boost rice cultivation were major interventions in the Kuttanad natural system. A major impact is loss of the backwater area due to land reclamation, which started over a century ago. The environmental consequences of these rice-boosting strategies became evident from the 1970s and a string of studies was done from 1978 onwards to study the various aspects of environmental degradation. The Vembanad Lake is part of the larger Vembanad-Kol wetland and the prime

brackish water body of South India. It was acknowledged as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention in 2002 (the area is protected and consists of 1,591 km$^2$ - partly below sea level).[5] Shallow parts of the lake and its shores were converted into rice fields over the last century and consist of highly fertile parts of land (Narayanan, 2003). The Vembanad Lake was encroached on and its shores were privatised for cultivation in the last century. Major reclamation work was done in the early 1940s with the consent of the State during the 'grow more food' campaign after the food shortages during the Second World War (Pillai and Paniker, 1964). Thus, lake commons used for fishing were privatised and thus enclosed over a period. In Vembanad (as part of a pattern followed in many Indian lakes like Chilika in Orissa State), the strong governmental support and the shift in policies that consisted in granting private entitlements for agricultural or other activities led to the gradual enclosure of common lands that were previously used according to customary rights by the local population (Narayanan and Venot, 2009). The next section examines the environmental consequences of the development interventions. From the context of floods, the shrinkage in lake and wetlands surrounding it reduced the water spread area and cushioning effects during times of heavy deluge. This is one of the major reasons for the heightened damage in the region.

## 3. Environmental consequences of rice-centrism in Kuttand

The second phase of development interventions in Kuttanad start in the 1950s with the Nehruvian state-designed and managed agricultural modernization. Kuttanad was one of the two regions in Kerala that witnessed the Green Revolution strategies through a policy of heavy subsidies to promote HYV seeds, which in turn necessitated the intensive use of fertilizers and pesticides. Rice cultivation, traditionally systematized in tune with nature's rhythms (of monsoon floods and summer salinity) was disrupted with the building of several engineering infrastructure, oriented to double cropping of rice. HYVs' low tolerance to pests and diseases and non-judicious plant protection measures have increased

the incidence of pests (John *et al*., 19903 Thomas *et al*., 1993; George and Krishnakumariamma, 1993). Diseases and consequent crop loss have become quite common (Aravindakshan, 1990; IIRD, 1978). Crops which were effectively protected with four to five treatments per season had to be sprayed ten to fifteen times in subsequent years (Mohandas, 1983:1). However, a shift to this mode of cultivation led to the following consequences:

**Hydraulic control for double cropping of rice**

Almost all state-sponsored development interventions in Kuttanad which were oriented towards making it into a rice-centric economy exacted a toll on the ecosystem. A major environmental impact is the shrinkage of the backwater area due to land reclamation into polders for rice cultivation. Two engineering structures built to drain off the floodwaters and check saline intrusion were constructed for facilitating double-cropping as part of intensifying agriculture to double cropping, a part of green revolution. The spillway that started functioning in 1955 for the speedy drainage of floodwaters to the sea was found to be ineffective due to faulty design. It was supposed to drain 64,000 m³/sec of floodwaters coming from the highlands through the four rivers to the sea, but less than 20,000 m³/sec of water is passing through it (Kannan, 1979:421). Before the construction of the spillway, these waters used go to the Cochin estuary and flood the low-lying rice fields. But when it was confined to flow through the spillway, flooding now also began to occur in its immediate vicinity. Another suggested possibility is the rise in sea level due to the rush of water from the Indian Ocean to the Arabian Sea during the SW monsoon. Because of this, even if the spillway was opened, water did not flow towards the sea (IIRD, 1978:37). Abraham (1980:30) supported this and argued that the flood of 1964 occurred during the winter following the strong SW monsoon, drowning 40,000 acres of *punja* crop.[6] Another unintended consequence is the accretion of sand from the sea near the shutters of the spillway, which prevents water flow towards the sea (IIRD, 1978:38). This report mentioned the views with hindsight by the chief engineer about the technical and organizational

lapses in construction of the spillway, lack of understanding of sea level changes and doubt about whether the location of the spillway was appropriate (IIRD, 1978:39). Abraham (1980:32) comments that the constructors were unaware of the basic causes of floods in Kuttanad and that the spillway is an 'eternal monument to the incompetence of administrators. The lesson learned here is that insufficient knowledge, i.e. uncertainty about natural processes, led to faulty design and unintended consequences. This design fault in spillway has thus augmented the floods in Kuttanad that it was supposed to mitigate.

Salinity, considered as 'pollution'[7] by earlier planners (Pillai and Panicker, 1965) became the 'ecological master factor' through hindsight in later studies (IIRD, 1978:37; Abraham, 1980:30; KSSP, 1978:39; KWBS, 1989; Nair and Pillai, 1993). Staggering of the crop season and resultant lack of discipline in rice cultivation after the construction of the salinity barrier has affected the natural balance of the system (KWBS, 1989). The salinity barrier commissioned in 1972 to prevent salt water into the Kuttanad system during summer was supposed to facilitate double cropping of rice, but has led to the decline or disappearance of several fish species. The estuaries and the backwater systems of the Kerala coast are the nurseries of several species of marine shrimp. The construction of the regulator has severely reduced the backwater area available for the prawns to spend their larval and growing stages of life, and the prevention of the inflow of saline water into the lake during summer has led to the decline or disappearance of several fish species that grow in saline water (Jhingran 1975; IIRD, 1978; Kannan, 1979). Decline in the catch of fish has cut into the livelihood opportunities of fishermen - a sizable section of the population.[8]

Fishermen voiced their protest about the barrier (as detailed in Chapter 4). Toddy tapping (country liquor) from coconut trees is another of the livelihood sources seriously affected by the salinity barrier (KSSP, 1978; IIRD, 1978). According to a toddy-tapping labourer in my field sample, the decrease of salinity due to the barrier is very detrimental to

coconut cultivation and toddy production. He cites an instance when during the drought of 1983, the barrier was opened early and there was salinity ingress into Kuttanad and toddy production tripled that year. Coir processing was also seriously affected.[9] 95% of those involved in this activity are women (IIRD, 1978:37, Abraham, 1980, KSSP, 1978). The annual ingress of saline water to the upper reaches of Kuttanad during the summer months tended to check the growth of many of the water weeds. The complete prevention of saline water ingress accelerated the growth of weeds like salvinia, causing problems to rice cultivation and inland navigation and also adversely affecting the mangroves on the bank of the lake.[10] Stagnation of water due to closure of the regulator and the consequent decline in salinity prevent the settling and growth of lime shells. (Kannan, 1979:428). The growth rate of the black clam, major resource for the lime shell fishery, is adversely affected by the rapid decline in salinity (KWBS, 1989; Aravindakshan, 1990:7). The faulty designs of the spillway and regulator are mostly due to the uncertainties and lack of information regarding the environmental processes. In retrospect, we see the limitations of development planning without due consideration of environmental and social aspects of land use. Unfortunately, the unintended consequences become clear only later through new information on the environment.

From the point of floods, both structures have huge impact: the spillway with its optimal functioning and salinity barrier blocking the flowof monsoon stormwaters.

**Permanent embankments and Roads**

A major problem faced by the cultivators in raising the second crop of rice was the flooding of fields due to breaches in the temporary bunds. The state government drew up a scheme to construct permanent, but submersible bunds in 1974. In earlier times, the embankments used to be repaired just prior to the cultivation season; this recurring cost was feasible due to the large holdings and cheap availability of labour. With the turn in economics and social changes, this became difficult. The

permanent embankments in polders (built mostly by state aid, implementing schemes such as the Kuttanad Development Scheme) are a boon to the farmers and for small farmers cultivation would been impossible without these measures. However, the environmental consequences of permanent bunds are: (i) preventing soil-enriching floodwater silt deposits; (ii) making it impossible to flush out acidity; and (iii) preventing fish ingress and growth during the fallow period.

The last two decades saw phenomenal rise of roads in Kerala. This can be directly related to the decentralized governance through the three tier Panchayat Raj Institutions. The level planning that started with IX Five Year Plan from 1996 facilitated decision-making at the local level. The most visible intervention like roads that can appeal to a large number of beneficiaries becomes the development imagination of every elected representative. Kuttanad also was no different. A place where traditional mobility was by canoes and boats aspired for speedier road transport. The low allocations to roads ensured that required culverts needed for efficient drainages were not given priority. The combined effect of permanent embankments and roads led to serious fragmentation of the wetland ecosystem that affected smooth drainage, especially during peak monsoons when Kuttanad receives flood waters from the four rivers draining from the Western Ghats. Reclamation reducing water spread area and the serious fragmentation accentuated the effects of floods. With unprecedented rains, there was no wonder that August 2018 floods became a disaster.

This section has clarified the fragile balances of the natural system and how the hazards of short-sighted interventions (like boosting rice cultivation), have affected the livelihoods of many.

**Tourism and its Consequences**

There has been a spectacular rise of the tourism industry in Vembanad Lake, an official site of the International Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in Kerala, in the past twenty years. Houseboat tourism

emerged as the backbone of the tourism industry of the state in addition to the many resorts, which have sprung up around the shores of the lake due to the scenic beauty of Vembanad Lake. On the one hand tourism and the rise of the houseboat industry, with more than 1000 boats[11], has led to job creation, it also puts pressure on the environment even though the natural beauty was the original reason for attracting such investments. The major sources of pollution are solid and liquid waste discharges from the houseboats. The water front area of backwaters along the lake is one of the most sought-after area for real estate development for resorts and more elite housing schemes. Encroachment into the backwater started in the 1980s, which accelerated during the last 10 years. A vigilance enquiry is in progress as regards several apartments many of which have been constructed illegally including violating the floor space index/floor area ratio stipulated in the CRZ suggesting the powerful nexus of builders, officials and political leadership who have little concern for environmental protection (KSSP, 2017). It has reduced the lake area and severely altered canal courses in several parts of the region contributing to the flood damage.

## 4. Floods 2018: Needs to Understand the Bigger Picture

Blessed with 44 rivers, backwaters and inland waterways, 8.7% of the total geographical area of Kerala is considered as flood prone by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA 2008). This year, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) had issued an extremely heavy rain (over 210 mm) warning to the state ahead of the monsoon onset. The state disaster management authority secretary even observed that during the last eight years IMD's highest order of extremely heavy rain alert in Kerala ahead of the monsoon onset is rare[12]. Expert opinions suggest multiple factors for the 2018 Kerala floods. News reports as suggested by the Central Water Commission proposed underperformance of water management systems that spills the excess water from Vembanad Lake into the sea. Also, the inadequate and the low carrying capacity of the lake due to siltation might have worsened the impact of deluge[13]. On June 22, 2018 newspapers reported that Kuttanad have been

inundated and the Revenue Department of GoK has opened 19 gruel centres in the region following severe flooding[14] and by July 18, the number of gruelcentres opened in Kuttanad taluk stood at 375. In the week starting 12th July, rainfall in Kerala was 122% above the long period average[15], and Kuttanad reported the worst flood in the last two decades[16] with a mass evacuation of about 2.7 lakhs of people from the region[17]. 673 relief camps were functioning in Alappuzha district alone.To understand the scale of devastation we have to grapple with a more regional and temporal analysis.Narayanan (1994) has detailed the links between physiography, land use changes and environmental consequences in Kerala 25 years back and the cumulative effects of this process illustrates the root causes of the flood damages:

**Larger Land Use Changes in the Intricate Physiography of Kerala**

Kerala is an elongated land mass having the Western Ghats along its eastern margin with a maximum elevation of 2670 m (Anamudi) and the coastal plains along the west bound in by the Arabian sea. The physiographic diversity, along with the climate and soil have endowed the state with a very rich flora and fauna. The state can broadly be divided longitudinally into three physiographic sub divisions, the highland, midland and the low-land.[18] The highland is generally thickly forested in its upper reaches, while in the lower ranges the forests are interspersed with plantations. On the western fringe of the State are the lowland and the coastal zone containing a string of estuaries, and back-waters of which Kuttanad is part of. The rolling hills of the midland lie between these. Due to its location on the windward side of Western Ghats, Kerala State receives an average rainfall of 2800 mm. The diversity in the original rocks, variations of micro-climatic situations and differences in the intensity and type of weathering under variable terrain conditions have led to the generation of different types of soil in Kerala (Government of Kerala, 1982). Because of the undulating terrain conditions in midland and in parts of the lowland, and of the highly dissected nature of the highland (which also is due to the high surface slopes and rainfall), the soils of Kerala

are susceptible to erosion and in extreme cases landslides under conditions of improper land use and inadequate soil conservation measures.[19]

The Western Ghats form the catchment area of all the 41 rivers in the State. Invariably all the rivers are dependent on the forests for a sustained flow. A vegetation cover presents an entirely different surface to solar radiation as compared to the barren soil. Further, the role of vegetation in reducing surface run-off is of particular importance in a region like Kerala, where the topography is rugged and the rainfall is heavy and concentrated during a few months. Existence of forests helps in reducing the peak flow and prolongs the duration of the flow (IUCN, 1980). Most of the flash floods arise from the rapid run-off from catchments where the vegetation has been removed. By regulating the peak flow, the forests check flash floods in the valleys during rains and prevents extreme drought conditions in summer. Further, by regulating the flow it helps to prevent the saline water intrusion in the lower reaches in summer, by maintaining a minimum water level (Government of Kerala, 1982).

According to Menon (1983), deforestation in the State had acquired a different dimension in the sixties and seventies which had largely been cleared for "developmental activities". But that itself had acted as an incentive for more and more forests to be cleared for agricultural purposes. Kannan and Pushpangadan (1988) have summarised the reasons for deforestation as; (1)encroachment of forests by powerful rural interests, making use of a large army of land-poor and land hungry peasants; (2)clear felling by government for raising plantations and construction of irrigation and hydro-electric projects. (3)illegal felling of trees and plundering of forest resources by private interests, mainly timber contractors.

Deforestation and raising of tubers like cassava and monoculture plantations accelerate the process of soil erosion and increase the possibility of landslides in the highland. The soil erosion triggered by the cultivation leads to an increase in the amount of silt carried by the rivers bringing down the storage capacities of the reservoirs (for irrigation

and power generation), thus wasting public investment (Chattopadhyay, 1984). This reduces the sediment load in the rivers downstream, but in the midland and lowland portions, heavy sand mining is done which again reduces the sediment capacity. The depth-width ratio of the stream is also distorted during the process. Rivers retain their natural shape by carving off the banks along with the buildings and cultivated land. A study in Neyyar river, showed that the extent of sand removal was dis-proportionately higher than the feeble countering mechanism of sediment deposition by the stream. The deepening of the channel further resulted in the depletion of ground water from either side of the river (Thrivikramaji, 1986). In the lowland, wetlands are drained, cleared and filled for agriculture, human settlement and industrial purposes. Such acts are likely to disturb the ecological balance of the coastal zone. The unprecedented scarcity of water in the coastal zone, drying up of wells which used to be perennial are indications of this. Intrusion of salinity in the wells can be attributed to the unscientific reclamation of extensive areas of wetland and the indiscriminate deforestation along the Western Ghats.The reduction/changes in vegetation and increase in built-up area increases the chance of flash floods in the basin. This is exasperated in the months of June to November when almost 90 percent of the annual discharge from the rivers takes place. This enormous seasonal variation in flow is a major factor that impacts the entire wetland system, including the efforts to alter the flow pattern. With the increasing human-land ratio, consequent pressure on land and short-sighted land use practices mentioned above resulted in varying degrees of environmental degradation.  This is important since these units are parts of a single fragile system where tampering with one part will automatically have its repercussions on the others. Kuttanad thus comes at the receiving end being in the downstream of four river basins and thus faces the cumulative effects of the damages.

**Path  Ahead**

        The above description highlights the need for a more integrated

approach for managing the heterogenous land and water system in the State. This needs more in-depth land use analysis at local and regional levels. An immediate need is an attempt of zonation of existing disasters to understand the range of vulnerabilities spatially and socially. Second is the stringent measures of regulation before losing the collective memory of floods. Regarding Kuttanad, the most important element is the need for increasing the water spread area, which has limitations because of the committed land uses in the hands of private individuals. However, the remaining public lands/commons have to be protected with commitment. One of the important tasks is to understand the drainage network and ease out the congestions, especially vacate the encroachments. All roads and permanent embankments have to be provided with adequate measures of water flow by constructing structures like culverts. The completion of new shutters in the salinity barrier has to be complimented with a proper operation and management plan to facilitate flow of flood waters during monsoon. More investigations are needed to make the spill way operations better. Flood levels have been recorded by various initiatives and using this a proper Digital Elevation Model study has to be done to delineate and zone the flood levels. This will help prioritise the areas and habitations that needs immediate attention during an imminent flood. Similarly, socially vulnerable households like those with bed-ridden patients that need special care and help during relief could also be demarcated. Chances of increasing climatic events like surge in precipitation or rise in sea level will directly affect regions like Kuttanad first. Preparedness is most important. "Living with floods" must be the slogan with early warning systems, new houses to be built above the flood level with stilts and preparing the population for floods.

**References**

1. Aravindakshan, M, (1990): *The Kuttanad Ecosystem, Five Decades of Rice Research in Kuttanad,* Keralam Agricultural University, Trissur-680 654.

2.     Chandy, J. (2013): Economics and environmental dimensions of backwater resources in Kerala A study with special reference to Kuttanad region. *PhD Thesis*. Mahatma Gandhi University.

3.     Chattopadhyay, S, (1984): *Deforestation in Parts of Western Ghats region (Kerala) India.* Trivandrum: Centre for Earth Science Studies.

4.     George Alexander and P. R. Krishnakumariamma, (1993): *Trends in the use of ecologically hazardous inputs for rice in wetland ecosystem: A 10 year case study.* Rice in Wet Land Ecosystem. 250-253. Thrissoor: KAU.

5.     IUCN, (1980): ed. *World Conservation Strategy: Living Resource Conservation for Sustainable Development.* IUCN–UNEP–WWF.

6.     Jhingran, V.G., (1975): *Fish and Fisheries of India,* p. 255, Hindustan Publishing Corporation, New Delhi.

7.     John, P.S, P.J. Ittyavirah, M.S. Nair and N.K. Sasidharan, (1993): *Effect of agronomic practices on rice yield and the incidence of major rice pests.* In Rice in. Wet Land Ecosystem. 242-245. Thrissoor: KAU.

8.     Jose, A.V., (1977): "Origin of Trade Unionism Among Agricultural Labourers in Kerala", in *Social Scientist*, 5 (12), July:24-44.

9.     Jose, A.V; (1979): "Trade Union Movement among the Agricultural Workers in Kerala- The Case of Kuttanad Region," *Working Paper No. 93.* Trivandrum: Centre for Development studies.

10.    Jose, R.V, (1999): "Inland Fishermen and Inland Fishing: A Study at Neelamperror Village (Alapuzha District)", *Discussion Paper No.6, KRPLLD.*Thiruvanathapuram: Centre for Development Studies.

11.    Kannan, K.P., (1979): "Ecological and Socio-economic Consequences of Water Control Projects in the Kuttanad region

of Kerala", *Proceedings of the Indian Academy of Sciences*; Vol. C2, Part 4, December 1979: 417-433.

12. Kannan, K.P, (1986): "Of Rural Proletarian Struggles: The Mobilisation and Organisation of Rural Workers in Kerala, India", *PhD Thesis* submitted to the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, The Netherlands

13. Kannan, K.P and K. Pushpangadan, (1988): "Agricultural Stagnation and Economic Growth in Kerala: An Exploratory Analysis". *CDS Working Paper* No. 227. Trivandrum: Centre for Development Studies.

14. Marx Karl, (1974): *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol.III, Moscow, Progress Publishers.

15. Menon, A.R.R  (1983): "Tropical rain forest: Present state and future strategies". Vanarashmi: 4(10/11): 5-12. (*KFRI Scientific Paper* No. 120). Trichur" Kerala Forest Research Institute.

16. Nair, P.V.R and Pillai, V.K, (1993): "Changing Ecology of the Vemnabanad Lake", *in Rice in Wet Land EcoSystem* (eds) R.R. Nair, K.P.V. Nair and C.A. Joseph, Trichur-10, KAU. P. 280-285.

17. Nandakumar, T. (2014): *"Four districts categorised as climate change hotspots."*The Hindu. [online] Available at: https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/four-districts-categorised-as-climate-change-hotspots/article5801125.ece [Accessed 7 Sep. 2018].

18. Narayanan NC (1994): "Sustainable Land use for Agriculture: A Local Level Approach with Reference to Paddy Cultivation in Kerala, *M Phil Thesis* submitted to the Jawaharlal University at the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum.

19. Narayanan NC (2003): *"Against the Grain: The Political Ecology of Land Use in a Kerala Region in India*. Masstricht: Shaker Publishers.

20.  Narayanan NC and Jean-Philippe Venot (2009): "Drivers of change in fragile environments: Challenges togovernance in Indian wetlands", *Natural Resources Forum*, 33 (2009) PP. 320–333.

21.  Narayanan, S.P., Thomas, A.P. and Sreekumar, B., (2011)*. "Ornithofauna and its conservation in the Kuttanad wetlands, southern portion of Vembanad-KoleRamsar site*, India". Journal of Threatened Taxa, *3*(4), pp.1663-1676.

22.  Padmakumar, K.G., (2013): *"Kuttanad-Global Agricultural Heritage: Promoting Uniqueness". Proceeding of Kerala Environ. Cong,* pp.62-72.

23.  Pillai V.R. and Panikar P.G.K. (1965): *"Land Reclamation in Kerala,* Asia Publishing House, Bombay.

24.  Thomas Jim, N. Mohandas and M.J. Thomas, (1993): "Contamination of the irrigation water in rice fields due to insecticidal spray application", In *Rice in Wet Land Ecosystem*. 246-249. Thrissoor: KAU.

25.  Thrivikramaji, K.P, (1986): *River Metamorphosis Due to Human Intervention in the Neyyar Basin, Kerala*. Trivandrum: Dept. of Geology, University of Kerala.

26.  Varma, Ajayakumar, (2016): *Eco-restoration of Vembanad Lake & connected river systems.*

**Malayalam Publications.**

27.  Abraham, John, (1980): *Kuttanad*, Trivandrum: Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad .

28.  IIRD, (1978): *Kuttanad: Prasnangalum Sadhytahakalum*. Kottayam: IIRD .

29.  Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP), (1978): *Kuttanad Padhana Report. Problems of Kuttanad - A study report*, Trivandrum: KSSP.

**Government Publications**

30. Census of India (Various Years).

31. Census of India, (2011): *District Census Handbook, Alappuzha. Directorate of census Operation*. Kerala. Available at http://censusindia.gov.in/2011census/dchb/3211_PART_B_ALAPPUZHA.pdf

32. GoK, (1982): *First Report on the State of Environment in Kerala*. Trivandrum: State Committee on Science, Technology and Environment.

33. GOK, (1971): *Report of the Kuttanad Enquiry Commission*, Trivandrum, Government Press.

34. Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA), n.d. Kerala State Disaster Management Plan Profile.

35. National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), (2010): *National Disaster Management Gudelines - Management of Floods.*

36. TSM, 1940, *The Travancore State Manual*: Trivandrum, Government Press.

**Unpublished Literature**

37. KSSP, (2017): *"What future for Vembanad Ecosystem: From one crisis to another or crisis to sustainable management?" Report of People's Commission on Vembanad Ecosystem.*

38. KWBS, (1989): *Kuttanad Water Balance Study-Draft Final Report*, Thiruvananthapuram, BKH Consulting Engineers.

39. Mohandas, N, (1983): Strategy of Pest Control for Achieving Targets of Increased Rice production and productivity in kerala. In the Proceedings of the *Seminar on Stagnation of Rice Production in Kerala.* Vellayani: KAU.

**Footnotes**

1.   https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/kerala-floods-water-not-receding-kuttanad-cut-rest-state-87439

2.   Pillai and Pani ~~kc~~kae~~r~~, 1965; KSSP, 1979; KWBS, 1989. 'Greater Kuttanad' is defined as the area extending over 874 km$^2$ with garden lands; just over 304 km$^2$ at an average elevation of 1m above ~~Mean Sea Level (~~MSL~~)~~ and about 500 km$^2$ of area at 0.6 to 2.2m below MSL (Chattopadhyay and Sidharthan 1985).

3.   The very first experience of reclamation, which was the general pattern of the enterprise, is described as follows: 'Whole stems of coconut trees were piled into two rows on the bed of the stream. A broad corridor, which was formed in this manner, was cemented with garbage, river sand and clay and it emerged as a bund. The ring bund rising from under the water was like a dream come true. It was indeed a remarkable engineering feat, though a risky and expensive operation' (Pillai and Panicker, 1965:13).

4.   Water was drained by manually operated water wheel.  An array of wheels of different sizes was used, arranged one below the next. Planted at the extremity on the outer ring bund was a wheel with 8 to 12 spokes  to operate the installation (Pillai and Panicker, 1965:20; GOK, 1971:8).

5.   Various rivers originating in the Western Ghats flow into the lake, which is connected to the Arabian Sea through an estuary: the lake is under tidal influence and subject to seasonal fluctuations in salinity levels (Narayanan, 2003).

6.   Curiously, another technological solution of pumping water to the sea with 40,000 ~~HP~~ hp electric pumps was suggested by some quarters in both the above-mentioned studies. Abraham (1980:32) ridicules this: 'if this happens, it will be one of world's utmost tourist attractions as a symbol of technological foolishness.'.

7. The rationale of the salinity barrier was to boost rice production, and salinity was considered 'pollution' in those times. An earlier study noted that 'during the summer months the flow in the rivers which feed the lake progressively dwindles, while the *water in the lake area gets increasingly polluted by the invasion of salinity* from the sea. This produces a scarcity of ~~fresh water~~ fresh water for irrigation even in the existing fields….. It is expected that with the completion of the spillway and the salt-water barrier an open spread area of about 20,000 acres (more than 8,300 ha) will be available' (Pillai and Panikar, 1964:172-italics added). Later studies brought out the problems of checking salinity (KWBS, 1989; Nair and Pillai, 1993).

8. KWBS, 1989. – The few available data showed that estuarine penaeid prawn catches used to vary from 1,500 to 2,000 tonnes/ year in the period 1970-1982, while at the time of the study, yields have declined to about 1,000 tonnes/year (KWBS, 1989).

9. While retting of raw husks takes three months in saline water, it takes 10-12 months in ~~fresh water~~ fresh water and hence retting has been seriously hampered by the operation of the regulator. The quality of fibre is reported to be inferior compared to that processed in earlier days (IIRD, 1978:46; KSSP, 1978:39, Kannan, 1979:428).

10. The mangrove habitat is a unique blend of land and aquatic eco-system. It has very good land conservation characteristics and prevents soil erosion ~~in~~ at the lake banks (Arvindakshan, 1990:7).

11. Mr Er. Vinothu, Port Officer in charge in Alleppey, interview in Alleppey on 23 February 2013.

12. https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/thiruvananthapuram/high-alert-in-kerala-with-extremely-heavy-rains-on-may-28-ahead-of-south-west-monsoon/articleshow/64322715.cms

13. https://indianexpress.com/article/india/how-keralas-largest-lake-worsened-flood-water-panel-5345888/

14. https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-kerala/six-relief-camps-in-alappuzha/article24226099.ece

15. http://www.imd.gov.in/pages/press_release_view.php?ff=20180719_pr_293

16. https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/worst-floods-in-last-two-decades-ravage-kuttanad/article24454838.ece

17. https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/kerala-floods-water-not-receding-kuttanad-cut-rest-state-87439

18. The classification of area is according to elevation above mean sea level (MSL). Low lands are those below 7.5 m from MSL, midlands between 7.5 to 75 m and highlands above 75 m from MSL. Low land covers 10%, midland covers 41.76% and high land 48.14% of the total geographic area (Government of Kerala, 1989a).

19. It has been estimated that out of a total area of 38.85 lakh hectares, 19 lakh hectare area is affected by soil erosion problems.

# Empowering Local Self Governments for Mainstream Biodiversity in Sustainable Development of Kerala

**N. Anil Kumar  &**
**Suma  Vishnudas**

*This paper discusses the context and the efforts of M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (M.S.R.F.) in helping the elected Local Self Governments of a few Grama Panchayaths of Wayanad district of Kerala for mainstreaming the biodiversity concerns in the local development. This paper builds upon the idea of multi-level approach and processes needed from people to the policy makers for mainstreaming biodiversity. The gaps in awareness and institutional structures at different levels to achieve this goal are discussed in this paper. The need for consistent efforts to inculcate biodiversity conservation and sustainable use as a developmental agenda in the minds of elected representatives, rather than an alternative idea away from the routine development processes is emphasized here.*

### Introduction

Biodiversity is life, and it is the most dynamic element of a bioregion for food and agriculture production. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) came into force in the year 1992 signed by 168 countries and agreed upon the conservation of biological diversity

considering it as a global asset.  Conservation, sustainable use of the components of biological diversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic recourses are the objectives of the CBD. The convention recognizes, biological diversity as *people and our need for food security, medicine, fresh air, water, shelter and a clean and healthy environment than plants animals and micro-organisms and their ecosystems.*(www.cbd.int/intro/default.shtml)

Biodiversity has a critical role to play in dealing with two principal issues that limit social progress - climate resilience and under nutrition. According to FAO, since 1900s, some 75 % of plant genetic diversity has been lost as farmers worldwide have left their multiple local varieties and land races for genetically uniform, high yielding varieties (FAO, 1999). Hence, it is important to place high on the development agenda, leveraging biodiversity for overcoming the climate related biotic and abiotic stresses, as well as bringing nutrition in food production and consumption, and thereby addressing the issues of climate resilience and under nutrition.

The second goal of 2030 U. N. Sustainable Development Goals is to "End hunger, achieve food security, improve nutritional status and promote sustainable agriculture". One of the targets under goal 2 is to "ensure maintenance of the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species through soundly managed diversified seed and plant banks at the national regional and international levels by 2020". Another target is to promote climate resilient agricultural systems all over the globe[1].  Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals requires changes in institutional environments, information delivery and governance. Investments in biodiversity conservation need to be relooked. Above all capacity development at various levels is very important to achieve the targets.

Biodiversity mainstreaming is a long term iterative process of getting biodiversity concerns fully reflected in the policies, plans, and activities of the governance systems at local, sectoral or national levels

in order to achieve the outcomes that concomitantly benefit biodiversity and development. It is as much a political and institutional issue as it is a technical one, requiring a process of changing mindsets to policy frameworks and practices. After the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources (PGRs) for food and agriculture and several of the decisions of the CBD-CoPdecisions, necessary policies and measures were put in place by the Government of India to promote conservation and sustainable use of country's biodiversity. All the countries who were party to in the agreement of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) have developed national strategies for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Some specific measures undertaken by India to motivate local communities and institutions engaged in biodiversity management were enacting two national level legislations- Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights Act 2004 and Biodiversity Act 2002.India developed its National Biodiversity Action Plan in the year 2009[2] and that identifies the constraints and threats pertaining to biodiversity conservation. India has developed a systematic plan to achieve this target by a proper institutional structure starting from MoEF&CC, Planning commission, National Biodiversity Authority, State Biodiversity Boards and Biodiversity Management Committees at Panchayath levels.

The Biodiversity Act & Rules mandate establishment of Biodiversity Fund at national, state and local levels for "the management and conservation of heritage sites; compensating or rehabilitating people from such designated heritage sites; conservation and promotion of biological resources; and most importantly "socio-economic development of areas from where such biological resources or knowledge accessed…" The National Biodiversity Authority, State Biodiversity Boards and the local level Biodiversity Management Committees are the institutions designated under the Biodiversity Act 2002 & Rules 2004 to advise/facilitate respective governments on all matters related to the biodiversity management. The prime responsibility at present for them is to help the governments to achieve the 12 National Biodiversity Targets and

**Vol.10   No.4   October - December 2018**
            **&**           **Social Science in Perspective**
**Vol. 11   No.1   January - March 2019**

thereby contributing to achieve the Global Biodiversity Strategy Plan and Aichi Biodiversity Targets by 2020.

This paper discusses this context and the efforts M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) in helping the elected Local Self Governments of a few Grama Panchayaths of Wayanad district of Kerala for mainstreaming the biodiversity concerns in the local development. This paper builds upon the idea of multi-level approach and processes needed from people to the policy makers for mainstreaming biodiversity. The gaps in awareness and institutional structures at different levels to achieve this goal are discussed in this paper. The need for consistent efforts to inculcate biodiversity conservation and sustainable use as a developmental agenda in the minds of elected representative, rather than an alternative idea away from the routine development processes is emphasized here.

**Mainstreaming biodiversity in development**

The Biodiversity conservation programme in the state needs to be oriented towards helping the elected Local Self Governments to mainstream biodiversity in local development and thereby achieving the various conservation goals. So, it is very important to discuss and identify the priority areas for the Biodiversity Boards vis-à-vis the 2020 National Biodiversity Targets. The Biodiversity Board of Kerala state, which started functioning in the year 2004 is considered as one of the best performing boards of the country. However, some of the important questions that needs to be addressed by the State Biodiversity Board are: Whether this body has to promote integrated conservation where *ex-situ, in-situ* and on-farm methods are combined and benefitting conservation and livelihoods simultaneously? How do we engage the local communities in the priority setting of biodiversity management? Will the preparation and maintenance of People's Biodiversity Registers be adequate? What are the ways and means for empowering the Biodiversity Management Committees and integrating the PBR data and concerns in the local

governance? These questions have to be answered also in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Kerala as a model for decentralized governance and development in the country had set the goal of sustainable development as early as 1990s. During the peoples' planning and decentralization, the core idea was to promote primary production systems and sustainable utilization of natural resources. Now Kerala is going through a critical development path, struggling to balance between the increasing individual needs of a developed population and arresting the depletion of natural resources.

The 2018 Big flood in the state aggravated the existing maladies, worsened the life struggles and vulnerabilities of the poor. One of the heavily affected districts of the state was Wayanad district- a critically important biodiversity terrain of Western Ghats. About 47 landslides, more than a thousand land slips and 234 land subsidence were reported. The impact assessment reports from the district revealed nearly 70% of the people and as much percentage of the production landscapes of this predominantly farm/plantation district have been directly affected. The heavy rainfall and the resultant flood, landslides and other calamities of severe magnitude had destroyed the ecological foundations of food and agriculture production of this district.

The Flood has created new kind of challenges in environment and development management. Climate change mitigation and disaster preparedness has become the two core urgent concerns in the development as it was over that natural disasters are uncertain and can create setbacks in social progress and long term impacts on economic development.  Rebuilding process requires more extraction of natural resources and biodiversity in general. Reducing the direct pressures on biodiversity and promoting sustainable use should be the core of the future development plans. Also improving the ecosystem management and functions is vital. Functional and efficient ecosystems can only contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

Climate resilient agriculture production landscapes and ensuring sustainable income from food and agriculture production are two such challenges for the state to ensure an equitable development.   Improving resilience of food production landscapes through ecological intensification and maintenance of biodiversity in production system backed by a sustainable consumption plan could be the future strategy for the state. The first step towards achieving these goals is to include biodiversity on the agenda of development policy, planning and investment process and involving all stakeholders in the decision making process. More importantly, enhancing the capacity of local self-governments in mainstreaming biodiversity is the key to achieve the targets.An Action Framework with six clearly defined and developed mechanisms needed to achieve these outcomes are given below (see table 1).

**Table 1: Action Framework for mainstreaming
biodiversity in local governance**

| Attribute | Approach mechanisms |
|---|---|
| Outcomes | Sustainable agriculture and food production, Fisheries, Forestry, & Tourism |
| Institutional Arrangements | NBA-SBB-BMC; SPB –BD mainstreaming M&E Group |
| Approach & Tools | Case studies; PBRs & BD Gramasabhas; BD based Enterprises Development |
| Capacity Building | Officials of the 4 sectors above; BMCs and community Leaders |
| Communications | Biodiversity Fair; BMC Websites; Social Media; Community Radio, people's biodiversity monitoring platforms. |
| Finance | Internal (Govt) Gene Fund, SDG Fund; External (donors-CSR) (5% of the plan fund of all LSGDs should be set apart  for conservation, integration of biodiversity in all sectors of development) |
| Monitoring & Evaluation | SPB –SBB- BD mainstreaming M&E Group |

### MSSRF's efforts to mainstream biodiversity and to strengthen the management

MSSRF, which played a key role in drafting the National Biodiversity Act 2002 and Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmer Rights Act in 2004 has established a Community Agrobiodiversity Centre in 1997 in Wayanad district. The Centre is engaged in activities of agro-biodiversity management by strengthening the systems in place as part of the emerged legislations, and reviving and revisiting the policies in the framework of emerging global sustainability frameworks. Some of the key activities are described here.

### Peoples' Biodiversity Registers

The Biological Diversity Act 2001 directs preparation of People's Biodiversity Register' at every Panchayath, which documents knowledge of people on the biological diversity present in the Panchayath. The responsibility of preparation of such registers lies with the Biodiversity Management Committee. It should be maintained as a base document of all future conservation activities. MSSRF has taken leadership in preparation of this kind of a knowledge register, even much before the Biodiversity Act came in place in Kottathara, Meppady and Pozhuthana Grama Panchayaths of Wayanad. Since the implementation of Biodiversity Act, MSSRF has played a major role in preparingPeople's Biodiversity Registers. In 2013, Wayanad district became the first district in the state to complete preparation of PBRs in all its Panchayaths. The Community Agro-biodiversity Centre is actively engaged in assisting the three tier system of biodiversity action plan -National Bio-diversity Authority, State Bio-diversity Board and Biodiversity Management Committees. Though the state biodiversity board and BMCs have been constituted, the know-how on the application of biodiversity act is far too away from what is anticipated. Efforts at Panchayath level to facilitate the BMCs to undertake any activities other than drafting PBRs were very minimum in the panchayaths. MSSRF focused on creating

awareness for the BMC members on the Biodiversity & PPVFRA Acts and setting up of models at Panchayath level to facilitate conservation action under the leadership of BMCs.

**Empowering the BMCs**

During the years 2013-14, we conducted a study in 23 Panchayaths on the status of the implementation of Biodiversity Act in the district. The criteria's set for assessment are awareness level of BMC members, Panchayath members and people on the Biodiversity Act, and use of Peoples Biodiversity Registers (PBR). The results of the participatory assessment shown that majority of Panchayath presidents were unaware of their BMC Chairmanship and so was the case of BMC Members about their BMC membership. Though People Biodiversity Registers (PBR) was prepared in most of the Grama Panchayaths, most of the BMCs did not conduct any follow-up meetings after the preparation of PBR. The agro biodiversity component is reviewed as very meager in over 60% of the registers. So the decision was to expand the sensitization programmes on BD act and powers of BMC. In the year 2014 there was only one Panchayath in the district has planned and implemented any single activity under BMC. The study could also identify that there is no mechanism to coordinate the activities of BMCs at district level. The BMCswere not represented in any of the planning bodies at Panchayath or district level and no working group and funding support was allocated at Panchayath level. In nutshell, BMC existed as paper institutions.

This study report was discussed at state level and generated discussion on how to improve the situation on biodiversity governance. The next effort was to build awareness among BMCs on BD Act and to set up some models in selected Panchayaths to formulate biodiversity conservation projects for BMC. Series of trainings, interactions and dialogues resulted in the formulation of four projects in Wayanad: (i) A community Seed Bank for rice in VellamundaPanchayath, (ii) Regeneration

of riverine ecosystem in Pulpally Panchayath, (iii) Restoration of reverie vegetation and conservation of Heronry in Panamaram Panchayath and (iv) a land use study in Vythiri Panchayath for developing land use guidelines. BMCs of the respective Panchayath came forward by developing proposals and initiating activities at different levels.

**Wayanad Community Seed Festival**

Wayanad community seed festivalwas initiated by M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation Seed Care and Wayanad District tribal Development Action Council (WTDC), the two Grass root institutions promoted by MSSRF in the year 2014. This 3-day event is an on going activity where a multi stakeholder participatory engagement ensured to democratize the ton-farm conservation. As part of building custodian farmer networks the details of farmers who are conserving native crop varieties in the district were documented.

Annual Seed festivals offer opportunity for the traditional farmers to organize, exhibit and exchange their seeds. The farmers are organized under the BMCs and represented respective Panchayaths in the fest.

Seed festivals attract people from different walks of life including children and it act as a knowledge sharing platform on agro-biodiversity. Many number of awareness classes being conducted as part of the seed festival as a trans-disciplinary engagement and to have common understanding on the issues related to agro-biodiversity conservation and utilization. The annual seminars at the Festival discuss the policy gaps in integrating the agro-biodiversity concerns in to local development agenda.

**Panchayath level initiatives to conserve agro-biodiversity**

Three Grama Panchayaths of the district initiated programmes to set up Community Seed Banks. Edavaka Panchayath has initiated and implementing gene bank programme for tuber crops conservation since 2014. Edavaka has widened their conservation efforts to rice seed bank, special financial support to all farmers who cultivate traditional

paddy varieties, Medicinal plants and trees in the farm land. Vellamunda panchayath has initiated rice Seed Bank, Vythiri Panchayath initiated conservation plots for pepper varieties. 8 Panchayaths submitted projects for conserving different crop varieties in last three years. Many of these projects get rejected in the processes of vetting or at the time of implementation due to conflicting clauses in the LSGD guidelines. It was also noticed that the officials at the vetting and implementation end are not sensitized enough on the changing developmental needs and concepts. Creating an economic benefit in conservation is the core issue in promoting sustainable use of biodiversity. The concept of "do ecology" which revolves around creating economic stake in conservation to serve simultaneously conservation as well as reduction of poverty becomes very relevant in this context. This is an opportunity for the state and panchayaths to create legally binding access to genetic resources for food, health and agriculture which can lead into development of "bio-enterprises" where benefits can be monetary with the knowledge providers.

This is critically important with respect to the conservation of medicinal plants that have use value amongst the tribe community of the district and for which market can stimulate their conservation and extensive cultivation. The CBD enabled Access & Benefit Sharing mechanism offers ways and means to help the individuals and communities to target community level market development for biodiversity.

**Panchayath level Seed Festivals**

By fourth year the BMC members of the Panchayaths who regularly attended the Community Seed Fest gradually started replicating the process at Panchayath level seed festivals. Such small localized seed festivals spread the message of conservation and use of agro-biodiversity to more number of people. BMC took major role in organizing such seed festivals and gradually identified their role in biodiversity governance.

**Traditional Farmers' Directory**

Wayanad community seed festival brought out a platform for many

**Vol.10   No.4   October - December 2018**
                 **&**                       **Social Science in Perspective**
**Vol. 11  No.1   January - March 2019**

famers to interact each other and exchange knowledge and seeds from different locations. These interactions lead to the compilation of information about the traditional farmers of the district in the form of a directory. This was essential to create a network of farmers who conserve native varieties of crops and protect the seeds. The compilation helped in making a single point source on the details of conserved varieties as well as the farmers who can act as "conservation hubs" locally for protection of ago-biodiversity.

**Recognition of custodian farmers and Community agro-biodiversity awards**

MSSRF facilitated formation of a grass root organization among the custodian farmers of Malabar called 'Seed Care' in the year 2011. The objectives of this organization are to strengthen the conservation efforts of custodian farmers by building social networks, to work for protecting the farmer rights on the genetic resources they conserved, and to find markets for the value added native crop diversity and its products. They have initiated registration of 21 traditional rice varieties of Wayand as farmer's varieties under PPVFR Act 2001in the year 2012.

Wayanad Tribal Development Action Council (WTDC) is another Grass root organization formed exclusively among Adivasi communities of Wayanad to address the special developmental needs based on community biodiversity management in the year 2006. WTDC is working with an objective of eradicating poverty and malnutrition among Adivasies of Wayanad, protection of community rights on biological resources and traditional knowledge on them and enhancing livelihood options of Adivasies. WTDC has got Genome Saviors' community Award from government of India under PPVFR Act in the year 2012. They received this award of ten lakh rupees in recognition of the rice conservation activities of MulluKuruma and Kurichya communities of Wayanad.

WTDC has institutionalized two annual Community Agro biodiversity Awards for on farm conservation efforts of Adivasi farmers of the district

utilizing the Genome Savior Award money.  For the last five years WTDC is giving awards of Rs. 25,000 for the selected Adivasi farmer who conserve the most number of rice varieties in the district. Another Award of Rs.15000 for the contribution of agro-ecosystems conservation.  These awards are distributed in the annual seed festival and given to the family including male, female and child members, in contrary to the conventional approach where often the male members are only recognized in public on behalf of the family.

**Policy Advocacy**

MSSRF submitted a set of policy recommendations regarding the agro-biodiversity management and BMCs after its five-year long interaction with BMCs and the Panchayath. The recommendations included year wise allocation of money for biodiversity management at Panchayath level, separate working groups for biodiversity, District level coordination of BMCs, representation of BMCs in District Planning Committee and appointment of an officer in charge at district level to coordinate and vet proposals from BMCs.

During the current year, the LSGD Department of Kerala has revised the SGD guidelines adding a new working group in Panchayaths to plan for biodiversity, environment and disaster management with 2% compulsory budget provision. This working group needs to be strengthened with inputs like basic data on biodiversity and natural resources of corresponding GP and the global situation in climate variations to plan future course of action. This is a welcome step and allocation of 2% fund for various activities under the working group can bring notable change at grassroots level for biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation.

**Promoting the Wayanad district as a carbon neutral district**

In Wayanad, farmers practice mixed crop cultivation in dry lands with many trees in the farm. Growing trees itself, is a conservation action

in the context of climate change. However, farmers rarely benefit from this action till it's recognized by the state and value it for its contribution to combating climate change. Meenangadi Panchayath in Wayanad is piloting the carbon neutral project in the country through various efforts with the technical support of MSSRF.

**Underpinning the gains in shade coffee production**

Wayanad is the largest coffee growing area in the state. Almost 80% of the coffee production of the state comes from Wayanad. However, in recent times, the production has come down due to market fluctuations. Wayanad coffee plantations, are historically known for integration with abundant tree stocks and biodiversity; for example, some large farms have been identified with more than 40 different forest tree species, at least 8 rare and threatened frog species (Ground Frog (1sp*)* Bush Frog (5spp) and tree frog (2 spp) and over 100 bird species, more than in an equivalent area of farmland, and exceeded only by primary tropical forest. Recent research (Anil Kumar et al 2019, Karthika and Vishnudas, 2018) shows that Shade coffee gardens are almost equal to natural forest in case of certain faunal elements. This is a good evidence for marketing specialty coffee highlighting as grown in bio-diverse environment. Planting more trees in addition to existing trees will improve the carbon sequestration process combating global climate change. Coffee farms also check soil erosion and ensures nutrient cycling with deep-rooted trees in the farms ensuring sustainability. Shade grown coffee system amongst the small growers - marketing the coffee as a specialty product, carbon neutral and grown in bio-diverse environment, can improve the farm income and enhance the agro-ecosystem services. MSSRF advocates for shade coffee plantation as a climate resilient farming practice for Wayanad.

**Conclusion**

Kerala is going through the processes of rebuilding the state in the aftermath of the big flood. The UN report on this disaster and the

rebuilding plan highlights the need for rejuvenating natural systems and bringing the concept of sustainability in practice. A key question however emerges is "what are the evidences for those management practices, which poise protection and enhancement of human well-being, as well as production and production capability of biodiversity and ecosystem services for the new state? This question underpins sustainable development and it helped MSSRF to develop a conceptual model called 'C4 continuum' that pays concurrent attention to four fundamental purposes in the biodiversity sector, such as *Conservation, Cultivation, Consumption* and *Commerce* of genetic resources and ecosystem services management. This model produced several relevant and easily understandable indicators that are successfully used in measuring the biodiversity mainstreaming efforts in Wayanad district. The State Biodiversity Board in alliance with the National Biodiversity Authority and the Biodiversity Management Committees at the grass root level and the key stakeholder groups can take leadership to take this learning forward for the sustainable management of biodiversity sector of Kerala.

### References

1.      Nadesa Panicker Anil Kumar, Amsad Ibrahim Khan Saleem Khan and Vaniyan Balakrishnan 2019: Coffee, Climate and Biodiversity: Understanding the Carbon Stocks of the Shade Coffee Production System of India. In Handbook of Climate Change and Biodiversity, Climate Change Management, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98681-4_7© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2019 W. Leal Filho et al. (eds.)

2.      Nitiayog, India (2017): *Millennium Development Goals Final Country Report,* Government of India,  http://www.mospi.gov.in/ sites/default/files/publication_reports/ MDG_Final_Country_report_of_India_27nov17.pdf

3.      Nitiayog, India (2018): SDG India Index, Baseline Report, 2018. http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/SDX_Index_India 21.12.2018.pdf

4.    UNDP (2018): Kerala Post Disaster Needs Assessment: Floods and Landslides August 2018. Executive Summary, UNDP. https:/ /www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/crisis-prevention-and-recovery/post-disaster-needs-assessment—kerala.html

5.    FAO (1999): Food insecurity: When people must live with hunger and fear starvation: The State of Food Insecurity in the world. 1999. http://www.fao.org/NEWS/1999/img/SOFI99-E.PDF

6.    FAO (2009): The international treaty on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. Conservation and sustainable use under the international treaty. http://www.fao.org/3/a-i2579e.pdf

7.    Karthika C. &Vishnudas C. K. (2018): "A comparative study of mixed-species bird flocks in shaded coffee plantation and natural forest in Wayanad, Kerala", *Indian BIRDS*. 14 (4): 97–102.

8.    United Nations (2015): Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1, United Nations, https:/ /sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld

9.    NBA, (2009): National Biodiversity Action Plan. http://envfor.nic.in/ division/national-biodiversity-action-plan-nbap

**Footnotes**

1.    Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1, United Nations, www.sustainabled evelopment.un.org )

2.    http://envfor.nic.in/division/national-biodiversity-action-plan-nbap

# Enabling Environment for Climate Smart Agriculture

**Saji John**

*For implementing Climate Smart Agriculture in Kerala, there is a need for expanding the evidence base for determining the current and projected effects of climate change on agricultural production systems and farmers and pinpointing the key vulnerabilities. It is also required to identify and evaluate the potential climate-smart options for adapting to the expected impacts of climate change while supporting sustainable agricultural development. Farmers, pastoralists, foresters and fisher folk are the primary custodians of knowledge about their environment, agricultural ecosystems, crops, livestock, forests, fish and local climatic patterns. Efforts to adapt a climate-smart agriculture approach to a specific setting must take into account local producers' knowledge, requirements and priorities.*

## 1.0 Introduction

The agricultural sector has witnessed its most challenging and taxing times, after the devastating floods that wreaked havoc on the State of Kerala. Among many affected, the agrarian population is facing the worst adverse effects of flooding and soil erosion. The scientific community has emphasized on the urgent need for reclaiming the eroded soil to restore its fertility, glorious biodiversity and capacity to sustain

all life forms. While considering the prospects of rehabilitation, it is equally important to realize that the prime cause of such calamities are recurring aberrations in the  normal weather and climatic conditions of the State. Hence, it is worth discussing  the Climate Change that has profound influence in the agrarian sector.

There has been projection in a recent report by the Asian Development Bank (*ADB, 2017. A Region at Risk: The Human Dimensions of Climate Change in Asia and The Pacific)* that East, South, and Southeast Asian regions are extremely vulnerable to the effects of environmental change. State of the art models have projected pronounced increase in frequency and intensity of heavy rainfall events in the region which may cause more severe flooding if the global temperature continues to rise.

## 2.0 Climate Change

Change is inevitable in everything. Climate Change is a reality of our world, and it has large implications for society in general, with a particular impact on agriculture. Models project that mean winter temperatures in India will increase by as much as 3.2ºC in the 2050s and 4.5º C by 2080s. Summer temperatures will increase by 2.2º C in the 2050s and 3.2º C in the 2080s. Further, for every degree of global warming, the world is committed to an eventual sea-level rise of over 2.3 meters (*ADB, 2017).*

In the first report on "Impact of climate change in four regions of the country" by the Indian Network for Climate Change Assessment, it has been pointed out that reduced rainfall, increased atmospheric temperature and flooding due to rising sea levels are the climate change scenarios for the Western *Ghats and Kerala over the next 20 years.*

## 2.1 Kerala and Climate Change

In keeping with the clear upward trend in surface air temperature, the mean maximum temperature over Kerala during the last 50 years has risen by about 0.8 ºC, the minimum by 0.2 ºC and the average by 0.60 ºC over (27.3 - 27.9 ºCelsius), as per the Indian Meteorological Department.

Such warming not only affected the entire Kerala coast, but also led to widening of differences in the maximum and minimum temperatures along the high ranges of Kerala. The changes in thermal and moisture regime over the year have resulted in the shifting of climate in Kerala from B4 to B2 class, moving from wetness to dryness within the humid type of climate.

Temperature data recorded at the Regional Agricultural Research Station, Ambalavayal (Wayanad district) and Cardamom Research Station at Pampadumpara (Idukki district) under the Kerala Agricultural University revealed that the maximum temperature over the high ranges of Kerala had increased by 1.46° C from 1984 to 2009. It also reveals that the effects of global warming and deforestation are felt more across the high ranges of Kerala situated in the Western Ghats, one of the hot spots of bio-diversity.

Under the projected climate change scenario, it is certain that the temperature is likely to increase by 2°C by 2050. The minimum surface air temperature in the Western Ghats region may rise by 2°C to 4.5°C. The average temperature in the region bordering Kerala is likely to rise by 1°C to 3°C. The number of rainy days is likely to decrease along the entire Western Coast, including the Western Ghats.

It is now established that the sea level is on the rise due to global warming and the projected Sea Level Rise (SLR) along Kerala coast on a conservative estimation is about 100 to 200 mm over the next 100 years. Vulnerability to Sea Level Rise would be alarming to the majority coastal communities which live on sandy coasts, most of which are barrier beaches or spits. Backwater banks, islands and filtration ponds/ paddy fields are other sections of the coastal zone which are highly susceptible to Sea Level Rise. If the sea level rises by one metre, 169 sq. km of the coastal region surrounding Kochi will be inundated.

### 2.2 Kerala, A *Climate Change* Prone State

There are many reasons for Kerala becoming a *climate change prone* State. High dependency on climate sensitive sectors like agriculture,

fisheries and forests, very long coast line prone to severe sea erosion, unprecedented decline in forest resources and biodiversity, continued soil erosion leading to reduced soil quality and low productivity, urban & industrial effluent discharge to rivers, sand mining from the river bed and clay mining from river banks/floodplains, alarming rates of reclamation of wetlands, high density of dams restricting natural river flow, extreme hunger for land for housing and livelihood, unregulated backwater tourism (house boats) and 'eco' tourism in the ecologically fragile zones etc are the major factors which make our State vulnerable to climate change.

High population density and high state of urbanization result in high per capita energy needs and this enhances carbon intensity. Rapidly expanding infrastructure development as well as large proportion of goods and traffic movements increase Green House Gas emissions. The high energy needs consequent to high urbanization in the wake of high population density persuade even our administrators to compromise on environment susceptibility without integrating green technologies in the development process. Financial constraints of the State also restrict the adoption of cleaner technologies instead of polluting ones.

Rubber plantations cover about 18% of the total agricultural land and 11% of the total geographical area of the State and this has posed threat to our food security, biodiversity and balanced ecosystem. Acute food insecurity and import of food grains and vegetables from other states in many ways aggravates the vulnerabilities. The Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM) has identified the probable impacts of Climate Change in Kerala as follows:

- Higher temperature, and higher rates of evaporation and transpiration

- Location- specific higher/ lower precipitation and shifting pattern of monsoon

- Increased surface runoff during monsoon causing floods and decreased summer flow

- Soil erosion leading to degradation of soils, siltation of water bodies and canals, and reduction in capacity of reservoirs

- Higher rates of soil moisture depletion and faster dry up of soil

- Higher rates of groundwater depletion and declining water table

- Drying up / shrinking of ponds, tanks , lakes, wells etc

- Increased incidence of droughts, floods and landslides

- Sea level rise, and Coastal erosion

- Salinity intrusion/ ingress into surface and groundwater in coastal areas

The major climate change hotspot districts in Kerala are Alappuzha, Palakkad and the hilly districts of Wayanad and Idukki. Water scarcity, spread of vector and  water borne diseases, degradation of forest and biodiversity, decrease in the agricultural production etc. are some common issues which may become severe in the future.

### 3.0 Impacts of Climate Change  on Agriculture

FAO estimates that agricultural production will have to increase by 60 percent by 2050 to satisfy the expected demands for food and feed. But climate change is emerging as a major threat to agriculture, food security and livelihood of millions of people across the world. It is estimated that in 2030, India will surpass China to become the world's largest populated country. The burgeoning population urges the best out of the crop production. To feed an expanding population, the annual world food production will need to increase by 60 percent over the next three decades in India also.

Climate change is expected to increase temperature and precipitation variability, reduce the predictability of seasonal weather patterns and increase the frequency and intensity of severe weather events, such as floods, cyclones and hurricanes. Some regions are expected to face prolonged drought and water shortages. All these will

adversely affect crop production. Changes in crop cultivation suitability and associated agriculture biodiversity, decrease in input use efficiency and prevalence of pests and diseases are some of the major causes of climate change impacts on agriculture.

It also adversely affects the soil processes resulting in soil erosion, soil leaching, soil organic carbon loss, salinization and nutrient loss. Decrease in soil moisture and lowering of water table hasten organic matter decomposition in soil, thereby enhancing emission of green house gases. Changing weather parameters have a detrimental effect on cropping seasons and cropping patterns leading to many crops currently being raised unsuitable for cultivation in the future. Climate Change also causes immense deterioration of forests and biodiversity, affecting the ecosystems supporting sustainable development. Rise in temperature and precipitation increases the relative humidity, paving the way for new pests and diseases, thereby enhancing the risks of farming. Minor pests may turn into major pest's epidemics in various agricultural regions of the state, thereby adversely affecting crop production and productivity. Further, arable land along the coast lines are bound to be reduced with an intrusion of saline water. Coastal erosion, submergence of shorelines could mainly affect agriculture through inundation of low lying lands.

### 3.1 Climate Change and Kerala Agriculture

Climate change has its impact on Kerala agriculture in many ways. Cultivated land is declining year after year across the state and production is almost stagnant. With changes in rainfall pattern, drought, increased rate of runoff causing floods and the erratic behaviour of rivers, the conventional agro-climatic zones of the State need to be re-defined.

Increased temperature enhances the metabolic activity of the plant which reduces crop duration and reduces crop yield. With each degree rise in temperature, rice yield would be reduced by 6 %. Thus an increase of temperature by 2°C by 2025 would affect paddy production in Kerala. Salt water intrusion and salination of fertile rice land are becoming a

problem in Kuttanad (Alappuzha and Kottayam districts), Pokkali land (Ernakulam and Alappuzha), Kaipad lands (Kannur District) and Kole land (Thrissur and Malappuram) adversely affecting rice production in the State.

Climate projections across the high ranges indicate that the Southwest Monsoon rainfall is likely to decline and surface air temperature and its range are likely to increase. Under such circumstances, there is a threat to thermo sensitive crops like black pepper, cardamom, tea and coffee. Major perceived effects of climate change on mango include early or delayed flowering, multiple reproductive flushes, variations in fruit maturity, abnormal fruit set and transformation of reproductive buds into vegetative ones. Cashew is also highly weather sensitive. Despite advanced technologies in crop production and crop improvement, cashew productivity is declining over Kerala.

### 3.2 Impact of Agriculture on Climate Change

Apart from analysing the impact of Climate Change on Agriculture, it is also important to learn how agriculture impacts climate change or global warming. The agricultural sectors, which include crop and livestock production, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, are major contributors to global greenhouse gas emissions. According to FAO estimates, in 2010, emissions from the agriculture, forestry and other land use (AFOLU) sector directly accounted for 22 percent of total global emission.

In Kerala, the emission of green-house gases (GHG) are comparatively low. Kerala has a critical eminence for Carbon Sequestration Potential due to the better geographic cover by forest. However, due to the population pressure, forest areas are under threat which leads to the higher concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Excessive use of nitrogenous chemical fertilizers also leads to emission of green house gas (Nitrous Oxide). Similarly coconut husk retting activity in the coastal areas, discharge of sewage and domestic waste are also enhancing green house gas emission. Anaerobic

conditions during wet land paddy cultivation can also result in emission of green house gas (Methane)

## 4.0 Climate Smart Agriculture

To meet the challenges of climate change in agriculture, FAO introduced the concept of Climate-Smart Agriculture at the 2010 Hague Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change. Climate-smart agriculture does not refer to a set of practices that can be universally applied, but rather an approach that involves different elements that are embedded in specific contexts and tailored to meet local needs. Climate-smart agriculture has three main objectives:

- Sustainably increasing agricultural productivity, to support equitable increases in farm incomes, food security and development;

- Adapting and building resilience of agricultural and food security systems to climate change at multiple levels;.

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture

- Using Agriculture as a major tool for mitigation of Green House Gases

This does not imply that every practice applied in every location should deliver positive results for each of these four objectives. Enhancing food security while contributing to mitigate climate change and preserving the natural resource base and vital ecosystem services requires the transition to agricultural production systems that are more productive, use inputs more efficiently, have less variability and greater stability in their outputs, and are more resilient to risks, shocks and long-term climate variability. Making this shift requires considerable changes in national and local governance, legislation, policies and financial mechanisms.

## 4.1 Sustainable Increase in Productivity and Income

Climate Smart Agriculture requires a major shift in the way land,

water, soil nutrients and genetic resources are managed to ensure that these resources are used more efficiently. Key strategies for ensuring that agriculture can adapt to change include:

- Sustainable soil and water management practices;

- Active promotion of biodiversity; and

- Diversification of income sources inside and outside the farms

### 4.1.1 Sustainable soil and water management practices

The impact of climate change will contribute to land and soil degradation and reduce the productivity of these natural resources. However, there are immense opportunities to lessen the negative impacts of climate change on land and soil resources and to optimize the potentially positive effects of climate change.

- Land resource planning is an essential entry point and process to choose the most suitable land-use systems for accommodating the often competing uses of land.

- Locally adapted sustainable soil and land management practices that can support climate change mitigation and adaptation.

- Increasing soil organic carbon improves nutrient and water intake by plants, which increases yields and resource efficiency of land, nutrients and water. It also reduces soil erosion and increases water retention. This combination makes the system more resilient to variability of precipitation and to extreme events.

- Agriculture sector withdraws 70 percent of total global freshwater and hence efficient use of available water will be of fundamental importance in building resilient production systems and improving the management of climate change-induced risks.

### 4.1.2 Active promotion of biodiversity

Genetic resources for food and agriculture are the foundations of

sustainability, resilience and adaptability in production systems. More crucially, genetic diversity is a prerequisite for adaptation and continued evolution of the species, varieties and breeds. Successful integration of biodiversity conservation into agricultural production is fundamental to maintain functioning ecosystems. Genetic diversity ensures that all kinds of life can thrive or persist under a range of environmental conditions and allows these resources to cope with pests and diseases.

There is a need to enhance conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture and gather more and better information on these resources. Traditional and novel uses of genetic resources can increase the adaptability, resilience and yield of production systems and enhance their contribution to climate change mitigation. It is also widely recognized that maintaining crop diversity in production systems is crucial to avoid vulnerability and widespread crop loss resulting from particular biotic or abiotic threats.

### 4.1.3 Diversification of income sources

Farmer income is what ultimately counts and climate smart agriculture will be pursued by farmers only if it provides for their sustained livelihood. Many measures are being recommended as part of practising climate smart agriculture to sustain farmer income.

- Integrated farming models like aquaculture, poultry, cattle rearing etc would be promoted to have a diversified base and make households self-sufficient in farming. It has a complimentary effect through effective recycling of wastes and crop residues and encompasses additional source of income to the farmers. It is a rich source of species diversity which helps in soil building, preserving and improving ecological conditions essential to long-term sustainability. Moreover, the emissions intensities of integrated systems are typically lower than those of specialized systems.

- Good agricultural practices, often in combination with effective

input use are one of the best ways to increase smallholder productivity. It ensures farmer commitments on food production and security, food safety and quality and environmental sustainability of agriculture.

● Organic farming has potential to produce high quality food, enhance natural resource base and environment and increase income from premium price on produce apart from supporting carbon sequestration in soil. Under extreme climatic conditions such as drought which are expected to increase with climate change, organically managed farms may produce higher yields than conventionally managed ones due to improved soil properties.

● Effective use of weather information services contributes to resilience by enabling farmers to better manage the negative impacts of weather-related risks in poor seasons. Pest and disease surveillance and forecasting system is a service to the farmers, which is aimed at providing information to enable farmers of a certain area to take respective precautions with maximum economical benefit and lowest environmental hazard and to counteract eventual calamities in time.

● Greater value to farmers will arrive through assigning emphasis on post-production activities that connect the farm harvest to markets for value realisation. This will include expanding the marketing range of the farmers.

● Higher return to farmers also needs to be ensured through Agro Processing and Value Addition and marketing across the nation and world.

## 4.2 Adapting and Building Resilience to Climate Change

Uncertainty and risk in agricultural production need to be addressed carefully for successfully implementing climate smart agriculture.

- The natural risk in agriculture can be negotiated by appropriate weather prediction, disseminating early warning for flood and cyclones and developing contingency crop plans, climate resilient varieties, technologies etc.

- Anthropogenic risk in agriculture can be minimized through diversified cropping systems, conservation practices for carbon sequestration, water saving technologies and water harvesting development, organic farming and integrated farming systems, and forestation.

- Production risks (price risks, credit risks, technological risks and institutional risks) can be minimised by avoidance of highly risky crops, diversification of crops , weather forecast infrastructure, credit package, agriculture insurance, minimum support price system and futures markets etc.

## 4.3 Mitigating Climate Change

Climate change mitigation aims at stabilizing the greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

- **Reducing/avoiding greenhouse gas emissions:** Improving soil management with conservation agriculture (i.e. no-tillage implemented in the context of varied crop rotations and soil protection/mulching), sustainable use of fertilizers and sustainable mechanization for crop production and improving manure management.

- **Removing greenhouse gas from the atmosphere:** This category includes policies and measures to increase carbon sequestration in standing biomass and soils. Agro-ecosystems, including forests, naturally remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through photosynthesis. The sequestered carbon is stored in biomass and soils, thereby acting as " Carbon sinks".

## 4.4 Agriculture For Mitigation of Green House Gases

Agriculture is a major tool for mitigation of Green House Gases by its unique capacity to absorb $CO_2$ ;  and release Oxygen through Photosynthesis. This could be achieved through increased cropping, by reducing rain fed areas through integrated water and river basin management, expansion of agriculture to wastelands, wetlands, degraded fallow areas and introducing urban agriculture

## 5.0 Strategies for Climate Smart Agriculture in Kerala

In Kerala, climate change has become an agenda for development planning only in the recent years. The Environment and Climate Change Department, Government of Kerala is the nodal agency for coordinating activities related to climate change in the state. There is a need to adopt a multi pronged strategy for focussed attention and implementation of Climate Smart Agriculture. It is also high time a competent authority / agency undertakes flood and drought vulnerability assessment in the major agro-climatic regions of the State. Further, Climate Smart Agriculture can succeed only if the farmers are provided with the means and measures for  enhancing income and mitigating the uncertainty and risks in agriculture through credit support, crop insurance, minimum support price and market interventions.

## 5.1 Vulnerability Assessment   of Agro Ecological Zones

Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment of each agro-climatic zones need to be undertaken for preparing vulnerability mapping and identifying vulnerable agricultural regions which are prone to climate change impacts such as flood and drought. Highly sensitive climate  zones like Kuttanad region are to be declared as vulnerable agricultural zones and in these zones, climate smart agriculture protocol should be established. Vulnerable areas need to be even exempted from farming activities.

Suitability of each and every land for agriculture should be assessed and specified cropping patterns and sustainable soil management

practices need to be followed. There is need for a Crop Plan strictly complying with the land use classification.

## 5.2 Adopting Sustainable Soil and Water Management Practices

It is required to promote various soil conservation techniques and watershed management practices. Increasing soil organic matter to heighten the water retention capacity of soils is much important. Providing updated Soil Health Cards to farmers annually / biennially to farmers in all agro climatic zones in the state should be made mandatory. A mechanism for integrated management of rainwater, surface and ground water and a network of small water harvesting structures in mid land and low land areas to fully exploit the high precipitation in monsoon should be maintained. Further, we should adopt improved water management practices both on-farm and off-farm to increase water use efficiencies and reduce water pollution

## 5.3 Crop Improvement and Management

It is high time to develop new crop varieties which can survive climate extremes and are  tolerant to various abiotic and biotic stresses like pests and diseases. In addition to developing improved cropping patterns with inclusion of climate smart crops, adoption of agricultural technologies such as INM, Crop Rotation etc and other farm operations should also be promoted.

Adoption of good agricultural practices, organic farming and natural farming need to be strengthened to the extent possible.  Adoption of ICT  / Block Chain Technology to transform the *"organic belief"* to an *"organic reality"* since mechanism currently followed is not adequate to ensure  adoption of organic cultural practices. Also strict enforcement of quality control on chemical and organic pesticides being used by farmers should be enforced.

## 5.4 Better Weather Forecasting Services and Crop Advisories

There is a need to strengthen our Weather Forecasting Services

and Crop Advisories in the state. Automated Weather Stations have to be established adequately to gather ago-climatic zone based weather data and KAU should be capacitated and strengthened for facilitating weather -based  and location specific crop advisories**.**

Maharashtra Government has installed  2,060 weather stations across the state during 2017 and 1000 more are on the way, to provide real-time weather-related information to farmers. These AWS measure wind direction, wind speed, air temperature, relative humidity and rainfall and these data are processed at  the Agricultural University  to issue weather and crop advisories. The advisories are shared to farmers by making them available on Mahavedh portal (Maharashtra Agriculture Weather Information Network) as well as on mobile applications. Digital kiosks in every Gram Panchayat to disburse weather related information and expert advice to farmers are also part of the programme. They also use the data to design better disaster management programmes, crop insurance schemes and to establish a weather database bank.

### 5.5 Information Support System for Pest & Disease Surveillance

The Information Support System for Pest & Disease Surveillance in the State need to be strengthened.  Application of Geo-informatics for real pest and disease monitoring and forecasting of possible insect or disease based timely weather information should be adopted. It is important to develop the skills and attitude of farmers towards bio-intensive pest management and to undertake research on the characteristics and spread of new pests due to variation on climate parameters.

### 5.6 Active Promotion of biodiversity

Genetic diversity is a pre-requisite for adaptation and continued evolution of the species, varieties and breeds. Successful integration of biodiversity conservation into agricultural production is fundamental to maintain ecosystems. Traditional and novel uses of genetic resources can increase the adaptability, resilience and yield of production systems and enhance their contribution to climate change mitigation.

### 5.7 Awareness Creation and Capacity Building

Dr. M.S.Swaminadhan observes that *"We will have to marry traditional wisdom with modern science if we are to insulate our crops from the adverse impact of higher mean temperature. There should also be increased effort in developing cropping systems which are climate smart and nutrition rich. Climate Risk Management Centers will have to be established in every panchayat. If these steps are not taken, food and nutrition security will be impacted adversely."*

Empowering farmers to better anticipate and plan for climate change is a pre requisite for practising climate smart agriculture. Awareness and assistance shall be provided to farmers for environmental modification with respect to change in climate and they should be provided with timely advise on cropping, water management and nutrient management practices.

### 5.8 Establishing Climate Smart Villages

The concept of climate-smart villages is being piloted in India to help farmers cope with changing weather patterns. The project is coordinated by the CGIAR Research Programme on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS). It provided training for hundreds of farmers in technologies that help protect their crops from excessive rains and drought. In the Indian states of Bihar and Maharashtra, farmers from 40 villages have learnt how to increase the carbon content of their soil through agroforestry, effectively manage manure and apply optimum amounts of fertilizers to save money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Various national and international organizations are involved in the initiative, including the Indian Agriculture Ministry and Meteorological Department. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) helps farmers prioritize adaptation and mitigation options, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) assists farmers in dealing with water-logging through vertical drains, and the International

**Vol.10   No.4   October - December 2018**
        **&**                         **Social Science in Perspective**
**Vol. 11   No.1   January - March 2019**

Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) provides advice on conservation agriculture and the precise use of fertilizers.

Kerala needs to adopt such a programme without delay. The focus of the climate-smart village concept is to blend local knowledge of conservation techniques with global perspectives on climate change mitigation. After selection of potential sites, a steering group of community representatives and researchers identify appropriate climate-smart options for that village. These can include climate-smart technologies, climate information services, local development and adaptation plans and supportive institutions and policies, all tailored to that community's needs. The community chooses its preferred options in a process that aims to be as participatory and inclusive as possible, encouraging participation of women and more vulnerable groups.

## 5.9 Market Infrastructure and Supply Chain Management

To ensure sustained farmer income while adopting climate smart agriculture, it is important to enhance the market infrastructure in the State which is currently very weak. It is required to develop decentralised village based agricultural processing centres as a support to local farmers. More agro processing and cold storage centres across agro climactic regions should be established. It is also important that the cold storage chain is adequately developed using energy efficient technologies and by adopting energy conservation measures. Value Addition and Brand Export of Kerala Products are also important in increasing farmer income.

## 5.10 Risk Mitigation

Natural risk in agriculture can be negotiated by appropriate weather prediction, disseminating early warning for flood and cyclones and developing contingency crop plans, climate resilient varieties, technologies etc. Anthropogenic risk in agriculture can be minimized by diversified cropping systems, conservation agriculture for carbon sequestration, aerobic rice cultivation, water saving technologies, organic farming and integrated farming systems. Production risks in agriculture

can be minimised by avoidance of highly risky crops, diversification of crops, weather forecast infrastructure, credit package, agriculture insurance, minimum support price system and futures markets etc.

## 6.0 Enabling Environment for Climate Smart Agriculture in Kerala

For  implementing Climate Smart Agriculture in Kerala,  there is a need for  expanding the evidence base for determining the current and projected effects of climate change on agricultural production systems and farmers and pinpointing the key vulnerabilities. It is also required to identify and evaluate the potential climate-smart options for adapting to the expected impacts of climate change while supporting sustainable agricultural development. Farmers, pastoralists, foresters and fisher folk are the primary custodians of knowledge about their environment, agricultural ecosystems, crops, livestock, forests, fish and local climatic patterns. Efforts to adapt a climate-smart agriculture approach to a specific setting must take into account local producers' knowledge, requirements and priorities.

## 6.1 Support enabling policy frameworks

Supportive policies, plans and investments, and coordination in the policy-making processes and institutions responsible for agriculture, climate change, food security and land use are required to create this enabling policy framework. New policies to stimulate the adoption of climate-smart agriculture systems should focus on filling policy gaps and to support the capacity development of all the stakeholders.

## 6.2 Strengthening State and local institutions

Enabling institutions (e.g. financial institutions, land tenure regimes, institutions regulating customary law, community-based organizations, insurance schemes, information and extension services) are essential for harnessing the evidence base to empower, enable and motivate farmers to adopt climate-smart agriculture practices. Cross-sectoral dialogues form an important part of the climate-smart agriculture

methodology and it is required to enhance coordination between institutions dealing with agricultural, climate change, social protection, food security and other issues. Climate Smart Agriculture can be successfully implemented only if our local bodies conceive its philosophy and act  accordingly.

## 6.3 Farmer Friendly Implementation

We will not be successful in enforcing any climate smart  policies which are not farmer friendly. As with any new methods or technologies, climate-smart agriculture practices may be perceived as a risky investment. We may need to even introduce *Environment Subsidy* or *Eco Compensation* to support our farmers pursuing climate smart agriculture. Concepts like *Green Credit  / Green Corpus Fund*  may be established to extend the credit / insurance support to our farmers. Improved market access, which increases the returns on land and labour, is a critical factor for the adoption of new climate-smart agriculture practices. Risk Fund Concept should also be established for compensating the risk on  price deficit during market glut. Innovative financing mechanisms are central to implementing climate-smart agriculture in Kerala. New climate financing mechanisms, such as Green Climate Fund, Environment Cess etc may be a way of spurring sustainable agricultural development in the State. Despite all these challenges in implementation, Climate Smart Agriculture is an ***investment for the future*** since there is ***no future for mankind without food security***.

# The Implications of Disaster on Dynamics of Migration in Kerala

**K. Jafar**

*The paper is an attempt to explore the implications of the recent disaster on employment situation and the dynamics of migration in Kerala. It uses Kerala's experience in mass-education and its impact on the process of development in general and on pattern of employment and dynamics of migration in particular as an interesting context. It explores how mass-education leads to educated unemployment, withdrawal of educated workforce from traditional jobs in primary sector, concentration of educated work-force in service sector jobs, and changes the dynamics of employment and migration in the state. While doing this it highlights its impact on the dynamics of migration in terms of emigration of workers out of Kerala and in-migration into Kerala. In the post-disaster context, loss of livelihoods and assets pushes many families into distress where the limited options of livelihoods and employment growth in the local economy remain as a challenge. Given the experience with Gulf-migration in improving the social and economic mobility of migrants and local development for several years, disaster is likely to start new waves of distress-driven emigration from Kerala. In the case of in-migration too, disaster seems to set some challenges in reviving the local*

*economy and domestic job market for the domestic migrant labours. Considering the importance of emigration, remittances, support of global Malayalee diasporas and service of DMLs in the development and rebuilding process, the state government can use this context to revisit the policies effectively in mobilising the resources and expertise required for rebuilding the post-disaster state in a sustainable manner.*

## 1. Introduction

The state of Kerala is known for its unique development experiences; the existing socio-political context and State's role in prioritising the social sector created a strong human capital base in the state. This enabled its educated workforce in exploring the new options of livelihoods which emerge outside the state and large-scale migration of workers. Kerala has long history of labour migration; its experience during the last four decades is particularly known for its dynamic nature and impact on the social, political and economic lives in the region. While considering the differential impact, Gulf-migration found to be more effective in addressing the vulnerabilities and in improving the social and economic mobility among the lower and middle level social and economic groups. Migration affects almost all aspects of Malayalee lives; it has helped the Kerala society in addressing several issues while it brought some fresh ones in. Advance in communication technologies enables the global Malayalee diasporas in following the every-day lives in Kerala so closely; their participation and contribution remain as the key source of support in almost all collective efforts made in Kerala. Their support in terms of cash and kind has been very critical in managing the recent disaster especially in the relief and rehabilitation process in different parts of the state. Among others, the support offered by the rulers, officers and the larger public in Gulf-countries were remarkable and the

same can be seen as a gesture of strong relationship with those countries and recognising the contribution of Malayalee workers in developing these countries. The state recognises these factors and makes all effort in its appeal to the global Malayalee diasporas for supporting its efforts in building New Kerala in a sustainable manner.

The paper makes an attempt to look in to the nature of recent disaster and its implications on issues related to labour migration and livelihood in the post-disaster context in the state. While doing this, it also tries to reflect on some key aspects of employment and larger process of development in the state. Given the nature of information available on key indicators, the paper uses the available base-line data sets on nature of employment, labour migration and explores the available information on how the disaster affected these patterns.

## 2. The Nature of Disaster

Between June 1 and August 18, 2018, Kerala experienced the worst ever floods in its history since 1924. The estimates indicate that Kerala received an excess rainfall of 96 percent during August (1-30 August 2018), and 33% during the entire monsoon period till the end of August (Government of Kerala, 2018). The heavy rainfall received during June-August months triggered several landslides and flood in different parts of the state. Though the existing mechanisms and institutional arrangements were not fully prepared to manage the situation in the early phase, state managed to mobilise all its resources and organised the support from all possible corners in managing the crisis at a critical stage and controlled the casualty to the minimum. Even with all these efforts, estimates highlight the loss of lives and properties in different parts of the state. According to latest reports by the Government of Kerala, 1259 out of 1664 villages spread across its 14 districts were affected.[1] Some districts like Alappuzha, Ernakulam, Idukki, Kottayam, Pathanamthitta, Thrissur and Wayanad were severely affected. It affected 5.4 million people, displaced 1.4 million people, and took 483 lives (from

May 22 to August 29). The post-disaster need assessment (PDNA) estimates total damage around Rs. 10,561 crore and losses around Rs. 16159 crore i.e. a total disaster effects of around Rs.26718 crore without including the damage estimates from the Joint Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (JRDNA) conducted by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. When the JRDNA estimates are included, the total recovery needs can be estimated around Rs. 31000 crore (PDNA, 2018). Many have to live in the temporary shelters and relief camps for a longer duration. The disaster caused severe damage to houses, infrastructure especially electricity, roads and public institutions that provides basis services and washed away crops and livestock. Its impact on Kerala society and economy particularly on state finance and productive sectors will be very crucial. This will have direct impact on the lives and livelihoods of people in the affected areas and the same need not be limited to the existing estimates.

## 3. Impact of Mass-Education on Occupational Patterns

Kerala's development experience can be seen as a good example to show how the state's strategy of prioritising the social sector to strengthen the process of human development and the same helping the state in generating economic growth in the state. One can identify the 'Kerala model' and 'virtuous' growth as two distinct but related growth phases; the high growth phase experienced in the late 1980s can be identified as a result of specific strategy followed in the earlier period. It helped the state in strengthening the mass-education process and enabled its educated workforce in seeking opportunities outside the state. Later, migration and inflow of remittances fueled the domestic economy and affected the process of development in the state (Kannan, 2005 & 2007; Jafar, 2018; Zachariah, Mathew, & Rajan, *2003;* Zachariah, & Rajan, 2012 & 2013). The larger trend in employment in Kerala indicates a low rate of labour force participation (includes employed and unemployed persons as a share of total population) for many years

(40%, 57.5% and 24.0% respectively for total, men and women in 2012). The workforce participation rate (employed as a share of total population) indicates that there has been some improvement in recent years while the improvement was minimal among the women. Within the state, districts like Palakkad, Malappuram, and Kasaragod etc. experienced marginal decline in women's work participation rate (Census of India, 2011). The relatively lower participation in labour market particularly among the women can be linked to the progress in education and emigration of workers (mainly men) from Kerala.

**Table: 1**

**Distribution of Main Workers in Kerala 1991-2011** *(Share %)*

| Occupational Category | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cultivators | 12.2 | 7.1 | 5.8 |
| Agricultural Labourers | 25.5 | 12.4 | 9.9 |
| Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, plantation, Mining and Quarrying etc | 10.2 | 13.8 | 10.8 |
| Household Industry | 2.6 | 3.3 | 2.1 |
| Other than Household Industry* | 11.6 | 12.2 | 12.4 |
| Construction | 4 | 9.3 | 14.3 |
| Trade and Commerce** | 12.6 | 14.9 | 14.2 |
| Transport, Storage and Communication | 6 | 9.2 | 9.0 |
| Other Services*** | 15.2 | 17.2 | 21.6 |

*Note: *includes Electricity, gas, and water supply; ** includes wholesale and retail trade, hotels & restaurants;*

*\*\*\* include includes financial intermediaries, real estate activities and categories from 'L' to 'Q' according to National Industrial Categories 2001 (include HHI from other service sectors)*

*Source:  Census of India*

The dynamics of education and migration affected the larger pattern of transition; it has led to emergence of 'non-agrarian' villages

in the state (Pani, & Jafar, 2010). It seems to have played a key role in changing the occupational pattern of workers in the state. We notice steady decline in share of main workers engaged in traditional jobs in primary sectors while this has been followed with gradual increase in the share of workers engaged in jobs available in the service sector. The share of main workers engaged as cultivators declined from 12.2 per cent of 1991 to 7.1 per cent in 2001 and further declined to 5.8 per cent in 2011, the share of agricultural labourers declined from 25.5 per cent to 12.4 per cent and 9.9 per cent during the same periods. On the other hand, share of construction workers gradually increased from 4 per cent to 9.3 per cent and then increased to 14.3 per cent. Compared to this, the increase in share of main workers engaged in other service sector jobs (include includes financial intermediaries, real estate activities and categories from other service sectors) has been sharper (increased from 15.2% to 17.2% and then to 21.6%) during the same period (Table: 1).

The educational status of the main workers and the distribution across different sectors indicate that workers with low educational status remain in some traditional jobs in primary sector while workers with higher educational qualification tend to concentrate in various jobs available in the service sector. Thus, majority of the illiterate workers are engaged in agriculture and allied jobs (nearly 58%), construction (11.8%) and manufacturing (10.5%) sectors. Compared to this, workers with educational status up to matriculation or secondary level have more presence in other sectors. It is interesting to note that only few workers with higher educational status engage in traditional agriculture allied sectors while their presence in various jobs available in service sector remain very high (Table: 2).

**Table: 2**

**Main Workers and Level of Education in Kerala - 2011** *(Share %)*

| Sectors | Total | Illiterate | Up to matric | Matric & above |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry & Fishing | 25.82 | 57.88 | 27.60 | 14.73 |
| Mining and Quarrying | 0.67 | 1.09 | 0.75 | 0.37 |
| Manufacturing & Repairing | 13.60 | 10.46 | 13.88 | 13.38 |
| Electricity, Gas and Water Supply | 0.59 | 0.40 | 0.51 | 0.87 |
| Construction | 14.28 | 11.77 | 15.54 | 11.20 |
| Wholesale & Retail | 11.85 | 5.69 | 11.62 | 13.75 |
| Transport & Storage | 8.95 | 2.52 | 9.40 | 8.91 |
| Accommodation and food service activities | 2.37 | 1.74 | 2.61 | 1.83 |
| Information & Communication | 1.42 | 0.12 | 1.10 | 2.60 |
| Finance, Insurance; Real Estate; Professional, Scientific & Technical activities | 3.27 | 0.32 | 2.58 | 5.81 |
| Public Administration, Defense, Compulsory Social Security, Support Services etc. | 4.58 | 0.90 | 3.65 | 7.97 |
| Education, Human Health and Social Work activities | 7.60 | 1.09 | 5.92 | 13.68 |
| Other services (R-U)* | 4.98 | 6.01 | 4.85 | 4.90 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

*Arts, Entertainment and recreation; Other Service Activities; Activities of Households as Employers: Undifferentiated Goods and Services; Activities of Extra-Territorial*

*Source:  Census of India*

Within the service sector, electricity, gas and water supply; financial intermediation, real estate and business activities; and public administration, defence, etc. attract workers with higher educational status while other sectors like construction, retail and wholesale trade, hotels and restaurants, and transport, storage and communication etc may continue absorbing workers with basic levels of education. At the same time, this has led to situation where the educated youth refused to accept employment that they consider below their educational status or sought options outside the state. With preference for 'white-collar'

jobs, especially in the organised sector, the educated work-force was not willing to engage in traditional farm jobs, despite being unemployed and the same led to shortage of workers in many areas (Mathew, 1999; Nair 1999). The nature of the state economy in terms of its dependency on service sector and stagnant commodity producing sectors, sustainability of employment growth is very limited.

## 4. Dynamics of Migration

Kerala experiences high rate of unemployment; limited growth in productive sectors, nature of growth, preferences of educated work-force, segmentation of workers and informalisation etc. contribute towards high incidence of unemployment, especially among the educated youth. When the strategy of prioritising social sector and progress of mass-education was not complemented by growth, the productive sectors could not absorb the educated workforce. At the same time, the success in mass-education enabled Malayalee workers in seeking new options outside the state.

### 4.1. Emigration of Malayalee workers

The contemporary Indian migration has a 175-year old history. By and large, the West remains as the favourite destination for skilled migrants from India while the unskilled migrants from India are concentrated in West-Asia (Khadria, 2009 & 2011). Until 1947 Kerala had a negative net migration, the state attracted more migrants than those who left the state. Since independence, there are two[2] kinds of international migration; migration of workers with skills and professional expertise, mainly to the USA, Canada, UK and Australia as permanent migrants (since early 1950s) and migration of unskilled and semi-skilled workers to the oil-exporting countries of West Asia on temporary work contracts, following the oil price increase of 1973-74 and 1979 (Rajan & Kumar, 2010). In the decade between 1981 and 1991, 555,000 persons migrated from Kerala to places outside India in addition to 189,000 who migrated to other states within the country (Zachariah, Mathew & Rajan, 2002). The period between 1980 and 1983 represent the peak phase of

labour migration from India (a total of 976.7 thousand workers) where more than 50 per cent of them were Keralites (Prakash, 1999:137-139). The steady increase in emigration and inflow of remittances helped Kerala in entering a high growth phase ('virtuous growth') by late 1980s and emerged as the driving force behind the state economy.

**Table: 3**

**Educational Qualification of the Emigrants- 2018** *(Share in %)*

| Education Level | Male | Female | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Less than primary | 2.8 | 8.8 | 3.7 |
| Primary to Secondary | 13.6 | 10.7 | 13.1 |
| Secondary to Higher Secondary | 42.8 | 11.2 | 37.8 |
| Degree and above | 24.6 | 53.1 | 29.1 |
| Others | 14.4 | 7.1 | 13.2 |
| Illiterate | 0.2 | 0.85 | 0.32 |
| Haven't Started Schooling | 1.8 | 7.82 | 2.73 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |

*Source: Kerala Migration Surveys*

Scholars have shared concerns around the dependency of economy on foreign remittances, its sustainability and leakages in utilisation of remittances, rehabilitation of returned emigrants, changing policy regime in the destination countries, and other policy issues. The fact that Kerala managed to continue the large-scale emigration for many decades indicates that the state can continue this model as long as it manages to explore new opportunities and prepare its workforce to make use of them. Analysis of international migration trends in India is inhibited by the limited official data available. The available information on workers migrating legally with Emigration Check Required (ECR)[3] from tops sending state in India suggests that states like UP and Bihar experience steady growth while Kerala experienced marginal decline in recent years (International Labour Organisation, 2018). The fact that nearly 30 per cent of the total migrants have educational qualification of degree and

above indicate the higher Educational status of Malayalee migrants and potentials in this direction indicates that compared to earlier estimates, only a small share of the migrants is illiterate and with primary level educational status (Table: 3).

**Table: 4**

**Destination of Emigrants - 2018** *(Share in %)*

| Destination | Male | Female | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gulf | 92 | 74.2 | 89.2 |
| Australia | 0.6 | 2.5 | 0.9 |
| Canada | 0.6 | 1.4 | 0.7 |
| Singapore | 0.5 | 1.2 | 0.6 |
| United Kingdom | 1.2 | 5.1 | 1.8 |
| America | 1.5 | 5.6 | 2.2 |
| Others | 3.5 | 10 | 4.6 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |

*Source: Kerala Migration Surveys*

While comparing the earlier generation of Malayalee migrants, the present generation of migrants have higher educational qualification and the same will enable occupational mobility and explore the opportunities in new areas. Thus, many of the Malayalee migrants are able to explore the opportunities in countries other than Gulf-countries (Table: 4).

The recent trend of emigration indicates some shift in its nature and dynamics. The recent round of Kerala Migration Survey (KMS) 2018 indicates a negative growth in emigration, especially towards Gulf countries. Compared to the constant increase in emigration during 1998-2013 period (34.9%), 2018 round of KMS reports a negative growth (11.6%) with a reduction of 3 lakh emigrants during 2013-18 (one-tenth of 2013 emigrants). Though Kerala experienced steady growth in emigration, this shift (even a marginal fall) indicates the possible limits

of Gulf-migration from Kerala. At the same time, growth in the inflow of remittances continues (Table: 5).

**Table: 5**

**Trend in Emigration and Inflow of Household Remittances in Kerala (1998-2018)**

| Year | Emigrants | Remittances (Rs. Crores) |
|------|-----------|--------------------------|
| 1998 | 1361919 | 3530 |
| 2003 | 1838478 | 7965 |
| 2008 | 2193412 | 12511 |
| 2011 | 2280543 | 15129 |
| 2013 | 2400375 | 24374 |
| 2018 | 2121888 | 30717 |

*Source: Kerala Migration Surveys*

Along with the declining trend in emigration, Kerala experiences a steady growth in the number of returned migrants (1.29 returned migrants in 2018-nearly 60% of emigrants). The fall in emigration can be linked to multiple factors or cumulative effects of demographic advances; low/constant wage in Gulf-countries and low savings; increase in the wages in domestic economy; decline in price of oil since 2010; nationalisation policies; options available outside, and other reasons (Rajan & Zachariah, 2018). The fact that the recent decline in emigration did not reduce the growth of remittances can be linked to improvement in quality of human capital, greater occupational mobility, occupational status, remitting capacity, weakening value of rupee and other factors.

## 4.2. Labour Migration into Kerala: Domestic Migrant Labour

At macro level, the evidence suggests that there has been a steady increase in the share of migrants. For instance, 33 million migrants stated economic reasons for migration in 2001 while it has increased to 51

million in 2011 census respectively (Government of India, 2017: 266). In the case of Kerala, the emigration of workers out of the state and unwillingness of educated work-force to work in traditional sectors resulted in shortage of workers in many traditional sectors and wage works in Kerala. There are many push and pull factors like growing unemployment and lack of livelihood opportunities in home state; rural indebtedness in home state; high wage rate in Kerala; preference of employers in Kerala for migrant labourers; positive role of social network of migrants; pressure of large size of the family; poor income from agriculture; recruitment agents as catalyst triggering the migration of workers into Kerala (John, 2015). These factors seem to make Kerala as one of the favourite destinations for Domestic Migrant Labour (DML) in the country or DML emerges as the key source of wage workers in the state.

The long-term trend in inflow of DML into Kerala indicates steady growth in recent years. In 2013, one of the estimates suggests that Kerala has a stock of 25 lakh DML (equivalent to around 20% of Kerala's workforce). Compared to the earlier generation of DMLs who came from the neighbouring states like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka (many of them came along with families), the current generation are mainly from northern and north-eastern states (99% men and 91% within age group of 18-35 years). Earlier, their presence was limited to specific sectors where there was shortage of manual labour but gradually expanded to other sectors (Narayana, Venkiteswaran & Joseph, 2013). Now, they have presence in almost all sectors while construction sector (nearly 60%), absorb the major share. The district-wise distribution of inter-state migrant workers varies across the districts in Kerala; Ernakulam has the highest share followed by Wayanad and Kannur (respectively 17%, 13% and 11%) districts (Figure: 1).

**Figure: 1**

**Distribution of Inter-State Migrants in Kerala (Share in %)**
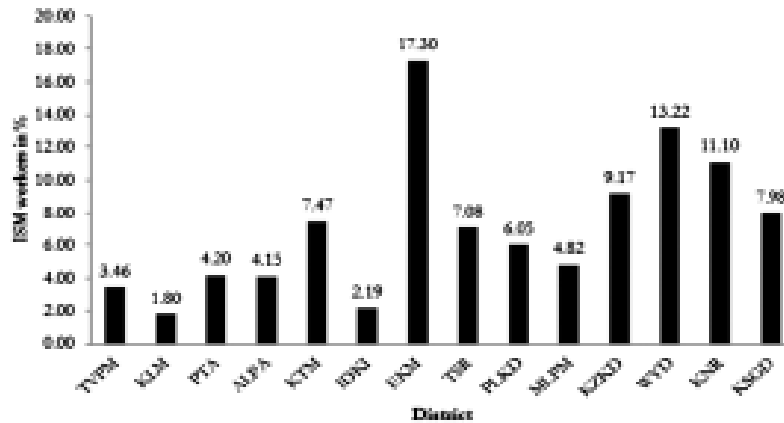
Kerala has attracted migrant workers from different states; the current composition suggests that majority of them are from West Bengal, Odisha, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and other North-Eastern states. The details suggest that, it is possible to identify specific pockets and regions within these state where the majority of the workers belong to and the way the inter-state migration corridors across the country. Agents, contractors, relatives, friends, and other formal and informal ties strengthen these corridors and social network among the DMLs. Though Kerala state has initiated some specific policies including the introduction of live registry, social security measures and targeted service provisions, these workers continue to face challenges in conditions of work and living in different contexts (Government of Kerala, 2017; John, 2015; Narayana, Venkiteswaran & Joseph, 2013; Peter, & Narendran, 2017).

**5. Employment and Migration in the Post-Disaster Context**

Various agencies have tried to estimate the impact of disaster

on Kerala and its society in terms of loss and damage. Given the nature of employment in the state, the available information is not adequate to provide any finite estimate on the loss of employment in different sectors of the state economy. The available figures show that disaster was found to have adversely affected both organised and un-organised sectors in the state. As a reflection of the differences in the distribution of these establishments and nature of disaster experienced across the districts, the loss of man-days and wage loss also vary across the districts (Table: 6). For instance, districts like Alappuzha and Ernakulam have large number of establishments and workers in both sectors and are severely affected by the disaster and hence the loss became high.

**Table: 6**

**Man-Days Lost in Various Establishments Due to Flood - 2018**

| District | No. of Establishment in organised sector | No.of Establishment in unorganised sector | No. of workers | Man-days Lost |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Thiruvananthapuram | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Kollam | 13 | 21 | 270 | 15930 |
| Pathanamthitta | 393 | 6095 | 11371 | 125081 |
| Alappuzha | 19804 | 11683 | 69311 | 1043802 |
| Kottayam | 28 | 14689 | 17719 | 70876 |
| Idukki | 61 | 9786 | 57678 | 183223 |
| Ernakulam | 729 | 8439 | 112746 | 1195560 |
| Thrissur | 7 | 5645 | 19247 | 173396 |
| Palakkad | 27 | 947 | 12340 | 81141 |
| Malappuram | 2610 | 20290 | 47900 | 335300 |
| Kozhikode | 10 | 1744 | 21900 | 145674 |
| Wayanad | 4 | 394 | 1414 | 9798 |
| Kannur | 13 | 51 | 163 | 418 |
| Kasaragod | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Kerala | 23699 | 79784 | 372059 | 3380199 |

*Source: Labour Commissioner, Kerala*

Similarly, the available information on person-days lost for workers registered under different welfare fund boards, fisheries and plantation sectors also indicate huge loss. In many cases, the damage to factories, industrial units, factories, working tools, raw materials, storage facilities and offices worsen the intensity and duration of disturbance and loss of livelihoods. In the case of fisheries and plantation sectors, the vulnerability caused by severe monsoon events disturbed their livelihood for several days. The incidence of major land slides in the hilly districts like Idukki, Wayanad, and Palakkad where the plantation activities are concentrated, thousands of plantation workers lost their jobs for many months. As per the records available with the Department of Labour, 35107 with the plantation workers (out of the 50882 workers in Kerala) were directly affected by the disaster. While considering the nature and duration of distress in the plantation sector, the government has introduced some special provisions for the affected workers.

The PDNA estimates the total damage and loss in the area of employment and livelihoods at Rs. 10,358 crore. The total damage (around Rs. 881 crore) covers tourism (Rs. 509 crore), MSME (Rs. 359 crore), and Kudumbashree and coir (Rs. 13 crore). The total loss was estimated around Rs. 9477 crore covering wage loss (Rs 7301 crore) and inventory loss (around Rs. 2176 crore). Along with this, total person days of employment lost (works out to 1097 lakh) and wage loss to the workers (estimated at around Rs. 7301 crore) also need to be considered (PDNA, 2018). Though different assessments followed different approaches and vary in the estimated cost of recovery, they emphasize the importance of restoring the employment and livelihoods as the primary step in the process of re-building Kerala.

Overall, the disaster weakened the productive sectors and economy which adversely affect the employment and livelihood options available. At the same time, the recovery strategies should consider the specific requirement and address the differential impact (if any) on different

sectors and regions. For instance, addressing the vulnerability in unorganised sectors, traditional industries, plantation, and workers representing marginalised groups etc. may be prioritised in the recovery process. Similarly, modification of flagship programmes like Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Scheme and other livelihood programmes like Ambedkar Employment Guarantee Scheme could be revived and modified in effective manner. In the process of employment generation, measures should be taken to ensure its nature being sustainable and echo-friendly.

In the case of emigration, the evidence confirm the nature of Kerala's dependency on emigration and remittances. The KMS 2018 estimates show 2.1 million emigrants from Kerala across the world in 2018; and total household remittances at Rs. 85092 crore (Rajan, Zachariah, 2018). The fact that 40 per cent of the remittances received during the last 20 years in the state are used for housing and construction purpose. The nature of disaster and the damage it caused on land, housing and other valuables has pushed many people into distress and the same may trigger new wave of migration from the state. Along with the long history of successful emigration from the state, the nature of reconstruction, delay in process of restoring the pre-disaster livelihood options and limited growth of job in the domestic economy etc. may attract fresh emigration or emigration of returned migrants, at least in the short-run. Given the unfavourable demographic dividend, Kerala may not be able to sustain its dominance in the Gulf-region anymore. Its dependency on emigration and remittances will be compromised unless the state manages to improve emigration among the skilled workers and tap the opportunities that emerge in the developed world and promote utilisation of remittances into productive sectors in the state economy (Rajan, Zachariah, 2018). While recognising the critical role of the Malayalee diasporas in mobilising resources and support in addressing the rescue, relief and rehabilitation process in the state, state

can use this context to devise strategic policy in enabling smooth and successful emigration from the state.

Considering the stock of 25 inter-state migrants in 2013 (with 6.8% annual net flow of migrant labour), Kerala is likely to have around 35 lakh such workers in 2018. The estimates indicate that two-thirds of the migrant workers lost their workdays during the floods (affecting around 22.7 lakh and results in wage loss of Rs. 2,033 crore). If the wage loss to migrant workers (taking a loss of 13 work days between 16 August and 30 August 2018), the total wage loss can be estimated around Rs. 2032.72 crore while the person days lost works out to 296.01 lakh (PDNA, 2018).

During the disaster, most of them had to leave their living place and shift to safer places; some of them returned to their homes. The state government also made efforts to help many of them to go back to their homelands by requesting special trains scheduled towards states sending large number of migrants to Kerala. There are many popular pockets where migrant workers live in large numbers in some of the districts, but very few accounts on the way they managed to survive the disaster. In some places, the local people arranged exclusive and special relief camps for the migrant labourers and extended all kinds of supports. Given the social stigma and divide that exist between local and migrant population, the volunteerism emerged between them was very impressive. Though many of them who went back to their home-states started returning to Kerala, the stagnant nature of the domestic economy and lack of jobs in certain sectors especially in the construction field pushed many of them to seek other options.

Kerala offers the highest wage rate in the unorganised sectors and the same has been the most attractive force behind this trend; but the current disaster and stagnant nature of local economy may not be able to sustain this high wage rate or it may bring some of the local workers back to the manual jobs which migrant labourers engage. These

factors may reduce the inflow of migrant workers into Kerala or their gradual replacement. The discussion with the labour commission office suggested that there is hardly any official estimate on the number of DMLs returned from Kerala or remained after the disaster (even among those who have formally registered as DML in Kerala). Given the nature of state's dependency on the supply of inter-state migrants, state needs to address the issues they face in the post-disaster context and ensure their contribution in the development in Kerala.

**Concluding Remarks**

Kerala's experience can be used as an example to understand how mass-education affects the process of development in a regional context. The development experience of the state during the last few decades highlights the role of labour migration and inflow of household remittances in shaping the nature and pattern of development in Kerala. The evidence and discussion indicate that mass-education has its effect on the high rate of educated unemployment in the state, concentration of educated work-force in service sector jobs and withdrawal of educated workforce from traditional jobs in primary sector. The paper particularly discusses its impact on the dynamics of migration in terms of emigration of workers out of Kerala and in-migration into Kerala (Domestic Migrant Labour) to meet the shortage of manual workers. At one level, Kerala experiences high rate of unemployment and send nearly 22 lakh workers as emigrants. On the other hand, Kerala's labour market accommodates nearly 35 lakh migrant workforce from other states.

By looking into the available information, the paper makes an attempt to explore the implications of the recent disaster on employment situation and the dynamics of migration in Kerala. The loss of livelihood in traditional agriculture, plantation, fisheries and some of the traditional/ small-scale/cottage industries etc pushed many families into the vulnerability. Many lost their livelihoods and tools of work. Policy intervention is necessary to restore their lively hoods. The stagnation

and delay in recovering from disturbances caused by the disaster may limit the options available to the migrant workers. With the support of the Malayalee diasporas across the globe and the larger public, the state government can use this context to revisit the policies effectively in mobilising the resources and expertise required for rebuilding the post-disaster state in a sustainable manner.

**References**

1.  *Census of India*, (2001 & 2011): Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Government of India

2.  Government of India, (2017): *'Economic Survey 2016-17'.* Published by Department of Economic Affairs Economic Division, Ministry of Finance, New Delhi

3.  Government of Kerala, (2017): *'Economic review 2017'.* Published by the State Planning Board, Thiruvananthapuram

4.  Government of Kerala, (2018): Additional Memorandum: Kerala Floods - 2018 (1st August to 30th August 2018). Submitted by State Relief Commissioner, Disaster Management (Additional Chief Secretary)

5.  International Labour Organization, (2018): India Labour Migration Update 2018 https://www.google.co.in/search?q=ILO+India+Labour + Migration+Update+2018&rlz=1C1CHBFenIN822IN822&oq=ILO+ India+Labour+Migration+Update+2018&aqs=chrome..69i57.2046j0j7 &sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8# (Last accessed on 15th October, 2018)

6.  Jafar, K. (2018): *Education, Migration and Human Development: Kerala Experience',* Rawat Publications, Jaipur.

7.  John, J. (2015): "Interregional migration from Eastern States to Kerala: A Socio Economic Analysis:, *Kerala Development Society (KDS Delhi) Working Paper No: 4,* August

8.  Kannan, K.P. (2005): Kerala's turnaround in growth: Role of social development, remittances and reform. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40 (6): 548–554

9.  Kannan, K.P. (2007): "From human development to economic growth: Kerala's turn around in growth powered by human development, remittances, and reform". In A. Vaidyanathan and K.L. Krishna (Eds.), *Institutions and Markets in India's Development:* Essays for K.N. Raj (pp. 319-44). Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

10. Khadria, B., (2009): "India-Migration report 2009: Past, present, and the future outlook. International Migration and Diaspora Studies project", *School of Social Sciences at Jawaharlal Nehru University*. Cambridge University Press India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.

11. Khadria, B., (2011): "Bridging the binaries of skilled and unskilled migration from India". In, S.I. Rajan, and M. Percot, (Eds.), *Dynamics of Indian Migration: Historical and Current Perspectives* (pp. 251–285). Routledge, New Delhi.

12. Mathew, E.T., (1999): Educated unemployment in Kerala: incidence, causes and policy implications, In B.A. Prakash (Ed). *Kerala's Economic Development: Issues and Problems* (pp. 94-115). Sage Publications, New Delhi.

13. Nair, M.K.S., (1999): Labour shortage in a labour surplus economy? A study of the rural labour market in Kerala. In M.A. Oommen (Ed.), *Rethinking Development: Kerala's Development Experience* (pp 247–268). Volume 2, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company

14. Narayana, D., Venkiteswaran C.S. & Joseph, M. P. (2013): "Domestic Migrant Labour in Kerala". *Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation*, report submitted to Labour and Rehabilitation Department, Government of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram

**Vol.10   No.4   October - December 2018**
               **&**              **Social Science in Perspective**
**Vol. 11  No.1   January - March 2019**

15. Pani, N., & Jafar, K., (2010): Mass education-led growth and non-agrarian villages: Long-term results of the Kerala model, *Oxford Development Studies*, 38 (1): 25–42

16. PDNA, (2018): "Kerala-Post Disaster Needs Assessment: Floods and Landslides - August 2018, Joint report prepared by the United Nations, European Union and Government of Kerala

17. Peter, B. & Narendran, V. (2017): 'God's Own Workforce: Unravelling Labour Migration to Kerala', *Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development,* Perumbavoor- Kerala

18. Prakash, B.A., (1999): "The economic impact of migration to the Gulf. In, B.A. Prakash. (Ed.), *Kerala's Economic Development: Issues and Problems* (pp. 134–149). Sage Publications, New Delhi.

19. Rajan S.I., & Kumar, P., (2010): "Historical overview of international migration", In S.I. Rajan (Ed.), *India Migration Report 2010: Governance and Labour Migration* (pp. 1-29). Routledge, New Delhi.

20. Rajan, S.I. & Zachariah, K.C. (2018): *Kerala Migration Survey 2018*. Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram.

21. Usha, L.R., (2009): "Migration from Kerala to the Gulf countries: Pattern, problems and policies". In B.N. Ghosh and P.D. Namboodiri (Eds.), *The Economy of Kerala: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (pp. 243-258). Serials Publications, New Delhi.

22. Zachariah, K.C., Mathew, E.T., & Rajan, S.I., (2003): *Dynamics of migration in Kerala: Dimensions, differentials and consequences.* Orient Longman, New Delhi.

23. Zachariah, K.C., Mathew, E.T., & Rajan, S.I., (2002): "Migration patterns and their socio-economics", In K.C. Zachariah, K.P. Kannan and S.I Rajan (Eds.), *Kerala's Gulf Connection: CDS Studies on International Labour Migration from Kerala State in India* (pp.13-45). Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram

24. Zachariah, K.C., & Rajan, S.I., (2012): *Kerala's Gulf Connection, 1998-2011: Economic and social impact of migration*. Orient BlackSwan, New Delhi

25. Zachariah, K.C., & Rajan, S.I., (2013): *Diasporas in Kerala's Development*. Daanish Publishers, New Delhi.

**Footnotes**

1. Government order No. (P)No.05/2018/DMD dated Thiruvanan-thapuram, 29.09.2018

2. Some studies identified the third phase of migration (from mid-1990s) which is again led by professionals mainly software engineers and managers to the developed countries like United States and United Kingdom (Usha, 2009).

3. The limited coverage of this information (mostly for workers who have to register for emigration clearance) may be noted. It covers only who have not passed Class 10 at least, are leaving via employment visas into specific sectors or are workers emigrating for the first time to the GCC region, Malaysia and a few other countries.

# Recovery and Reconstruction after the Flood: Challenges from the Health Sector

**V. Ramankutty**

*Kerala has been known for its impressive achievements in the health sector; therefore any set back in this sector is of special concern to the state. The natural calamity affects health at several levels, and therefore the rebuilding of the sector also has to be planned along those lines. Perhaps the greatest challenge to the state is mobilising the resources needed. The state government needs to divert funds for this reconstruction in the health sector. The policy makers in charge should think of imaginative plans to raise resources and not the kind of effort that has the potential of putting off sections of the people. The resource generation should also be a transparent and accountable process, and not one where unscrupulous elements have the opportunity to amass wealth, a phenomenon that is all too familiar to the people in the state.*

## Introduction

The floods that hit Kerala in August 2018, estimated to be among the most damaging in almost a century, have resulted in major loss of life and economic assets in the state. The government and the people have geared up for a long process of recovery and reconstruction ahead. All sectors have been affected, and health has been no exception.

Consequences in the health sector belong to broadly three categories: immediate loss of life due to the floods, infections and results of displacement in the post-catastrophe period, and long term damage including destruction of health facilities which will affect the health of the population.

Kerala has been known for its impressive achievements in the health sector; therefore any set back in this sector is of special concern to the state. The natural calamity affects health at several levels, and therefore the rebuilding of the sector also has to be planned along those lines.

**The Extent and Nature of the Damage**

Officially, loss of life due to the floods has been pegged at less than 500, which in itself is not a huge number in a state of around thirty three million people. However, many studies in other parts of the world have pointed out that to understand the true extent of loss of life due to a catastrophe, we need to estimate the excess deaths after the event. Recently the Trump administration in the US claimed that loss of life was minimal after the 2017 weather catastrophe that affected Puerto Rico, which in a US territory. However, scientists have challenged this claim in various fora, and pointed out that many lives lost due to inadequate health care, loss of access to drugs in time, and other such events would not have happened without the event. This is still being debated. People may die due to causes attributable directly to the floods, and we may not be aware of this. This includes the loss of life due to disruption of care in the case of people on long term support such as dialysis and ventilators, or people immobilised due to stroke. They may not get the continued care after the floods and their lives may be cut short because of this. Many people on long term drugs for ailments such as hypertension and diabetes may have difficulties with continued regular medication during and in the immediate post flood period. The loss of life due to these causes can only be estimated after the event by measuring the immediate post catastrophe mortality and comparing it with the expected rates, an exercise which can be undertaken only after at least one year of the flood. But this is something that must be done.

The actual loss of life attributed directly to the floods has been kept at a low level due to remarkable relief efforts, but many deaths in the immediate post flood periods could be traced to the effect of the flood. There have been reports of suicides and many of the heart attacks and strokes immediately after the floods could have been precipitated by the tragedy afflicted on families. The disruption of water supply and contamination of water sources, coupled with the total destruction of sanitary systems in many parts of the state, will add further to the burden of disease in the immediate post flood period in the form of diarrhoea, dysentery, leptospirosis, and other waterborne diseases. People at the extremes of age like childhood and old age, deprived of their homes and forced to live in overcrowded camps, will be further prone to other infections. But current reports indicate that these have also been contained to a large extent. This is certainly due to the timely and effective action of the health services department, and in spite of adverse propaganda from many quarters against some interventions.

The threat comes not only from infectious diseases, but the disruption of life and the break in regular medication and care that it brings in is sure to affect the course of non-communicable diseases also. It is well established that the major cause of death in Kerala is cardiovascular disease including diabetes and hypertension, accounting for about 40% of deaths. There are reports of disruption of services such as dialysis which cannot but result in adverse consequences. We should undertake an audit of the damage brought on by this disruption.

The floods have also damaged, sometimes beyond repair, many of the health facilities in the state such as sub-centres and primary health centres. While many have been rebuilt, repair and reconstruction drains scarce resources from the state's kitty, resources which could have been utilised for more constructive purposes. The state is in the process of launching a major initiative in primary health care, the 'Aardram' programme, which will strengthen many sub-centres and PHCs in the state. The extent of setback which the floods have brought in is not yet assessed.

## How to Address this Challenge?

Nevertheless, it has also been claimed that compared to such departments like revenue and transport, perhaps the health services department has responded in a very timely fashion to the sudden and unexpected catastrophe. This could be because they have a network of information systems, used to conveying information on outbreaks of epidemics immediately to the decision makers in the capital. It is true that this machinery swung into action and was in full flow within hours of the disaster setting in. It also incorporated many NGOs and voluntary groups focussing on various aspects, and even institutions like the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences Bengaluru, who had a field team ready to take care of the distressed people affected by the floods. Paradoxically, it has also been claimed that since the health department acted promptly and prevented early deaths, there is a false sense among the authorities especially at the Central level that the damage due to the floods has not been too heavy.

In addressing this multiple challenge, the state has some strengths which it should draw on. First is the strong public health system that the state has built up over the years. The information network that the health services have built, and its recent modernisation, is a very strong support tool for the recovery and rehabilitation efforts. The decentralisation of decision making in health which can be traced back to the initiatives at Panchayat level planning twenty years ago has given the local governments sufficient experience in initiating new programmes at the local level. This was evident in the way the local representatives took charge and worked day and night in the flood recovery efforts, along with voluntary people from the groups. The highly educated population which is sensitive to the media and willing to cooperate with civil society groups is another advantage that the state has. What the disaster brought out was that contrary to what many people believe, young people in the state responded to these distress calls by volunteering their labour and time, and their expertise in using the new media tools is very handy in such situations. In many situations, more than

the the official machinery, it is such groups that acted first. Moreover, it was evident that they were very much willing to work with the official teams. However, since the floods have receded, there is no longer a glue which keeps them together, and the team spirit seems to have been dissipated.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to the state is mobilising the resources needed; not much support is expected from the Central government in this regard. However the state is very much capable of generating the resources. The policy makers in charge should think of imaginative plans to raise resources and not the kind of effort that has the potential of putting off sections of the people. The resource generation should also be a transparent and accountable process, and not one where unscrupulous elements have the opportunity to amass wealth, a phenomenon that is all too familiar to the people in the state.

Local problems are best assessed by LSGs and they can formulate plans to tide over the crisis. The state government needs to divert funds for this reconstruction in the health sector. Local NGOs need to work with the LSGs in mobilising support and extending their reach to marginalised sectors such as tribals and coastal communities. Rebuilding health facilities which once offered services to the people is a huge financial challenge; but it is also an opportunity to get rid of unuseable buildings and equipment which is not working. This has been demonstrated by many health facilities which have been rebuilt in the short time since the floods.

**Conclusion**

All these advantages should be harnessed in addressing the challenges in the health sector. This is where the leadership plays a key role. They should be ready to engage with people's initiatives and not be confined to technical approaches. This setback has come at a time when the health services department was poised to make a major break through with its initiative to innovate the health services in the state. This should be taken as an opportunity to completely reorient the health system to one that is more sensitive to the people's needs and based on the principles of primary health care.

698

# Role of Animal Husbandry: Dairy and Poultry Sectors in Rebuilding of Kerala

**K. Anilkumar**

*Role of the animal husbandry, dairy and poultry sectors in rebuilding of Kerala are defined in six major areas. The sector can act as provider of livelihood security for the persons involved in it. These sectors are also providing supplementary income for agriculture based activities and stabilizing the agriculture based enterprises. Animal Husbandry and related activities are job oriented and creates job opportunities better than most other sectors in the state. For a state like Kerala with a sizeable population abroad, animal husbandry activities can attract investments. Most of the expatriates are living with nostalgic feeling of farming and many of them like to invest in the sector. As Kerala is declared as a state with organic farming as the mode of agriculture, any system of organic farming requires animal manure as the major source of fertilization. The closely knitted agriculture and animal husbandry sectors is a must for establishment of organic farming units of various agriculture crops. Moreover manure and urine of cows, goats and other species help to maintain soil fertility. One of the major challenges is absence of experts for preparation of workable project proposals and establishment of the projects. If this aspect is addressed it is possible to have quantum jump in related activities.*

The cattle population in the state had declined by a factor 38% from 2003 to 2012. But milk production increased from 24.20 Lakh Metric tons to 27.16 lakh metric tons. Though there is a reduction in milk production from 2013-14 to the level of 25.20 lakh metric tons in 2016-17, the productivity of dairy animals of the state is on the increase. The contribution of livestock in Gross State Value Added (GSVA) in agriculture sector is nearly 29% amounting to around ₹10000 crore.

The unprecedented monsoon showers and subsequent flood situation in Kerala has resulted in loss in the tune of ₹ 40000 crore to the state. The loss in Animal Husbandry sector is estimated at the death of 5163 cows, 541 buffaloes, 5166 calves, 1228 heifers, 6380 goats, 14 lakh poultry, 4.6 lakh ducks and 1053 pigs and 20000 quails. Complete destruction of around 4500 cattle sheds, 3000 hectars of fodder cultivation and losses of stored concentrate feeds and feed ingredients are also reported. The after effects of flood on health of animals due to diseases like pneumonia, mastitits, stress related incidences of hemoprotozoan, bacterial and viral diseases are also likely to cause loss to the farmers in coming days.

Role of the animal husbandry, dairy and poultry sectors in rebuilding of Kerala are defined in six major areas. The sector can act as provider of livelihood security for the persons involved in it. These sectors are also providing supplementary income for agriculture based activities and stabilizing the agriculture based enterprises. Animal Husbandry and related activities are job oriented and creates job opportunities better than most other sectors in the state. The job positions are the backbone of the rural economy and need be encouraged. Another role these sectors are capable of playing is as an activity of continuous income generation. The sale of milk and other output of the enterprise ensures more or less continuous income generation many a times even on daily basis. This is one of the factors that keep the farmers glued to the sector irrespective of its low profit

**Vol.10   No.4   October - December 2018**
                **&**                  **Social Science in Perspective**
**Vol. 11  No.1   January - March 2019**

or loss situation. This is also true to some extent for activities like poultry egg production, broiler production and goat rearing. For a state like Kerala with a sizeable population abroad, animal husbandry activities can attract investments. Most of the expatriates are living with nostalgic feeling of farming and many of them like to invest in the sector. As Kerala is declared as a state with organic farming as the mode of agriculture, any system of organic farming requires animal manure as the major source of fertilization. The closely knitted agriculture and animal husbandry sectors is a must for establishment of organic farming units of various agriculture crops. Moreover manure and urine of cows, goats and other species help to maintain soil fertility.

A fifteen point action plan is suggested for the future planning of role of animal husbandry, dairy and poultry sectors in the rebuilding of Kerala

1.  Crossbred cattle are the major milk producers of the state. There is vast damage to the sector in the flood. Many animals are lost and farmers are finding it difficult to sustain their livelihood. The alternative is to introduce cows of high genetic merit into the state. It is possible to get good germplasm of crossbred from the Military farms. The whole sector can be revamped with these introduced animals. The animals supplied should be bought under a central herd scheme. The performance needs to be monitored through out the year. The data recorded need be analysed for formulation of future strategies. All these animals should be insured and breeding need be done using superior semen. The major advantage through this programme is establishment of largest herd of crossbred cattle  monitored continuously. This in turn can become the  hub population for future genomic approaches in selection and improvement of the breed.

2.  The productivity of crossbred animals in the state is increasing

and the rate of increase need be accelerated. Application and popularization of new scientific methodologies like complete feeding, molecular technologies for disease screening, microchip based identification of animals and application of technology enabled reproduction are suggested.

3.  Genomic screening of the animals and application of molecular technologies in selection process to ensure precision selection methodology.

4.  There is a deficit of feed and fodder in Kerala and this situation can be addressed by use of locally available agriculture by products and feed ingredients. Feed mixing units need be established at milk cooperative society level for ensuring balanced ration and feeding for livestock.

5.  Another aspect to be emphasized is to ensure clean milk production. The pricing of milk needs also be based on milk quality.

6.  Conservation and multiplication of indigenous livestock and poultry recourses is another aspect to be stressed in the rebuilding of Kerala. Conservation units and periodic improvement of the indigenous stock is envisaged in future.

7.  Meat animal production is to be enhanced as the conditions are favorable for maintaining large animals, small ruminants and pigs as meat animals. Units like male buffalo calves, male crossbred calves, crossbred pigs and indigenous goats are to be promoted. The packages suggested by the experts need be fine tuned.

8.  These farming units need to ensure proper sanitization and environmental controls ensuring clean, green and ethical practices.

9.  Establishment of breeder stock and hatcheries for broiler poultry chicks and layer chicks. The cooperative sector of the state can play an important role in these activities.

10. Comprehensive animal health monitoring system at door step round the clock veterinary facilities need be established. The "night vet" facility need be extended to all the veterinary hospitals / dispensaries of the state.

11. Insurance coverage to all the animals of the state is another programme suggested .

One of the major challenges is absence of experts for preparation of workable  project proposals and establishment of the projects. If this aspect is addressed it is possible to have quantum jump in related activities.

# Rebuilding the Flood-hit Kerala Economy: Imperatives for the Sustainable Growth of Kerala's Tourism Sector

**P.K. Manoj**

*Kerala, the southernmost state in India is often referred to as 'God's own Country' because of its enviable natural beauty. Kerala has one of the best resources in the whole of India that are conducive for the growth of tourism. Its features like unique natural endowments, special geographical location, vast coastal areas and better physical infrastructure make it one of the topmost tourism destinations in India and also the whole world. However, Kerala was late in recognizing its huge tourism potential and hence it could not effectively utilize its vast resources for the development of tourism and hence the economy as a whole. The flood that occurred in Kerala in August 2018 has been one of the deadliest the state has witnessed ever since the one in 1924. The flood has adversely affected all facets of Kerala economy including the tourism sector which accounts for about 12 per cent of the state's GDP. In spite of the devastating impact of the flood, Kerala tourism has been fast picking up normalcy in a gradual and systematic way. In this context, this paper makes a closer look into the problems and prospects of*

*Kerala tourism, the impact of the flood havoc on tourism, its current status, and suggests strategies for the sustained growth of Kerala tourism considering the relevant national and international developments.*

## 1. Introduction

It is widely recognised in the literature that tourism offers excellent potential for employment generation and economic development and hence tourism is being promoted aggressively by nations, particularly the developing nations like India. It may be noted that at the global level tourism is ranked second highest in terms of income generation and is second only to the oil industry. Tourism has emerged as one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the whole world. The combined effect of enlarged leisure and better purchasing power makes tourism affordable to more people. Every country can play a decisive role in tourism and tourism industry is reckoned as very valuable, particularly for the development of global transportation and communication. Of late, this industry is receiving good attention as a foreign exchange earner and in most parts of the world it is aggressively promoted primarily for attracting more foreign exchange. The huge amounts spent by foreign tourists for accommodation, food, transport, recreation, etc. have got linkage effects resulting in overall economic development of the host countries.

In India, after the independence of the country in 1947, the focus of the Government was on the development of sectors like agriculture, industry, infrastructure etc. Tourism sector in India was never considered as a sector with high growth potential and it had been growing at slow pace during the early years of the country's independence. Hence, Indian tourism could not exploit the vast tourism potential of the country during those years. But, since the last two decades or more, there has been an organised effort to aggressively promote tourism by the Government of India. Quite similar to the poor tourism performance of Indian tourism

among comparable world nations, the relative performance of tourism sector of Kerala has been very poor vis-a-vis other states in the Indian union. In spite of the enviable tourism resources in Kerala the state is lagging far behind most of the other Indian states, notwithstanding the fact that those states have low tourism endowments.

India has been showing the best way to strategize sustainable tourism by way of encouraging the pursuit of tourism in a responsible manner. It is about sensitizing tourists on the need for conserving and maintaining the natural wealth and cultural heritage of a nation. In the above context, environment-friendly tourism models, particularly the Responsible tourism (RT) model, has assumed tremendous significance in states like Kerala in India. Of late, the Government of Kerala has been giving focused attention on RT, though allied models like ecotourism, rural tourism etc. are also being accorded high priority. RT seeks to measure the effects of tourism on the well being of the host community, their art and culture, by products, hereditary values and knowledge, as well as on local environment. RT tourism envisages minimum negative effect on the culture of the indigenous society, and on the environment. So, RT ensures environmental sustainability besides magnifying host culture. Though RT and its variants like ecotourism have immense growth potential in Kerala because of the huge demand from foreign tourists, these models are yet to pick up adequate growth momentum in the state.

The flood that has occurred in Kerala in August 2018 has adversely affected all industries in the state, particularly the tourism industry. So, the recent flood has given another dimension to the constraints and limitations of Kerala tourism. Suitable remedial measures need to be taken to bring the flood-hit tourism back to its normalcy.

## 2. Literature Review and Research Gap

The industry report by World Economic Forum (WEF) (2015) [29] 'The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report' has done a detailed study of the competitiveness of various countries of the world, in the travel

and tourism front. Competitiveness of nations at the regional and global levels based on a number of well-defined parameters is dealt in the WEF report. As per WEF report, the global competitiveness of Indian tourism is only 52 as against 17 in respect of China. This indicates a huge performance gap between the two comparable (and neighbouring) nations of the developing world. At the regional (Asia Pacific region) level too, there is a huge gap in the competitiveness, as India is in the 12th position whereas China is ranked in the 6th position. WTTC (2015) [32] in its latest report, 'Economic Impact of Travel & Tourism 2015 - Annual Update' has made an elaborate account of the relative performance of various countries of the world in the tourism front, including region-wise performance and future projections. WTTC has reported that South Asia, led by India and the Middle East, is globally the fastest growing region in terms of the total contribution of Travel and Tourism to GDP. Accordingly, India is one among the bigger, fast growth markets along with China, Indonesia, South Korea and Turkey. Besides, WTTC has reported that South Asia will be the fastest growing sub-region for total Travel & Tourism GDP long-run growth (7.0 percent) as India outpaces China. Empirical studies on ecotourism in the Indian context, particularly in the context of Kerala state in the Indian union are rather rare. Some relevant studies are briefly discussed here. Kumar, Yathish (2007) [12] has noted that the aim of tourism is to improve the quality of life of people, provide a good experience to the tourists, and maintain the environmental quality which is vital for both the tourists and the local populace. A macro level study done in the Kerala context by Manoj P K (2008) [16], 'Sustainable Tourism in India: A Study from a Global Perspective with Focus on Tourism Prospects of Kerala' points out the vast growth prospects of sustainable tourism in Kerala from a global perspective. The author has suggested some strategies for the faster growth of sustainable tourism with special reference to Kerala. In another Kerala-based study, Oommen M. A. (2008) [23] warned about the danger of overlooking the environmental sustainability in development activities in the state. While referring to the growing environmental issues in Kerala from

the perspective of the state's economic development model viz. 'Kerala model of development' the author has pointed out in detail the environmental and ecological issues that the state faces at present; the current scenario being critically referred to as one of 'Ecological Overkill' in his paper. The day by day worsening situation of the natural environment in Kerala and its adverse impact on the long-term sustainability of tourism has been noted by many researchers, pointing out the need for environment-friendly (nature-friendly) tourism models like ecotourism and its variants like rural tourism, responsible tourism etc. Notably, the macro level study by Manoj P K (2009) [17], 'Environment Friendly Tourism for Sustainable Economic Development in India', for instance, underscores the cardinal significance of tourism in India for its rapid economic development; and at the same time point out the need for promoting environment-friendly (and hence sustainable) tourism models. The author, thus, makes a few strategies for development of environment-friendly tourism in India. In his book on 'Ecotourism Development Management', Singh, Sarvjeet (2009) [25] has stated that ecotourism is entirely a new approach in tourism and it provides opportunities for visitors to experience powerful displays of nature and culture and to learn about the importance of biodiversity, conservation and local cultures. It focuses on volunteering, personal growth and finding innovative means to live on the earth. It involves travels towards locations wherein flora, fauna, cultural heritage etc. are the main attractions. It encourages the active participation by the local population in the conservation and education dimensions of tourism development process.

In a research article by Manoj P K (2010) [18], 'Tourism in Kerala: A Study of the Imperatives and Impediments with Focus on Ecotourism', the tourism sector in Kerala state in India is analysed in detail using the SWOT model. Accordingly, strategies are suggested for the faster and sustainable development of tourism in Kerala. Sudheer, B (2015) [26] in his research report submitted to University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi titled 'Economic and Cultural Impact of Responsible Tourism Initiative in Kerala - A Case Study of Kumarakom Panchayath'

has highlighted the need for alternative and innovative practices like Responsible Tourism (RT) to minimise the negative effects of tourism on environment and to make it sustainable in the long-term. With respect to RT at Kumarakom in Kerala, the positive effects like employment to the local people, empowerment of women through RT-related activities (like, providing vegetables, fish, meat etc. often procured locally), positive linkage effects on the locality (like, earnings arising from the purchases made by tourists) etc. have been pointed out.

Though there are many studies on tourism done in the Indian context, including a few studies in the Kerala context, empirical studies that focus on the impact of flood on Kerala tourism are virtually nil. So, this study seeks to bridge the above research gap.

## 3. Relevance and Significance

The concept of inclusive growth is of utmost significance in India, and in Kerala which has got huge tourism potential. Though tourism is being aggressively promoted by the Government of Kerala, particularly the Responsible Tourism (RT) model (including its variants like ecotourism, rural tourism etc.), tourism is yet to pick up growth momentum in the state. The flood havoc that took place in Kerala in August 2018 has adversely affected all industries, particularly the tourism sector. In the above context, it is relevant to make a focused study of the impact of flood on Kerala tourism with a view to suggest remedial measures, notwithstanding the fact that Kerala tourism is fast approaching normalcy after the flood havoc. So, this paper studies the impact of flood on Kerala tourism and accordingly suggests suitable remedial measures.

## 4. Objectives

(i)   To study the prospects and problems of Kerala tourism, in terms of foreign exchange earnings, foreign tourist arrivals etc., with a focus on responsible tourism (RT);

(ii)  To study the impact of flood havoc on Kerala tourism and its current status; and

     (iii)  To suggest strategies for the growth of Kerala tourism and hence the Kerala economy.

## 5. Methodology of the Study

This study is descriptive-analytical and exploratory in nature. Both primary and secondary data are used for this study. Primary data are collected by means of sample survey using an Interview Schedule. Secondary data are collected from the publications of United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC), Kerala State Planning Board, tourism statistics of the tourism departments of Governments of Kerala and India, reports on tourism industry by agencies like FICCI, IBEF etc. Popular statistical tools are used for data analysis.

## 6. Prospects and Problems of Tourism in Kerala

In fact, way back in 2000 Kerala had drafted a comprehensive tourism policy viz. *Vision 2020* that had given due consideration to the sustainability aspects of tourism growth along with its economic and feasibility aspects. This policy sought to make tourism one of the core competencies of Kerala and to regulate the tourism initiatives properly taking into account the broader and long-term interests of Kerala, like, environmental conservation, protection of heritage and culture, development of tourism infrastructure, quality standards etc. In short, it aims at using a sustainable and integrated approach to tourism promotion in Kerala. The performance of Kerala tourism has been impressive, both in absolute and relative terms. There has been an increasing trend in respect of foreign tourist arrivals to Kerala over the years and also in the share of Kerala in the tourism revenue for the whole of India.

Despite the good growth prospects for Kerala tourism, there is scope for further improvement in view of its enviable tourism potential as the "God's own country". It is noted there are a few areas wherein Kerala has a comparative edge over the rest of India and also other countries of the world.

**Vol.10   No.4   October - December 2018**
             **&**                   **Social Science in Perspective**
**Vol. 11  No.1   January - March 2019**

Its unique socio-economic and geographic profile has added significantly towards making it one of the sought-after tourist destinations of the world. The lengthy coastal belt, peculiar geographical location, lusty backwaters, a large number of beaches, serene hillocks, moderate climate throughout the year, highly literate populace etc. are some of the factors. It is noted that there has been a growing trend in respect of foreign tourists and domestic tourists to Kerala over the 18 years' period, 2000 to 2017 (Table I).

**Table I: Trends in Domestic and Foreign Tourist Arrivals
into Kerala (2000-2017)**

| Year | Domestic Tourists | Percentage Change | Foreign Tourists | Percentage Change |
|------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 2000 | 5013221 | 2.6 | 209533 | 3.8 |
| 2001 | 5239692 | 4.5 | 208830 | -0.5 |
| 2002 | 5568256 | 6.3 | 232564 | 11.3 |
| 2003 | 5871228 | 5.4 | 294621 | 26.7 |
| 2004 | 5972182 | 1.7 | 345546 | 17.3 |
| 2005 | 5946423 | -4.3 | 346499 | .27 |
| 2006 | 6271724 | 5.47 | 428534 | 23.7 |
| 2007 | 6642941 | 5.92 | 515808 | 20.37 |
| 2008 | 7591250 | 14.28 | 598928 | 16.11 |
| 2009 | 7913537 | 4.25 | 557258 | -6.96 |
| 2010 | 8595075 | 8.61 | 659265 | 18.31 |
| 2011 | 9381455 | 9.15 | 732985 | 11.18 |
| 2012 | 10076854 | 7.41 | 793696 | 8.28 |
| 2013 | 10857811 | 7.75 | 858143 | 8.12 |
| 2014 | 11695411 | 7.71 | 923366 | 7.60 |
| 2015 | 12465571 | 6.59 | 977479 | 5.86 |
| 2016 | 13172535 | 5.67 | 1038419 | 6.23 |
| 2017 | 14673520 | 11.39 | 1091870 | 5.15 |

*Source: Govt. of Kerala (2018), Economic Survey; and Tourism statistics (Kerala Tourism).*

The Department of Tourism (DoT) of Kerala state has formulated a three-pronged strategy to maintain and further improve the superior position of Kerala in the global tourism map. Accordingly, 3 broad strategies viz. (i) Product Innovation, (ii) Innovative Marketing, and (iii) Strategic alliance with the Government of Rajasthan. Besides, there are efforts in the direction of obtaining the benefits of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) for tourism, so that SEZs for tourism could be established meaningfully. The recently drawn up 'Kerala Tourism Policy 2017' has given a further boost to RT initiatives in Kerala whereby Responsible Tourism Mission (RT Mission) will be implemented to promote RT in the state in a systematic manner.

## 7. Impact of Flood on Kerala Tourism and the Present Status of Kerala Tourism

Based on the discussions with all the stakeholders, the following are the adverse effects of the recent devastating flood that occurred in Kerala in the mid-August 2018:

(i)     Transportation was disturbed during one week fully, and three weeks partially;

(ii)    There was lack of proper communication facilities for nearly two weeks;

(iii)   There was cancellation of registrations to the tune of 60 percent in August 2018, but the situation gradually improved to 20 percent or less by the end of October 2018.

(iv)    Image of the tourism spots was affected after the flood, but later it gradually improved.

In spite of the above temporary issues, because of the pro-active steps taken by the Government, particularly the Tourism Department of the Government, the tourism industry in Kerala has been gradually attaining normalcy. The adverse impact of the floods is vanishing and more tourists are expected in the future. The macro level (Kerala state

as a whole) picture on the impact of the unprecedented flood on Kerala tourism are as follows:

- Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) decreased by 13.55 percent during the third quarter viz. July-Sept. 2018 compared to the same period last year i.e. July-Sept. 2017. There was a positive growth of 12.13 percent in FTAs in the first quarter, viz. Jan.-March 2018. But, a negative growth of -4.6 percent was registered in the second quarter viz. April-June 2018; because of the alleged rape and murder of a Latvian woman near Kovalam in Kerala and also the Nipah virus outbreak in Kozhikode in May 2018. This negative growth further widened to 13.55 percent in the third quarter viz, July-Sept. 2018, as already noted above.

- Domestic Tourist Arrivals (DTAs) decreased by 3.48 percent during July-Sept. 2018 whereas there was a high increase of 15.93 percent during May-June 2018. This is for the first time that the state witnesses a negative growth rate in DTAs, as the normal trend in Kerala used to be that of 5-6 percent annual overall growth rate, and double digit growth during special occasions. The four worst-hit districts because of the devastating flood were Idukki, Wayanad, Alappuzha, and Thrissur.

- Flight bookings to Kochi (via. Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) almost halved to 53 percent in August and Sept. 2018 - a direct impact of the floods. In October too, the flight bookings is 17 percent lower than that of last year, i.e. Oct. 2017.

- The often attributed weakness of 'lack of hygiene' became worse after the flood, because the flood further deteriorated the cleanliness in the tourism spots. Another persisting complaint is that of exploitation of tourists, particularly the foreign tourists.

Flood has caused irreparable damage to Kerala economy,

particularly Kerala's tourism sector. The flood that occurred in August 2018 was one of the deadliest that Kerala has ever witnessed since the one in 1924. The flood adversely affected all facets of Kerala economy, particularly the tourism sector which accounts for about 12 percent of the GDP of the state. The post-flood recovery costs, assessed by the UN team in October 2018, are as follows:

| *Sectors* | *Recovery Cost (Rs. Crore)* |
|---|---|
| Housing & Land Settlements | Rs. 5,659 Cr. |
| Cultural Heritage | Rs. 73 Cr. |
| Employment & Livelihood including Tourism | Rs. 3,903 Cr. |
| Environment & Climate change | Rs. 148 Cr. |
| Agriculture, Fisheries & Livestock | Rs. 4,499 Cr. |
| Health & Nutrition | Rs. 567 Cr. |
| Education | Rs. 214 Cr. |
| Water, Sanitation & Hygiene | Rs. 1,331 Cr. |
| Transportation | Rs. 8,554 Cr. … etc. |
| **Grand Total** | Rs.24,948 Cr |

In spite of the adverse impact of flood on Kerala tourism as noted above, there are indications of a revival of the sector. Some indications are as follows;

- Foreign tourists arrived in large numbers, totally over 900 tourists - all from United Kingdom, in three charter flights in the month of December 2018.

- Large number of tourists started flowing to Munnar in December 2018, increasing the occupancy levels in the hill stations and home stays in that tourism spot.

- Gradually improving status of health and wellness tourism in Kerala, particularly the renowned Kerala brand Ayurveda tourism.

Other types of medical tourism (like, modern medicine) is also picking up in the state, though initially affected by the flood.

## 8. Suggestions based on the Findings of the Study

- Kerala has already formed the Responsible Tourism Mission (RTM) in 2007. Responsible Tourism (RT) deserved special attention in Kerala. RT ensures balanced development, particularly the development of the local community. RT models like the one in Kumarakom in Kottayam is a role model for the whole nation. The Kumarakom model needs to replicated in other destinations too, but considering the local conditions also and hence 'tailor-making' the tourism products on the offer accordingly.

- Events like Kerala Travel Mart (KTM) need to be arranged periodically so as to promote tourism in Kerala in a greater way.

- Remedial measures are required to counter the negative impact of tourism, particularly mass tourism. The environmental degradation because of plastic littering, imbalance in bio-diversity, pollution of water bodies and streams etc., as observed in many ecotourism destinations (like, Thenmala, in Kollam district) needs to be controlled. Mass tourism should give way to 'class tourism' so as to ensure the sustainability and environmental purity. Control is required on the number of tourists in busy destinations.

- Less known destinations have to be promoted so as to reduce the intensity of tourists in well known destinations. This is because of the fact that in many reputed tourism spots the tourist arrivals are more than the carrying capacity of the destination, and this in turn affects the long term sustainability of the respective tourism spots.

- Diverse tourism models, including newer and less common ones like Cruise tourism, adventure tourism etc. can be successfully

implemented in Kerala, given the unique geographic advantages of the state, like the vast coastal areas, serene hillocks etc.

- The problems of lack of hygiene and exploitation of tourists are two worst problems. Efforts are required to get rid of these evils from the tourism products on the offer.

- Many tourists are interested in healthcare tourism, and some are interested in studying about traditional products like those based on Ayurveda (Ayurveda tourism). Hence, the Government and other stake holders should provide facilities to encourage such tourists, including those interested in such studies. This would enhance the image of the sector.

- Concerted efforts towards aggressive promotion of Kerala tourism is necessary. Given the immense potential of information and communication technology (ICT), the same has to be used not only for tourism promotion but also as a vital element that is embedded in all tourism products and services. ICT is an enabler of superior tourism products and services and also enhanced productivity, and hence ICT adoption needs to be nurtured.

- Special thrust is required on Human Resource Development (HRD) in the tourism sector, particularly with the help of modern ICT-based tools. Only highly skilled and techno-savvy professionals can provide the kind of service that is expected by the growingly discerning tourists from advanced nations of the world, like the US or UK. Extensive use of ICT in all facets of the delivery of tourism products and services is an imperative for the growth of the sector in Kerala, as is the case elsewhere in the world. Special training be provided to tourist guides on ICT-based tools and applications.

## 9. Concluding Remarks

In spite of the adverse impact of flood on Kerala tourism, it is fast

**Vol.10   No.4   October - December 2018**
                    **&**                      **Social Science in Perspective**
**Vol. 11   No.1   January - March 2019**

picking up in the state. By way of concerted action Kerala can definitely attain complete normalcy in its tourism within a few months. The indications have so far been positive and let us hope that Kerala tourism will attain laurels by the end of next year viz. December 2019.

**References**

1.    Ajith Kumar M.K. (1998): "Psychographic & Demographic Profiles of Foreign Tourists Visiting Kerala with special reference to Spending Patterns", *Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis*, Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT), Kochi, Kerala.

2.    Ballabh, Aanandh (2005): *Fundamentals of Travel and Tourism*, Akansha Publishing House

3.    Brundtland G.H. (1987): *The Brundtland Report, World Commission on Environment and Development*, Oxford University Press.

4.    Bhatia, A.K. (1996): *Tourism Development: Principles and Practices*, Sterling Publishers Pvt.  Limited, New Delhi - 110 020 (India).

5.    Bijender K. Punia (1994): *Tourism Management - Problem and Prospects* pp169, Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi

6.    Chatak, G.R. (2007): *Sustainable Tourism Codes and Guidelines*, Cyber-Tech Publications, Daryaganj, New Delhi, (First Edition)

7.    Clark, J.R. (Ed.) (1991): *Carrying Capacity: A Status Report on Marine and Coastal Parks and Reserves,* University of Miami/US National Park Service, Washington, DC.

8.    Clifford J (1998): *The Predicament of Culture: 20th Century Ethnography, Literature and Art, Cambridge,* MA: Harward University Press

9.    Brandon, K. (1996): Ecotourism and Conservation: A Review of Key Issues. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

10.    Government of Kerala, *Economic Review,* State Planning Board,

Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala - for the years 2008 to 2017. [Available online at https://spb.kerala.gov.in].

11. Kabia, Sunil K. (2005): *Tourism and Environment*, Mohit Publications, New Delhi, First Edition.

12. Kumar, Yathish (2007): "Tourism Sector and Sustainable Development", *Southern Economist,* Vol. 45, No. 9.

13. Lane, B. (1991): "Sustainable Tourism, A new culture for the Interpreter", *Interpretation Journal*, Vol. 49.

14. Lindberg, K., and J. Enriquez (1994): *An Analysis of Ecotourism's Contribution to Conservation and Development in   Belize*, Vol. 2. Washington: World Wildlife Fund.

15. McNeeely, J.A., J. Thorsell., and H. Ceballos-Lascurain (1992): *Guidelines: Development of National Parks and Protected Areas for Tourism*, WTO/UNEP/IUCN, Madrid.

16. Manoj P. K. (2008): "Sustainable Tourism in India: A Study from a Global Perspective with Focus on Tourism Prospects of Kerala", *Proceedings of Second International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations*, 21-24 March, 2008, p.7. Also available online in the [Official website: http://www.artyforum.info/documents/MicrosoftWord-MANOJ-Poster.pdf]

17. Manoj, P. K. (2009): "Environment Friendly Tourism for Sustainable Economic Development in India", *International Journal of Commerce and Business Management,* pp.139-147.

18. Manoj P K (2010): "Tourism in Kerala: A Study of the Imperatives and Impediments with Focus on Ecotourism", *Saaransh RKG Journal of Management,* Vol. 1, No. 2, Jan. 2010, pp.78-82.

19. Manoj P K (2015): "Prospects of Eco tourism in Kerala: Evidence from Kumarakom in Kottayam District" *International Journal of Research in Management and Social Science,* Vol. 3, Issue 1 (II), Jan. – March 2015, pp. 54-59.

**718**
Rebuilding the Flood-hit Kerala Economy: Imperatives for
the Sustainable Growth of Kerala's Tourism Sector

20.  Manoj P K (2015): "Employment Generation from Rural Tourism: A Field Study of the Local Community at Kumbalangi, Kerala", *International Journal of Applied Services Marketing Perspectives (IJASMP),* Vol. 4, No. 4, Oct.-Dec. 2015, pp.1880-1888.

21.  Manoj P K (2016): "Impact of Rural Tourism on the Environment and Society: Evidence from Kumbalangi in Kerala, India", *International Journal of Advance Research in Computer Science and Management Studies (IJARCSMS)*, Vol. 4, Issue 2, Feb. 2016, pp.148-159.

22.  Manoj P K (2017): "Segmentation Strategy for Promotion of Ecotourism Products: Evidence from Thenmala Ecotourism", *South Asian Journal of Socio-Political Studies (SAJOSPS),* Vol.18, No.1, July-Dec. 2017, pp.112-119.

23.  Oommen, M.A., (2008): "Reforms and the Kerala Model", *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol. XLIII, No.2, Jan. 12-18, 2008, pp. 22-25.

24.  Singh, Ratandeep (2008): *Tourism Marketing Principles, Policies and Strategies*, Kanishka Publishers & Distributors, Darya Ganj, Delhi - 110 002 (India).

25.  Singh, Sarvjeet (2009): *Ecotourism Development Management* A.K. Publications, New Delhi

26.  Sudheer, B. (2015): "Economic and Cultural Impact of Responsible Tourism Initiative in Kerala - A Case Study of Kumarakom Panchayath", *Research Report,* Research Sponsored by the University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi. (www.sncollege cherthala.in).

27.  Verma, J. (2007): *Dynamics of Indian Tourism Issues & Challenges*, Cyber-Tech Publishers, Daryaganj, New Delhi, First Edition.

28.  ATREE (2006): *White Paper on Ecotourism Policy* (Draft), April, pp 4-5.

29.   WEF (World Economic Forum) (2015): *The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2015,* 91-93 route de la Capite, CH-1223 Cologny, Geneva, Switzerland.

30.   United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2015): *UNWTO Tourism Highlights 2015 Edition*, Calle Capitán Haya, 42 28020 Madrid.

31.   Weaver, D.B. (2001): *Ecotourism,* John Wiley & Sons: Milton

32.   World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) (2015): *Economic Impact of Travel & Tourism 2015 Annual Update*, Harlequin Building, 65 Southwark Street, London, SE1 0HR, United Kingdom.

33.   Government of Kerala (2014): *Kerala Tourism Statistics 2014*, Research & Statistics Division, Dept. of Tourism, Thiruvananthapuram.

34.   Government of India (2014): *India Tourism Statistics at a Glance 2014*, Dept. of Tourism, New Delhi.

35.   Official website of World Tourism Organisation (WTO), www.unwto.org

36.   Official website of World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), www.wttc.org

37.   Official website of Kerala Tourism (Government of Kerala), www.keralatourism.org

38.   Official website of Incredible India (Government of India).

# Understanding Kerala (2018) and Himalayan Floods (2013-14)

**Shekhar Pathak**

*The Himalaya and Western Ghats are less similar and more different. There may be some similarities in flora, fauna, crops, migration and 'money order economy' but these are two different physical features with different rain patterns and climatic conditions at two corners of Indian subcontinent. Kerala has sea and the Himalaya has snow and ice accumulated. Himalaya is more fragile and with more tectonic and seismic activity. But the ways of destruction, influx of big tourism, pressure on forests and wilderness, priority to plantation and change in land use, finally the new liberal economy, corporate domination, privatization, globalization and consumerism are same in both the regions. So the conservation, equity, understanding the climatic changes and their impact on everyday life and on calamities all these aspects should be relooked and evolving the ways of sustainability and eco-sensibility are needed in both the regions. Natural calamities will be there but we will be able to minimize their fury and loss of the human lives. Kerala and Himalayan floods give us independent lessons for respective regions and joint lessons too for both the regions.*

Floods have been part of natural systems of the planet earth from earliest times, like earthquakes, landslides, avalanches, hurricanes and

tsunamis. After the beginning of agriculture and urbanization the direct human contributions started associating with it. Floods can change the geo-morphology of a region, shift the soil and change the landscape drastically. Floods depend on so many factors- the natural hydrological systems, the rains (monsoons in Indian context and double monsoons in Kerala context), the state of ground water, the state of the catchments, the slopes, the vegetation, the seismicity of the region etc. The floods also depend on the volume of the rains and their erratic nature, cloud bursts, dams and barrages like man-made obstructions.

Humans learnt from the floods since the very beginning of human history on the earth. They always hesitated in settling in the flood plains or river courses. They have been keen observers of the river behavior, change in the water volume or colour. In the Himalayan context the communities have understanding of the behavior of glaciers or events like glacial lake bursts. But humans are also great encroachers and they sometimes disobey the rules made by themselves in the interest of all. At that point we need appropriate implementing agencies, which can follow the accepted appropriate traditional ways and land, water related laws of the country to reduce the consequences of the calamity.

The smaller floods have been creating plain areas by bringing fertile soil from the mountains. Many a time the floods have created 'land benches' along the rivers, which later found suitable for human settlements and agriculture. As Indian sub-continent has many geological, climatic, agro-ecological regions, so the rivers and floods have different characteristics in different regions. In this presentation. I have tried to understand Kerala floods and to compare them with Himalayan floods.

## 2. Looking at Kerala

First let us look at Kerala. As you all know Kerala is situated in the South-Western corner of Indian subcontinent, bordering two Indian states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, between the mountains of Western

Ghats[1] and the Arabian Sea. The province of Kerala, created after the States Reorganization Act of 1956, is spread over 38863 square km. with 33387677 populations in 2011. Divided into 14 districts Kerala is 12th largest state economy in India with a composite culture and socio-religious scene.

Between Western Ghats (Sahyadri mountain range) and Malabar Coast (Lakshadweep Sea) Kerala have a unique ecology with high mountains, gorges and deep cut valleys in eastern region; hills of less height and lowlands in the central region and coastal plains in the western region. The Western Ghats interrupted only at Palakkad and average height of Western Ghats is 1,500 meters and highest peak 2,500 meters. The mountain range and coast line run parallel. Due to this Kerala have the humid tropical climatic conditions. The ecology created by this climate is the cause of Kerala's rich biodiversity. Kerala have a coastal line of 590 km and maximum width of the state is 121 km and minimum is only 11 km.

Kerala has a total 44 small rivers and out of them 41 are west flowing and only 3 are east flowing. Periyar (244 km) is the longest river and other important rivers are Bharathapuzha (209 km), Pamba (176), Chaliyar (169), Kadalundipuzha (130), Chalakudipuzha (130), Valapattanam (129) and Achankovil (128 km). The average length of the rivers is only 64 km. Known as 'backwaters' these rivers make eight percent of India's internal waterways. Many of the rivers are small, spring fed and many are only monsoon fed. The deltas are invisible phenomenon here. The changes in land use, sand mining and quarrying have been accelerating the land-mud slides, floods and droughts for some decades.

**3. The Double Monsoon Ecology of Western Ghats**

Kerala is the southern part of Western Ghats. The term 'Western Ghats', mountain system spread in many states, refers to the practically unbroken hill chain (with the exception of the Palakkad/Palghat Gap)

running roughly in a north-south direction, for about 1500s km parallel to the Arabian sea coast, from the river Tapi (about 210 16' N) down to just short of Kanyakumari (about 8019' N). In some accounts the term Western Ghats or Sahyadris is restricted only to the western escarpment of the Peninsular Plateau from the Tapi southwards to the region of Kodagu, (about 12 degrees N) while the higher mountain ranges further south, including the Nilgiris, the Annamalais, the Cardamom hills and the Agasthyamalai range, being referred to as a distinct geological entity named as the Southern Block. We use the term 'Western Ghats' in the broader sense to include the entire tract of hills from the Tapi to Kanyakumari, with an area of approximately 129037 sq km, it stretches to a width of 210 km in Tamil Nadu and narrows to as small as 48 km in Maharashtra (leaving the Palghat gap)- Gadgil Report, page: 5-7. The Ghats host India's richest wilderness in 13 national parks and several sanctuaries and is recognized by UNESCO as one of the world's eight most important biodiversity hotspots. The ecosystems of the Western Ghats comprising parts of six states - Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The total area of Western Ghats is 129037 sq km, total length is 1490 km, minimum width is 48 km and maximum is 210 km.

The double monsoon climate ecology had been functional for long in Kerala. The total rainy days annually are 120-140. Average rainfall is 2923 mm annually. 65 % rains happen between June to August and rest between September and December. If we look at the history of disasters in Kerala we don't have a long list, like we have in Hindukush-Himalaya. The great flood of 1341 AD is often mentioned while talking about the calamities in Kerala. It is told that this mid 14th century flood drastically changed the terrain, many river courses and the overall landscape of the region. But we don't have details of that calamity. Was it related to any earthquake and tsunami? Was it a combined one? We don't have clear answer. Let us hope someone will work on this aspect of natural history in coming time.

We know more about the second big calamity that happened after 583 years in 1924. It was documented that in 1924 a combination of heavy rains and breaching of the dams triggered the devastating floods killing more than 1000 human lives and much of the property (houses, roads, bridges, animals and standing crops). The 2018 floods are called 'the repetition of this tragedy' as it is also combined strength of heavy rains and worst dam management. The data from the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) shows that Kerala received 2,087.67 mm of rain from June 1 to August 15 in 2018, which is 30 percent less from 3,368 mm rain in 1924. The death toll in 2018 is close to 500, the loss of property is close to 20000 crore and the number of flood victims went beyond one and a half million.

This point gives us the chance to look at the scene in more detailed and critical way. What drastically changed in last 94 years after the 1924 floods? One answer is change in demography and increased pressure on the resources of the land. The second is sudden change in raining pattern and tendency of cloud bursts increased. The third is failure in managing the newly built dams. The fragility of the Western Ghats is common in all three points. Tectonic and seismic activities records should also be looked at. It is to be noted that Kerala state has the lowest population growth rate in India. It is only 3.44% a year. It has the highest *Human Development Index* (HDI), 0.712 in 2015; the highest literacy rate, 93.91% (2011 census); the highest life expectancy of 77 years; and the highest sex ratio (1,084 women per 1,000 men).

At the same time the state has witnessed significant out-migration to *Arab countries, which increased* during the *'Gulf Boom'* of the 1970s and early 1980s. After this Kerala's economy started depending significantly on the *remittances* from a large community of *Malayali* migrants like that of Uttarakhand and Nepal Himalaya. Due to the outmigration the pressure on the resources may have decreased. I mean the national and international tourism-the fast growth in hospitality sector.

**Vol.10   No.4   October - December 2018**
                   **&**               **Social Science in Perspective**
**Vol. 11  No.1   January - March 2019**

Its impact is yet to be analyzed. But it can be said that the pressure created by tourists and pilgrims together in Kerala may be less than of Uttarakhand, Kashmir or Nepal. So the temporary migratory population may not be a strong point.

Now before us are the twin issues of the pressure on natural resources and the mismanagement of the dams. Both the issues are to be looked and analysed in a more critical way. In last hundred years the development of roads, dams; rise in urbanization; expansion of coffee, tea and rubber plantation; increase in resorts and high rise buildings in the mountainous and wild areas and rapid growth in sand mining and quarrying have destroyed the biodiversity, green cover and over all wilderness of the Western Ghats. A study in the southern region, comprising the states of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, showed that between 1920 and 1990 about 40% of the original vegetation cover was lost or converted to another form of land use (Menon and Bawa 1997, Gadgil: 9). The State of the Forest Report, 2017 also clearly tells us that the reason for the increase in the forest cover is commercial plantation, not the preservation of natural forests (India State of the Forest Report 2017, FSI, Dehradun: 223). Plantations increase the greenery but cannot make a natural forest.

Now let us discuss dams. Normally it is thought that every dam can moderate floods in the downstream areas, as long as it has space to store water. Every action which helps in storing, holding/delaying the flow of rainwater from the catchment to the river moderates its flow and the floods. Today the catchments of rivers are fast losing this capacity, due to deforestation, encroachment into wetlands, local water bodies and fast changing land use. This process also reduces soil's capacity to hold water and delay its flow.

Kerala's 44 rivers with short lengths and high slopes have over 60 large dams. The potential capacity of dams to help moderate floods can be realized only when they are operated with this objective in mind.

When dams are not operated with such an objective, and are, instead, filled up as soon there is water available, there is no space left to store more water. The only alternative then is to release all the inflow into the downstream river. Due to this, in downstream areas, which are already facing floods due to local rains or other reasons, the dams end up increasing the magnitude of the flood disaster. Himanshu Thakkar has mentioned numerous instances of this kind, including the floods in Uttarakhand (June 2013), Tehri (September 2010), Hirakud (2009, 2011, 2014), Damodar dams (multiple years), Krishna basin dams (2006, October 2009), Ukai (August 2006), Chennai floods (December 2015), Bansagar dam (August 2016), Kurichu dam in Bhutan (2004, 2016, others), and Ranganadi (2017) and Doyang (2018), among other dams, where flawed operation of the dams created or worsened flood disasters in the downstream areas (SANDRP and EPW, September 22, 2018).

There was definitely a difference between the pre-dam and post-dam floods. At the time of 1341 flood there were no dams in Kerala Rivers and in 1924 there were some dams built. Now it is to be seen the difference between the pre-monsoon and post-monsoon floods. Kerala experiences South-Western summer monsoon and North-Eastern winter monsoon. There is no dispute that in Kerala, most of the dams were almost full by the end of July 2018. The Central Water Commission (CWC) report on the Kerala floods, however, stated that it has been found that the dams in Kerala neither added to the flood nor helped in reducing the flood, as most of the dams were already at FRL (Full Reservoir Level) or very close to FRL on 14 August 2018, due to more than normal rainfall in the months of June to July 2018 (CWC 2018: 34).

But Himanshu Thakkar questions this analysis by terming such statements,

> "an effort to absolve the dams from any blame, assume and imply that the floods in the river downstream, before and after the dam, are same. This is a misleading and incorrect assumption. The flood in the downstream area, from water released by the dam,

is very different from the flood in an undammed river for a number of reasons. First, floods in rivers before the dam can, most of the time, be seen gradually rising, which allows people to prepare and can save lives as well as valuables. Floods from water released by the dams come much more suddenly, leaving little time to respond. Second, the potential damage from water suddenly released from a dam is much greater than that of a gradually rising flood in the river. Third, the river downstream, its flood plains, and even the riverbed - which do not experience regular floods - may have changed. The dam induces a false sense of security from floods, often propagated by dam proponents, which leads to encroachment on the river bed/flood plain. The carrying capacity of the downstream river may have also changed. The river immediately downstream of the Idukki dam saw no flows for 26 years; the last time the gates were opened was in 1992.

The flood-carrying capacity of the Tapi river, downstream of Ukai dam, has reduced from about 8.5 lakh cubic feet per second ($ft^3$/sec) earlier, to about 4.0 lakh $ft^3$/sec, and to possibly less than 2 lakh $ft^3$/sec at present (CWC 2005: 46; Patel and Gundaliya 2014). Finally, the water released from the dam is either relatively silt-free or carrying too much silt if released from the bottom sluices. In either case, it is different than normal floodwater, and has a different damage potential. Therefore, dam operators cannot be exonerated on the claim that they have not added to the incoming floods.

The real question is: Have the dam operators done everything possible to moderate the floods in the downstream areas? The CWC report does not even ask that question. So, what could the dam operators have done to moderate the floods in Kerala during the 2018 monsoon?"

Himanshu Thakkar further writes about violation of the 'Rule Curves':

"Every dam is supposed to have a dam-specific rule curve that regulates, among other things, how the dam is supposed to be filled during the monsoon to optimize flood moderation for the downstream areas, while ensuring that it is filled up only towards the end of the monsoon. Almost all the dams in Kerala were full by the end of July. This was in complete violation of the rule curve, since by the end of July the south-west monsoon is just halfway through its course, and large parts of Kerala also receive the north-east monsoon, which follows the south-west monsoon. Thus, to fill up the dams by end of July was an invitation for disaster.

The CWC report is clearly designed to absolve the dam operators from any blame, so it does not mention whether the Kerala dam operators followed or violated the rule curves. However, the very first recommendation of the report is: It is essential to review the rule curves of all the reservoirs in Kerala. The rule curves need to be formulated for both conservation as well as operations during the flood, particularly for the reservoirs having the live storage capacity of more than 200 MCM (million cubic meters) in order to create some dynamic flood cushion for moderating the floods of lower return periods particularly in the early period of monsoon (CWC 2018). The Kerala dams clearly failed in flood moderation during the August 2018 floods, as they were already full when the floods occurred." (EPW: September 22, 2018).

Around 5254 dams in India are an integral part of flood management, apart from storing water for irrigation and generating power. A report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) submitted (2017) in Parliament stated that there was emergency action plan available for only seven percent of these dams. For the 61 dams in Kerala, there is none. The oldest dam of Kerala Mullaperiyar Dam was built in 1895 on the river Mullayar and its tributary, Periyar to provide water to deficit regions of Tamil Nadu - especially arid shadow region of Madurai which was in greater need of water. That is why the Periyar River which flows westward of Kerala was diverted towards the Bay of Bengal to provide water to

the people of Madras presidency. This dam is owned and operated by Tamil Nadu Public Works Department. In 1979 the Kerala government sought its rebuilding due to its being in earthquake prone area. In 1980 Tamil Nadu government demanded to raise its height from 136 feet to 150, which was opposed by Kerala. In 2006 the Supreme Court directed to raise height to 142 feet and Kerala brought a law to negate it. After that the Supreme Court appointed a panel to examine the safety and the new dam. The other major dams are Idukki, Idamalayar, Kakki etc. More than half of Kerala's dams (around 57%) are hydro-electric projects operated by the Kerala State Electricity Board and the rest are operated by the irrigation department of the state. For both entities, the amount of water to store is motivated by demand for electricity and irrigation, rather than flood control measures.

The 2017 CAG report presented an insight on what is wrong with India's flood management plan. Of the 219 proposed new telemetry stations, used to forecast floods, only a quarter, were set-up till August 2016. Of the 375 existing stations, almost 60% were non-functional after installation. The flood forecasting data was used in the formulation of flood forecast only after comparing the telemetry data with manually observed data; and in the case of mismatch between the two sets of data, manual data was adopted. CWC could not use and depend on telemetry data even after investing in modernization for nearly 20 years. The report also said that there is an emergency action plan for only 7% of the dams in India. For the 61 in Kerala, there is none as told above. In eight out of 17 flood-prone states, the integrated flood management plans for entire river/basin have not been taken up, the report said.

A recent study also warns us. Earthquakes of similar magnitude of 2004 Sumatra earthquake could occur in an area beneath the Arabian Sea at the Makran subduction zone, according to recent research. The study suggests that the risk from undersea earthquakes and associated tsunami in this area of the Western Indian Ocean, which could threaten

the coastlines of Pakistan, Iran, Oman, and India and further, has been previously underestimated. The results highlight the need for further investigation of pre-historic earthquakes and should be fed into hazard assessment and planning for the region.[2]

Subduction zones are areas where two of the Earth's tectonic plates collide and one is pushed beneath the other. When an earthquake occurs in these areas the seabed moves horizontally and vertically as the pressure is released, displacing large volumes of water that can result in a tsunami. The Makran subduction zone has shown little earthquake activity since a magnitude 8.1 earthquake in 1945 and magnitude 7.3 in 1947. Because of its relatively low seismicity and limited recorded historic earthquakes it has often been considered incapable of generating major earthquakes. Plate boundary faults at subduction zones are expected to be prone to rupture generating earthquakes at temperatures of between 150 and 450 C. The scientists used this relationship to map out the area of the potential fault rupture zone beneath the Makran by calculating the temperatures where the plates meet. Larger fault rupture zones result in larger magnitude earthquakes.

The other and hidden aspect of future calamity calculation is related with climatic changes happening around us without noticed by us seriously. Climatic changes are happening all over the planet earth. At some places these are little visible, at other places these may be seen in larger form so more visible to us.

## 4. What Western Ghat Ecology Experts Panel Report Suggests

Now let us look at the Western Ghat Ecology Experts Panel Report (2011). The WGEEP Report chaired by Madhav Gadgil has suggested so many things to be done in Western Ghats and Kasturirangan's 'counter' Committee (2017) has not opposed all of them (the government did the same thing by forming another committee in the case of Ravi Chopra Committee initiated by Supreme Court on the

Dams in Uttarakhand). Even if we come to the golden mean of both the reports (Gadgil and Kasturirangan) an implementable point can be identified and strategy can be evolved. The expert committee report says in the very beginning:

> "....assignment through a multipronged strategy which included (i) compilation of all readily available and accessible information on the Western Ghats, (ii) development of a geospatial database on ecological sensitivity for the entire Western Ghats region which would provide a multi-criteria decision support system for demarcation of ecologically sensitive areas, and (iii) comprehensive consultations with principal stakeholders which included civil society groups, government officials, and peoples' representatives, ranging from members of Gram Panchayats and Zilla Parishads to MLAs and MPs. It is noteworthy that in all these endeavors special effort was made to have wide-ranging discussions with complete transparency. All the information generated by the Panel including the geospatial database is publicity available through a dedicated website created for the Panel."

But the politicians with some vested interest, as everywhere turned it into a debate of development v/s environment. In essence WGEEP advocated a layered, nuanced, participatory approach, so that boundaries will not be discontinuities and therefore will not be of undue significance. The report talks of the boundaries of the Western Ghats, but pleads that the pattern of adaptive co-management that we propose may also be applied to regions beyond these boundaries (page 15-16).

The panel has given the idea of Ecologically Sensitive Zones-ESZ (page 23) and for overall management it has suggested to establish Western Ghats Development Authority (WGDA) and Western Ghats Ecology Authority (WGEA) covering the whole region spread in five states. The report has suggested three types of ESZs and ESA (Ecologically Sensitive Areas). But the idea is old in other context.

Western Ghats as an administrative entity was first visualized in the context of Regional Planning exercises, beginning with a report prepared by the Town and Country Planning Organization, Delhi in the 1960s. This report delineated the Western Ghats at Taluk level, which became the basis of the Planning Commission of India's Western Ghats Development Programme (WGDP) initiated in 1974-75 across 132 talukas. This serves as the basis of disbursement of central government assistance. The WGDP is currently being implemented in 171 talukas of Western Ghats viz. Maharashtra (63 talukas), Karnataka (40), Kerala (32), Tamil Nadu (33) and Goa (3 talukas). Now some of the original talukas have been sub-divided.

It is interesting that the Kerala Bio Diversity Board (KBDB) has also given its ideas tuning with some of the panel's recommendations:

"Water resources management in the Western Ghats region is linked to improving the flows in the rivers and the health of the catchments. Shorter perennial monsoon fed west flowing rivers like Periyar, and the Bharathapuzha travel through steeper and more undulating topography before emptying into the Arabian Sea. As for Kerala, the groundwater potential is low when compared to other states and shallow dug wells are the most common source of freshwater. However, over the years the groundwater table is lowering at an alarming rate indicative of poor recharging capacity. On the other hand, water needs are growing in the Western Ghats States. In Peechi and Malampuzha reservoirs irrigation water is being diverted for drinking and for the industrial needs of cities in Thrissur and Palakkad respectively. As for the west-flowing rivers, saline ingress is advancing even into the midlands due to reduced downstream flows. Crop losses and saline water intrusion into drinking water has been reported in Kerala during severe summer owing to salinity intrusion. The west-flowing shorter rivers (Sharavathi, Periyar) have been dammed at several places. River flows has been completely diverted at Mullaperiyar and Parambikulam dams

involving Kerala and Tamil Nadu. West flowing rivers have been virtually made into east-flowing rivers by violating all natural laws. In the case of inter-basin water diversions, absolutely no natural flows or even 'minimum flows', leave alone environmental flows, are left below the dams. In Mullaperiyar dam the main tributary of Periyar has been completely diverted to the Vaigai basin in the east. Idukki dam does not even have a spillway for allowing monsoon spills into the river. Idukki dam is a case wherein the entire catchment was encroached along with dam construction. A river basin-level planning and decentralized management of water resources in the Western Ghats is necessary (Understanding Report of the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel, Kerala Perspective, Kerala Bio-Diversity Board: 29).

As per the WGEEP in Kerala Mandakol, Panathadi, Paithal Mala, Brahmagiri-Thirunelli, Wayanad, Banasura-Kuttiyadi, Nilumbur-Mepadi, Silent Valley - New Amarambalam, Siruvani, Nelliampathy, Peechi-Vazhani, Athirappilly-Vazhachal, Pooyamkutty Munnar, Cardamom Hills, Periyar, Kulathupuzha, Agasthya Mala, are identified as ESAs surrounding Protected Areas (WGEEP:20).

The democratic institutions are well entrenched in the state and Kerala leads the country in capacity building and empowering of Panchayat Raj Institutions. So Panel's suggestion not to stick in a system that forcibly divorces conservation from development is fine. The Key features include: focus on learning-by-doing, synthesizing different knowledge systems, collaboration and power-sharing among community, regional and national levels and management flexibility. These features can promote an evolving, place-specific governance approach in which strategies are sensitive to feedback (both social and ecological) and oriented towards system resilience and sustainability. Such strategies include dialogue among interested groups and actors (local-national), the development of complex, redundant and layered institutions, and a combination of institutional types, designs and strategies that facilitate

experimentation and learning through change. Other important themes in adaptive co-management include improving evaluation of process and outcomes, additional emphasis on power, the role of social capital, and meaningful interactions and trust building as the basis for governance in social-ecological systems (WGEEP, 2011 page 15-16).

Yet we are today stuck in a system that forcibly divorces conservation from development. It ends up creating a dichotomy so that our policies at once promote reckless development in certain areas and thoughtless conservation in other areas. In the process we constitute islands of biodiversity (and social exclusion) - the so-called Protected Areas (PAs) - in an ocean of ecological devastation outside of these PAs.

For the Kerala state within Western Ghats the total number of proposed ESZ1 is 15, ESZ2 is 5 and ESZ3 is 8 (WGEEP: 25). Together with it are the Eco Sensitive Areas. Out of Western Ghats' total landscape (129037 sq.km.), 77000 sq.km. (including existing sanctuaries) will come under SEZ1, which will be 60% of the landscape. 20000 sq. km. (15%) will go to ESZ2 and 32000 sq. km. (25%) will go to ESZ3 to allow all developmental activities with precaution. The report did not find favor with industry and concerned states. Instead of taking decision the MoEF appointed another panel, High Level Working Group (HLWG) led by K. Kasturirangan to examine the Gadgil report, consult the stakeholders and suggest the ways to implement it. The report of this panel came out in April 2013 with the suggestions of its own on ESAs. HLWG followed the criteria of the Western Ghats Development Programme of the Planning Commission and identified 188 talukas as its Western Ghats landscape, which worked out to 1,64,280 sq km. The report marked 37 percent (60000 sq km) of this stretch as ESA where hazardous industries, thermal plants or mines would not be allowed. There has been lot of debate on ESAs suggested by Gadgil and Kasturirangan and many environmentalists are insisting on acceptance of ESAs suggested by Gadgil.

The WGEEP has given so many suggestions regarding 'no go' areas, power plant clearance, rail and road development, waste disposal etc also. It looks at the issues of Western Ghats in a complete way.

## 5. The Case of Uttarakhand Floods

Now from Kerala I take you to two Himalayan cases for understanding the floods in a bit larger perspective. In June 2013, heavy rains and *cloudburst* caused devastating floods and landslides in *Uttarakhand*. Though the IMD was informing the people in its bulletins that the monsoon will reach here in the last week of June but when warnings by the *IMD* predicting heavy rains came, these were not seriously taken by pilgrims, administration and government at large, causing thousands of people to be caught unaware, resulting in huge loss of life and property.

After two days rains continued on 16th and 17th June 2013 the collapse of the lake, landslides and finally floods did the havoc in whole of Uttarakhand, parts of Himachal (Kinnaur-specially Baspa valley), Western Nepal and Western Tibet. The bursting of Chorabari lake above Kedarnath shrine, raining in high altitudes, where either hail or snow used to fall, landslides and finally floods devastated the whole state. At some places 375% more rains happened. The natural silt which comes with the water of the rivers from glaciers, debris created by faulty road building (dynamiting and debris throwing into the rivers), project constructions and the muck deposited by hydro-companies near river banks accelerated the flood. The collapse of many hydro projects in different valleys further increased the devastation. The debris blocked up the rivers, causing major overflow. Some parts of Far West Nepal, *Haryana, Delhi* and *Uttar Pradesh* also experienced the heavy rains. Around 6000 people, as per official records, were presumed dead. The people killed during the devastation include locals, Nepali labourers and mostly pilgrims from all over the country. The actual number of people who lost their lives may be more than ten thousand as the Chairman of Uttarakhand Vidhan Sabha reported.

The destruction of roads, bridges, buildings, hydro-projects, canals, power houses, vehicles was so much that some experts say that the overall loss was higher than what Uttarakhand lost in 1991 earthquake. More than 300000 pilgrims struck in Chardham (Badri, Kedar, Gangotri, Yamunotri and Henkunt Sahib) region. Many died due to rains and cold, many due to landslides and floods. Many lost lives, while running towards high places in Kedar valley. Search for bodies who died during the extreme natural conditions continued for several months and even as late as September, 2013, about 556 bodies were found, out of which 166 bodies were found in highly decomposed state. Later skeletons were also found at some places.

The media made the tragedy Kedarnath centric calling it 'Kedarnath tragedy' as most of the people died in Kedarnath and Mandakini valley. Actually it was a pan-Uttarakhand tragedy and the destruction also happened in Himachal and Nepal. The government and media people had failed in collecting the information from other valleys. We will never know the number and names of the people who came as pilgrims and lost their lives. The large number of labourers working with pony/horse, *doli* (palanquin) and *doka* (chair) operators were largely from Nepal.

The flood was much more devastating than what the region experienced in 1894 (Birehi and Alaknanda), 1970 (Birehi, Alaknanda and Kali) and 1978 (Bhagirathi). More than 24 hydro projects (barrages, diversions, canals, tunnels and power houses) were destroyed or damaged and some of them washed away. Parts of many settlements were washed away. Not a single brick or house stone was visible at Rambara, halting point between Gaurikund and Kedarnath, where dozens of houses, hotels, restaurants were standing before the flood.

All the rivers including Tons, Yamuna, Bhagirathi, Pindar, Saryu, Ramganga East, Gori, Kali, Dhauli East and their tributaries were with largest volume of water, silt and other floating things. Most of the agricultural fields were washed away or submerged in water. Death

reports also came from Himachal and Western Nepal. The temporary bridges at many places and a hanging bridge were swept away at Jauljibi town at India-Nepal border. The dams could not play any role in regulating or controlling the floods, rather they contributed in making the floods more devastating.

## 6. The Story of Kashmir Floods

In September 2014 *Kashmir* region suffered disastrous floods across the state caused by torrential rainfall. The Indian state of Jammu *and Kashmir,* as well as *Azad Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan* and both *Punjabs* were affected by these floods. By 24 September 2014, nearly 277 people in India and about 280 people in Pakistan had died due to the floods. The *Jammu and Kashmir* state and adjoining areas received heavy rainfall from 2 September 2014 onwards, during last stage of *monsoon in India.*

The heavy rains triggered landslides and flooding in Kashmir and the adjoining areas of Pakistan. On 5 September the *Jhelum River* in *Srinagar* was flowing at 22.40 feet (6.83 m) which was 4.40 feet (1.34 m) above the danger mark and at 33 feet (10 m) at *Sangam* in Anantnag district above the danger mark. The discharge rate in the river was recorded as 70,000 $m^3$/s against the normal discharge of 25,000$m^3$/s. It is to be noted that Jhelum River originates from within the valley. The *Chenab River* was flowing above the danger mark by which hundreds of villages were affected in *Pakistan*. These rivers flooded into the streets causing heavy casualties and loss of property.

Several thousand villages across the state had been hit and 390 villages had been completely submerged. 2600 villages were reported to be affected in *Jammu and Kashmir*, out of which 390 villages in Kashmir valley were completely submerged. 1225 villages were partially affected and 1000 villages were affected in *Jammu Division.* Large parts of *Srinagar* were inundated and vital buildings, hospitals and roads were submerged, by the floods. The strongest post monsoon storm ever

recorded in Pakistan took place on 3 September 2014 on a very low pressure system which started to affect parts of *Jammu and Kashmir* and North-East Pakistani districts. If we look at the chart of rains between 3 to 5 September 2014 it was between 202 mm. in Jhelum, 498 mm. in Lahore and 981 mm. in Rawalkot (Azad Kashmir).

On 8 September, in many parts of Srinagar's neighborhood, the water was about 15 feet (4.5 m.) deep, submerging entire houses. Stranded residents left their homes to move to homes of in safer areas. The death toll till 10 September had crossed 190 in *Kashmir valley* and areas affected by the floods were mostly districts in South Kashmir.

Most of the city areas in Srinagar were submerged under water. Some houses and hotels were under 24 feet deep water. The loss of crops and fruits was huge. More than 50 bridges were either washed away or damaged across the state. More than 300 people lost their lives during the floods in J&K and more than one million people were affected by the floods. The most difficult thing to understand the floods in Kashmir valley was that the flood water level was so high in such a wide valley. The one cause may be heavy rains but the equally strong point is that most of the drainage points were blocked by human intervention.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

I don't know how to compare these Himalayan floods with that of Kerala. The Himalaya and Western Ghats are less similar and more different. There may be some similarities in flora, fauna, crops, migration and 'money order economy' but these are two different physical features with different rain patterns and climatic conditions at two corners of Indian subcontinent. Kerala has sea and the Himalaya has snow and ice accumulated. Himalaya is more fragile and with more tectonic and seismic activity. It has direct international borders. Many trans-boundary rivers are coming from Tibet to India and Nepal and finally to Indus-Ganga plains.

But the ways of destruction, influx of big tourism, pressure on forests and wilderness, priority to plantation and change in land use, finally the new liberal economy, corporate domination, privatization, globalization and consumerism are same in both the regions. So the conservation, equity, understanding the climatic changes and their impact on everyday life and on calamities all these aspects should be relooked and evolving the ways of sustainability and eco-sensibility are needed in both the regions. Natural calamities will be there but we will be able to minimize their fury and loss of the human lives. Kerala and Himalayan floods give us independent lessons for respective regions and joint lessons too for both the regions.

The idea of 'Gross National Happiness' (GNH) has emerged in a small Himalayan country, Bhutan. Do we have enough courage to tilt towards it? As Gandhi has told 'The earth has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed', this wisdom can be at the heart of the future programmes for Western Ghats and Himalaya together.

**Footnote**

1.   This article is an edited version of the special address given at the National Seminar on Common Property and Citizens Rights: Issues of Reconstruction of Kerala, Organized by C. Achutha Menon Foundation, 25th - 26th October 2018 at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. Thanks to Himanshu Thakkar for the comments and suggestion on the first draft.)

2.   The research was carried out by scientists from the University of Southampton based at the National Oceanography Centre Southampton (NOCS), and the Pacific Geo-science Centre, Natural Resources Canada and published in Geophysical Research Letters, a biweekly peer-reviewed scientific journal of geo-science published by the American Geophysical Union, May 2013.

# Rebuilding Kerala: Lessons from Aceh?

**John Kurien**

*Aceh Province bears close resemblance to Kerala in physical features - west facing coastline; hills in the east running parallel to the coast; and a plenitude of rivers flowing westwards. The lesson for Kerala is that reconstruction is best achieved with a separately designated, time-bound and focussed entity for execution, with sanction of the legislature and accountability to it, but with the freedom to function according to the highest professional and ethical standards. This entity should be viewed as a public-private-people partnership for building back better. In the context of global climate change, if we do not wish another deluge, let us forge a measured balance between 'deep ecological activism' for conserving nature on the one hand, and on the other, a well-planned reconstruction of our habitations, our choice of cash crop agriculture, a re-look on our dams, a willingness not to disturb the banks and sand of our rivers, and an agreement to leave our beaches as playgrounds for the sea. To achieve this, we need, like Aceh, a renewed political engagement, in a new framework, where our commitment is not to narrow political, class and caste identities but open to envisioning and co-creating a new Kerala, within the purview of its natural boundaries, with the pledge to build back better.*

The deluge in Kerala and the challenge to rebuild a 'New Kerala' reminded me of my four-year involvement in post-tsunami efforts at Aceh Province of Indonesia to 'build back better' - the phrase coined by US President Clinton when visiting Aceh.

I learnt in Aceh that disaster management has five phases: rescue, relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and redevelopment. The first four are part of common discourse in Kerala. By redevelopment, however, we are alluding to using the context of a disaster to re-envision a change in the composition, pace and direction of the development process.

Aceh Province bears close resemblance to Kerala in physical features - west facing coastline; hills in the east running parallel to the coast; and a plenitude of rivers flowing westwards. Some common socio-cultural traits make a Keralite nostalgic. They include the '*kadai kopi*' (coffee shop) with the single newspaper and contentious political arguments in the morning. Many Acehnese trace their origins to Ponnani in Malabar.

In Aceh, the monster 8 metre tsunami wave of December 2004 swallowed over 150,000 persons in less than 30 minutes, often reaching over 5 kilometres inside the coastline. It totally wiped out coastal towns and villages, leaving the traumatised survivors in a state of shock.

In Kerala, the well-coordinated and heart-rending rescue phase is over. Relief emanated from every corner of the state, country and abroad. Undoubtedly, the best in us manifests in the worst of times. The flood waters are receding, relief camps are closing and people slowly trudging back wearily to their silt and mud filled homes. Rehabilitating people back to their homes is marked by an upswell of universal goodwill and fraternal feeling without any consideration of the barriers and identities that divide us in good times.

The narrative of the discourse at all levels - affected households, the local communities, and the various tiers of governance - has shifted

to thinking about the priorities and strategies for reconstruction. How can Kerala turn this crisis into an opportunity of sorts?

**Leadership for Reconstruction**

In Aceh, reconstruction was coordinated by a specially created agency, decreed by the President of the Republic of Indonesia. The Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency - BRR for short - was designated to operate for a four-year period, with competent full-time staff and two oversight boards. The Agency's mission was to "*restore livelihoods and strengthen affected communities by designing and overseeing a coordinated, community-driven reconstruction programme implemented according to the highest professional standards.*"

There was a Master Plan for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction. BRR matched donor funds to specific community needs through a process that was rigorous, sensitive to local concerns and priorities, and well-monitored. BRR coordination was essential to ensure timely delivery of support and eliminate legal and institutional uncertainties in reconstruction.

BRR recognized the important role of local community input and participation in reconstruction. Local government bodies, customary and community leaders, academics, religious leaders and NGOs were continuously consulted and involved in re-shaping the reconstruction plan whenever needed. Mechanisms to trigger community-based reconstruction initiatives were critical to ensure participation - and more importantly to eliminate perception of bias or corruption.

The lesson for Kerala is that reconstruction is best achieved with a separately designated, time-bound and focussed entity for execution, with sanction of the legislature and accountability to it, but with the freedom to function according to the highest professional and ethical standards. This entity should be viewed as a public-private-people partnership for building back better.

Its mission should be to create a part fixed, part flexible physical master plan from a judicious amalgamation of participatory ward/panchayat level physical rehabilitation and reconstruction plans. Each ward/panchayat should provide a vision statement for their rebuilt reality. This amalgam must then be meshed with macro-assessments of reconstruction needs which have taken seriously the geo-physical and environmental factors in nature made amply visible in the wake of the deluge.

**Aid Coordination**

With aid pouring into Aceh (it reached USD 8 billion), the Government of Indonesia requested the World Bank to establish a multi-donor trust fund (MDF) to pool donor contributions. The MDF activities had to be consistent with, and guided by, the Government's Master Plan and under the leadership and direction of BRR.

The MDF helped all donors allocate funds judiciously. It provided detailed spatial and financial information on the specific needs of the survivors. Procurement procedures were made simpler and transparent shortening implementation time. Smaller donors with limited overseas experience or administrative capacity also used MDF as a channel for their aid.

In Kerala, a multi-donor profile is gradually evolving for assisting reconstruction. Aid from central government, foreign nation states and international development agencies and banks have fixed arrangements and channels to reach the coffers of the state. Kerala can also make project proposals for specific short and long-term needs, availing of soft loans and grants from a range of sources including the World Bank and the United Nations system. The Kerala diaspora is ready to answer the Chief Minister's call to pledge a month's earnings for this cause. They will pledge more if the state can guarantee that hard-earned money they contribute can, if they so indicate, be utilised for specific projects intended for designated places and people.

Kerala needs a special purpose financial trust facility for overall and nuanced aid coordination. This facility should have the Chief Minister and Finance Minister at its helm, but the operational charge needs to be given to qualified bureaucrats and experts with experience in dealing with the financial management of disaster reconstruction.

**Linking Aid to Execution**

In Aceh, when dealing with the post-tsunami relief, information technology and local expertise was not as developed as in Kerala today. The BRR depended on e-mail, SMS, satellite phones, GIS, and regular ground-checks. Matching funds and personnel to exact locations for reconstruction work took time due to complete destruction of road infrastructure. Delays gave rise to doubts about credibility of the process. Local level coordination and execution were dependent on physical meetings with paper charts. At BRR there was the occasional power-point presentations and rare video conferencing arrangements.

Despite these shortcomings, credibly linking aid and execution helped form strong partnerships and investments were thereby effectively utilised. Information about quantum, location and utilisation of aid was made more transparent.

In Kerala today, the ubiquitous smart phone, provides transparency, accountability and empowerment. Citizens photos of damage or progress of restoration can spread through social media networks. Our talented IT personnel, equipped with open source and open hearts, can make a one-to-one match between anyone's donation with the specific reconstruction needs of a village, a people or special cause of her choice. The twinning offers both donor and recipient, transparency and accountability at almost zero marginal costs. This enhances the trust of individual and institutional donors. The result is more aid.

**Tsunami of Private Aid**

The Aceh tsunami was the first major disaster seen worldwide

on live TV reportage. The impact on hearts and purse strings of viewers was without parallel. In Aceh, after the tsunami their next problem was the tsunami of aid.

Direct private aid, channelled through local and religious institutions were hard to stop, but they created their fair share of contentious issues on the ground. Allegations of corruption, unwarranted compensation to those who suffered less or did not suffer at all, were rampant.

In Kerala too, NGOs and religious organisations have their clientele and obligations towards them. They may not be willing to pool their resources into any common kitty, particularly if controlled by the state. It is hard to trample on the rights of such organisations. However, these acts of kindness and favouritism, must be recorded at the local panchayat level, to discourage their beneficiaries making duplicate claims to aid from public funds. Affected households, from upper echelons of our society, may not lay claim to government financial assistance. They need to be separately registered. Along with others they will require assistance for getting duplicates of legal documents, linking back to the electricity grid and road network. Thus, dealing with the official reconstruction apparatus becomes inevitable.

**Redevelopment Challenges**

For Aceh, the 'gift of the tsunami' was total provincial autonomy granted by Government of Indonesia in matters of political governance, customary, cultural and social expression and management of natural resources, among others.

The Government of Aceh became open to a new development paradigm for natural resources giving serious consideration to co-management - where state, community and market - coalesce from the lowest level upwards to protect and utilise the real wealth of society for a just, participatory, sustainable and self-reliant process of development.

In Kerala, our settlement pattern, food grains, cash crops,

tourism, power sources, fisheries, and easy access to fresh water are a few essential attributes which arise innately from the special geo-physical contours of the state. The recent floods have highlighted once again the inevitable need for greater partnership of state and community to utilise and manage these precious natural resources. We must utilise the golden opportunity, thrown up by crisis, to re-imagine and re-design how we situate ourselves within the context of Kerala's salubrious natural environment.

In the context of global climate change, if we do not wish another deluge, let us forge a measured balance between 'deep ecological activism' for conserving nature on the one hand, and on the other, a well-planned reconstruction of our habitations, our choice of cash crop agriculture, a re-look on our dams, a willingness not to disturb the banks and sand of our rivers, and an agreement to leave our beaches as playgrounds for the sea.

To achieve this, we need, like Aceh, a renewed political engagement, in a new framework, where our commitment is not to narrow political, class and caste identities but open to envisioning and co-creating a new Kerala, within the purview of its natural boundaries, with the pledge to build back better.

# INDIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

The Indian Council of Social Science Research, (ICSSR) an autonomous organization established by the Government of India, promotes research and publications in Social Science.

## *Social Science in Perspective*

*(Quarterly Journal of C.Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library)*
Place on record its obligation to ICSSR for financial support and academic recognition.

# C. ACHUTHA MENON FOUNDATION PUBLICATIONS

1. *Achutha Menon Souvenir* (Mal) (1993).

2. K.V. Surendranath (ed.) (1993): *For An Indian Model: Essays in Homage to C. Achutha Menon*, Trivandrum.

3. K.V. Surendranath (ed.) (2002): *Diary Notings of C. Achutha Menon* (Mal.), Current Books, Thrissur.

4. *Selected Works of C. Achutha Menon* (Mal.) (2002): Manorama Publications, Kottayam.

5. *C. Achutha Menon Smrithi Chitrangal* (Mal) (2004): Pappiyon, Kozhikode.

6. K.V. Surendranath (2006): *Man, Vision and Environment* (Mal), Gautha Books, Trivandrum.

7. K.V. Surendranath (2006): *Lokathinte Mukalthattilude* (Mal), Gautha Books, Trivandrum.

8. *K.V. Surendranath Souvenir* (2006): Sahithya Keralam, Special Edition, C.Achutha Menon Foundation.

9. V. Sundaresan (ed.) (2007): *K. Damodaran Smrithi Chithrangal* (Mal), Goutha Books, Trivandrum.

10. Sureshkumar R.K. and P. Sureshkumar (eds.) (2006): *Governance and Development*, APH, New Dehi.

11. Suresh Kumar R.K. and P. Sureshkumar (2008): *Development, Politics and Society: Left Politics in Kerala - A Disinterested Perspective*, APH, New Delhi

12. K. Raman Pillai (2010)*: Facets of Indian Politics,* APH, New Delhi

13.	K. Raman Pillai (ed.) (2010): *Land Reforms*, APH, New Delhi.

14.	Raman Pillai K., R.K. Sureshkumar & P. Sukumaran Nair (eds.) (2013): *Electoral Reforms*, Kalpaz, New Delhi.

15.	V. Sundaresan (ed.) (2013) : *C. Achutha Menon Smrithi Chithrangal* (Mal), C.Achutha Menon Foundation, Thiruvananthapuram.

16.	V. Sundaresan (ed.) (2013) : *Kavisanghamam* (Mal), C.Achutha Menon Foundation, Thiruvanantahpuram

17.	K. Raman Pillai (Chief ed.) : *C.Achutha Menon Birth Centenary Souvenir* (Mal.) (2013), C.Achutha Menon Foundation, Thiruvananthapuram.

18.	Vivekanandan B., R.K. Suresh Kumar & P. Sukumaran Nair (eds.) (2014) : *India Today: Issues Before the Nation - A Festschrift in Honour of Prof. (Dr.) K. Raman Pillai.*, Gyan, New Delhi.

19.	Suresh Kumar R.K. and P. Suresh Kumar (2014): *Vikasanam Rashtreeyam Samooham : Keralathile Edathupaksha Rashtreeyam Oru Abhiveekshanam* (Mal), C. Achutha Menon Foundation, Thiruvananthapuram.

20.	Suresh Kumar R.K. (2014): *Manavikathayude Prakasagopuramayi Oraal.* (Mal), C. Achutha Menon Foundation, Thiruvananthapuram.

21.	Raman Pillai K., R.K. Suresh Kumar & P.Sukumaran Nair (eds.) (2016) : *Panchayati Raj Experience in India*, Kalpaz, New Delhi.

22.	R.K.Suresh Kumar & P.Suresh Kumar (eds.) (2016) : *Mattoru Keralam Sadhyamanu (Mal)*, Prabhat, Thiruvananthapuram.

Statement about Ownership and Other Particulars About
**SOCIAL SCIENCE IN PERSPECTIVE**
**FORM - IV**
(See Rule 8)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Place of Publication | : | C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Thiruvananthapuram |
| 2. | Periodicity of Publication | : | Quarterly |
| 3. | Printer's Name | : | Dr. R.K.Suresh Kumar |
| | Nationality | : | Indian |
| | Address | : | C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram 695 012 |
| 4. | Publisher's Name | : | Dr. R.K. Suresh Kumar |
| | Nationality | : | Indian |
| | Address | : | C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram 695 012 |
| 5. | Editor's Name | : | Dr. R.K. Suresh Kumar |
| | Nationality | : | Indian |
| | Address | : | C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram 695 012 |
| 6. | Name and Address of individuals who own the news paper and partners : or shareholders holding more than one percent of the total capital. | | C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram 695 012 |

I, Dr. R.K. Suresh kumar, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sd/-

Dated : 25-09-2009                                    **Dr. R.K. Suresh Kumar**

Publisher

# Kashmir Issue & India–Pakistan Relations
## C. Achyutha Menon Memorial Lecture 2019

**B. Vivekanandan**

*In order to build up a new solidarity based relationship between India and Pakistan, serious efforts should be made, with a vision, to create a new higher political framework of a Confederation between the two countries, which would formally pool their destinies together, by strengthening the bonds which unite them. It will enable both the countries to pay more attention, with more resources, to better the living standards of all their people. Experts from both countries would vouch for the immense mutual benefits, or what may be called 'peace dividends', which they can derive politically, economically and socially, from such a consummation. Their history, geography, tradition, resources, habits and culture and their other symbiotic features are all in favour of bringing the two countries into a single larger political framework. In fact, their complementarities overwhelm other factors. Of course, the establishment of a Confederation between the two countries requires a great vision, and high statesmanship on the part of the political leadership of both countries.*

My personal relationship with Sri. Achyutha Menon began 50 years ago, more precisely in 1968, when he came to New Delhi as a

Rajyasabha member, and started living in North Avenue, near the Rashtrapathi Bhavan.

At that time, I was doing my Ph.D. in Indian School of International Studies, and was also living in North Avenue. During that period two of my fellow Ph.D. students of the School of International Studies, who were doing their Ph.Ds on Soviet Union, faced a serious problem. They were unable to go to the Soviet Union for their field work, which was compulsory for the completion of their Ph.D. theses, since they were not getting Visas from the Soviet Embassy to visit the Soviet Union. And, they sought my help in the matter.

One day I met Sri. C. Achyutha Menon at his residence in North Avenue and explained to him the problem of my fellow students and requested his help. After listening, he asked to me bring both those students to him. I took them to him, and they gave him their details. He asked them a few questions by way of checking whether they knew any Communist leaders of their States - Karnataka and Gujarat. They told him that they did not know any of them. Then he looked at me; and I just smiled. Then he said "Doesn't matter. After all it is an academic matter". Then he told us that in the Soviet Embassy he never met anybody below the Ambassador, and that, the then Ambassador Mr. Pegov was on leave and asked my friends to wait. He said, "Let me see".

All along the conversation he was matter of fact and to the point and remained serious. I found in him a man of deeds, and there, he did not dole out any soothing promises to us. And, we left.

Next day evening, I received a phone call from Sri. Achyutha Menon. His crisp communication was that: "Ask your friends to go to the Soviet Embassy and collect their Visas". I was amazed at the extraordinary efficiency and earnestness of Sri.C. Achyutha Menon. Without giving any expressed assurance to us, he promptly went to the Soviet Embassy next day itself, and attended to my friends problem.

That was Achyutha Menon, the man, Whom I can remember only with deep respect and reverence.

Anyone who met would admire him. Even a tough political opponent, like Sri. Pattom Thanu Pillai, had a high regard for C. Achyutha Menon - a great humanist, and a Gandhian Communist, who imbibed the Gandhian spirit of simplicity, and purity, in personal and public life. His honesty and integrity was above board.

In today's "C. Achyutha Menon Memorial Lecture", I have been asked to speak on the subject: "The Kashmir Issue and India-Pakistan Relations".

## I

As the Kashmir issue has been made a flash-point of India - Pakistan Relationship, which has stimulated a voluntary offer from the US President Donald Trump to become a mediator of it, and in the context of Prime Minister Imran Khan's threat that Pakistan would go to any extent for Kashmir, including raising the issue in UN General Assembly and other international fora, it is imperative to go back to the basics of the Kashmir issue to understand it in the correct perspective.

**The Genesis**

It may be recalled that when India and Pakistan began their odyssey as two independent nations, on 15th August, 1947, the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir (J & K) chose to remain independent. But, two months later, that choice became untenable, as a large number of armed tribesmen from the North-West Frontier of Pakistan invaded Kashmir, on 20 October 1947, and looted the state, with the help of some Pakistani army irregulars. It created an alarming situation in J & K, as the King of the State did not have the strength to stop the invaders, nor to beat them back and drive them out. In the circumstances, the King of J & K, Maharaja Hari Singh, requested the help of the Indian

Army to drive out the invaders. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who was the Home Minister, and the Deputy Prime Minister of India at that time, informed Maharaja Hari Singh that, India would not be able to send the Indian Army to J & K, unless the State joined the Indian Union, as other princely states had done.

The methodology India followed for the merger of Princely States in India with the Indian Union was that, if the King of the State, and the Leader of the largest political party in the State, agreed to join the Indian Union, that merger would be final. That was how all other princely states in India joined the Indian Union. In J & K, the largest political party of the State was the National Conference, headed by Sheikh Abdullah. In conformity with the methodology followed hitherto, the King of J & K, Maharaja Hari Singh and Sheikh Abdulla, the leader of National Conference, agreed to accede the State with the Indian Union, and the Accession Document was signed on 26 October 1947. Therefore, the accession of Jammu and Kashmir with India was unconditional, complete, and final.  And, the entire territory of Jammu and Kashmir up to the International boarder of Pakistan became legally the territory of the Indian Union. Therefore, clearly, Pakistan has no legal right over any part of Jammu and Kashmir. Hence, the presence of the Pakistan Army in any part of the Jammu and Kashmir is an illegal occupation, which has to end peacefully, to make Pakistan prosperous, with India's co-operation.

Following the State's merger, the Indian Army was sent to Jammu and Kashmir and the army operations against the 'tribal invaders' began in right earnest. When the invading tribesmen learnt about the Indian Army operations against them, they fled the Kashmir Valley, and crossed over to the other side of Pakistan's international boundary. They were careful not to be caught inside the Indian territory of J & K. When all these developments were taking place in J & K, from October 1947, Pakistan did not make any territorial claim over the State. Significantly when India took up the matter with the UN, and requested the UN

Security Council on 1ˢᵗ January 1948, to direct Pakistan, not to assist nor participate in the invasion of Kashmir, in its reply at the UN Security Council, on 15ᵗʰ January 1948, Pakistan denied any role in the tribesmen's invasion of Kashmir.

**Nehru's Three Mistakes**

Meanwhile, Jawaharlal Nehru voluntarily made an impractical offer of a 'plebiscite' in J & K, which he did not offer to the people of other princely states, like Travancore for example, which joined the Indian Union earlier. The 'plebiscite' offer remained infructuous, despite a UN resolution on it, for two reasons:- (1) It was not part of merger document; and (2) In J & K itself, there was no consensus on it among socio-political groups in the State. Dogras, Kashmiri Pandits, Gujjars, Bakkarwals, and Ladakhi Buddhists were opposed to this 'plebiscite' proposal. A Kashmir Valley-focused approach in it was not acceptable to them. However, the only purpose which this unsolicited voluntary offer of Plebiscite served was that, it gave a good tool to Pakistan to talk about Kashmir in International fora, and to embarrass India. Another grave mistake Jawaharlal Nehru did, in this context, was that, he prematurely took up this domestic matter of India to the United Nations, with an apparent trivial objective of implicating Pakistan in the "Tribesmen's" invasion of J & K.

But, the gravest mistake Jawaharlal Nehru made, in this context, was his thoughtless personal intervention, during the course of the Indian Army's operations in J & K. He made that mistake in May 1948, at a critical stage of the Indian Army's operations, to clear off all Pakistani intruders from the J & K territory. When the Indian Army was successfully engaged in driving out the invaders from the whole of Kashmir, including from the present Azad Kashmir, before the completion of that task, Nehru ordered the Indian Army to stop its operation and created a cease-fire line inside the Indian territory of Kashmir. It is worth noting that, Nehru insisted on stopping the army operations, when Major General Kalwant Singh, Commander of the Indian Army in Kashmir, was

pleading "endlessly" with Nehru, to allow him to advance, and give him five more days to complete the task and to bring the entire territory of J & K under India's possession and control. Kalwant Singh explained to Nehru that, "There is no resistance anywhere. But the terrain is difficult. We have to climb it up to reach the Pakistan border", for which, he requested for five more days operations.  But Nehru said, "No", and asked Kalwant Singh to stop operations and "Stay where you are".

A dejected Kalwant Singh obeyed the Prime Minister's orders and made the Indian Army to line-up at the point, where they had reached at that time, inside Kashmir. When the Pakistani intruders and the Pakistan Army saw the Indian Army voluntarily stopped its operations, and lined up inside Kashmir, the Pakistan Army personnel, who ran out from Kashmir to the other side earlier, re-entered Kashmir, and formed a parallel line inside Kashmir. That is the present Cease-fire Line or Line of Control in Kashmir. It was only after this development that in August 1948, Pakistan confirmed, for the first time, its army's presence in Kashmir.

In a graphic account of the operation of the Indian Army at that time, on the ground, Russel Brines records:

The Indians launched an offensive in the Sprint of 1948…… The Indian Army sent one column to Uri with a flanking movement over the mountains of the north. The flank attach under the colourful General Thimmayya was so successful that he captured Tithwal on May 23 (1948) and looked down on Musafarabad, only eighteen miles away. Mussafarabad, now the capital of Azad Kashmir, was the political key of the campaign. The threat to Muzaffarabad forced a Pakistani withdrawal from the entire northern sector, but the Indians stopped, apparently on their own volition, and a Pakistan Brigade stablised the situation (Russel Brines, *The Indo-Pakistani Conflict*, London, 1968, p.75).

This account of Russel Brines obliquely confirms that the Indian

Army's advance in Kashmir was stopped on Nehru's orders. If Nehru had allowed the army operations for five more days, we would not have had this trouble with Pakistan over Kashmir. With the capture of Muzaffarabad, India could have gone on to reclaim and possess the whole of Kashmir.

In brief, through a series of follies, the Kashmir issue, which was primarily an issue of the security of an Indian State acceded to the Indian Union, was transformed into an Indo-Pakistani problem; and, by bringing the United Nations into the picture, it was made an international issue, with all its accompanying ill-effects for India and Pakistan. It marked the beginning of India's problems with Pakistan.

## The Special status

When independent India made its Constitution in 1950, Jammu and Kashmir was temporarily granted a special status under Article 370. In the Indian Constitution, Article 370 has been marked as a "temporary provision with respect to the State of Jammu and Kashmir". It has provided for some additional formalities for the application of certain Central laws in the State, and imposed restrictions on persons outside the State for purchasing land from the State. It has also made Article 238 (regarding a Special Officer for SC/ST communities) inapplicable in Jammu and Kashmir. These special features in it notwithstanding, Article 370 of the Constitution remained a temporary one. In the right perspective, there is nothing extra-ordinary in rescinding a temporary Article of the Indian Constitution, if it is found that it is perpetuating an unnecessary lacuna in the system, or that its negative impact outweighed its positive impact. Equally important is to consider whether the rescinding of an Article is harmful or beneficial to the people of the concerned State. On both these counts, the rescinding of Article 370 of our Constitution, at this point of time, is not unjustifiable. Of course, opinion would differ on the question whether time has come to abrogate Article 370 from the Statute Book, and end the special status it has temporarily granted to J&K. However, it seems that the largest beneficiaries of the present

action, would be the Kashmiri youth, who would be looking around for new opportunities in the rest of India.

India is a secular democracy, which upholds equality as a fundamental principle. In that vein, equality of all states and equal right of all citizens in the country are fundamental. Keeping these factors in view, it is time for India to re-examine all discriminatory provisions in our Constitution, including various provisions for reservations, and weed out discriminations at all levels, to usher in real democracy in the country. Article 370 had created a hiatus in the working of States in the country which needed to be removed. Therefore, the act of ending of the special status for J & K, and bringing it on a par with other states in the country need not cause much heart burn.

**The Authoritarian Way**

But, I strongly disapprove the way in which the Narendra Modi Government has done it. It smacks of authoritarianism. The rashness of the Government measures on the eve of scrapping Article 370, and the subsequent harsh measures which followed, might have caused alienation of more people in J & K. To place respectable, and responsible State leaders, like Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti under arrest, and house arrest, and the sending of a large contingent of army to the State, as a prelude to the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, is not befitting Indian democracy. On the occasion of Id, all major mosques in J & K were kept out of bounds. After 18 days of the present crackdown in the State, when a group of opposition leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, D. Raja, Sharad Yadav, Sitaram Yachuri, went to J & K to see the prevalent situation in the state they were not allowed even to step out of the Srinagar Airport, and were forced to return, without meeting any local people or the local media persons. These are not good signals. The proper way of doing it would have been, to proceed for scrapping Article 370, after holding serious discussions on the proposed course of action, with all responsible political leaders of Jammu and Kashmir, in an effort to reach a consensus on the proposal.

Instead of doing it in this manner, to rough-shod the process is a flawed method.

Pakistan has raised a hew and cry over the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, and has threatened to approach the international community in the matter. As part of its unilateral measures, Pakistan has downgraded its diplomatic relations with India, expelled the Indian High Commissioner in Islamabad, decided not to send Pakistan's High Commissioner designate to India, and suspended its trade with India. These are short-sighted and unsustainable measures, which Pakistan will have to rescind, one after the other, sooner than later, in its own interest. Pakistan is unlikely to get much international support, except possibly, from China, to its stand on the issue, since the matter is of India's domestic jurisdiction, and Pakistan has no *locus standi* to raise objection on the matter. However, there is no scope for a third party mediation in the matter, as the issue has to be settled peacefully, and bilaterally, by giving due respect for the legal right of the state concerned, if necessary, by forging a higher frame of political relationship between India and Pakistan which would make the Kashmir issue no issue at all.

## II

**India - Pakistan Wars**

Coming to India-Pakistan relations, ever since India and Pakistan started off their journey in 1947, as two new nations, their relationship has been put under a deterrence doctrine-based, confrontationist mode. The Kashmir issue has provided an impetus to it all these years. During a span of the last seven decades, India and Pakistan have fought four futile wars, which did not end in the resolution of any bilateral problem. The war between India and Pakistan in 1948 created the Kashmir problem. The war between the two countries in 1965 ended without any tangible benefit. The Thashkant Agreement, between Lal Bahadur Sasthri and General Ayub Khan in 1966 after the 1965 war, ended up in the restoration of the *status quo ante* prior to the start of that war. The Indo-

Pak war of 1971 ended with the birth of Bangladesh. Though that war presented a golden opportunity to India to solve the Kashmir issue peacefully, Indira Gandhi wasted it. At the time of signing of Shimla Agreement, after that war, she allowed herself to be carried away by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's bluff, and agreed to release 93,000 Pakistani Prisoners of War from Indian custody, without settling the Kashmir issue. The Kargil War between India and Pakistan in 1999 was a futile war, planned and executed by Pakistan's Army Chief, Parvez Musharaf, without the knowledge of the Prime Minister Navas Sheriff.

The lesson these Indo-Pak wars conveys is that, war and confrontation are not the right method to solve any problem between India and Pakistan. Co-operation, dialogue and discussion between the two countries, in a spirit of their common future are the right methods. Both countries will have to find ways and means to insulate the Kashmir issue, from bedeviling India-Pakistan relations in future.

**Civilian - Military Relationship in Pakistan**

Unlike in India, in Pakistan, democracy has been reduced to a sham by the dominance of the military machine in the State. In Islamabad, the army has established its supremacy over the civilian administration, as a result of which the army often acts on its own, without the knowledge or consent of the civilian authority in Government. A notable example of it is the Kargil War. The fact that the Kargil war was planned and executed by the Pakistan Army Chief Parvez Musharaf, without the knowledge of Prime Minister Nawas Sherif, was revealed by Nawas Sheriff himself when he visited New Delhi after the Kargil War. At a one-to-one meeting between him and India's Defence Minister, George Fernandes, he told Fernandes that: "I never knew anything about the Kargil War. If I knew it, I would not have allowed it".  This was told to me by George Fernandes later. He told me: "I trust Nawaz Sheriff. He is a good man."

We must keep this bizarre feature of the working of Pakistan democracy in mind, when we deal with Pakistan. I believe that Mr. Imran

Khan's position, as Prime Minister of Pakistan today, is not different. But, keeping this in view, India should help the political leadership in Pakistan to regain its primacy in decision-making. That is important in finding peaceful political solutions to all bilateral issues between India and Pakistan. The political leadership of both countries must realize that preservation of an adversarial, confrontationist relationship between India and Pakistan, and maintenance of a war-like situation all along in the border regions, is a vested interest of Pakistani military leadership, to preserve its primacy in decision-making in Pakistan.

Therefore, in order to help the Pakistani political leadership to gain its primacy, it is imperative, as a first step, to take Indo-Pak relationship out, from the present, deterrence doctrine-based, confrontationist mode, and place it in a cooperation-based, mutuality-based, common security-based, and a common future-based mode. Once it is done, we would see a flurry of peaceful solutions to all unresolved bilateral problems, including the Kashmir problem, between India and Pakistan.

**India-Pakistan Confederation**

In order to build up a new solidarity based relationship between India and Pakistan, serious efforts should be made, with a vision, to create a new higher political framework of a Confederation between the two countries, which would formally pool their destinies together, by strengthening the bonds which unite them. It will enable both the countries to pay more attention, with more resources, to better the living standards of all their people. Experts from both countries would vouch for the immense mutual benefits, or what may be called 'peace dividends', which they can derive politically, economically and socially, from such a consummation. Their history, geography, tradition, resources, habits and culture and their other symbiotic features are all in favour of bringing the two countries into a single larger political framework. In fact, their complementarities overwhelm other factors. Of course, the establishment of a Confederation between the two countries requires a great vision,

and high statesmanship on the part of the political leadership of both countries.

## Needs a Caring Approach

I have no doubt that, if India makes a caring move, in right spirit, towards Pakistan, there will be a reciprocal matching response from Islamabad.  This I say, on the basis of knowledge I have gained from a secret conversation, which took place between Prime Minister Morarji Desai and President General Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan, when Shri.Morarji Desai was India's Prime Minister between 1977 and 1979. At that time, President Zia-ul-Haq took a decision to increase the size of the Pakistan Army. India's intelligence sources immediately informed Prime Minister Morarji Desai about the decision of the Pakistan President.

## Morarji Desai - Zia-ul-Haq Interactions

Generally such matters are handled first through the diplomatic channels. But in this case, Shri. Morarji Desai decided to handle it by himself. Shri.Desai immediately, picked up his red telephone, meant only for making direct calls to Heads of Government, and dialled President Zia-Ul-Haq, and asked him straight, without any prelims: "General, why do you need a big army for Pakistan? If Pakistan is in trouble, tell me. My army will be at your disposal". Those three sentences from the Indian Prime Minister, assuring Indian Army's assistance to defend Pakistan, made Zia-ul-Haq dumbfound. Zia could not visualize such a generous, re-assuring expression from the Indian Prime Minister. He was so overwhelmed and thrilled that he became speechless. He trusted the words of Morarji Desai and abandoned his plan to expand the size of the Pakistan Army. From that day, General Zia-ul-Haq became an ardent admirer of Shri.Morarji Deasi. As a mark of his deep admiration and respect for the towering statesmanship of Shri.Morarji Desai, President Zia-ul-Haq conferred 'Nishan-e-Pakistan', the highest civilian honour of Pakistan, equivalent to India's *Bharat Ratna*, on Shri. Desai.

The content of this top level secret conversation between Shri.Morarji Desai and Gen.Zia-ul-Haq, was revealed to me by Shri.Morarji Desai himself, during a meeting between us a little later. I do not know whether the Prime Minister's Office has kept any record of this secret conversation between Shri. Morarji and Gen. Zia-ul-Haq. However, it is my conviction that if Shri. Morarji Desai remained Prime Minister till the end of his 5-year term, the Kashmir issue also would have been solved in the most peaceful way. The pulling down of his government, when it was only half-way through, was a great loss for the country.

**One People in Two Nations**

That apart, the message, the record of Morarji Desai-Zia-ul-Haq interaction conveys is that if India adopts a caring attitude to Pakistan's security, stability and welfare, there would be a matching reciprocal response from Pakistan. After all, in the ultimate analysis, Indians and Pakistanis are 'One People in Two Nations'. The Wagah border, which I visited many years ago, does not indicate any physical or cultural divide between the people who live on both sides of the border line. During my visits abroad, I had innumerable opportunities to interact with many Pakistanis. My experience is that when we go abroad, Pakistanis have been found to be our warm friends. They show their affinity and brotherly affection to us spontaneously, just due to the fact that we came from India.

At peoples level this warm feeling for one another remains in the hearts of millions of ordinary people in both countries, though it has seldom reflected at the establishment levels, except during the Prime Ministership of Shri.Morarji Desai. During my travels abroad, I have experienced the generous and affectionate hospitality of our Pakistani brotheren, without any expectation in return. Indeed, helping Indians is a passion for Pakistanis abroad. Similarly, it is on record that whenever Imran Khan came to India to play cricket, or whenever Pakistani singers

like Noor Jahan came to India for performance, people of India enthusiastically celebrated the occasions.

Therefore, when there exists such a feeling of warmth in the inner recess of the people of India and Pakistan, it would be easy for political leadership of both countries to pool their destinies together for achieving peace and common prosperity. It would free the sub-continent from the ill-conceived and ill-motivated meddling of big powers to exploit and draw huge benefits, like arms trade, for example, from the confrontationist relationship between India and Pakistan.

I am an optimist. I am sure that in the coming decades, India and Pakistan would follow the path which two Germanys have shown, on 9 November 1989, to peacefully come together and prosper together.

# Campaigning through Social Media: Understanding BJP's 2019-Election Victory

**Patibandla Srikant**

*This paper argues that, the social media campaign steered by BJP among other factors had played crucial role in bringing BJP back to power. Thus, while there are other important factors that determined BJP's win, this paper specifically looks at social media campaign in order to understand BJP's victory. The social media campaign is a mix of fact and fiction often leaving voters in believing fiction as fact. The BJP campaign has managed to integrate development with aggressive nationalism on social media. On the one hand BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate Narendra Modi was repeatedly projected as the 'messiah' for Indian development; on the other hand a grand narrative was built around aggressive muscular Hindutva nationalism. In the process the development realized during earlier regimes of BJP was belittled, while simultaneously campaigning for strong India, building aggressive and exclusive nationalism. In spite of the hate campaign, it appears that the Indian voter has supported BJP in 2019 elections. In other words, why did the Indian voter vote for BJP, though the BJP-regime from 2014 to 2019 acted inimical and antithetical to the interests of the people?*

The recently concluded general elections-2019 had left scholars of Indian polity in a confused state. This is, because, many scholars studying Indian polity have opined that the incumbent Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) had amassed a great degree of anti-incumbency and hence would lose the elections. Analysts of the Indian polity have looked at various factors to prove their point. Some of them are: attacks on minorities, mob lynching, atrocities on dalits, various sections of the society suffering due to demonetization, haphazard implementation of goods and service tax (GST), crisis in agriculture sector, suppression of liberal voice, tweaking of growth rates and employment figures, last but not the least, not fulfilling the poll promises made in the run up to 2014 elections. The elusive promise of 'acche din' (good days) and bringing back the black money coupled with Vijaya Mallya and Nirav Modi's escape from India and Rafale scam have put the BJP-led NDA government in spot. These are only few issues among much larger number of complaints against the NDA government, ranging from saffronisation to war mongering.

Much to the chagring of the political analysts the BJP-led NDA had won the 2019 elections with much better numbers compared to 2014 elections. Final results of 2014 and 2019 elections are given below:

**Table 1: Final tally of NDA and UPA in 2019 and 2014 Elections**

| Name of the Alliance | 2019 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|
| National Democratic Alliance-NDA | 351 | 336 |
| United Progressive Alliance-UPA | 93 | 59 |
| Others | 98 | 148 |

*Source: Focus on the Global South (2019).*

Moreover, the growth rate has witnessed a downward slide in the second half of 2018, less than one year before the elections. By 2019 March (one to two months before the elections) the growth rate was only 5.8 per cent. Consequently, India had witnessed the highest unemployment rate in the past four decades - 6.1 per cent (Focus on

the Global South, 2019: 42). If there is a real or perceived resentment against the BJP-led NDA government, then what led the Indian voter to hand over the baton to the incumbent Modi-led government? Notwithstanding various conspiracy theories like tampering of electronic voting machines (EVMs) to rigging, one needs to engage with the dominant hegemony that the BJP had built during its rule between 2014 and 2019. The question is what went into building this dominant hegemony? Why did the Indian voter allow this hegemony to survive and thrive? What forms of narratives were used to build this hegemony? And finally, how was the propaganda machinery utilized to further this campaign in realizing the goals of sustaining dominant hegemony?

In the light of the above questions, this paper argues that, the social media campaign steered by BJP among other factors had played crucial role in bringing BJP back to power. Thus, while there are other important factors that determined BJP's win, this paper specifically looks at social media campaign in order to understand BJP's victory. The social media campaign is a mix of fact and fiction[1] often leaving voters in believing fiction as fact. The BJP campaign has managed to integrate development with aggressive nationalism on social media. On the one hand BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate Narendra Modi was repeatedly projected as the 'messiah' for Indian development; on the other hand a grand narrative was built around aggressive muscular Hindutva nationalism. In the process the development realized during earlier regimes of BJP was belittled, while simultaneously campaigning for strong India, building aggressive and exclusive nationalism. In spite of the hate campaign, it appears that the Indian voter has supported BJP in 2019 elections. In other words, why did the Indian voter vote for BJP, though the BJP-regime from 2014 to 2019 acted inimical and antithetical to the interests of the people?

**Theoretical Framework**

In order to understand the phenomenon of BJP winning elections in 2019, the paper looks at the concepts of dominant hegemony and

counter hegemony as expounded by the Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci laid emphasis on 'Marxian super structure' like ideology, institutions, media, culture, which in turn brought a shift in critical  theory making way to understand ideas emanating from super structure (Lull, 1995). Hegemony, in itself does not emerge as dominant from the articulations of the ruling class. Such articulations should have every day commonly shared cultural values and the subordinated peoples have to accept that hegemony as reality in their experiences (Nordenstrengh, 1977; Williams, 1976). With rapid changes in technology and communication, it has become easy for the hegemony to create 'normal realities' based on 'common sense'. BJP's Hindutva ideology is articulated in the form of 'nationalism', which in turn manifests as a 'normal reality' and 'common sense' for the masses.

For Gramsci (1971), state is made through two overlapping spheres - political society (state rules through force/coercion), civil society (state rules through consent). Maintenance of equilibrium or balance between these two spheres constitutes hegemony. In other words, hegemony is the unity of economic and political goals combined with ethical and intellectual unity across the two spheres. In the process of achieving and maintaining state of balance between the two spheres, it is essential for the hegemonic power to have strong foundations through a common world view or 'organic ideology'. Thus, using the common world view, the hegemonic power builds false consciousness at all levels. In this process, the hegemonic power unites all the conflicting interests in the society by posing a larger goal in order to unify diverse sections under the hegemony. In the case of India, Modi led BJP has successfully piggybacked on 'nationalism' in order to secure and sustain their dominance. The protests against the dominant hegemony are often handled in the realm of political society,[2] where coercion is utilized to maintain the balance. The sphere of civil society is used to build consent among the general public in order to sustain the dominant hegemony. Coercion is carried out by the Sangh Parivar (Sangh family) by attacking beef eaters, minorities, dalits and women by forcing them to practise

the ideology of BJP. This paper argues that the BJP along with its allied organization Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has thrived hard between 2014 and 2019 to build dominant hegemony in the Indian polity. While this dominant hegemony is built by creating conflicts around various contested spaces like nationalism, religion, caste, food, dressing and other forms of cultural experiences, it is built using the development discourse. In the entire process, mainstream media was largely coopted, while social media was used extensively. This social media campaign used 'common sense' logic by contesting various established normal realities and living experiences.

**Constructing Hegemony via Social Media:[3]**

Theoretically hegemony is supported by mass media that is effectively controlled by the ruling elite. In the Indian context, while the mainstream mass media like print, electronic and digital media is patronized by the ruling elites, social media is often left in the hands of the people. In this backdrop, there is no authority that control social media effectively, as much of the news on social media is not shared centrally. Since, there is no visible location for sharing news or information on social media, anyone can share any kind of information on social media. In the campaign towards 2014 parliamentary elections Narendra Modi's image was carefully constructed as the savior of the masses and a leader capable of inaugurating a new India. Modi's image was constructed based on his repeated election victories in Gujarat and the perceived development that took place during his regime. With little botheration for facts, an aura was created around Modi's image by presenting him as the one time solution to all the panaceas prevailing in India. Thus, Modi was projected as the 'vikas purush' – a man of development (Nilsen, 2018). This aura was continued and perpetuated through careful manipulation and usage of the media. For instance, Modi's use of, what is now largely considered as redundant, All India Radio (AIR), to air his 'Mann Ki Baath' (straight from the heart) every month has helped in reaching to wider sections of the Indian electorate. Similarly, print and electronic media were both arm twisted or co-opted

to benefit BJP's rule in general and Modi's image in particular. While such usage of mainstream media by the BJP has been much talked about, use of social media by the BJP has not attracted much scholarship. In this backdrop, this paper further dwells into the BJP's use of social media in maintaining their hegemony.

The advent of information and communication technology (ICT) has changed the way information is shared. Internet connectivity has helped to connect the periphery to the centre and provided easy access. With improvements in mobile technology the urge to connect with others in real time has increased. Communication tools like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok, ShareChat, YouTube and Google groups among others have brought in a paradigm shift in the manner news is shared and consumed. In this context social media has increased its presence in elections all over the world since the US presidential elections in 2012. This was followed by Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's use of WhatsApp to influence voters, while Facebook played a key role in Rodrigo Dutere, President, Philippines to increase his support base.

Back in India, Modi used social media extensively in 2014 elections. With slogans and hash tags like 'sabka saath, sabka vikas' (development for everyone), NaMo (short version of Narendra Modi), AccheDin (good days), Modi has used Facebook, YouTube and Twitter extensively along with several websites and apps. To implement this BJP reportedly invested around USD 100 million for the campaign by hiring big names in the advertising industry like Madison World, McCaan Group, and Ogilvy and Mather to build brand Modi (Mahapatra, 2019). This large scale brand building exercise through social media brought equally large scale consensus among the voters about Modi being the 'vikas purush'. For instance, the election outcome in 160 constituencies out of 543 had been largely impacted by social media, especially Facebook (Mahapatra, 2019). As a part of 2014 election campaign at the behest of political strategist Prashant Kishor, BJP has registered an NGO in Ahmedabad in 2014 named 'The Sarvani Foundation. This

foundation was to work among women in general and acid survivors in particular and mobilize them in support of BJP. Soon after the elections this NGO went dormant and was revived and renamed as the Association of Billion Minds (ABM) after BJP lost in Bihar elections. The ABM was responsible for assembling IIT engineers, consultants, lawyers, young professionals and others to work for BJP (Bansal, et. al., 2019). ABM apart from preparing ground level information based dossiers for Amit Shah, is also actively involved in aggressively campaigning for BJP on social media.

In this backdrop, social media offers more convenience and comfort for any political party due to the following reasons:

1. real time communication of information and news;

2. allows all formats like text (including regional languages), pictures, videos and graphics;

3. no necessity to create content from a centralized location - content can be customized easily to suit the local needs - in other words campaign can be localised;

4. no supra body or authority to verify the veracity of the content - anything can be circulated;

5. reaches lakhs of people within no time, almost at zero cost - financial advantage;

6. author of the information or content creator remains anonymous;

7. easy to mobilize people politically.[4]

**Social Media in India: Some Numbers**

Internet users were estimated at 566 million in December 2018 in India. Rural users alone comprise of 250 million users (Kalbag, 2019). At the same time mobile data in India is the cheapest in the world, allowing more and more users accessing internet. Since data costs in

India have come down by 95 % India has witnessed huge surge in internet usage. On an average Indian mobile data users consume 8.3 gigabits (GB) of data per month. Even in advanced digital economy like South Korea, it is only 8 to 8.5 GB, while in China it is 5.5 GB (The Economic Times, 2019). Further, out of 566 million users, 493 millions are regular users of internet – people who have accessed internet in the last thirty days. Among 566 million users, 97% of the people access internet using mobile phone, while 42% of the users comprise of women (The Economic Times, 2019a). India has an estimated 900 million voters, with around 8000 candidates that contested in 543 constituencies. There are around 9,27,533 polling booths in order to allow voters to choose their candidate of preference. The volume of social media users appears to be matching the volume of voters in India.

**Table 2. Number of Users on various Social Media Platforms**

| Social Media Platform | Number of Users | Proportion to Number of Voters (above 18 years age) |
|---|---|---|
| WhatsApp | 37.9 crore users | 1 in every 3 voters |
| Facebook | 24.1 crore users | 1 in every 4 voters |
| Twitter | 4.3 crore users | 1 in every 20 voters |

*Source: Khan (2019)*

Considering the sheer volume of social media users in India, BJP through its well orchestrated machinery strove to build consent at one level and used coercion at another level via social media. Even if one discounts multiple identities by a single user at the rate of 10% to 20% out of the total social media users, still the number is voluminous and provides huge reach for any kind of campaign. In this regard it is pertinent to understand that BJP had set up a website in 1995, while the Congress put up a website only ion 2003 (Vanaik, 2018: 44).

**2019 Elections – BJP's Social Media Campaign**

BJP has built state-level IT cells with 20 to 30 office bearers depending upon the size of the state. In addition to these office bearers,

in all the states, there is a huge corpus of volunteers that is flexible and available on call. This IT-cell handles day-to-day campaign, strategies for campaign, generates content, counters opposition, shares, likes and retweets as a part of social media campaign. They use NaMo app, WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, Telegram, Google Groups and YouTube among others to reach people. Apart from Hindi and English languages, messages are also shared in regional languages (Shekhar, 2019). With this kind of structure in places BJP also maintained continuous touch with its social media volunteers by organizing regular meetings between volunteers and BJP leaders in various places. Interestingly the message for such meetings is communicated through social media platforms. As 2019 elections approached, such meetings were called as training workshops, where BJP leaders gave directions to the volunteers and encouraging them. In the run up to 2019 elections, BJP conducted numerous workshops starting from 2018 to its social media volunteers. In one such training workshop conducted in Gurugram in March 2019, the then Defence Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman encouraged the volunteers by calling them 'social media jawans' that can effectively counter opposition campaign against BJP (Bajwa, 2019). Apart from the BJP giving their social media volunteers a sense of empowerment, the volunteers too feel that they are empowered. Shekhar (2019) spoke to a volunteer, Lavanya Shetty, of BJP's social media team in Telangana and to quote,

> "I feel like a soldier," says 31-year-old Shetty. "It is not just about being on the border with a gun in your hand. A government also decides the fate of a nation and its people, so this is no different from a war-like situation. When I work for long hours ahead of the elections to bring the right kind of politicians to power, I think I'm a soldier for this country." (Cf. Shekhar, 2019).

BJP's successful campaign in social media as a part of 2019 elections campaign is based on installing this false notion of empowerment among the voters.

In addition to the trainings, BJP appointed one social media coordinator for each booth. For instance, BJP had recruited around 65,000 'cyber warriors' in Madhya Pradesh alone. Before state elections in Karnataka in 2018, BJP created over 20,000 WhatsApp groups (Shekhar, 2019). In each group, WhatsApp allows a maximum of 256 people and a single message can be forwarded to five people/groups at a time. Even with the restrictions one booth social coordinator of BJP would be able to send a message to 1,280 people at one go. As per the campaign plans BJP was to create a total of 9,27,533 social media coordinators at the rate of one coordinator per booth. Theoretically BJP could reach over 700 million out of 1.3 billion people at any given time, with the push of a button (Rima and Sharma, 2019). Along with BJP, RSS also had its own social media campaign in favour of BJP. The RSS social media campaigners appear to be neutral in public and hence, their campaign carries much weight. RSS groups that work below 'prant' level are code marked with numbers. 'Prant' number is followed by 'vibhag' number, which in turn is followed by the local 'mahanagar' code (Munshi, 2019). The main target of RSS is to create doubts among voters about Congress, while simultaneously urging the voters not to waste their vote casting to NOTA.

**Social Media Campaign Content: Fact or Fiction?**

With social media infrastructure in place, the next step is generating content. Whether the content generated and shared online is a fact or fiction, it appears, is not a concern for the campaigning volunteers. There are three different types of content: (i) Generate positive content about BJP; (ii) Launch counter attacks on opposition; (iii) Troll anyone who is not in line with the BJP. For instance, BJP supporters use hastags like 'anti-national or anti-Indian' (to mock at anybody opposing BJP), 'sickular' (to mock at secularists), 'libtard' (mocking at liberals), and 'presstitute' (to degenerate somebody's character) in their trolls and memes against anyone opposing BJP or Modi. On occasions social media messages even led to violent riots. For instance, in one of its reports on Indian elections, Focus on the Global South observed that,

…the use of information technology to spread and promote lynching and riots is a practice that the Hindu right has become particularly adept at, with devastating consequences, as when the uploading of a fake video by a BJP legislator in Uttar Pradesh purportedly showing a Muslim mob murdering a Hindu youth provoked riots in the city of Muzaffarnagar that took 47 lives and displaced 40,000 people (2019 : 44).

The shift from 3G to 4G connectivity has only allowed spread of fake news with lightening speed. One WhatsApp message showed Congress being soft on militancy, with a claim that their party leader has promised money to free terrorists and stonepelters (Rima and Sharma, 2019). This again, like so many other posts, turned out to be fake. Such fictional and fake messages allow BJP to garner support from various sections, by spreading false news in terms of nation and religion. BJP has projected itself ideologically as the one that stands for Hindus and India, as a result in spite of the fake messages and posts people are convinced in favour of BJP.

On the other social media platform, twitter, too BJP was proactive compared to any other political party. On March 16, 2019, Narendra Modi tweeted with the hashtag #MainBhiChowkidar. In the tweet he said,

Your Chowkidar is standing firm & serving the nation.

But, I am not alone.

Everyone who is fighting corruption, dirt, social evil is a Chowkidar.

Everyone working hard for the progress of India is Chowkidar.

Today every Indian is saying #MainBhiChowkidar.

Modi's post about claims that he is firm and serving the nation in addition calling everyone that is fighting corruption, dirt and social evil are also like him allows the marginalized to identify them with Modi in the process giving them a false sense of empowerment. The hashtag has 746 unique tweets in the first twenty days. On the same day Congress party leader tweeted with the hashtag #ChowkidarChorHai

(watchman is the thief). In the first twenty days it got only 281 unique tweets. A comparison between the two hashtags #MainBhiChowkidar and #ChowkidarChorHai proves support base of BJP in general and Modi in particular on various social media platforms.

**Table 3. Comparative table between MainBhiChowkidar and ChowkidarChorHai**

|  | **#MainBhiChowkidar** | **#ChowkidarChorHai** |
|---|---|---|
| **Retweets** | 56,300 | 15,000 |
| **Comments** | 31,500 | 17,000 |
| **Likes** | 1,61,000 | 46,000 |

*Source: Sharma (2019)*

Though, Modi's tweet had received more negative comments, the BJP social media team was able to neutralise the responses by more than 50% on the campaign.

On the Facebook too, BJP dominated the campaign. According to Facebook data the top search term was BJP and Modi was the third most searched term. In the run up to 2019 general elections a total of 30,457 advertisements related to politics or issues of national importance have hit the Facebook. The top three pages by large number of advertisements are as follows:

**Table 4. Top Three Facebook Pages by Number of Advertisements**

| Sl. No. | Page | No. of Advertisements |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | My First Vote for Modi | 2,765 |
| 2. | Bharat Ke Mann Ki Baat | 2,429 |
| 3. | NaMo Supporters | 2,153 |

*Source: Mampatta, (2019).*

Table 4 clearly shows that the BJP has targeted first time voters. According to the Election Commission of India, there are 84.3 million newly registered voters for the 2019 elections, while 15 million among

them are first time voters in the age group of 18 to 19 years (Suri and Mukherjee, 2019). The new generation that is born and brought up in the midst of internet and digital gadgets like smart phone and tabs has been extensively targeted by the BJP. The new generation is more adept with social media and BJP has used the same social media platform to give the new generation voters a voice to express themselves. Such recognition would in turn give a sense of empowerment to the young voters who in turn identify themselves with BJP.

A cursory look at top Facebook pages and their advertisement expenditure would give a clear picture vis-à-vis the competition to win the support of social media users.

**Table 5. Top Facebook Pages with Advertisement Costs (February to April 13, 2019)**

| Sl. No. | Top Pages in Political Advertisements | Party Affiliation | Amount Spent (in Rs.) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Bharat Ke Mann Ki Baat | Pro-BJP page, party advertiser proxy | 2,23,96,560 |
| 2. | Nation with NaMo | Pro-BJP page, party advertiser proxy | 1,20,00,786 |
| 3. | My First Vote for Modi | Pro-BJP page, party advertiser proxy | 1,06,12,409 |
| 4. | Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) | BJP, official party page | 87,47,538 |
| 5. | Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC) | Political Consultancy, Worked for YSR Congress Party in Andhra Pradesh | 45,61,596 |

*Source: Thaker, (2019a)*

As table 5 shows, BJP topped in advertisement expenditure on Facebook from two months before the start of general elections. The first phase of elections started on 11th April 2019. From February onwards BJP was much ahead of all other political parties in the country. Also it is pertinent to note that BJP has not placed its advertisement expenditure on a single page. It has divided it among different pages in order to

specifically target different sections of the society. Similarly, BJP topped in advertisements on Google Groups also.

**Table 6. Advertisement Costs on Google Groups**
**(February to May, 2019)**

| Sl. No. | Political Party | Amount Spent (in Rs. crore) |
|---------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| 1. | Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) | 17.10 |
| 2. | Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) | 4.10 |
| 3. | Indian National Congress (INC) | 2.71 |
| 4. | Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) | 2.31 |
| 5. | Auburn Digital Solutions (AAP proxy) | 2.18 |

*Source: Hari, (2019)*

Apart from building consent among voters by using various social media platforms, BJP also instilled fear among its detractors by using memes and trolls (equivalent to physical violence) on social media. Memes and trolls are used against BJP non-supporters or someone who posts or tweets an uncomplimentary message about BJP or Modi. The social media volunteers of BJP immediately resort to cyber bullying and cyber stalking in order to discourage and instill a sense of fear in them. Thus, BJP has used both consent and coercion on social media as a part of its campaign during 2019 general elections. The same may be grouped using Gramscian interpretation as follows:

**Table 7. Gramscian Interpretation of BJP's Social Media Campaign**

| Sphere | Mode Used | Campaign on Social Media |
|--------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Civil Society | Consent | Main Bhi Chowkidar, My First for Modi, Nation with NaMo |
| Political Society | Coercion | Memes, Trolls, Videos and Pictures containing and showing violence. Hashtags like 'libtard', 'anti-nation', 'anti-India', 'presstitutes', 'sickular' |

Thus, BJP was able to create an aura of 'dominant hegemony' around the party by using social media. However, the campaign carried out in social media is complimented by similar campaign undertaken physically by BJP grassroot functionaries. However, when one studies the dominant hegemony of BJP in Indian polity through Gramscian analysis, one would question the presence and nature of counter-hegemony force.

On 14th February 2019, two months before the first phase of polls, a convoy of security personnel was attacked at Lethpora in the Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir by a car carrying explosives killing 40 soldiers. While the Congress along with other opposition parties blamed the Prime Minister for shooting for Discovery Channel, the BJP immediately bounced back and used Pulwama attack extensively in its election campaign. On the social media, a new hashtag calling for #strongindia surfaced widely on twitter and instagram. On the ground BJP leaders used the rhetoric of revenge against terrorists and called the voters to vote for a strong Centre. Soon after the attacks, the wave of nationalism took over the Indian social media and the nationalist sentiment got converged with pro-BJP sentiment (Pal, Panda and Lalani, 2019). Followed by the attack fake news circulated in the social media in favour of BJP. One such post was a video in which Prime Minister Modi was speaking to a woman over phone. The caption read as, Have you ever seen a prime minister who calls the martyr's wife himself and tries to console her like a father? This video will bring tears to your eyes". This was posted by a Facebook page called Swadeshi Lehar and has been shared by thousands of users on Facebook and Twitter (Singh, 2019). Though, Alt News, the website that tracks and identifies fake news on social media, found that the video was from 2013 when Modi was the Chief Minister of Gujarat. Interestingly much of the fake news appeared to have targeted the principal opposition party to BJP, the Congress. Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi were targeted in particular, with photos of Rahul posing with the suicide bomber, while a video was circulated showing Priyanka meeting the chief of Pakistan Army (Thaker,

2019). Thus, Pulwama attack was used by the BJP to mobilize voters in its favour by organizing street level protests at the ground level and by instigating jingoistic nationalism on social media. Through this, by the time first phase of polls started BJP was able to establish its hegemony over the voters by posing nationalism as a much bigger challenge to resolve the contradictory conflicts among various sections of the Indian society.

**Counter-Hegemony Force**

Given the dominant hegemony of the BJP, it is quite natural to think about 'counter-hegemonic forces'. Gramsci proposed counter-hegemonic force as an alternative to dominant hegemony and that which can essentially provide 'counters' to the dominant challenges (Heywood, 2991: 101). Though, there have been continuous protests against the Modi government by farmers, dalits, minorities, women, and tribals among others, but were unable to pose any significant challenge to the dominant hegemony of BJP. Political parties like the Congress and the Communists were unable to make much dent into the BJP's dominance. At the same time regional political parties like Telugu Desam Party (TDP) from Andhra Pradesh, Trinamool Congress (TMC) from West Bengal and Aam Admi Party (AAP) from Delhi had rallied together against Modi, but in vain. In other words, there is no coherent and consolidated opposition that could challenge the hegemony of Modi. The opposition is divided and fragmented on a variety of issues and hence, was unable to challenge the authority of Modi.

In this backdrop, Modi has appropriated the counter hegemony force by constructing a narrative against the dominant hegemony in the society. In the 2014 elections it was 'chaaiwalah', while in the 2019 elections it was 'chowkidar'. Both chaaiwalah and chowkidar signify common man, who is powerless and is often exploited by the corrupt. According to Gramsci, 'counter hegemony force' will bring in fundamental transformation of the existing society (Venkat, 2017). To that extent apart from talking about fundamental transformation at the rhetorical level, Modi

had initiated steps like replacing Planning Commission with Niti Ayog, demonetization, introducing anti-talak bill to protect Muslim women and swatch Bharat campaign for toilets. All these helped in projecting himself as the messiah of masses – a 'counter hegemonic force'. In this process, Modi belittles everything and anything that leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi had done during their regimes. This in turn allows him to demolish the 'dominant hegemony' of Congress party in Indian polity.

On the one hand BJP builds aggressive narratives of dominant hegemony using nation, nationalism and religion, while on the other hand Modi builds a counter narrative by projecting himself as the warrior against 'corruption, dirt and social evil'. As a result the poor, marginalized and the middle class often tend to identify themselves with Modi. This carefully crafted image of Modi had made him popular among the masses. Thus, with hegemony and counter hegemony operating together is one of the chief reasons for BJP's victory. The shrewd use of panoptic social media has ensured and sustained the dominant hegemony and counter hegemony of the BJP. Caught in the web of social media campaign, voter was unable to identify viable alternative to BJP and thus, BJP was able to secure the much needed vote for its victory.

**Notes**

1.    During Uttarakhand floods in 2013, it was reported in *The Times of India*, June 23, 2013 that Modi visited Uttarakhand and rescued 15,000 Gujaratis. See, 'Narendra Modi lands in Uttarakhand, flies out with 15000 Gujaratis', http://articles.timesofindia.india times.com/2013-06-23/india/40146385_1_uttarakhand-cm-vijay-bahuguna-narendra-modi. Only when others started questioning the veracity of the number 15,000, it turned out to be fake. But by then, BJP supporters had celebrated the superhuman capabilities of Narendra Modi. See Jha, Prashant (2013), 'Reporter Claims Modi's '15,000' rescue figure came from BJP itself', https:/

/www.thehindu.com/news/national/reporter-claims-modis-15000-rescue-figure-came-from-bjp-itself/article4857739.ece.

2.   Chatterjee (2004) argues in the Indian context that 'civil society' consists of elite class, where as the 'political society' consists of the poor, landless, and other marginalized sections. Such people are yet to realize their rights and often negotiate with the state on a political terrain. See Partha Chatterjee, (2004), *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*, Permanent Black, Delhi.

3.   For relation between social media in general and Facebook in particular and winning elections, see Francis P. Barclay, C. Pichandy, Anusha Venkat and Sreedevi Sudhakaran (2015), 'India 2014: Facebook 'Like' as a Predictor of Election Outcomes', *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 23:2, pp. 134-160.

4.   For mobilization through social media in the Indian context, see Saifuddin Ahmed, Kokil Jaidka & Jaeho Cho, (2017), 'Tweeting India's Nirbhaya protest: a study of emotional dynamics in an online social movement', *Social Movement Studies*, 16:4, 447-465, DOI: 10.1080/14742837.2016.1192457. Also see, Saifuddin Ahmed and Kokil Jaidka, (2013), 'Protests against #delhigangrape on Twitter: Analyzing India's Arab Spring', *JeDEM - EJournal of EDemocracy and Open Government*, 5(1), 28-58. https://doi.org/10.29379/jedem.v5i1.197

## References

●   Bajwa, Harpreet, 'Nirmala Sitharaman dubs BJP's Online Volunteers as 'Social Media Jawans'', *The New Indian Express*, 31 March, 2019

●   <http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2019/mar/31/nirmala-sitharaman-dubs-bjps-social-media-volunteers-as-social-media-jawans-1958424.html> accessed on 14 July 2019

●   Bansal, Samarth, Gopal Sathe, Rachna Khaira, and Aman Sethi,

'How Modi, Shah Turned A Women's NGO Into a Secret Election Propaganda Machine', 4 April, 2019, <https://www.huffingtonpost.in/entry/how-modi-shah-turned-a-women-s-rights-ngo-into-a-secret-election-propaganda-machine_in_5ca5962ce4b05acba4dc1819?pnr> accessed on 18 July 2019.

- Focus on the Global South, *Undermining Democracy: The 2019 Elections in Thailand, The Philippines, and India*, July, 2019 <https://focusweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/A4_Three CountryElectionStudy_WEB.pdf> accessed on 16th July 2019.

- Gramsci, Antonio, (1971): *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, translated and edited by Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, Lawrench and Wishart, Boston.

- Hari, Vaisakh E., (2019): 'Lok Sabha Elections 2019: The Social Media Factor', 25 May, <https://www.theweek.in/theweek/cover/2019/05/25/lok-sabha-elections-2019-the-social-media-factor.html> accessed on 18 July 2019.

- Heywood, Andrew, (1994): *Political Ideas and Concepts: An Introduction*, Macmillan, London.

- Kalbag, Chaitanya, (2019): 'View: Anti-social media in Elections 2019', The Economic Times, April 10, 2019, < https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/elections/lok-sabha/india/view-anti-social-media-in-elections-2019/articleshow68821364.cms?from=mdr> accessed on 11 July 2019.

- Khan, Md. Inam Ulla, (2019): '2019 Lok Sabha Elections and Social Media,' March 17, <https://thecompanion.in/2019-lok-sabha-elections-and-social-media/> accessed on 25 June 2019.

- Lull, James, (1995): *Media, Communications and Culture: A Global Approach*, Polity Press. 2nd Edition, Cambridge.

- Mahapatra, Sangeeta, (2019): 'India Online: How Social Media Will Impact the 2019 Indian General Election', January 11,

<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2019/01/11/long-read-india-online-how-social-media-will-impact-the-2019-indian-general-election/>; accessed on 21 February 2019.

● Mampatta, Sachin P, (2019): 'BJP-friendly ads dominated Facebook since February, shows data', 22 March, <https://www.rediff.com/news/report/bjp-friendly-ads-dominated-facebook-since-february/20190322.htm> accessed on 16 July 2019.

● Munshi, Suhas, (2019): 'How RSS is Running a Silent Social Media Campaign to Give Heft to BJP in Rajasthan', May 1, < https://www.news18.com/news/politics/how-rss-is-running-a-silent-social-media-campaign-to-give-heft-to-bjp-in-rajasthan-2123669.html> accessed on 13 July 2019.

● Nilsen, Alf Gunvald, (2018): 'How can we understand India's agrarian struggle beyond 'Modi Sarkar Murdabad?', *Economic and Political Weekly* (Online), Vol. 53, Issue No. 50, 22 December, <https://www.epw.in/engage/article/how-can-we-understand-indias-agrarian-struggle -beyond-modi-sarkar-murdabad> accessed on 24 December 2018.

● Nordenstreng, K., (1977): 'From Mass Media to Mass Consciousness', in G. Gerbber (ed.), *Mass Media Policies in Changing Cultures*, New York, Wiley.

● Pal, Joyojeet, Anmol Panda, Faisal Lalani, (2019): 'How #BJP fused with #StrongIndia in #2019', 9th May,   <https://www.livemint.com/elections/lok-sabha-elections/how-bjp-fused-with-strongindia-in-2019-1557414405626.html> accessed on 28th July 2019.

● Prakash, Amit, (2019): 'The Dynamics of Social Media and the Indian Elections 2019', 12 April,   <https://theasiadialogue.com/2019/04/12/the-dynamics-of-social-media-and-the-indian-ele ctions-2019/> accessed on 13 July 2019.

● Pulla, Venkat, (2017): 'Gramscian 'Counter hegemony' in

Narendra Modi's New India Perspective', *Space and Culture, India*. Vol 4, No 3, pp. 1-5.

● Rima, M and Rakesh Sharma, (2019): 'Decoding 2019: Social Media and Politics - A Match Made in Heaven', 8 April, <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/podcast/podcast-decoding-2019-social-media-and-politics-a-match-made-in-heaven-3786201.html> accessed on 25 May 2019.

● Sharma, Milan, (2019): 'Did BJP's #MainBhiChowkidar win the social media war? Or was it Congress's #ChowkidarChorHai? Find Out', 10 April, <https://www.indiatoday.in/elections/lok-sabha-2019/story/did-bjp-s-mainbhichowkidar-win-the-social-media-war-or-was-it-congress-s-c howkidarchorhai-find-out-1498828-2019-04-10> accessed on 14 July 2019.

● Shekhar, Divya J., (2019): 'Hastag battle: Inside the BJP and Congress social media war rooms', March 29, <http://www.forbesindia.com/article/poll-vault/hashtag-battle-inside-the-bjp-and-congress-social-media-war-rooms/52881/1> accessed on 17 July 2019.

● Singh, Malvika, (2019): 'Social Media, Messaging Apps Flooded with fake News After Pulwama Attack', 19 February, <https://www.newsclick.in/social-media-messaging-apps-flooded-fake-news-after-pulwama-attack> accessed on 14th July 2019.

● Suri, Manveena and Sreoshi Mukherjee, (2019): 'For India's 84 million first-time voters, election finally gives them a voice', 18 March, <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/03/15/india/india-first-time-voter-intl/index.html>, accessed on 18 July 2019.

● Thaker, Aria, (2019): 'Never Seen Anything Like This Before, says Facebook India's fake-news buster after Pulwama Attack', 18th February, <https://qz.com/india/1552882/never-seen-anything-like-

this-before-says-facebook-indias-fake-news-buster-after-pulwama-attack/>, accessed on 28th July 2019.

- Thaker, Aria, (2019a): 'Modi's BJP is back to being the top Facebook advertiser amid Indian elections', 17 April, <https://qz.com/india/1591629/modis-bjp-tops-congress-in-political-ads-on-facebook-in-india/> accessed on 14 July 2019.

- *The Economic Times*, (2019): 'Internet users in India to rise by 40%, smartphones to double by 2023: McKinsey', April 25, < https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/internet/internet-users-in-india-to-rise-by-40-smartphones-to-double-by-2023-mckinsey/articleshow/69040395.cms> accessed on May 2, 2019.

- *The Economic Times*, (2019a): 'Internet users in India to reach 627 million in 2019: Report', March 6, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/internet/internet-users-in-india-to-reach-627-million-in-2019-report/articleshow/68288868.cms?from=mdr> accessed on July 10, 2019.

- Vanaik, Achin, (2018): 'India's Two Hegemonies', *New Left Review*, 112, July-August, pp. 29-59.

- Williams, Raymond, (1976): *Key Words: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Oxford University Press, New York.

# Uttar Pradesh Lok Sabha Elections 2019 Modi's Social Engineering, Development and Smart Politics

### A.K. Verma

*BJP's inclusive politics based on new social engineering, poor centric developmental schemes with focus on grassroots implementation and smart leadership by PM Narendra Modi won the BJP 2019 LS elections in UP. On the contrary, Congress's poor agenda, negative campaign and Rahul's non-serious leadership almost exterminated the party in the state. The SP-BSP gathbandhan ignored the fact that to succeed, a political coalition must be preceded by a social coalition that was not attempted by the gathbandhan constituents. After a very long, 2019 LS election in UP would be remembered as an election that defied caste and communal overtones and took a new trajectory of inclusion, development and leadership in Uttar Pradesh.*

The 17th Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh was perhaps the most intriguing and curious elections in recent history. That was because in spite of general negative media perception about Prime Minister Narendra Modi and much hype about the success of pre-poll alliance between two regionally dominant parties - the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) - the results saw BJP sweep the polls and win more than two-thirds seats (77% seats). That was a clear

indication of the cumulative effect of the troika of governance, development and smart politics pursued by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

UP witnessed seven-phase polling that began on 11 April 2019 and ended on 19 May 2019. The counting was done on 23 May. There are 80 parliamentary constituencies in UP of which 63 are general and 17 are reserved for scheduled caste (SC). No seat is reserved for scheduled tribes (STs) in UP. A total 979 contestants were in the fray out of which 819 lost deposits. The number of electors in UP was 1,461,34,603 of which 85756301 valid votes were cast taking the percentage of valid votes polled to 58.6% whereas the voters turnout was a little higher i.e. 59.21% - obviously about 0.6% votes polled were invalid (ECI: 2019).

The results surprised many including the BJP. That was because there had been pre-poll alliance between the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). The people and parties were made to believe by numerous media reports and analysts that the alliance would sweep the polls. The two regionally dominant caste-parties had dominated the state politics since 1989. Both had formed governments with almost identical vote shares of about 30 percent each in 2007 and 2012 respectively. Many thought that their coming together would lead to an arithmetical addition of their respective vote shares and so they would trounce the BJP. Very few analysts has cautioned against such expectations and suggested that the transfer of votes may not take place *(Verma: 2019 b).*

When the results were announced, the BJP crossed all estimates and won 62 seats and its ally Apna Dal (AD) won two seats taking the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) tally to 64. Though that was 9 seats less than the previous NDA tally of 73 seats in 2014 LS polls in UP, yet the achievement was beyond the expectations of even the most ardent supporters of the BJP. The SP-BSP coalition was a fiasco as expected *(Verma: 2019 d).* The Congress just escaped being reduced to zero by somehow retaining the Raibareilly seat of Sonia Gandhi. It was surprising that in spite of having got a few seats less than 2014 LS elections, the

BJP vote share raced from 42.3 percent in 2014 to 49.98 percent in 2019, almost close to 50 percent – a rare achievement by a party after a long in UP *(Table 1).*

**Table 1 - Votes and Seats of Parties in LS Elections in UP (2019)**

| Party | Vote % | | | Seats Won | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2019 | 2014 | Gain/Loss (+/-) | 2019 | 2014 | Gain/Loss (+/-) |
| BJP | 49.98 | 42.3 | +7.68 | 62 | 71 | -9 |
| AD | 1.21 | 1.0 | +0.21 | 2 | 2 | NIL |
| SP | 18.11 | 22.2 | -4.09 | 5 | 5 | NIL |
| BSP | 19.43 | 19.6 | -0.17 | 10 | 0 | +10 |
| Congress | 6.36 | 7.5 | -1.14 | 1 | 2 | -1 |
| RLD | 1.69 | 0.9 | +0.79 | 0 | 0 | NIL |

*Source: Election Commission of India Statistical Reports 2019 & 2014*

**The Backdrop**

The Lok Sabha (LS) poll 2019 in UP started on a dull note for the BJP. That was because the BJP was a little demoralised due to the backdrop of elections. Earlier, the party had suffered defeats in Phulpur and Gorakhpur LS bye-elections in the state in March 2018 and, subsequently, lost power in three major states of Hindi heartland viz. Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chattisgarh in assembly polls in December 2018. The BJP spirit was further dampened because of SP-BSP alliance in UP in January 2019 that seemed to promise great performance by the Akhilesh-Mayawati duo in the state. And, there was no Modi-wave in 2019 on the eve of the polls contrary to the 2014 *(Verma: 2019 d).*

In the last seven years (2007-14) in UP, UP voters changed governments regularly. They changed government in 2007, ousting Mulayam Singh Yadav of SP and bringing in Mayawati by giving absolute majority to the BSP. They surprised all in  Lok Sabha elections 2009 by electing 21 Congressmen as Members of Parliament (MPs) when many thought that the Congress was in terminal decline in the state *(Beg and Kumar 2009)*. They again surprised all in 2012 by giving an absolute

majority to the SP when political observers expected that the work done by Rahul Gandhi would enable the Congress to replicate its 2009 performance in the state *(Verma 2012)*. The BJP's saffron sweep in 2014 LS elections was yet another surprise that saw BJP sweep the polls winning 71 and its ally AD two seats *(Verma 2014)*. The 2019 LS polls also fell in the line of surprises.

**Paradigm Shift**

During 21st century, caste based identity politics had become the fulcrum of electoral contestations in UP. That marginalised the national parties and gave predominance to the state or regionally dominant parties – the SP and the BSP. The 2014 LS polls made a paradigm shift in UP displacing caste and identity by aspiration for development and a faint hope that Modi will put brake on scams and corruption rampant during ten years of Congress rule (2004-2014). Though there were several uncomfortable steps by Modi government in its first tenure (2014-2019), the people stuck to their hope and aspirations and returned the Modi government in 2019 once again. Many hard decisions by Modi government could be seen right from the beginning of its tenure in 2014.

First, the Modi government tried to unearth black money by bringing voluntary disclosure scheme, then it was the turn of the demonetisation that put everybody in panic and brought lot of inconvenience to the people as there was an eagerness to return the demonetised notes that were with the people in cash. Then came the Goods and Services Tax (GST) – based on 'one nation-one tax' principle. It too was resented by opposition parties. Though Congress supported the GST bill in Parliament, it charged it as *gabbar singh tax*, a slang for its alleged notorious character. Similarly, the BJP brought 'Real Estate Regulatory Authority' (RERA) that applied a brake on the arbitrariness of the real estate builders and those who took peoples' money and were not accountable to anyone.

With all these *high handed* looking steps, the BJP was actually harming its own constituency. All those traders and shopkeepers in villages, towns and cities, the people in real estate and the business

community had been traditionally, the BJP voters. They were all very uncomfortable and unhappy though they all knew well that in the long term, these steps were designed to give them relief. Of course, those who were habitual tax evaders were naturally very upset. The government wanted to ensure that the taxes that the people pay must reach the government coffers and not be eaten up by the middle-men; no taxes be evaded by any one. So, the BJP risked the short term annoyance of its voters to the long-term advantages to them and the government both. The risk worked well and as the processes got streamlined, not only the realisation of GST increased in spite of repeatedly reducing the GST tax slabs but the traders and businessmen also realised that a hassle free tax environment is better proposition than evading taxes and living in perpetual panic and with a sense of guilt. That's why in spite of Congress attacking the Modi government on GST and demonetisation, people continued to support Prime Minister (PM) Modi.

**Analysis**

Why the voters voted the way they voted in UP in 2019? Was the Modi Magic still working or there was something deeper that most analysts could not capture? But, first let us examine the challenges before the Modi government in UP.

Uttar Pradesh (UP) had BJP government since 2017 run by Chief Minister (CM) Yogi Adiytanath. The Yogi government had twin tasks to set right the state administration that was a victim of caste and corruption during the regime of Akhilesh Yadav (2012-17) and also create a favourable environment for the upcoming re-election of PM Modi who now contests from Varanasi LS constituency in UP. Obviously, UP is so big demographically that one can say that it happens to be the fifth largest country in the world after China, India, USA, and Indonesia. So, Yogi was struggling with multifarious problems. But, the USP of Yogi was that he, like PM Modi, was clean and hard working. In spite of the corrupt bureaucracy and his own ministers and MLAs, the CM Yogi did his best to put the state back on track. He gave police signal to exterminate

hardcore criminals in encounters and make the state a safe place to live. However, the outbreak of encephalitis in his former constituency Gorakhpur and the menace of cattle grazing because of his tough stand against unlicensed slaughter houses had created poor image of the BJP government in the state.

But, two things turned the tables. One, he ensured that the flagship programmes of PM Modi '*swachh bharat abhiyan*' about rural toilets and the '*pradhanmantri awas yojna*' etc become reality. During several visits to the various regions of the state, the CSSP researchers saw these two schemes shape up on the ground and its positive impact on voters mood about *Yogi government*[1]. The respite and self-confidence that these twin schemes brought to the rural women and poor people completely transformed the public mood in favour of the Modi government. Two, the Yogi government organised the *ardh-kumbh* at Prayagraj (formerly Allahabad) in such a large, magnificent and incident free manner that millions of people who visited the *kumbh site* during January to March 2019 were all praises for the Yogi government. Some analysts had noticed the impact of that religious-cultural extravaganza on voters psyche and anticipated its impact on voting behaviour. It clearly favoured the BJP (*Verma 2019 a*).

### SP-BSP *Gathbandhan*

The BSP and SP had entered into pre-poll alliance called *gathbandhan* on *12 January 2019*[2]. The same was joined by Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD). The SP and BSP had been arch rivals since the infamous *Lucknow guest house incident*[3] in 1995. But Akhilesh tried to patch-up with Mayawati after he became the President of the Samajwadi Party on *January 1, 2017*. The *gathbandhan* had been formed on the assumption that Akhilesh could transfer the SP votes to the BSP and Mayawati could get Dalit votes transferred to the SP in LS polls. Earlier, in 2014 Lok Sabha polls, Akhilesh Yadav's Samajwadi Party (SP) polled 22.2 per cent votes and Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) 19.6 per cent in Uttar Pradesh. Most of SP-BSP sympathisers, sure of

vote transfer to each other, did an elementary arithmetic, summed up their vote shares and argued that the SP-BSP *gathbandhan* would sweep the polls together with about 41.8 per cent votes. Of course, they forgot that electoral politics is more a matter of chemistry than mere arithmetic.

But, even their summing-up thesis did not hold good for the SP-BSP *gathbandhan*. That was because in previous LS polls in UP in 2014, the BJP's vote share was 42.3 per cent and its ally Apna Dal's (AD) had polled 1.2 per cent votes. If the same summing up was done for BJP-AD called NDA alliance, then their cumulative vote share came to 43.5 per cent, still ahead by 1.7 percentage points *(Verma: 2019 b)*. However, it is surprising that the BJP-AD actually polled above 50% in 2019 LS polls in UP registering an accretion of about seven percent votes over their 2014 performance. The *Gathbandhan* vote share was a paltry 37.54% only *(Table 1).*

**Non-transferability of Votes**

As the LS 2019 results indicated, the *gathbndhan* did not click with the electorate. The transfer of votes to *gathbandhan* partners did not take place. Why? Akhilesh Yadav of SP is not known for his ability to get party votes transferred to other parties. That was demonstrated in 2017 UP assembly polls when he had entered into pre-poll alliance with the Congress. He and Rahul had campaigned vigorously but both suffered badly. Akhilesh had miserably failed to transfer SP votes to the Congress, which polled just 6.25 per cent votes and won only seven seats of the 114 that it contested in 2017 assembly elections. The SP too had been reduced to its lowest (56 seats) in recent times *(ECI: UP Elections 2017)*.

In previous Lok Sabha elections in 2014, the SP had lost votes across all communities except Muslims whose votes for the party had gone up by 28 percentage points in LS elections for the party *(CSDS data, 2014)*. With Congress contesting all seats in UP in 2019 LS polls, Muslim voters had an option; they could vote either the Mayawati-

Akhilesh *gathbandhan* or the Congress party. Since Congress has better national credentials than the *gathbandhan*, Muslims voted for Congress where *gathbandhan* candidate was weak as in Kanpur where former Congress Home Minister Sriprakash Jaiswal contested though lost. Muslims also felt that *gathbandhan* candidates were not serious bidders especially in national politics and, hence, they turned to any party or candidate of their personal choice. In a field study conducted by CSSP in UP in April-May 2019, we found that 34.5 percent Muslims were inclined to vote Congress whereas only 25.4 percent Muslims said they would vote for *gathbandhan* candidates *(CSSP Data 2019)***.** The fact that BJP/NDA got over 50% votes in UP in 2019 LS polls indicate that a substantial chunk of Muslims also voted the BJP – though their inclination could not be captured in the fieldwork data for obvious reasons. However, there was huge appreciation of Modi government's initiative on *triple talaq* as 52 percent respondents approved of that*.* The Modi government also seemed to have won the women voters because 61 percent female voters preferred Modi government *(CSSP Data 2019)***.**

### *Guillotined* Candidates

The *gathbandhan* partners also suffered owing to the negative impact of *guillotined* candidates of *SP and BSP*. Because of the SP-BSP pre-poll alliance, the SP had to contend with 37 seats out of *80 and BSP with 38 seats*[4]. Thus, SP and BSP both *guillotined* half of their ticket aspirants who felt cheated because the move was very sudden and they were never taken into confidence for such a tie-up. It resulted in the shattering of hopes of 43 ticket aspirants of SP and 42 of the BSP. That was more so because both these parties had been arch rivals since the infamous Lucknow *guest house incident.* Similarly, Mayawati's brigade also felt the shock as many had 'booked in advance' their constituencies and pumped lot of money preparing for the LS polls. Thus, in each and every constituency, there was local resentment against the *gathbandhan* candidate; if s/he was SP candidate, the deprived BSP aspirant secretly worked against the *gathbandhan* candidate; if s/he was

a BSP candidate, then the hurt SP aspirant worked against the *gathbandhan* candidate. Neither Mayawati nor Akhilesh could gauge the magnitude of the hidden anger of their deprived party candidates for whom it looked like the end of their political carrier. In some cases, such *guillotined* candidates of both SP and BSP defected to the BJP *(Sharma 2019)*.

**Shifting Caste Dynamics**

The politics of UP had been dominated by caste based parties – SP and BSP - since 1989. The SP banks on its core Yadav vote with Muslim combine whereas Mayawati consolidated her dalit votes who are about 21% of the total electorate. The Yadavs had been traditionally SP supporters, but after the split of the party and the ouster of Mulayam Singh Yadav and Shiv Pal Singh Yadav engineered by Akhilesh Yadav, then UP chief minister, in December 2018, the Yadavs got divided in to two camps, not sure of the political fortunes of the SP. Some of them voted for Akhilesh's uncle Shivapal Yadav's Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party. But, generally, Yadav voting behaviour reportedly saw a tactical shift. They did not vote *gathbandhan* candidates blindly. They voted the *gathbandhan* candidate if he was from SP, but they voted the BSP's *gathbandhan* candidate only if he was Yadav or OBC. Otherwise, they voted the BJP. Thus, Yadav and Dalit voting behaviour differed from constituency to constituency. As is clear from Table 2, only 50 percent Yadavs and OBCs showed inclination to vote BSP candidates, and about 25 percent showed inclination to vote BJP whereas 58 percent Dalits voted SP candidates and only 20.5 percent showed inclination to vote BJP *(Table 2).* The same was discernible for the Muslim voting behaviour. In a study conducted by the Centre for the Study of Society and Politics' (CSSP), Kanpur, Muslim share for SP candidates of *gathbandhan* was 25.4 percent while it was just 4 percent for the BSP; that showed that Muslims moved to the Congress in big number because our study showed that 34.5 percent Muslims voted the Congress *(CSSP Data 2019).*

**Table 2: How Dalits and OBCs voted *gathbandhan* Candidates in UP 2019**

| Party | How Dalits vote SP candidates of *gathbandhan* | How Yadavs/OBCs vote BSP candidates of *gathbandhan* |
|---|---|---|
| BJP | 20.5 | 24.8 |
| SP | 58 | NA |
| BSP | NA | 50 |
| Congress | 4.9 | 5.9 |
| DK/Can't Say | 11 | 13.8 |
| Others | 5.6 | 5.5 |

*Source: CSSP Data 2019*

**Dalit-Yadav Animosity**

The failure of the dalit-Yadav coming together in *gathbandhan* was anticipated because of the age old animosity between them in UP *(Verma 2019 b)*. Not only there did not exist any social interaction between the two communities at the village or grassroots level, there was also a visible exploitative relation between them. Yadavs being the dominant landholding community in rural areas, the dalits were forced to work on their fields as agriculture labours. The dalits complain of economic exploitation and even physical coercion and ill-treatment by Yadavs *(Verma 2004)*. In many cases, when matters become intolerable, dalits had to resort to SC-ST Act and take legal actions against them. Yadavs counter that they had been falsely implicated under SC/ST Act.

However, the judicial decisions in several cases went against the Yadavs. In *Kartar Singh Yadav vs UP Government* (2015), the Allahabad High Court awarded Kartar Singh Yadav seven years rigorous imprisonment and fine of Rupees Ten Thousand for raping Mamta Devi **of 'chamar' caste**[5], whereas in Summer Singh Yadav vs MP (2018), the Madhya Pradesh High Court did not grant anticipatory bail and found the accused guilty under *SC-ST Act*[6]. That was also a reason that large segment of OBC voters moved to BJP. The study conducted by CSSP,

Kanpur showed that 52.2 percent OBCs voted BJP. When we see BJP actually getting about 50 percent aggregate vote share in UP, the field data assumes some credibility. This is also cross-checked by CSDS, Delhi data that reported59 percent OBCs voting the BJP in UP in 2019 *(Beg, Pandey, Khare 2019)*.

**Mayawati's Strategic Dilemma**

Mayawati, the BSP President, is usually hyped as a leader who can successfully transfer her party's Dalit votes to whichever party she desires. But, of late, the electoral behaviour of her core Dalit constituency demolished the traditional perception. In 2014 Lok Sabha elections, Mayawati lost 16 per cent Jatav and 35 per cent ati-Dalit votes in Uttar Pradesh (Lokniti-CSDS Data 2014). That trend continued in 2017 UP assembly *election as well*. It shows that Dalits no longer see Mayawati as their only leader.

The BJP, on the other, continues to attract Dalits and performed well in constituencies reserved for Dalits(SCs). It won all the 17 reserved (SCs) constituencies in LS polls 2014 and 70 of the 86 reserved (SC) assembly constituencies in UP assembly elections 2017. Thus, since 2014, the party is maintaining huge contingent of Dalit MPs and MLAs who could easily access Dalit voters in villages and towns. In fact, that huge band of Dalit MP and MLAs actually roped them in for the BJP in big numbers in 2019 LS elections. The CSDS Data shows that except Jatavs, about 50 percent other schedule castes voted the BJP *(Table 3)*. The Table 3 gives detailed caste-community votes obtained by the major players – BJP, *gathbandhan* (SP-BSP) and Congress in 2019. A comparison is also drawn with 2014 LS elections to showcase any accretions (+) or depreciation (-) in vote shares of different castes/communities to various parties. As is clear from the Table 3, the BJP registered huge accretions in the OBC segment, both more-backwards and most-backwards) in 2019 LS elections *(Table 3).*

## Table 3: How Caste/Communities Voted in UP Lok Sabha
## (2019 & 2014 Elections)

| Caste/Communities | BJP | | | *Gathbandhan* (SP+BSP)* | | | Congress | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2019 | 2014 | Gain/Loss+/- | 2019 | 2014 | Gain/Loss+/- | 2019 | 2014 | Gain/Loss+/- |
| Brahmin | 84 | 72 | +12 | 6 | 5 | +1 | 6 | 11 | +2 |
| Rajput | 89 | 77 | +12 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 5 | 7 | -2 |
| Vaishya | 74 | 71 | +3 | 4 | 7 | -3 | 13 | 12 | +1 |
| Jats | 91 | 79 | +12 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 2 | 3 | -1 |
| Other Upper Castes | 84 | 77 | +7 | 10 | 2 | +8 | 5 | 13 | -8 |
| Yadav | 24 | 27 | -3 | 62 | 28 | +34 | 5 | 8 | -3 |
| Kurmi & Koeri | 80 | 53 | +27 | 14 | 10 | +4 | 5 | 16 | -11 |
| Other OBCs | 74 | 60 | +14 | 18 | 12 | +6 | 5 | 8 | -13 |
| Jatav | 17 | 18 | -1 | 75 | 36 | +39 | 1 | 2 | -1 |
| Other SCs | 49 | 45 | +4 | 42 | 20 | +22 | 7 | 4 | +3 |
| Muslims | 8 | 10 | -2 | 74 | 30 | +44 | 15 | 11 | +4 |
| Others | 52 | 51 | +1 | 37 | 18 | +19 | 1 | 8 | -7 |

*Source: CSDS Data taken from National Election Study (NES) Post-Poll Survey in UP 2019 & 2014*

*\*The caste/community vote-share for gathbandhan in 2014 has been worked-out by adding the votes of SP & BSP obtained separately in 2014 and working out the average.*

### Modi Centric Elections 2019

The 2019 Lok Sabha election was Modi-centric - either one was for Modi or against him. The local contestants were irrelevant because people voted for Narendra Modi. But what made Modi click with UP voters? There could be several reasons.

One, Narendra Modi provided a strong, stable, secular and clean government with focus on inclusive politics and development. Two, Modi expanded the BJP's traditional constituency of upper caste, middle class and urban traders to include Dalits, OBCs and Muslims. He put into practice his *inclusive* approach, reflected in the *sabka saath, sabka*

*vikas* slogan. Third, Modi broke the caste matrix and made huge inroads into the class matrix, which ensured the party a massive vote share of 50 per cent not only in UP but in about 15 states. Finally, Modi focused on welfare measures and social security, ensuring that the benefits reached the poorest and the marginalised. His *ayushman yojna, pradhanmantri awas yojna, toilet revolution* (swachhata abhiyan) and several other pro-poor schemes did reach the poor and marginalised in spite of some corruption by village panchayat pradhans and panchayat officials, and gave them a ray of hope of a better future. The trust in Modi was reinforced and was very well reflected in the popular saying *Modi hai to mumkin hai* (If there is Modi, then it is possible!).

### Triangular contest Benefitted the BJP

UP witnessed a triangular contest in 2019 LS elections. The friendly fights between the Congress and the *gathbandhan* candidates benefitted the BJP. Had it been a direct contest between the SP-BSP-Congress *gathbandhan* on one side and the BJP on the other, things would have been a little tougher for the latter. But going by the huge victory margins of the BJP winners in UP, the final results would, probably, not been any different even then.

### Rahul's Non-serious Leadership

The 2019 elections will be long remembered for the defeat of Congress president Rahul Gandhi from Amethi, once considered the family's pocket-borough. The signals were clear to Rahul too because for the first time he chose to contest from two constituencies – from Amethi in UP and Wayanad in Kerala. The constituency, which was represented by the Gandhi family for the last two decades, chose Smriti Irani in 2019. Rahul did not care to nurse his constituency and, consequently, Congress party was steadily losing grip at the assembly and panchayat levels. Also, Rahul indulged in a negative campaign against Modi and made personal attacks viz *chowkidar chor hai* (a reference to the PM as a thief). People did not like that because many considered it as 'hitting

below the belt'. Also, Rahul's regular criticism on Rafael deal as corruption and his other charges against Modi on the one and his sudden love for Hindu deities and temples exposed his double talk. In spite of Rahul's allegation against Modi government of being the *suit-boot-ki-sarkaar* (pro-rich government) pursuing anti-farmer policies, about 55 percent respondents saw Modi government doing much for the farmers *(CSSP Data 2019)*. 'There was no significant trust in Rahul's appeal to the people. As top leader of the Congress party, people did not take Rahul seriously' *(New York Times, 21 May 2019)*. The Congress' strategy of bringing in Priyanka Gandhi clearly proved futile as the party's vote share fell by one percentage point, from 7.5 per cent in 2014 to 6.3 per cent in 2019 *(ECI 2019)*.

**Smart Politics**

We are into smart era. Everything is getting smart. The PM Modi began a new era of smart politics soon after he came to power in 2014. The electronic and social media have completely revolutionised the landscape of electoral contestation. Modi came out with an innovative idea of *man-ki-baat*, a monthly dialogue with the people over All India Radio and Doordarshan that is carried by all TV channels and radio stations. In his *man-ki-baat,* the PM talked about all things except politics. He raised issues of social concern and did some value education to the people for a better society and brighter tomorrow. That was really *smart politics* because it provided the PM a chance to be in regular touch with the people and vice-versa - a thing that Indian voters had always craved for. They have always missed a channel to connect with their representatives. So, the *man-ki-baat* was an innovative experiment in *smart politics* that endeared Modi to millions of Indians. This has become a very significant add-on to Modi's reputation for being honest and upright, hard working and a tough task master. Many see Modi taking hard and tough decisions in national interest forgetting its adverse political consequences. So, the people have come in defence of PM Modi and that's why his popularity ratings are very high vis-à-vis any other Indian

leader. Of course, people want to be led by a strong leader with a clear vision. In Modi, they find such a leader. That too paved for re-electing the Modi government in 2019.

Thus, BJP's inclusive politics based on new social engineering, poor centric developmental schemes with focus on grassroots implementation and smart leadership by PM Narendra Modi won the BJP 2019 LS elections in UP. On the contrary, Congress's poor agenda, negative campaign and Rahul's non-serious leadership almost exterminated the party in the state. The SP-BSP *gathbandhan* ignored the fact that to succeed, a political coalition must be preceded by a social coalition that was not attempted by the *gathbandhan* constituents. After a very long, 2019 LS election in UP would be remembered as an election that defied caste and communal overtones and took a new trajectory of inclusion, development and leadership in Uttar Pradesh.

**Notes**

1.  The CSSP (Centre for the Study of Society and Politics), Kanpur based research centre undertook field studies in all seven regions of the state during April-May 2019.

2.  Akhilesh Yadav and Mayawati decided to join hands on 12 January 2019 and bury the past animosity that existed since 1995 *guest house case* in which goons of SP tried to kill Mayawati. She had been rescued by the BJP leaders. The pre-poll alliance was called *gathbandhan* between *bua-bhateeja* and was hyped to sweep LS elections. Nothing of that sort happened and the *gathbandhan* broke down after the polls. (What is SP-BSP Alliance? India Today, 13 January 2019).

3.  Lucknow Guest House incident happened on 2 June 1995. Earlier in 1993, SP and BSP came together through the efforts of Mulayam and BSP supremo Kansi Ram and formed a coalition government in UP. But, differences persisted between Mulayam and Mayawati. With the result that on 2 June 1995, BSP withdrew support to the

Mulayam government. Irked by this, the SP goons attacked Mayawati when she was in a meeting with her MLAs in the Guest House in Lucknow and wanted to kill her. However, the BJP leaders rescued her.

4.   In the seat sharing formula, Samajwadi Party got 37 seats and Bahujan Samaj Party 38 seats. Both decided not to contest Raibareilly and Amethi seats which were contested by Congress President Rahul Gandhi and her mother Sonia Gandhi, sitting MP and former Congress President.

5.   https://indiankanoon.org/doc/48241719/

6.   https://indiankanoon.org/doc/159540841/

7.   https://www.business-standard.com/article/politics/the-logic-of-bjp-targeting-mayawati-s-votes-116062700014_1.html

**References**

1.   Beg, Mirza Asmer and Sudhir Kumar : 'Uttar Pradesh: Signs of a Congress Revival?' *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol 44, No. 39, 2009, p 190.

2.   Beg, Mirza Asmer, Pandey, Shashikant and Khare, Sudhir : 'Failure of the Mahagathbandhan', *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol 54, No. 31 (Online ), 2019

3.   ECI (Election Commission of India), General Election 2019 https://eci.gov.in/files/category/1359-general-election-2019/

4.   ECI (Election Commission of India), Uttar Pradesh General Legislative Elections 2017 https://eci.gov.in/files/file/3471-uttar-pradesh-general-legislative-election-2017/

5.   Sharma, Raghavi : 'In Uttar Pradesh, Defections to BJP Have Weakened the Opposition's Alliance', *The Wire,* 15 March 2019.

6.   Verma, A K (2019 a): 'Seemit Vikalpwale Aam Chunaav' (General Elections with Limited Options), *Dainik Jagran,* 5 April, 2019

7.   Verma, A K (2019b): 'Akhilesh Yadav & Mayawati's biggest challenge in UP - transfer of votes', *The Print*, 18 May

8.   Verma, A K (2019c): 'Jan-Jan se Judaav kii Naii Raajniti' (New Politics of Connecting with the People), *Dainik Jagran*, 17 May 2019

9.   Verma, A K (2019d): 'We're All Going To Be Surprised By The Silent Modi Wave In Uttar Pradesh', *Swarajya,* 17 May

10.  Verma, A K : 'Communal Polarisation vs Caste Calculus', *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol 49, No 18, 2014

11.  Verma, A K : 'Why Did Mayawati Lose?' *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol 47, No 18, 2012

12.  Verma, A K : 'Uttar Pradesh: Caste and Political Mobilisation', *Economic and Political Weekly*, December 18-24, 2004, pp 5463-66.

# Paradox or a Paradigm Shift?
# Deciphering the Bengal Election Results

**Nirjhar Mukherjee**

*This paper seeks to assess the Lok Sabha election results in the state of West Bengal. The paper intends to elucidate on some of the major factors which shaped the results where the dominance of the Trinamool Congress was reduced, and the BJP emerged as the main opposition party. The paper opines that the consolidation of anti-incumbency sentiment strengthened the index of opposition unity which resulted in the emergence of the BJP as the main opposition party. However, the upcoming Vidhan Sabha elections is poised to be a different ball game.*

## Introduction

May 23rd 2019 was an important date in the history of India. The results of the 17th Lok Sabha elections gave a strong mandate to the BJP led NDA to form a government once again. Amidst allegations of EVM malfunctioning which the Election Commission denied, the results cemented the position of the BJP at the helm in New Delhi. The results cemented the far-right regime of incumbent Prime Minister Narendra Modi for another five years. The Hindutva right-wing politics of the Narendra Modi- Amit Shah duo emerged victorious among a polarised electorate which largely rejected the Rahul Gandhi led Congress party. The BJP increased its tally of seats and crossed the three hundred mark. It held

on to its bastions in North India and also improved its performance in many other parts of the country. One state where the BJP made remarkable progress is West Bengal. Here the BJP increased its tally from 2 seats in 2014 to 18 seats. A remarkable jump. The BJP increased its vote percentage in West Bengal from 16.95 percent in 2014 to 40.23 percent making it the main opposition party in the state.[1] Confirming the understanding of scholars like Traub (2019), the secular fortress of Bengal has suffered a massive blow.

The hegemony of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) stands challenged. The TMC, which had a massive lead over its opponents till 2014 Lok Sabha elections and 2016 Vidhan Sabha elections retain a plurality in the number of seats and vote percentage but now find the BJP breathing down their necks in both these parameters. Another important fallout of these elections has been the decimation of the CPIM led Left-front. They have been replaced by the BJP as the main opposition party in West Bengal. The Left Front has suffered a massive fall in vote percentage getting reduced from 29 percent in 2014 to a shocking 7 percent. The once powerful bastions of the Left in North Bengal have yielded to the BJP. Large swathes of voters who voted for the Left for years have now voted for the Saffron party. For the first time in the history of India, a left party has failed to win a single seat in West Bengal. A rather ignominious result for a party which ruled with an iron fist even ten years ago!

This election saw the further erosion of the power of the Congress party in West Bengal. However, it must be said that despite overwhelming odds, the party avoided annihilation under the heroics of Adhir Chowdhury[2] who despite massive onslaught of the TMC, was able to retain his seat. The Congress retained two of the four seats that it had won in 2014 unlike the Left which lost both the seats that they had won in 2014.

The paper argues that there are several factors which need to be factored in if one seeks to analyse the results of these elections. First, there are some macro level factors such as the growing anti-incumbency

and its consolidation in favour of the BJP. Then there is the Modi-Shah style of politics which scholars like Chibber and Verma (2014), Sharma (2014) and Banerjee (2014) say have reduced Indian elections to a de facto presidential system style race between leaders at the Central level. The massive electoral spending by the BJP is also a factor.[3] The role of the media - especially the Bengali media is also an important factor in the emergence of the BJP as the major opposition party in Bengal. Then there are a number of sub-regional and local factors at various micro levels. The paper seeks to discuss some of these major factors which shaped the outcome of the elections. The paper would begin with a background to the elections. The factors which influenced the elections at a macro level would be discussed. The subsequent section would go on to discuss the results of the elections in detail- region by region. The paper would analyse how the opposition unity consolidated behind the BJP. It would be followed by an analysis of what these results mean for the four main parties in Bengal-TMC, Left Front, BJP and Congress. The paper would also discuss the future trajectory of politics in Bengal and the possible equations affecting the 2021 Vidhan Sabha elections.

**Background**

The 42 seats of West Bengal are greatly coveted for obvious reasons. The 2019 elections were no different. However, the stakes were different for different parties. Ever since ousting the CPM led Left Front in 2011, the Trinamool Congress under the leadership of Mamata Banerjee has been ruling Bengal with an iron grip. The TMC has been steadily fastening its grip over power. In the 2014 elections, the TMC established its hegemony in Bengal winning 34 seats contesting alone (it had contested the 2011 elections in an alliance with the Indian National Congress). Though the Modi wave of 2014 kept the TMC out of national level power brokerage, it continued its hegemony within the state. The Left Front allied with the Congress for the Vidhan Sabha elections of 2016. The Alliance was not successful. The Congress won the second

highest number of seats. The TMC won more than two hundred seats out of 294. The BJP could win only 3 seats.

The eight year plus TMC rule has many features. There have been a number of schemes started by the government which have benefitted a number of people including women, minorities among others. However, the culture of political violence- something which marked the three decades of CPM rule has continued unabated. Many leaders of Trinamool Congress have been accused of corruption. While widespread allegations of corruption were not able to dent the party's electoral fortune in 2016, it is a part of a powerful narrative. The politics of violence and strongman-ship is especially marked in the villages. While the economy has improved on some counts, there is still a lack of heavy industry. This narrative of lack of jobs and industry still has support among many people in West Bengal. The Hindu far-right has also alleged the Mamata regime of 'appeasement' of Muslims. The communal plank has been used by the BJP to polarise voters. The detailed discussion of all these factors is beyond the scope of this paper but it wouldn't be inappropriate to remark that allegations of corruption, so called 'Muslim appeasement', political violence and unfulfilled economic demands did create a wave of frustration against the state government.

The TMC went out into this election to win as many seats as possible. Mamata Banerjee needed each one of the forty two seats in order to play a greater role in the power-broking process in Delhi. It is well known that Mamata Banerjee created the Federal Front- a loose alliance of regional parties which could create a non-BJP, non-Congress alliance at the centre. The TMC ran a rather aggressive campaign. There was also a lot of high voltage political faceoff between Mamata Banerjee and the BJP. For the latter, Bengal was a state of great focus. 2014 was a watershed moment for the party. They had won 2 seats with around 16.9 percent of the popular vote in Bengal. This is something which was unthinkable till then. It was expected that the BJP might not be able to

match its stellar performance in its bastion of North India. Thus, they badly needed more seats in the East. Bengal provided them with hope. The BJP ran a very well-funded, aggressive campaign with Prime Minister Modi leading from the front. Mamata Banerjee tried to portray herself as the strong, regional leader who would resist and defeat the BJP-something acknowledged by scholars like Jaffrelot and Varniers (2015) and critics like Jaitley (2019) alike. Since 2014, the BJP along with the RSS has been increasing its presence in Bengal. The attempt to spread the far-right Hindu right wing politics has been successful to a degree. Hundreds of RSS *shakhas* or branches have been opened in Bengal as documented by media[4] and scholars like Kanungo (2015) and Bala (2017). They have also used a very powerful social media campaign.

The CPM was fighting a battle to retain its relevance in state politics. The alliance of 2016 with the Congress had been a failure. However, it is important to note that the party still retained the title of being the main opposition party in the state. There was an attempt at an alliance again with the Congress. However, in the process of negotiations, the alliance did not materialize. The CPM ran a campaign which sought to improve its tally from its miserable performance in the 2014. It tried in vain to consolidate the anti-TMC votes. The Congress party has been reduced to a small party in Bengal for many years-relevant only in some parts of the state. It was basically fighting a battle to defend its last few bastions-mainly in Malda and Murshidabad. It had won 4 seats in 2014. Riding the alliance with the CPM in 2016 Vidhan Sabha elections, the Congress had won many seats as compared with its relative strength in Bengal. However, this time, it was effectively fighting a desperate battle to defend the four seats that it had won last time. Adhir Chowdhury faced an onerous task to stave off a fierce challenge from the TMC which wanted to obliterate the Congress from its last standing bastion in the district of Murshidabad. Defections to the TMC and repression had given the Congress a tough time in Bengal.

This election, like many others were marked by a number of

untoward incidents. As already mentioned above, the entire election process was marked with political violence. There was violence before, during and after the elections where many people lost their lives. There were also a number of defections. The BJP gave tickets to a number of defectors from the TMC and the Left. Some of them like NisithPramanik, Arjun Singh, KhagenMurmu emerged victorious.

**The Result**

The result of the election was the clear establishment of the BJP as the main opposition party in West Bengal with 18 seats. It was a major jolt to the TMC regime and decimation of the Left Front. The base of the Congress eroded further but it survived and avoided the ignominy of not being able to open its account. The TMC remains the largest party but its hegemony stands challenged and seats reduced. The TMC won only 22 seats, down by 12 as compared to 2014. North Bengal, once a left bastion was swept by the BJP with the exception of Behrampur and Malda South which were retained by the Congress. The TMC retained South Bengal including Kolkata though the BJP won in many areas such as Hoogly, Asansol and Burdwan-Durgapur. The BJP also won some important seats near the Bangladesh border such as Ranaghat and Bangaon which also has a significant Matua population. The BJP has also won in the seats bordering Jharkhand in the tribal areas of Purulia, Jhargram among others. The result has changed the political contours of West Bengal. Other than a couple of seats in Murshidabad and Malda Dakshin, the BJP finished second in all the 19 other seats that it could not win.[5]

**Macro Level Factors**

There are a number of factors which had an impact on this decisive election. However, some of them are large-macro level as we may call them due to their impact on an all Bengal level. These factors emphasise how the BJP was able to emerge as the largest opposition party and consolidate the anti-TMC votes.

**Political Violence and Oppression**

The most important factor in this result is the heavy-handed misrule by the TMC. Like the three decade plus regime of the Left-front government, political life has been marked with an alarming amount of political violence. Violence has been especially pronounced in the rural areas (Basu, 2017). Political parties in West Bengal are infamous for housing miscreants and goons who perpetrate violence for their political masters. Party cadre often engage in violence. It is very often that we find that political opponents are attacked and not allowed to function, especially in the rural areas. A popular slogan that the TMC used in 2011 was 'Badlanoybodol chai' meaning 'We want change, not revenge!' However, in reality the TMC rule has been anything but that. Political violence has continued unabated. The TMC has maintained its sway over the cities, towns and especially the countryside through strongman tactics and political violence.[6]

It is not difficult to guess who the sufferer is in this kind of a situation- the common man. This is especially true for people with less privilege and resources. It is ordinary citizens, especially villagers who bear the brunt of the political conflicts. From the very onset of the TMC rule, there have been many incidents of oppression due to political violence. The TMC cadres have outmuscled and overwhelmed its rivals in most parts of Bengal. This has led to its opponents being unable to function properly. Heavy-handed rule has alienated the TMC from a large section of the society.

The 2018 panchayat elections were an important event. This election witnessed unprecedented amount of political violence. There was widespread political oppression. A large number of opponents were unable to file nomination papers for these elections. Thus, the TMC was able to win more than 30 percent of the seats without a contest. There were numerous cases of violence with regard to the submission of nomination papers. There was also massive violence during and after the elections. Many channels were able to show that the TMC engaged

in electoral malpractices. The Panchayat elections of 2018 showed that the TMC government would do what it could to hold on to power.[7]

There are also some aspects of TMC led misrule. The TMC regime has continued another aspect of political oppression prevalent during the Left-front era-politicisation of the administration. Many arms of the state government such as the police, civil services, CID etc are allegedly influenced by the state government. It has been alleged that a large number of public institutions such as colleges and other public spaces such as festivals have been politicized by the TMC.

Another sphere of violence that the TMC has unleashed over the years is the politics of defection. This is a brand of politics which has been introduced into Bengal politics by the TMC regime. In the past few years, the TMC has engineered a large number of defections from other parties. It has been alleged that many of these defections have been engineered through the use of force. A number of MLAs and elected representatives (belonging to other parties) of panchayats, corporations and other bodies of local self-government have defected to the TMC. In fact, the TMC has seized control of many such bodies which it had originally lost. It may be said that this culture of defection has created a situation of lack of faith in democracy, where even if a candidate opposing the TMC wins he/she will (be made to) defect.[8]These activities have alienated a large section of the Bengali society.

**Corruption**

It is well known that many TMC leaders have been accused of corruption. A number of chit-fund companies have cheated thousands of investors. Many TMC leaders are allegedly involved in a large number of these scams. The Saradha scam is the largest and most famous of them. Another important scam has been the Narada sting operation which claimed that the videos show TMC leaders taking bribes.[9] These claims failed to create much of an impact on the 2016 Vidhan Sabha elections. Nevertheless, these allegations of corruption have dented the public image of the TMC among many people.

**Enter the BJP**

Oppression and corruption are among some of the most important factors which generate anti-incumbency. However, these factors are not new in Bengal politics. These factors were there in full swing in the 2016 state assembly elections. However, the TMC sailed through. There is more to the rise of the BJP in West Bengal. The advent of Modi-Shah brand of politics has a role in it as does the decline of the Left.

Before 2014, the BJP was a fringe party in Bengali politics. The party never polled more than 5% votes. It had won the Darjeeling for a few times but the credit for that feat goes to the Gorkha JanamuktiMorcha or GJM. If the GJM allies with the BJP it usually wins Darjeeling. However, prior to 2014, it could not dream of winning any Lok Sabha seat in Bengal unless it was in an alliance with the TMC (which helped it win a seat in 1998 and 1999). 2014 was a watershed moment for the BJP in Bengal. For the first time in history, the BJP became a significant player in Bengali politics. Thanks to the Modi wave, the BJP was able to expand its roots in the state. The BJP tried to portray itself as the alternative to the TMC in West Bengal. Till 2016, it was not taken very seriously. The Left-Congress alliance was able to retain the status of main opposition party. In the 2016 election, the BJP's vote share dropped to 10% and it could win only three seats out of a total of 294.

The defeat of the Left-Congress alliance changed the dynamics of opposition politics in West Bengal. With the help of the Central government and its resources, the BJP tried to project itself as major opposition party in Bengal. The RSS with its dedicated cadre assiduously worked to build up their organisation in the districts and the countryside.[10] While they met violent resistance and repression from the TMC, the RSS was able to hit back on some occasions. RSS and other Hindutva outfits were able to counter-attack and violently resist/attack their opponents.[11] This created a perception that the BJP and its allies have what it takes to resist the TMC.

One of the most important features of the rise of the BJP in Bengal has been money power. The BJP didn't (and still doesn't) have adequate ground level organisation which can match that of the CPM or the TMC. However, what they lack in manpower, they tried to make up through financial means. The BJP was able to launch massive campaigns which were well funded given the financial resources of the party.

The financial might of the BJP also translated into a very well manned and effective IT cell. The BJP was able to build huge networks through Whats App and other social media platforms. What they lacked in real life organisational capacity, they tried to make up through Whats App and social media campaigns. Though the party was unable to reach out to the people regularly in real life, it was constantly able to make its presence felt among the people through Social Media. This is an important feature through which, the BJP was able to surpass the Left and the Congress as alternatives to the TMC. Due to repression, it was often very difficult for the Left and Congress supporters to function, organise rallies/events and connect with the people. With areas in the villages firmly under TMC control, it was rather difficult, almost impossible for any opposition parties to campaign in many rural areas of Bengal. This was a formidable obstacle for the BJP workers too. However, where the BJP was unable to connect in person, it did so through social media.[12]

The BJP IT cell also allegedly spread a lot of fake news which provoked and polarised the population. The BJP was able to create communal friction across the state on many occasions with the IT cell playing a major role. Over the years, this kind of propaganda, both real and fake created a support base for the BJP.[13]

Along with social media, there are two other kinds of electronic campaign that helped the BJP. First, prime minister Modi and his outreach to the people. Ever since becoming the Prime Minister, he has been very vocal and active on the media. The BJP campaign in Bengal is very Modi centric. It all revolves around the aura of Modi. The star campaigner has always been in action actively among the public- each

day through the media, amplified by the IT cell. Another important factor has been the TV debates each evening. Since 2014, the representatives of the BJP have been getting regular invites to the prime-time television debates in various Bengali TV channels. Other than the footage that the BJP has been getting through these debates is a conspicuous nature of some of these debates itself. Often some very popular news channels organise debates involving topics which find the BJP on one side and all the other major parties on the other. Example, debates involving secularism, 'intolerance' etc. Through these debates, the BJP has been getting inordinate footage. For example, a debate regarding a topic like 'intolerance' would have three speakers on one side and three speakers on the other. On one side, three pro BJP speakers would be pitted against three opponents-one from the TMC, one from the CPM and one from the Congress. These debates have tried to portray the BJP as a pole in the political spectrum.

Finally, no words are enough to explain how the RSS and other Hindu right-wing organisations have been working in Bengal. While, many of these organisations have existed for many years, they have burgeoned phenomenally over the last few years. The RSS has increased its influence though increasing number of Shakhas or branches. Many of its affiliates have worked with marginalised sections of the society. such as the so called 'tribal areas.' Another important aspect has been the spread of communal hatred, especially in the border areas.

A reader can fairly assume that the sections above allude to the fact that a strong wave of anti-incumbency coupled with the BJP's ability to project itself as a credible opposition party has resulted in the spectacular performance of the party in the state. While this remains the central theme spearheading the BJP's success in Bengal, there has also been other important factors operating at local levels.

One important example can be how the BJP was able to increase its vote share in Jangalmahal (one a hotbed of Maoist activities). The BJP got a lot of votes from the Kurmi caste which has been agitating

for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status for a long time.[14] The constituencies in Western parts of the state have voted heavily for the BJP. In north Bengal and constituencies adjacent to Bangladesh border, the BJP reaped dividends of communal polarisation. Through vilification of 'Bangladeshi immigrants' and accusing the TMC of 'Muslim appeasement', the BJP was able to make a mark on the significant section of the Matua community which has traditionally voted for the TMC.[15]

**Left Votes go Right!**

One highly controversial aspect of these elections in Bengal has been the so-called defection of left voters to the BJP. There has been a rather serious allegation by reporters like Gupta (2019) that, tired due to repression by the TMC, many left voters intentionally voted for the BJP. This was done because many Left voters believed that the BJP is a lesser evil than the TMC and can be a useful tool to unseat the Mamata Banerjee government. Grave as this allegation is, it is perhaps impossible to fully verify the authenticity of such as claim. However, as stated by Basu and Das (2019), data shows that for every 1% of decline suffered by the Left, the BJP has gained 0.89% of votes. Moreover, as simple data analysis from the results would show, a large number of people who have voted for BJP this time, had been voters of the left at one point of time. This paper seeks to take a holistic look at this phenomenon and make an assessment of what might have happened.

One theory can be that there has been an understanding at the grassroot level to oust the TMC at any cost. Something, that is impossible to verify empirically. Another possibility which seems to be more plausible is that the CPM has lost its control over large swathes of its supporters. Many of these supporters are filled with hate for the TMC. Perhaps its is Islamophobia and hate for Mamata Banerjee which drives them more than Marxism. Or perhaps, the unforgiving laws of Realpolitik at the local level (read massive oppression by the TMC) have left no option for many of these voters but to vote for the BJP. Whatever the reason(s) might have been, the Left must make a severe assessment

of what went wrong. The Left has been declining continuously for the past decade or so. However, this drop has been rather astonishing. Kaushik and Goyal (2016) have exposed how voting left cannot be seen as an identity of people of Bengal. This provides credence to the theory that it is possible for the left vote-bank to erode if other viable options emerge.

Another important observation is important. If one looks at the data carefully, it may be discerned that the left votes have declined at a greater scale in the rural areas than its urban counterparts. With the exception of one constituency, the BJP lost wherever the Left was able to poll more than 10%. In other words, in most cases where the Left decline was bad but not abysmally so, the BJP gained votes but was unable to win!

Scholars like Mouffe (1993, 2005) have argued that if the Left endorses neoliberal policies and abandon their ideological lines, their voters might abandon them for populist right-wingers who might claim to defend the common man against the evils of the rich and the powerful magnates which dominate the society. This is something which is the traditional job of the left. If the left abandons it, the populist right might win over their base by pretending to do so. The left must look forward to reviving itself in Bengal. Else it will become a relic in history. If one goes by the statistics, even a six or seven percent of 'gharwapsi' of Left voters might spell doom for the BJP's aspirations to win the 2021 VidhanSabha. However, for any progress to happen, the Left must work genuinely hard to establish credibility as a party which genuinely works for the toiling masses and opposes TMC in action.

**Where There is an Alternative, BJP May Not be the Way!**

The Congress victory in two seats - Baharampur and Malda South and defeat in Murshidabad has an interesting story to tell. In these seats the main fight was between the TMC and the Congress. The BJP was not a major player here. These are the only three seats where the BJP

didn't come first or second in Bengal. In the fight between the TMC and the Congress, the latter retained two while the TMC won Murshidabad with the Congress coming second. These seats provided non-BJP alternative to the anti-TMC sections of the society. With a viable non-BJP anti-TMC force in existence, the people voted for them-in this case the Congress. This demonstrates that if the Left or Congress can demonstrate that they can provide a viable alternative to the TMC, the people may not always opt for the BJP.

**Blundering Didi!**

Mamata Banerjee has a fair share of flaws as well which have caused her great damage in these elections. Her biggest mistake was to launch repression which was brutal enough to consolidate the votes of her enemies. Through massive repression of opponents like CPM and Congress, rendering them ineffective, she had created a situation in which the BJP could effectively rise to power as the main opposition party. In a democracy it must be understood that one cannot win over every section of the society. It is very rare to find a party win over fifty percent of vote share. Once a party has over 40 percent vote share, it must realise some practical things. First, it is not possible to increase its own vote share by more than 4 or 5 percent- even in a very favourable situation. It is important to keep opponents divided. Once, a party gets more than 40 percent of votes it is as important to keep opponents divided as to increase one's own vote share.

However, the pursuit of power, glory and votes for her own party made the TMC use repression to attack the opposition to the extent that they couldn't function. The BJP thus emerged as the only effective opposition party which thanks to the control over the centre, money power, excellent organisational skills, effective IT cell and other factors discussed earlier. Had Mamata Banerjee functioned in a more democratic manner with lesser repression, it would have been possible for the Left to remain the main opposition party (Congress in some areas). The BJP might have got more votes, but the opposition would have been

divided. If the Left's decline could have been arrested at 20 or maybe even 15 percent, the BJP would have failed to win many seats.

Mamata Banerjee attempted to create a state with almost no opposition. Her highly vituperative campaign against Adhir Chowdhury in Baharampur is a proof of the same. Baharampur in Murshidabad district remains one of the last few bastions of the Congress in Bengal. In order to breach this fortress, Mamata deployed Subhendu Adhikari- one of her strongest tacticians to Murshidabad. Adhikari did a great job. He was able to wrest the Murshidabad seat from the Left also offered a very tough fight to Adhir in Baharampur. However, the TMC candidate at Subhendu Adhikari's home turf of Midnapore lost to the BJP. In the quest to annihilate the Congress and the Left, the TMC didn't concentrate on other issues which could have saved the party the blushes in many seats. Had Adhikari focused on Midnapore and some other parts of Western West Bengal, the BJP's tally might have been lesser.

So far, the paper has been rather critical of the TMC. However, it must be noted that the TMC regime has not been a total failure. In fact, the policies of the TMC government have resonated among millions of supporters. In fact, the TMC has been able to increase its vote share in this election. As suggested by Basu and Das (2019), in some areas like North Bengal, it has increased its vote share despite losing seats. The tragedy of the TMC lies in the fact that the BJP has been able to consolidate the anti-TMC which rendered the TMC's hard gained support ineffective.

**The Days Ahead**

The elections were followed by a great deal of post-poll violence. It has been marked by a continuing series of defections and counter defections. The BJP is trying to increase it's support. Immediately after the election results, a large number of people abandoned the TMC and joined the BJP. The ghost of defection politics is now haunting the TMC. The BJP established control over many local administrative councils like

corporations through defections. However, in the past few days, the TMC has been able to wrest back control over many of those bodies through counter-defection. In other words, many councillors who defected from the TMC to the BJP have made dramatic U-turns and come back to the TMC.

As the political chessboard undergoes changes, it is the people who are suffering. There seems to be no end to these sufferings of the ordinary people. The post-poll violence in Bhatpara is a very good example of that. The monopoly of the TMC over the grip of power is over. The TMC is fighting it out against an invigorated BJP. However, some objective lessons may be taken from the results of these elections. First, the myth that Bengal is immune to communal politics is busted. The BJP has become a major player in Bengal politics. Since independence, two parties have usually dominated the political scene in West Bengal. Will it change? Or will the TMC and BJP remain the only two parties to dominate the future politics of West Bengal?

**A Different Ball Game?**

The battle for 2021 is already heating up. A lot of political drama is already taking place.If one follows the trend that the Lok Sabha elections showed this year, a BJP victory in 2021 is very much on the cards. However, 2021 will not be easy for the BJP. 2021 promises to be a very tough battle. Here are a few factors which will affect the contours of the 2021 elections.

The National Register of Citizen is a very big factor in Bengali politics today. After Assam, the shadow of the NRC has crept into Bengali politics through the speeches of BJP politicians. Though, the West Bengal legislative assembly passed a resolution against the NRC, the fear remains rife among many people- especially those who have a history of migration. The NRC factor can be a game changer in Bengal. The BJP has polarised the state on this issue. However, this is a massive gamble which can have a major backlash.

The Bengali regional sentiment is a card which the TMC is playing to counter the BJP's Hindu nationalism. The TMC has already included 'Joy Bangla' (victory to Bengal) to its slogan. 'Joy Hind! Joy Bangla!' is the new TMC slogan. Bengali sentiment will be a key factor in 2021.

The economic crisis that India is going through can potentially be a big issue in 2021. If the situation doesn't improve, the BJP may not be able to improve its performance.

The 2019 Lok Sabha elections have clearly demonstrated who the main challenger to the TMC is. The TMC has returned some captured party offices to the CPM. There might be relatively less persecution of the Left in the coming days. In this situation, can the Left improve its tally? If it can then it might spell doom for the BJP's aspirations.

Mamata Banerjee has tied up with Prashant Kishor's organisation IPAC for professional advice. Can he help Mamata retain the Chief Minister's seat?

The BJP is sheltering a large number of ex-TMC leaders who have serious allegations of corruption. Would the BJP remain a palatable option for the people even after housing leaders with such unsavoury reputation?

Finally, 2021 would be a state level election. This changes the dynamics of the election in Mamata's favour in a few ways. First, the BJP doesn't have any credible CM face in Bengal. A Modi led, Modi centered campaign might have been very effective for Lok Sabha elections where people elect representatives for Delhi. However, at the state level, other dynamics might be at work. Mamata Banerjee is immensely popular among a large section of the society. As Nath (2018) opines, there is a reason why the TMC regime sustains even without significant influx of big industry. Millions have benefitted from her populist schemes. It is dubitable if people would want to oust her for someone less popular. If not Mamata then who? There seems to be few credible answers.

**Conclusion**

The Lok Sabha polls witnessed a great deal of anti-TMC

polarisation. The BJP has made a palpable mark in a state where it was unthinkable for them to win seats. The decimation of the left, blunders of the TMC among other factors led to the polarisation of anti-TMC votes in favour of the BJP. This helped the BJP win 18 seats in the Lok Sabha elections. However, it seems rather unclear about who is going to have the last laugh in 2021 given the changed nature of the situation.

**Notes**

1.  For details see, http://www.indiavotes.com/pc/info?eid=17& state=0, retrieved on 12th October, 2019

2.  For details see, https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/adhir-ranjan-chowdhury-from-street-fighter-to-congress-leader-in-ls-profile-119061801274_1.html, retrieved on 12th October 2019

3.  For details see, https://scroll.in/latest/925882/bjp-spent-nearly-45-or-rs-27000-crore-of-total-expenditure-for-2019-lok-sabha-polls-report, retrieved on 12th October, 2019

4.  For details see, https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/adding-100-new-shakhas-each-year-in-bengal-rss/article23247982.ece, retrieved on 13th October, 2019

5.  For details see, http://www.indiavotes.com/pc info?eid=17 &state=0, retrieved on 12th October, 2019

6.  For details see, https://www.indiatoday.in/elections/lok-sabha-2019/story/west-bengal-election-political-violence-history-trinamool-congress-bjp-left-mamata-banerjee-amit-shah-1526598-2019-05-16, retrieved on 13th October 2019.

7.  For details see, https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/after-court-battles-west-bengal-votes-today-in-panchayat-polls-10-points-1851615, retrieved on 13th October 2019

8.  For details see, https://thewire.in/politics/explainer-the-defection-story-playing-out-in-west-bengal, retrieved on 14th October 2019

9.    For details see, https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/elections/lok-sabha/west-bengal/saradha-scam-narada-string-op-lead-to-losing-sting-in-west-bengal-polls/articleshow/68858715.cms?from=mdr, retrieved on 14th October 2019

10.   For details see, https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/membership-sees-significant-increase-in-bengal-says-rss-118031401208_1.html, retrieved on 14th October 2019

11.   For details see, https://www.news18.com/news/politics/how-rss-painted-the-bengal-canvas-saffron-while-the-world-missed-the-big-picture-2268479.html, retrieved on 14th October 2019

12.   For details see, https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/how-bengal-bjps-whatsapp-army-contributed-to-partys-victory-2043814, retrieved on 14th October 2019

13.   For details see, https://www.hindustantimes.com/kolkata/bjp-it-cell-secretary-arrested-in-asansol-for-posting-fake-video-on-social-media/story-GSLBmA1746fQlk5YupJrgl.html, retrieved on 14th October 2019

14.   For details see, https://www.telegraphindia.com/states/west-bengal/tmc-scan-on-jhargram-loss/cid/1691189, retrieved on 15th October 2019

15.   For details see, https://www.newslaundry.com/2019/04/30/dalit-matua-west-bengal-bongaon-bjp-tmc, retrieved on 15th October 2019.

**References**

● Traub, A.: 'The Collapse of Secularism in West Bengal'. *Dissent*, *66*(3), 96-109, 2019

● Nath, S. : 'Cultural Misrecognition' and the Sustenance of Trinamool Congress in West Bengal'. *Economic and Political Weekly*, *53*(28), 92-99, 2018

- Chhibber, P., & Verma, R. : 'The BJP's 2014 'Modi wave'. *Economic and Political Weekly'*, *49*(39), 50-56, 2014

- Sharma, A. : 'India votes: A Modi landslide'. *New Zealand International Review*, *39*(4), 2, 2014

- Bannerjee, S. : 'Modi: Man, Myth or Movement?' *South Asia @ LSE*, 2014

- Jaffrelot, C., &Verniers, G. : 'The resistance of regionalism: BJP's limitations and the resilience of state parties'. *India's 2014 Elections: A Modi-led BJP Sweep*, 28, 2015

- Jaitley, A. (2019): The Hope of the Losers.

- Kanungo, P. : 'The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party in West Bengal'. *Studies in Indian Politics*, 2015, *3*(1), 50-68

- Bala, K. : 'The RashtriyaSwayamsewak Sangh: Organisation base of the BJS/BJP'. *The International Journal of Advanced Research and Development*, 2017, *2*(5), 912-916.

- Kaushik, A., & Goyal, Y. : 'An Enquiry into People's Preferences of Communist Parties in West Bengal and Kerala: Examining Electoral Data'. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2016

- Mouffe, C. : *'The return of the political'* (Vol. 8). Verso, 2005

- Mouffe, C. : 'The 'end of politics' and the challenge of right-wing populism'. *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*, 2005, 50-71.

# Understanding Gujarat Polls-2019

**Manish &
Vijendra Singh**

*This paper explains 2019 Lok Sabha verdict in Gujarat
in the backdrop of last parliamentary and state assembly
elections. It argues that after its best performance in
2014 parliamentary elections in the state, BJP faced
serious debacle in 2017 state assembly elections. As a
consequence, it recalibrated its strategy and adopted
multipronged strategy during 2019. In 2019, BJP won
many of the lost communities and castes,and improved its
performance across the regions. Also, BJP's narrative
during election campaign was much more targeted and
focused, and thereby had much more resonance among
the electorate than that of the opposition. The paper also
argues that BJP's resounding victory in 2019 was also
because of voters making distinction between the state and
the national elections with Narendra Modi as the prime
ministerial candidate.*

### Introduction

This article attempts to understand Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP)
electoral victory in the 2019 Lok Sabha (LS) elections in Gujarat. The
2019 Lok Sabha elections took many by surprise, particularly against
the backdrop of resurgent Congress, which made significant gains in

2017 Gujarat Vidhan Sabha (VS) polls. In 2017, Congress put up its best performance in last three decades, clinching 77 assembly seats, 20 seats above its previous tally in 182 seats inGujarat Legislative Assembly. No wonder, since 2014, Gujarat had witnessed political and social turmoil including the brunt of demonetisation and the goods and services tax (GST) on its industries. Therefore, it becomes interesting to understand how politics played out in Gujarat. Despite all of it, the BJP once again could manage to win all 26 LS seats in 2019 elections. It is not that BJP emerged victorious all of a sudden in 2014 followed by its repeat in 2019.

The state, which has experienced a two-party contest, has been ruled by BJP uninterrupted since 1998. After Narendra Modi became the Chief Minister (C.M.) in 2001, BJP never faced a serious challenge from the Congress. What explains the BJP's rise to power in Gujarat? More importantly, how does one explain BJP's 2019 victory in the backdrop of its best performance in last parliamentary elections but not so encouraging performance in last state assembly elections in 2017? To understand, one needs to first go into the political history of modern Gujarat. The transition of the BJP in the political context of Gujarat attains an even greater significance post-2014 as the party formed government at the Centre and enables us to understand changes in its ideology that is reflected through the course of state action adopted.

**Demographic and Social Profile**

At the time of independence, in 1947, the present day Gujarat was part of the Bombay state. It came into existence on 01 May 1960, after a prolonged *Maha Gujarat* (Greater Gujarat) movement which called for a separate state from Bombay on linguistic grounds. The present day Gujarat has 33 administrative districts and 250 talukas, divided into distinct regions - North Gujarat, Central Gujarat, South Gujarat and the peninsular Gujarat comprising of Saurashtra (Kathiawad) and Kutch.

The development in the state is, however, uneven. On the basis of statistical data, the population of Gujarat as per 2011 census is

60,383,628 including rural and urban population. The composition of Gujarat society is quite varied. The religious makeup in Gujarat is 88.57% Hindu, 9.67% Muslim, 0.96% Jain, 0.52% Christian, 0.1% Sikh, 0.05% Buddhist, 0.03% others and 0.10 not stated population. The Hindus are further divided into Rajputs 5%, Brahmins 4% and Banias 3%, and influential Patidars (Patels) forming about 13% (Desai and Shah, 2009, pp. 190). Traditionally Patels were the middle caste in Hindu society but were not categorised as Other Backward Castes (OBC). The OBCs constitute around 40 to 45% of the population. The Kolis, working as small peasants, agriculture farmers, along with the Thakors-Kshatriyas constitute nearly 65 % of the total OBC population. The rest goes to the other 147 OBC communities included in the OBC Gujarat list. This also includes the OBC Muslims. The Scheduled Caste (SC) population is stated to be around 7% and Scheduled Tribe (ST) comprises slightly over 14%.Despite being one of the most urbanised states (46% population resides in urban areas) in the country, the sex ratio in Gujarat has declined from 942 females per 1000 in 1981 to 919 females per 1000 males as per 2011 census, which is below national average of 940 as per the census of 2011.The Patidars (Patels) and the Banias are the richest and the most influential as they have traditionally engaged in agriculture, trading and industrial activities.

**Politics since Independence**

The political space of Gujarat even before independence was dominated by the Brahmins, Patidars (Patels) and the Banias, primarily because they were the first ones to have been educated into the modern British education system. As a result, they had acquired the political leadership role within the state and also at the national level. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who came from the powerful peasantry clan of Patels, presided over the Gujarat Congress for over 25 years (1921-46). Similarly, Mahatma Gandhi's ideas of non-violence also blended with the Jain-Vaishnav ethos of Mahajan culture of non-killing, teetotalism, prudence and conflict resolution (Sheth, 2002, pp:15-21). The so called *Savarna*

alliance of Brahmins, and Banias became the most influential alliance and continued until the 1972 split of the Congress party.

The state also has an above average record of political instability, as it has witnessed 16 Chief Ministers since its inception in 1960. Before Narendra Modi, who ruled the state continuously for more than thirteen years, no one in the state with the exception of Madhav Singh Solanki completed his five years tenure as Chief Minister. The first four Chief Minister's of the state came from the so called *Savarna* communities. However, with the rise of the significant Patel community with the implementation of limited land reforms, *Savarna's* were overshadowed. The Congress party ran into entirely new set of problems when it appointed a Brahmin leader Ghanshyam Oza, who was handpicked as the Chief Minister by Indira Gandhi. The newly acquired power status achieved by the Patidars (Patels) under the leadership of Chimanbhai Patel quickly overthrew the new arrangement, thus asserting its all powerful status in Gujarat politics. The situation that ensued quickly also coincided with the *Navnirman* (Reconstruction) movement that added to the troubles of the party and its leadership. The *Navnirman* movement was over the issue of rising food prices, which was an outcome of the monsoon failure in 1972. Initially, the movement was supported by most sections of the society, but as the movement gathered an all-India status, it directly challenged Indira Gandhi's position at the national level (Dholakia 2017, pp.275).

The tumultuous phase in the late 1970s achieved relative stability when Congress found a stable voter base in what is called the KHAM coalition. The birth of the KHAM coalition can be traced back to one of the meetings conducted by the Gujarat KhedutAne Vikas Parishad (Society for the development of farmers and farmland) in the 1970s. The need to quickly adopt the political strategy was stressed by Jinabhai Darji, who was the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee President. The simple logic behind the KHAM coalition was to target the Kshatriyas, Harijans, Adivasis and Muslims that constituted 56% of the state's

population. This electoral formula strived to include within itself the backward communities that were named in the Bakshi Commission of Gujarat (1976) and were recognized as OBCs. With this, the Congress party for the first time provided a space for socio-political mobility for the backward as well as to Muslim minorities (Yagnik and Sheth, 2005, p.254). The KHAM coalition provided handsome returns to the party in the elections of 1980. With the huge win on the basis of KHAM formula, Madhav Singh Solanki, who hailed from the Kshatriya community, was sworn in as Gujarat's Chief Minister. The powerful KHAM formula not only dominated the assembly but also exercised its power through the different government Boards and Corporations that existed at that point of time (Lincoln, 2016).

But the other repercussion of the KHAM formula was the alienation of the Hindu upper castes and the Patidars, who were pushed to the fringes of Gujarat's politics for the first time. It was this disgruntled class that was to become the new power base of the BJP in the 1990s. This along with several other factors ushered in a new era in Gujarat politics that saw the rise of the BJP (Dholakia 2017, pp.277).

An important development that especially emerges out of the BJP's rule and deserves attention is the party's widening political base which includes within itself the OBCs and to an extent the SC's and ST's as well. This contemporary development within the party has enabled it to be less reliant on its traditional Brahmin-Baniya voters. The late 1980's witnessed an aggressive campaign in the form of Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) yatras which indeed helped BJP increase its vote share among different communities. Keshubhai Patel-led BJP managed to form its government with two-third majority for the first time in 1995 state assembly. This was the first sign of the erosion of the KHAM formula and also can be seen as the beginning of decline of the Congress party in the state. Due to internal bickerings, KeshubhaiPatel had to step down as chief minister. Keshubhai was replaced by Suresh Mehta but he too had to face an internal revolt.

Factionalism was at its peak at this point within the BJP and the powerful Kshatriya leader, Shankarsinh Vaghela revolted from the BJP to form a new party Rashtriya Janta Party (RJP) to form the government. With the support from the Congress, Vaghela led RJP formed the government, with Shankarsing Vaghela as the Chief Minister. Vaghela's government too was short-lived as Congress withdrew support within one year only. Dilip Parikh became the Chief Minister, but he too had a brief stint.

BJP led Keshubhai Patel again became the Chief Minister but he too could not continue his five-year term. It was in the October 2001 that BJP at the national level decided to bring Narendra Modi as the Chief Minister of Gujarat. This can be said as the beginning of a new era in Gujaratpolitics which brought in political stability in the relatively unstable state. The political base of BJP under the leadership of Narendra Modi and also due to the various yatras - Vijayadashami Vijay yatra, Ram Janambhoomi yatra by RSS and its allied organisations since early 1990s helped it to consolidate the Hindu vote bank across all castes. This was also the beginning of the dominance of Hindutva politics in the state. Modi as the Chief Minister was able to retain the earlier upper castes support base and was further able to consolidate the base among the OBCs, the Dalits and the Adivasis, thereby expanding BJP's political base.

However, the most significant denouement of the Narendra Modi era of BJP's rule is the strong and decisive leadership that clearly fetched the BJP a major chunk of votes from the Gujarati people. Modi not only provided political stability in the state but also stability within the BJP. Before him, BJP remained internally divided and faction-ridden but after assuming the post of Chief Minister, he gradually overcame with that. The lexicon of 'Good Governance', 'Inclusive Development' and 'Gujarti Asmita' (pride) reflected the change of tactics employed by Narendra Modi. He helped BJP to win repeated elections and established a new trend in Gujarat's politics. The year 2014 marked momentous shift in Gujarat politics as for the first time, national elections were fought

and won under the leadership of a Gujarati. The election results were all and out in favor of BJP in the state, and after ruling the state for thirteen years, Narendra Modi left for Delhi to become the second Prime Minister from Gujarat.

**The Verdict of 2019**

In comparison to previous elections in the state, 2019 Lok Sabha was same and different in many ways. The 2019 election results in Gujarat, was a decisive mandate in favour of Narendra Modi and of BJP. In terms of number of seats, BJP won all the parliamentary seats as it did in 2014 and thus no loss for the BJP or gain for the Congress. However, comparison of vote share, signals significant shifts in the state after 2014.  BJP increased its vote share by 3% and of Congress declined by little less than 1% when compared with 2014 Loksabha elections. BJP also scored vote share of 63.08%, highest ever in Gujarat be it in Lok Sabha or Vidhan Sabha (VS), indicating its best performance and complete dominance of the party in the state, across the regions. Moreover, in 2019, BJP won all the parliamentary seats with majority votes in 174 out of 182 assembly segments in comparison to 169 in 2014.

Interestingly, though Congress lost all the seats in 2019 elections, it does not mark Congress' worst performance in the state in terms of vote share. Congress went down below 30% in 1991 when it could score only 29% of vote share. Irony of the first past post system is that despite such a low vote share, the Congress was able to win five of the parliamentary seats in 1991 but not a single seat in 2019 with 32.55% of vote share. When we compare the vote share of the two main contending parties, then BJP scored almost double of the Congress in 2019 and the year marked the widest gap between the two parties since 1991. Between 2002 and 2009, we witnessed the narrowing of gap between the two parties to varying extent which suddenly started increasing in 2014 when Modi was declared as the prime ministerial candidate (See Table 1).

**Table 1: Vote Share and Seats by Parties in Lok Sabha Elections**

| Election Year | BJP | | INC | | Total Voting % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Seats Won | Voting % | Seats Won | Voting % | |
| 2019 Lok Sabha | 26 | 63.08 | 0 | 32.55 | 64.51 |
| 2014 Lok Sabha | 26 | 60.11 | 0 | 33.45 | 63.66 |
| 2009 Lok Sabha | 15 | 46.52 | 11 | 43.38 | 47.89 |
| 2004 Lok Sabha | 14 | 47.4 | 12 | 43.9 | 45.2 |
| 1999 Lok Sabha | 20 | 52.48 | 6 | 45. 44 | 47 |
| 1998 Lok Sabha | 19 | 48.3 | 7 | 36.5 | 59.3 |
| 1996 Lok Sabha | 16 | 48.5 | 10 | 38.7 | 35.9 |
| 1991 Lok Sabha | 20 | 50.4 | 5 | 29 | 44 |

*Source: Election Commission of India Reports*

The scale of BJP's victory can also be gauged by analyzing the victory margin in each parliamentary constituency (See Table 2). BJP increased its victory margin in all, except in Dahod (Central Gujarat) and Porbandar (Saurashtra) parliamentary constituencies when compared with last Lok Sabha elections. In 2019, it won all the seats by more than one lakh of votes and no question of winning by narrow margin. Three seats were won by margin of one to two lakh of votes, sixteen by margin of two to four lakh of votes and five by overwhelming margin of more than four lakh of votes. The highest victory margin was by C.R. Patel in Navsari parliamentary seat, surpassing the handsome victory margin of more than five lakh votes of the then BJP party president - Amit Shah. This time BJP dropped its ten of the sitting MP's, including its former president - Lal Krishna Advani. In place of Advani, Amit Shah contested from Gandhinagar and broke Advani's previous record of victory margin. Notably, 2019 was clearly bipolar contest between the BJP and the Congress as no other party posed any credible challenge on any of the seats. After the two national parties, NOTA (None of the above) scored third largest vote share of 1.4%, followed by Bahujan Samaj Party (0.87%) and Bhartiya Tribal Party (0.63%).

## Table 2 : Victory margin in 2019

| PC Name | Type | Margin in 2014 | Margin in 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ahmedabad East | GEN | 326633 | 4,34,330 |
| Ahmedabad West | S C | 320311 | 3,21,546 |
| Amreli | GEN | 156232 | 2,01,431 |
| Anand | GEN | 63426 | 1,97,718 |
| Banaskantha | GEN | 202334 | 3,68,296 |
| Bardoli | ST | 123884 | 2,15,447 |
| Bharuch | GEN | 153273 | 3,34,214 |
| Bhavnagar | GEN | 295488 | 3,29,519 |
| Chhota Udaipur | ST | 179729 | 3,77,943 |
| Dahod | ST | 230354 | 1,27,596 |
| Gandhinagar | GEN | 483121 | 5,57,014 |
| Jamnagar | GEN | 175289 | 2,36,804 |
| Junagadh | GEN | 135832 | 1,50,185 |
| Kachchh | S C | 254482 | 3,05,513 |
| Kheda | GEN | 232901 | 3,67,145 |
| Mahesana | GEN | 208891 | 2,81,519 |
| Navsari | GEN | 558116 | 6,89,668 |
| Panchmahal | GEN | 170596 | 4,28,541 |
| Patan | GEN | 138719 | 1,93,879 |
| Porbandar | GEN | 267971 | 2,29,823 |
| Rajkot | GEN | 246428 | 3,68,407 |
| Sabarkantha | GEN | 84455 | 2,68,987 |
| Surat | GEN | 533190 | 5,48,230 |
| Surendranagar | GEN | 202907 | 2,77,437 |
| Vadodara | GEN | 570128 | 5,89,177 |
| Valsad | ST | 208004 | 3,53,797 |

*Source: Election Commission of India Reports*

The state also witnessed highest voting percentage ever in Lok Sabha. 2014 also witnessed the significant increase in voting percentage in comparison to previous elections. Most interestingly, this time the state did not only surpass 2014 but also of 1967, the highest ever before 2019. The state witnessed 64.51% of voting, breaking its previous record of all-time high turnout of 63.77% polling during 1967 elections.

**Women Voters in Gujarat Elections 2019**

Women voters came out in large numbers in 2019 to exercise their voting rights and their participation crossed the 60% mark in terms of vote percentage and increased by 1.54% in comparison to the last Lok Sabha elections (See Table 3). Since the inception of the state in 1960, 2019 witnessed the highest voting percentage by women ever, in any of the parliamentary elections and was 60.96%. In last few years, Modi and BJP have carefully taken efforts through social media platforms, like Twitter and the Modi app to mobilize women. Since 2010, Modi has started organizing women *sammelans* (large conferences) and *Sakhi Mandal Sammelans* (conferences of women's small saving and microfinance groups) to build personal rapport with women from different parts of the state, resulting into higher mobilization of women during elections (Ganguly, 2017),

Importantly 2019 also witnessed the highest number of women contestants and the number of women getting elected to the parliament (See Table 3). This time all the six women fielded by BJP won elections, and two out of six won by huge margin of more than over five lakh of votes. However, three of the winning candidates came from the political family and four out of the six fielded by the BJP were sitting MPs. Congress since very beginning has very poor record of fielding women candidates. In 2019, it fielded only one woman out of total twenty- six candidates. Since last 52 years, it has never fielded more than one women candidate. Last time it was in 1962, Congress fielded two women candidates and both of them won. Though the women from Gujarat have to still get their due share in terms of their fair representation in Lok

Sabha but six women MP's constitute 23.08% of the total number of seats in the state and is way ahead of average national representation of women of 14.39%. Gujarat is at fourth place among the states sending highest percentage of women to Lok Sabha after Odisha, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal.

**Table 3: Women voting percentage, number of contestants and winners in Gujarat**

| Lok Sabha Election Year | Total Voting % | Women Voting % | Women Contestant | Women Candidates Elected |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2019 | 64.51 | 60.96 | 28 | 6 |
| 2014 | 63.66 | 59.42 | 16 | 4 |
| 2009 | 47.89 | 43.36 | 26 | 4 |
| 2004 | 45.18 | 40.06 | 11 | 1 |
| 1999 | 47.03 | 40.78 | 8 | 3 |
| 1998 | 59.31 | 55.1 | 7 | 4 |
| 1996 | 35.92% | 29.64 | 18 | 2 |
| 1991 | 44.01 | 37.06 | 17 | 2 |
| 1989 | 54.38 | 49.01 | 9 | 0 |
| 1984 | 57.93 | 52.76 | 11 | 2 |
| 1980 | 55.41 | 49.72 | 11 | 2 |
| 1977 | 59.21 | 54.37 | 2 | 1 |
| 1971 | 55.49 | 50.19 | 1 | 0 |
| 1967 | 63.77 | 58.1 | 1 | 1 |
| 1962 | 57.96 | 52.02 | 6 | 2 |

*Source: Election Commission of India Reports*

**2019 Lok Sabha vis-à-vis 2017 Vidhan Sabha (VS)**

Comparison of 2019 LS results with 2017 VS elections in Gujarat, presents much more significant shifts in the electoral politics of the state

since 2014. It can be observed by the fact that voters behaviour varied within one-and-a-half years when it comes to voting for assembly and parliamentary elections. 2017 Gujarat state elections are considered to be the major come back for the Congress and setback for the BJP. BJP could not reach three digit figures and were reduced to 99 seats, very close to losing majority. However, BJP did manage to increase its vote share by 1% in comparison to 2012 VS.

On the other hand, Congress made significant gains and won 77 seats out of 182. Its vote share also increased by 2.5% in comparison to 2012 state elections and almost by 8% in comparison to 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Most of the Congress gains were from agrarian region of Saurashtra-Kutch and north Gujarat regions. It won 29 out of 40 in Saurashtra-Kutch region and 17 out of 31 in north Gujarat region. Congress performed much better in rural constituencies than in urban constituencies across the state, and also won some of the urban constituencies in Saurashtra-Kutch region. Despite the fact that Congress performance was low in the urban areas, it was able to increase its vote share from 35% in 2012, 27% in 2014, to 41% in 2017 in urban constituencies (Shah 2018:20).

However, all the gains made by the Congress in 2017 both in terms of seats, vote share and regions were lost in 2019.The two results appear to be diametrically opposite within one-and-half years. If 2017 state assembly election results are transposed on parliamentary elections, then Congress was supposed to win eight Lok Sabha seats. But it not only failed to win any parliamentary seat but also lost majority votes in 69 assembly constituencies in 2019 when compared to 2017. Its vote share also declined by almost 9% in 2019 vis-à-vis 2017. Congress also failed to retain its performance in specific regions and could gain majority votes only in one assembly constituency Saurashtra-Kutch region and two in North Gujarat region. In contrast, BJP made significant gains both in terms of vote share and regions. BJP's vote share increased significantly by 14% and its performance was even across the regions.

**Table 4: Performance of BJP and Congress in Gujarat elections**

| Elections | BJP | BJP | INC | INC | Difference of vote share between BJP and Congress in % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Seats | Vote % | Seats | Vote % | |
| 2019 Lok Sabha | 26 | 63.08 | 0 | 32.55 | 30.53 |
| 2017 Vidhan Sabha | 99 | 49.05 | 77 | 41.44 | 7.61 |
| 2014 Lok Sabha | 26 | 60.11 | 0 | 33.45 | 26.66 |
| 2012 Vidhan Sabha | 115 | 47.85 | 61 | 38.93 | 8.92 |
| 2009 Lok Sabha | 15 | 46.52 | 11 | 43.38 | 2.14 |
| 2007 VidhanSabha | 117 | 49.12 | 59 | 38 | 11.12 |
| 2004 Lok Sabha | 14 | 47.4 | 12 | 43.9 | 3.5 |
| 2002 Vidhan Sabha | 127 | 49.85 | 51 | 39.28 | 10.57 |
| 1998 Vidhan Sabha | 117 | 44.81 | 53 | 34.85 | 9.96 |
| 1995 Vidhan Sabha | 121 | 42.51 | 45 | 32.86 | 9.65 |

*Source: Election Commission of India Reports*

**Shifts in Gujarat Politics after 2014**

The above data indicates major shifts in Gujarat's politics after Narendra Modi left the state and became the Prime Minister. The 2017 VS results were very different from 2014 Lok Sabha, and 2019 Lok Sabha results were very different from 2017 VS. To understand the shifting verdict, we need to take into account several major political events in the state politics after 2014. Under the leadership of Anandiben Patel followed by Vijay Rupani, the state government faced series of agitations of sorts that made national headlines and caught BJP unawares. The first major jolt was from Patidar community. A young leader and an excellent orator, Hardik Patel mobilized huge section of the youth from BJP's traditional vote bank - Patidar community against the BJP government for the first time in Gujarat's history. He projected himself as non-political person and a common youth, who is above party politics. Hardik Patel demanded reservation in jobs for his community or the

abolition of the reservation policy as such. It has been argued that such a demand was the reflection of the growing agricultural distress, increasing crisis of jobs in rural areas and joblessness (Jaffrelot, 2016: pp. 218-232). In August 2015, he organised massive rally in Ahmedabad under Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti (PAAS) which resulted into severe clash between the agitators and the police, resulting into the death of 13 persons and leaving hundreds injured. Since then, the state witnessed several clashes between the PAAS members and the government, and occasional protests. The protests and the arrest of Hardik Patel and his associates under sedition created a kind of bitterness in the section of Patidar community, leading to increasing chasm between the community and the BJP.

After Patidars, Kshatriya-Thakor OBC community under the leadership of another youth leader Alpesh Thakor, organised massive rally in October 2015.Under the banner of the Kshatriya-Thakor Sena (KTS), he mobilised numerically powerful Kshatriya-Thakor community and demanded stricter implementation of prohibition law, better implementation of government's policy of 85% reservation for local people in industries, better education and jobs. It was also a kind of counter mobilisation from the OBC community against any attempt to disturb the existing OBC reservation quota to accommodate the demands of Patidars. Later on, Thakor also attempted to unite OBC, SC and ST communities under the ExtaManch Front with very little success. The major difference between the two movements was that – Patidars were more assertive and thereby more confrontationist than the latter. 2015 to 2017 witnessed several clashes between the Patidars and the police, and the arrests of several youths from the community. As against that, Thakor leadership was spared of any major arrest by the police. Second, Patidar community constituted the traditional core vote bank of the BJP and thus their estrangement posed bigger challenge for the party and the government. Thirdly, Patidars though numerically less in number in comparison to the Thakor community are more economically well off and socially significant in Gujarati society to be ignored electorally.

Following these two protests, Dalit anger erupted in the wake of Una incident when four Dalits were flogged publicly with police acting as the mute spectator. It led to massive spontaneous protests by the Dalit community demanding justice, dignity and action against the perpetrators of the crime and against the local police. Like others, this protest also led to the emergence of another youth leader - Jignesh Mevani. Mevani continued to protest on issues of land and related Dalit issues even after the arrest of those responsible for crime in Una. The three agitations though organised on very different issues threw up three young leaders from very different economic, social and caste background. They emerged as new faces and forces in Gujarat's political fray after 2014 LS elections and also joined hands together against the BJP occasionally. Ahead of 2017 VS elections, the three youth leaders allied with the Congress and assertively campaigned against the BJP.

Some other prominent issues after 2014 LS were - drought-affected farmers in Saurashtra-Kutch region, the implementation of Goods and Services Tax (GST), demonetisation, which impacted the textile and the diamond industry in Gujarat, and the anti-incumbency. As a result, in 2017 VS elections, despite securing a majority, BJP lost grounds of its constituency in rural areas and also among certain castes and communities.

In the backdrop of all these events together, there was a realisation that the BJP may not be duplicating its 2014 performance in 2019 Lok Sabha (LS) elections. Particularly after the loss of seats and vote share in 2017 VS by the BJP, the Congress was expected to win parliamentary seats from Saurashtra-Kutch region and from those dominated by the Patidars.

However, contrary to this perception, BJP not only repeated its 2014 performance grabbing all the seats, but was also able to increase its vote share. In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, BJP's vote share in the state was around 60% while in 2019 Lok Sabha election, it stood at 63%. The vote share of Congress declined from 33.45% in 2014 to 32.55% in 2019.

It is also fascinating to see that despite getting a lot of fuel against BJP in Gujarat after 2014, Congress, the major opposition party, was not able to effectively capitalize on the opportunity. Thus, how to explain BJP's victory and resurgence in 2019 elections, what led to recalibration of political forces after 2017 verdict, how and why the voting behaviour of people changed within less than one-and-a-half years from 2017 to 2019, why such a major shift in the mandate of VS and LS elections?

**Decoding the 2019 Verdict**

The reasons for BJP's resounding victory in 2019 after the debacle in 2017 are manifold.  The defining variables are BJP's recalibration of its strategy, its ability to win the lost ground and communities, Modi's magic, fizzling out of some of the issues in the last one-and-a-half years which played decisive role in 2017, narratives put forth by both the parties during election campaign, loss of unity in opposition camp and lastly voters making distinction between the state and the national elections with Modi as prime ministerial candidate.

The 2019 verdict implies the popularity and trust that Narendra Modi continues to enjoy in his home state. In fact, Narendra Modi is believed to be the sole saviour of BJP in Gujarat, not only in Lok Sabha elections but also in the 2017 VS elections. As mentioned above, for the 2017 VS elections, the opposition was solely banking on the issues of agrarian crises, Dalit atrocities in the state, Patidar stir, unemployment, economic downturn due to demonetization and GST and so on. Congress did attempt to create a narrative in its favour with the slogans like 'Chowkidar Chor Hai', massive corruption in Rafale deal, BJP's attack on democratic institutions, playing soft Hindutva among others. Issues like Rafale, undermining of the democratic institutions etc did not find much traction among the voters. At the same time, slogans like Chowkidar Chor Hai were effectively capitalised by Narendra Modi which invoked 'Gujarati Asmita' (Gujarati Pride) and cited this as an insult to Gujarat. This was not the first time Narendra Modi turned

personal attacks by opposition to his advantage. It has been his tactic to turn winds to his advantage since his days as Chief Minister.

The issues on which Congress fought election were agrarian crisis along with water shortage and crop insurance issues, unemployment and land acquisition among others. After its decent performance in 2017 Gujarat assembly elections, Congress morale was boosted and it hoped of cashing in on several issues of unrest in the state especially, the Patidar agitation and GST among others. During the campaign Congress continuously reiterated that BJP has been using the issue of national importance such as anti-terrorism to its electoral advantage. In the Jan Sankalp rally that Congress organized to kick start its Lok Sabha polls campaigning, Priyanka Gandhi gave her debut speech in which she took on the BJP government by urging voters to think on the 'real' issues not the insignificant issue that BJP is trying to bring in to campaign. The rally witnessed blistering attacks on BJP on the promises made by BJP in 2014 including offering 2 crore jobs and bringing black money back.

The groundnut and cotton farmers' distress in Saurashtra region along with Congress' gain in Saurashtra in Assembly elections was seen by Congress as an opportunity to continue the show. In fact, Congress was largely optimistic of its scheme of minimum income promise of Rs72000. Congress also tried to bring in the limelight difficulties arising from the infrastructural projects such as the bullet train which generated unrest due to the land acquisition issues and compensation. The unrest of the farmers was organised under the banner of Gujarat KhedutSamaj which took to the high court against state government's amendment of land acquisition act. This was possibly the reason that BJP avoided campaigning on the bullet train issue. Congress was also expecting to reap the benefits of caste equations. Apart from some major urban constituencies in Gujarat which have been a conventional vote bank of BJP, Congress was hopeful in non-urban regions. Congress was expecting to capitalise on the Patidar agitation demanding reservation for the Patidar community. Its leader Hardik Patel also joined the Congress

but could not contest the election as he could not secure stay on his conviction. This was a disappointment for Congress but still, it strived to cash in the Patidar votes. Along with the Patidar votes that Congress was expected to get, it was also eying on the large OBC votes which comprises around 40 percent of Gujarat's population.

In central Gujarat, Congress has been relatively stronger due to its history of independence movement and the textile cooperative network bringing benefits to rural households. In North Gujarat Congress was also raking up the issue of the response to the floods especially in Sabarkantha and Banaskantha districts with the total death toll in the state standing at 224. Congress also raised the issue of a very little representation to Muslims in the election. However, this may not have affected BJP much since the Muslim votes do not go to BJP either.

Rafale deal was another case which Congress continuously raked up. Congress gave an abundance of footage to Rafale deal issue which it accused that BJP has procured the deal at a much higher price. Congress continued with Rafale rhetoric despite CAG finding no substantial indication of corruption. Rafale deal corruption issue made Congress use the slogan 'Chowkidar Chor Hai', meaning watchman (here the prime minister) is a thief. Gradually Congress realised that corruption issue, at least the case of Rafale deal, was not going nicely with the public. Not even Rafale, but corruption did not attract voters' attention much.

On the other hand, BJP relied on nationalism, zero corruption image, personal integrity and trustworthy image of Narendra Modi. BJP's slogans such as 'Modi hai to MumkinHai' were employed to convince the voters and establish Narendra Modi as a strong prime minister. Moreover, BJP has a robust voter base in the urban regions of Gujarat such as Surat, Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Vadodara. The voters here have traditionally supported BJP for its developmental work. And this was definitely visible in the poll results. During the campaign BJP understood the fact that corruption allegations primarily the Rafale scam

allegations are too technical to understand for voters. However, the intensity of Congress' attacks on Modi and BJP was high. Here again, Narendra Modi used the allegations to his own advantage. Modi responded to the slogan of 'Chowkidar Chor Hai' with changing his name prefix to 'Mai bhi Chowkidar' followed by other BJP leaders and cadres doing the same. Narendra Modi associated this allegation to the insult not only of him but also of the 5 crore Gujarati people.

Nationalism too assisted BJP to garner the support and overshadow other issues primarily economic. The Pulwama attack and its aftermath with India attacking the terrorist infrastructure at Balakot gave BJP a strong plank to contest the election on the issue of national security. Throughout his rallies in Gujarat (the state which shares long border with Pakistan), Prime Minister Modi and other leaders invoked Balakot strikes to convey the message of a masculine foreign policy by BJP. BJP tried to exploit the statements coming out from Congress leaders. For instance, BJP claimed that it was an insult to the armed forces to ask proof for the surgical strikes, post Pulwama terrorist attacks. BJP in this was able to bring Congress into its definition of 'anti-national'. During a BJP election rally, the Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, mentioned that this election is between India and Pakistan and blamed Congress for speaking the language of Pakistan. BJP again tried to surround Congress on the issue of terrorism citing the policies of past Congress governments for the current mess in Jammu and Kashmir.

It also said that BJP's victory in Gujarat is due to the traders and the youth who voted in large numbers. There are differing opinions on the fact that despite enduring massive losses by the trading community and soaring unemployment, BJP was able to sail through. BJP's win is also credited to the loss of momentum that Congress generated in 2017 assembly election along with the infighting in the party. Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailing from Gujarat became another plank on which BJP relied in the Lok Sabha elections in Gujarat. Invoking the Gujarati pride, Narendra Modi in a rally said "only a Gujarati can teach

Pakistan a lesson" thus playing the emotional card. He was citing the surgical strikes. Also, the Statue of Unity built by BJP was invoked to discredit and blame Congress for its dynastic politics. Prime Minister Modi in one of the rallies mentioned that none of the Congress leader has come to visit statue of unity. This was an attempt by BJP to convey to the people that Congress does not respect Patel who hailed from Gujarat and unified India rather for Congress, Nehru is everything thus depreciating the contribution of others.

The most serious challenge for BJP after 2014 LS elections was containing the growing discontent among the Patidar youth,and increasing chasm between the party and the community. For that BJP adopted multi-pronged strategy. BJP leadership under Modi and Amit Shah focused on mobilizing and gaining the confidence of socio-religious leaders of Patdiar community. Just before fifteen days of elections, Amit Shah along with Chief Minister and several other political leaders from the community, held closed door meetings with leaders of various socio-religious organizations of Patidar community from Khodaldham, Umiyadham, Sidsardham, VishvUmiya Foundation among others. All these organizations enjoy large scale respect and are too important for the community to be ignored. Though the leaders of these socio-religious organizations refrained themselves from publicly asking votes for BJP, and when asked denied these meetings to be related with Lok Sabha elections in a press conference. However, they recognized that they gave representation to Shah on various issues, concerning the community and that the response of the government was positive (*The Indian Express*, April 13, 2019)

Notably, Modi also took personal interest in the socio-religious programmes of the Patidar community. Before one-and-a-half months of election, he attended and inaugurated two very important and grand socio-religious project of the community. He inaugurated Rs 1000 crore Vishva Umiyadham complex developed by Vishva Umiya Foundation related to Kadva Patidars (Patels in Gujarat are divided into two sub-

castes - Kadva and LeuvaPatels). The complex will be consisting of a large Umiya (deity dear to the community) temple, a skills university and training centre for youth and widows. Next day, he also inaugurated the Annapurna Dham temple-cum hostel complex of the Leuva Patidar community. On both the occasions, he raised voice against the practice of female foeticide in the community and asked them to take oath in the name of the deity to give up such an evil practice (*The Indian Express*, March 5, 2019). Through these socio-religious programme, BJP attempted and was able to win back large section of the community, particularly the older generation and women.

The passage of the Bill regarding the implementation of the 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in jobs ahead of Lok Sabha elections also helped BJP in wooing back the younger generation of the Patidars. In Gujarat, BJP projected it as fulfilling the demand of reservation by the Patidar community. After the passage of the Bill, Hardik Patel and his close associates also recognized it as the fulfillment of their demands and during election rallies projected it as their victory. They claimed that it was implemented because of their protest and under their pressure. Hardik Patel, who took a public vow not to contest election before the fulfillment of demand for reservation, after the passage of the Bill from parliament, justified his decision to contest election as his vow is fulfilled. However, just before nomination, Hardik Patel was prevented to contest election when he was convicted in rioting related case of 2015 agitation. Whatever be the real reasons, one thing is sure that the implementation of the 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in jobs led to fizzling of the issue on which 2015 agitation was organized. It also pacified the anti-BJP feeling among the youth of the community to a great extent.

Hardik Patel formally joining the Congress party just before Lok Sabha elections further worked in favour of BJP to a great extent. Till now, he always projected him as a leader solely dedicated to the cause of the community and above 'party politics'. But now he has formally

joined a party which reduced the Patidars' influence in power corridors with the KHAM coalition in 1980's. BJP successfully used his decision against Hardik Patel and accused him of being an instrument of the Congress. Patidar voting for the BJP despite Hardik's appeal not to do so also indicates the fact that, despite disenchantment with the BJP, joining Congress party was not acceptable for the large section of the Patidar community. Though they felt hurt by police action of 2015 and arrest after that, the Patidar community, who saw Congress as enemy for long, was not ready to vote for or join Congress in a big way. It indicates the fact that though Patidars were agitated with BJP but they did not see Congress as an alternative. It seems that Hardik Patel had more appeal and turned out to be more effective in 2017 State Assembly elections when he did not formally join Congress and only asked to vote against the BJP and focused more on the demand of reservation and the atrocity against the Patidar youth. Also, his asking for vote against BJP when Modi was the prime ministerial candidate did not find much resonance among the Patidar community. It's one thing to dislodge the BJP from the state government and another to dislodge a Gujarati public figure like Modi from the central government. Despite that, Hardik Patel still continues to enjoy huge support in its community and remains to be popular, and has the potential to hurt BJP electorally in the future elections.

Along with winning over Patidars, BJP made sustained efforts to garner support from other significant communities and carefully crafted division in the rank and file of the opposition as an aftermath of 2017 debacle. Moreover, the opposition which seemed to be united and aggressive before State Assembly elections was weak, faction ridden and disorganized in 2019. Through micromanagement, BJP carefully constructed an alliance with the Thakor community. It won over one of its most vocal leaders - Alpesh Thakor. Thakor hailing from the northern Gujarat and one of the bitter critiques of the BJP, resigned from the Congress party, ahead of Lok Sabha polls. He campaigned for the BJP and leveled serious charges against the Congress leadership. Ahead of

elections, BJP also recruited a popular Koli community leader - Kunvarji Bavaliya. Bavaliya was a five-time MLA and one-time MP from the Congress. He enjoys considerable support in the significant Koli community in Saurashtra region where BJP suffered maximum loss during the last VS elections. One of the stated reasons for Bavaliya leaving the Congress was the appointment of his junior Paresh Dhanani as the leader of opposition in the state assembly.

Another youth leader of Gujarat - Jignesh Mevani was rarely seen during the 2019 Lok Sabha election campaigns. He was busy campaigning for candidates in Bihar and in Delhi but not for Congress candidates in Gujarat. After election results while speaking to the media, he said that he was baffled as he sees no reasons for Dalits voting for the BJP after price hike, unemployment and agrarian crisis. He also said that he decided to campaign for good candidates in other parts of the country as his own assembly seat fell in the Lok Sabha constituency which is a strong hold of the Congress (*The Indian Express*, May 24, 2019). It seems that he fell out from Congress leadership just before Lok Sabha elections and decided not to campaign for Congress party in Gujarat. Even in other states, he chose to campaign for non-Congress candidates and in the constituencies where there was no direct fight between the Congress and BJP.

In contrast to BJP, the Congress party was less organized and failed to unite the sections and communities which it wooed before last VS elections. Ahead of the 2019 elections, change in state leadership of Congress led to factionalism and discontent within the party. As mentioned above, the long-term Congress loyalist KunvarjiBavaliya left the party when his junior was offered the post of leader of opposition in the state assembly. Between 2017 VS and 2019 LS elections, around a dozen sitting MLA's left the party, followed by many other state leaders. In the absence of strong regional leadership in the state, all the major disputes within the party were taken to the high command at Delhi. The high command many times didn't have the time to address the issue

or failed to give proper audience to all the factions, or postponed the decision for the future, leading to further discontent within the party. In contrast, under the firm leadership of Amit Shah, all kinds of discontent within BJP was dealt with firmly and decisively. Barring Hardik Patel, Congress failed to keep other two young leaders and associated communities within its fold after 2017 VS elections. Alpesh Thakor left the party and Jignesh Mevani was conspicuous by his absence during the election campaign in the state. Congress also failed to keep its alliance intact with Bhartiya Tribal Party (BTP). Both the parties fought 2017 VS elections together. BTP enjoys considerable support among the tribals of south Gujarat and won 2 seats during last assembly elections. However, alliance was broken ahead of LS elections. Thus, ahead of Lok Sabha elections, Congress failed to keep its alliance with – Alpesh Thajkor, Jignesh Mevani and with BTP. BJP took advantage of the faction-ridden Congress party and the division within the opposition to turn the wind in its favour. The Pulwama attack and the Balakot strike were fully utilized by the BJP in its favour during the election campaigns.

Finally, the voters made the distinction between the state assembly elections and national elections. Voters of the state voted very differently in 2014 and 2019 when Narendra Modi, a native from the state was projected as the prime ministerial candidate. After 2002 in the state assembly elections, the gap between the BJP and the Congress has been narrowing, and reached narrowest in 2017 in terms of vote share and seats (See Table 4). Interestingly, once Modi is projected as Prime Minister candidate in 2014 and again in 2019, the Lok Sabha results were very different from preceding state assembly elections. Also, Congress fielded eight of its sitting MLA's as candidates in parliamentary elections in 2019. They not only lost but even trailed in their respective state assembly seats as well. Thus, it can be safely concluded that though Congress was increasingly giving a tough fight to BJP in state assembly elections after 2002, voters voted very differently when it came to parliamentary elections with Modi as the Prime Minister candidate. The voter's behavior is diametrically opposite when it came to voting in

last two Vidhan Sabha and Lok Sabha elections. Above all, Modi being from Gujarat had the advantage of addressing the masses in native language, was better aware of the sentiments of the masses and utilized the regional symbols, icons and idioms during the election campaigns much more effectively than the national leaders from the opposition. He also had enduring popularity in his home state and had much better appeal among the voters in comparison with Rahul Gandhi or Priyanka Gandhi.

**References**

- Desai, Kiran and Ghanshyam Shah. (2009): Gujarat: When Patels Resist the Kshatriyas. In C. Jaffrelot& S. Kumar (Eds), *Rise of the plebeians? The changing face of Indian legislative assemblies* (pp. 188-214). Routledge, New Delhi.

- Dholkia, Amit. (2017): The Shifting Basis of Political Legitimacy: An Analysis of the Dynamics of Gujarat politics. In Himanshu Roy et. al (2017). *State Politics in India,* Primus Books, New Delhi.

- Ganguly, Varsha Bhagat. 'Tokenistic 'Vikas' for Women in Gujarat'. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2017 Vol. 52, Issue No. 52, Online.

- Accessed on 5 Dec. 2019 URL - https://www.epw.in/engage/article/tokenistic-vikas-women-gujarat

- Jaffrelot, Christophe. 'Quota for Patels? The Neo-middle-class Syndrome and the (partial) Return of Caste Politics in Gujarat'. *Studies in Indian Politics*, 2016 Vol. 4, Issue No. 2, pp. 218-232.

- Lincoln, TN. 'The Political Historiography of Modern Gujarat,. *ISEC Working Paper* 380. Accessed on 2016, 05 Dec 2019

- URL: http://www.isec.ac.in/WP%20380%20-%20Tannen%20Neil%20Lincoln%20-%20Final.pdf

- Shah, Ghanshyam. 'BJP's Sixth Victory in Gujarat: A Puzzle'. *Economic and Political Weekly,* Economic and Political Weekly, 2018 Vol. LIII No. 2, pp. 20-25.

- Sheth, D. L., 'Politics of Communal Polarisation: A Precursor to Gujarat Carnage', *Manushi*, 2002 No. 129, 15-21.

- 'I will be back after 2019 (polls) too, so don't worry: Modi', *The Indian Express,* Ahmedabad edition, 5 March, 2019

- 'Shah, Rupani meet Patidar leaders'. Ahmedabad edition, *The Indian Express,* 13 April 2019.

- 'Dalits had no reasons to vote for BJP this time, a stunned Mevani says', *The Indian Express,* Ahmedabad edition, 24 May 2019.

- Yagnik and Achyut and Suchitra Sheth. (2005): *The Shaping of Modern Gujarat: Plurality, Hindutva and Beyond*. Penguin Books, India.

# Uttarakhand Lok Sabha Election Results on Expected Lines

**Annpurna Nautiyal**

*This election clearly exhibited that BJP's organizational structure, was far more efficient, better and well organized than congress party's organizational structure. The internal divisions, fights, revengeful attitudes, public spats and choice of candidates by one of the oldest party of the state were also responsible for its loss in all seats. Actually the internal divisions and lack of an acceptable leadership was the major cause of Congress fall from the grace. This allowed a landslide win for BJP and Modi in Uttarakhand. Under such conditions the grand old party certainly needs to introspect and check the internal divisions, fighting and develop a good leadership not only in the state but nationally also. Rahul Gandhi's defeat from Amethi seat in Uttar Pradesh and wiping out of Congress from all five seats in Uttarakhand indicates it clearly. However same goes for BJP also because though presently Modi wave and Amit Shah's strategies have given BJP a spectacular and unimaginable margin of win, but to repeat the same performance would be difficult if the state government which has fifty seven seats fails to perform well and remain complacent and slack in fulfilling the promises made for the agenda of development of hill areas. It is*

*high time that the state BJP starts working on its weak sectors and focuses on delivery of results.*

Election for five seats of Lok Sabha from Uttarakhand was finished in the very first phase on April 11, 2019, but from the beginning it was clear that BJP is going to win all the five seats. As these elections were concluded in the first phase, the candidates did not get much time for canvassing. Due to this, the major issues like migration from hill areas, lack of jobs, poor agricultural output, menace of wild animals, forest fires, scarcity of potable water, lack of infrastructure, poor medical facilities, shifting of NIT from Srinagar, declaration of Gairsain as permanent capital of state remained largely absent from the election rhetoric and debate. Though Prime Minister Modi did not address many rallies in Uttarakhand, the under current in favour of BJP and Modi was visible from the start of this phase of election. People were silently appreciating the motto of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and the agenda of inclusive development of Modi. The apathy towards hate and caste politics of the Mahagatbandhan of various political parties and pseudo secularism of Congress and other parties were also quite noticeable. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi took the onus of leading BJP towards gaining a majority for the second time, Rahul Gandhi shouldered the same responsibility for Congress.

Although it is true that Uttarakhand sends only five members of Parliament to Lok Sabha which is not very significant from the point of view of numbers but as the assembly election held recently in Madhya Pradesh indicated that a single seat could make a difference. So, in Lok Sabha election 2019 the outcome of every seat was important for both the BJP and Congress. Moreover in a politically charged state like Uttarakhand the verdict of the past elections has also been indicative of the future course. In Uttarakhand, people's awareness, their displeasure with the non-performing parties and governments is mirrored through constantly changing election outcomes.

**Seats and Vote Percentage in Uttarakhand through different Lok Sabha Elections**

| Year | Congress | | BJP | | BSP | | Others | |
|------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|
| | Seats | % vote | Seats | % vote | Seats | % vote | Seats | % vote |
| 1996 | 0 | 9.9 | 3 | 32.0 | 0 | 14.0 | 2 | 44.1 |
| 1998 | 0 | 20.2 | 5 | 47.3 | 0 | 13.1 | 0 | 19.4 |
| 1999 | 1 | 38.1 | 4 | 39.6 | 0 | 12.4 | 0 | 9.9 |
| 2004 | 1 | 38.3 | 3 | 41.0 | 0 | 6.8 | 1 | 13.9 |
| 2009 | 5 | 43.3 | 0 | 33.9 | 0 | 15.3 | 0 | 7.5 |
| 2014 | 5 | 34.03 | 5 | 55.32 | 0 | 4.73 | 0 | 4.82 (1.09 used NOTA) |
| 2019 | 0 | 31.4 | 5 | 61.0 | 0 | 4.48 | 0 | |

*Source: CSDS Data unit and election commission of India website*

Uttarakhand was created in 2000, but the first government, which was formed by BJP after Uttarkhand's separation from Uttar Pradesh, was voted out of power in the first assembly elections held in 2002. However in Lok Sabha polls held just after two years in 2004 the voters enabled BJP to capture three Lok Sabha seats. Likewise in 2007 assembly elections though Congress' vote share was higher than BJP, government was formed by BJP. But in Lok Sabha elections held in 2009, Congress defeated BJP badly by winning all five Lok Sabha seats. BJP lost 2012 assembly elections despite Major General B.C. Khanduri leading it. Interestingly BJP captured all five Lok Sabha seats in 2014 due to Modi wave at national level. The Modi wave also helped the BJP to perform exceptionally well in 2017 assembly elections and BJP could hold a record fifty-seven seats.

**Party voted in Assembly elections 2012 and 2017
and Lok Sabha elections 2014**

| Party Voted | Assembly Elections 2012 Vote Share and Seats won | | Assembly Elections 2017 Vote Share and Seats won | | Lok Sabha Elections 2014 Vote Share and Seats won | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Congress | 33.79 | 32 | 33.5 | 11 | 34.03 | 0 |
| BJP | 33. 13 | 31 | 46.5 | 57 | 55.32 | 05 |
| BSP | 12.19 | 03 | 7.0 | 0 | 4.73 | 0 |
| SP | 1.41 | 0 | .04 | 0 | 5.02 (SP and Rest) | 0 |
| Independents | 12.35 | 03 | 10.0 | 02 | | 0 |
| UKD (P) | 1.93 | 01 | .07 | 0 | | 0 |

*Source: data compiled from election commission website*

As there is no other winnable party in the state, the contest has always been between the BJP and Congress. Even during the 1990s when BJP began registering its presence in the hilly areas of Uttarakhand, the contest remained confined between the congress and BJP only. This trend has heightened after the formation of Uttarakhand state as can be seen through different elections. The first BJP led government of Uttarakhand was voted out of power in the first assembly elections of 2002. But it was interesting to see that people who voted for Congress in the assembly elections voted for BJP which captured three out of five Lok Sabha seats in 2004 Lok Sabha polls. Similarly in the assembly elections held in 2007 though Congress was voted for by 46.3 percent people and BJP by 38.2 percent people. But BJP was able to form the government with the support of the UKD (Uttarakhand Kranti Dal) and independents. However, in 2009 Lok Sabha elections Congress won all the five Lok Sabha seats.  Interestingly BJP lost 2012 assembly election despite Khanduri leading the election but captured all the five Lok Sabha seats in 2014 with a vote percentage of 55. 32 percent due to Modi wave at national level. Such electoral volatility reveals people's discomfort with the non-performing leaders and parties and their helplessness as well.

In 2019 Lok Sabha elections also the electoral contest remained bipolar and this time also the BJP contested the election in Modi's name. Modi's developmental agenda, nationalism, Balakot strike, reservation to economically weaker sections, Kisan loan scheme, Ujjawala cooking gas scheme, toilet and swachta schemes, Chardham Yatra project of surface transport ministry, rail connectivity project and initiation of air connectivity between Garhwal and Kumaun made a huge impact among the voters. The two women friendly schemes: construction of toilets in every home and Ujjawala Gas Yojana remained successful in easing problems of women of remotest villages and made them Modi supporters. The following table reflects women's clear preference for Modi and BJP as 62.01 percent female and only 60.19 percent males voted for BJP. This was probably the result of these two women focused schemes.

**Party Voted By Gender in Percentage**

| Voted by | Congress | BJP | Others |
|----------|----------|-------|--------|
| Male | 29.8 | 60.19 | 10.1 |
| Female | 33.21 | 62.01 | 4.9 |
| Total | 31.4 | 61.0 | 7.7 |

*Source: Uttarakhand Post Poll 2019-Lokniti, CSDS data centre, Sample Size 443*

The cleanliness drive, reviving livelihood of people dependent on Kedarnath pilgrimage by its reconstruction and restoration, which is quite noticeable was also a factor in yielding good results for BJP. Though Rahul Gandhi's Nayay was also discussed, people were not very convinced of its outcomes and sources. However it was also surprising that elections in Uttarakhand this year were a dull affair as like previous elections as no excitement was seen in public. Although Modi's election rally at Dehradun pulled a massive crowd and Rahul's rallies were also talk of the town, voters were not enthusiastic. Indifferent response of voters was attributed to holding election in the very first phase, which deprived candidates of gearing up their machinery and stringency of election commission that put a break on publicity posters, loudspeakers

and rallies. Moreover the candidates fielded by either party lacked a very strong presence among electorate. Nomination of Manish Khanduri, son of former chief minister of Uttarakhand Major General Khanduri by Congress party from Pauri Garhwal did not go well in the electorate despite Manish Khanduri's claim that his father's blessings were with him. It also created a strange situation for BC Khanduri and his daughter Ritu Khanduri, a BJP MLA, and their commitment of canvassing in favour of the BJP candidate Tirath Singh Rawat. It also was under scrutiny due to Manish Khanduri's blood relations with Khanduri senior. This was also seen as the best example of political ambitions which cross all boundaries as Khanduri senior was provided everything by BJP. Even if the 2012 assembly election was contested under his leadership with the slogan "Khanduri Hain Jaroriee", the fear of not getting opportunity to hold his father's legacy allowed the son for such a cross over. As Pauri Garhwal is an area dominated by former army men, betrayal by Khanduri's son, a parachute candidate, made Tirath Singh Rawat victory from this seat easier.

BJP fielded three sitting MPs Smt. Mala Raj Laxmi from Tehri Garhwal, Dr. Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank from Haridwar and Minister of state for Textile Ajay Tamta from Almora parliamentary constituency. Congress fielded Pritam Singh, Ambrish Kumar and Pradeep Tamta respectively from these three constituencies. Pritam Singh has been a sitting MLA from Chakrata assembly constituency and also president of Uttarakhand Congress Pradesh Party, Ambrish Kumar was former MLA and Pradeep Tamta a member of Rajya Sabha. Mala Raj Laxmi, Nishank and Ajay Tamta always had a good rapport with voters of their areas, therefore, the contest in these seats from the beginning tilted in favour of BJP. However, Harish Rawat's preference for Nainital Lok Sabha seat in place of Haridwar Lok Sabha seat became a subject of debate as Rawat had contested for Lok Sabha from Haridwar in 2009 and won it. Rawat had been contesting from Almora Lok Sabha seat since 1980 and wining and losing election from this seat couple of times before shifting to Haridwar parliamentary constituency in 2009 when Almora became a

reserved seat. However, in 2014 his wife Renuka Rawat replaced him and contested from Haridwar seat but lost to Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank. But in 2019 Harish Rawat shifted his base for the first time to Nainital to contest against the BJP candidate Ajay Bhatt, state president of BJP in Uttarakhand and also the first timer to contest Lok Sabha election. Harish Rawat and Bhatt both share interesting political backgrounds. Rawat faced a political revolt in March 2016 with nine Congress MLAs defecting to BJP and converting his government into a minority government. Congress also lost 2017 assembly election under him. Rawat himself was defeated from two assembly seats Haridwar rural and Kicha.  On the other hand, Ajay Bhatt despite holding charge of BJP state president also lost from Ranikhet assembly seat in 2017 elections. Leaders of both parties who had lost their seats in 2017 confronted each other in 2019 Lok Sabha election but due to Modi magic the BJP could win this seat. The fight of the two first timers from Nainital was very interesting but Modi's developmental agenda, Balakot strike, national security, nationalism, reservation to economically weaker sections and Pradhan Mantri Kisan loan scheme made an impact among the voters. The fast pace of the Chardham Road project and the development of the railways also helped to uplift the mood of the public to favour the BJP.

Since this election was largely confined on Modi verses the rest, the electorate of this hill state even did not bother to see the profile or performance of the candidates fielded by the BJP but voted in the name of Modi without any hesitation. The victory on all five seats with huge margin was sufficient to confirm this phenomenon. Some candidates were not well known but the Modi factor proved enough for them to hold their seats by a vast margin. The state president of the BJP Shri Ajay Bhatt defeated his closest rival the former chief minister of Uttarakhand Shri Harish Rawat of congress by a huge margin of more than 2.5 lakh votes from Nainital seat. Interestingly Ajay Bhatt who despite being the BJP state party president saw defeat from Ranikhet seat in 2017 assembly election defeated the former chief minister Harish Rawat who has been a five time MP from Almora and Haridwar seats and also held

the position of minister of state in the union cabinet during Manmohan Singh's tenure as Prime Minister. The BJP candidate Ajay Tamta defeated Congress party's Pradeep Tamta from Almora seat and Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank defeated Ambrish Kumar of Congress from Haridwar seat, Tirth Singh Rawat defeated Manish Khanduri the BJP's former Chief Minister Major General BC Khanduri's son who joined congress just before the election from Pauri parliamentary seat. Smt. Mala Rajlaxmi Shah retained her Tehri seat despite anti incumbency factor by defeating her closest rival the congress party's chief  Shri Pritam Singh. Like previous Lok Sabha elections the 2019 election also remained confined between the two national parties BJP and Congress and 64.37 women and 58.87 percent men casted their votes in this purely bipolar election.

The regional parties like Uttarakhand Kranti Dal and the casteist parties like Samajwadi party and Bahujan Samajwadi party with their stronghold in Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar also could not erase the Modi Factor from people's mind. Women particularly voted in a large number for BJP, which assured the saffron surge in all five seats. In fact, to repeat the performance of 2014 in a state like Uttarakhand where every five year the voters change the party and candidates, was a herculean task but Modi did it with his clever rhetoric, vision; connect with people and affirmative approach towards Uttarakhand's development. As the following table shows voters in rural areas voted more (69.1. percent) in the favour of the BJP than the Congress (24.6 percent). In the urban areas there was only a difference of nearly 7 percent votes between Congress and the BJP.

**Party Voted for Lok Sabha Election 219 by Rural and Urban population**

| Population | Congress | BJP | Others |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rural | 24.6 | 69.1 | 6.4 |
| Urban | 41.7 | 48.7 | 9.6 |
| Total percentage | 31.4 | 61.0 | 7.7 |

*Source: Uttarakhand Post Poll 2019-Lokniti, CSDS data centre, Sample Size 443*

The tactful linkage of nationalism to national security, spiritualism embedded with blessings of Kedarnath and Badrinath, subtle use of religion and the assurance of minimum government swept away the votes in all directions for BJP. The complete plugging of black marketing of cooking gas, toilets for women, medical schemes, cleanliness drive, connect through Man Ki Baat, through social media, ease of doing things like passport services, makeover of cities, infrastructure development, digitalization, transparency, reduced corruption and red tapism, government e-market procurement scheme, competition for better facilities Modi became a very admirable and favourite figure among a large number of voters of hill areas. Though the vote percentage has been low in the state (only 61.57 percent), people preferred to ignore the pains of demonetization, GST or caste or politics of religion and supported Modi unconditionally due to the policies of inclusive development.

This election clearly exhibited that BJP's organizational structure, was far more efficient, better and well organized than congress party's organizational structure. The internal divisions, fights, revengeful attitudes, public spats and choice of candidates by one of the oldest party of the state were also responsible for its loss in all seats. Actually the internal divisions and lack of an acceptable leadership was the major cause of Congress fall from the grace. This allowed a landslide win for BJP and Modi in Uttarakhand. Under such conditions the grand old party certainly needs to introspect and check the internal divisions, fighting and develop a good leadership not only in the state but nationally also. Rahul Gandhi's defeat from Amethi seat in Uttar Pradesh and wiping out of Congress from all five seats in Uttarakhand indicates it clearly. However same goes for BJP also because though presently Modi wave and Amit Shah's strategies have given BJP a spectacular and unimaginative margin of win, but to repeat the same performance would be difficult if the state government which has fifty seven seats fails to perform well and remain complacent and slack in fulfilling the promises made for the agenda of development of hill areas. It is high time that the state BJP started working on its weak sectors and focuses on delivery of results.

# Lok Sabha Elections in Rajasthan: Reasons Behind BJP Clean Sweep and Trend Reversal in State's Electoral Politics

**Rajan Pandey**

*While electoral trend in Rajasthan used to be that the winning party in assembly election used to triumph in upcoming Lok Sabha elections as well, BJP this time succeeded in reversing it. The people of Rajasthan voted quite differently in the assembly and national elections. While BJP remained unbeatable on the national level, it failed to bridge the gaps at state level. If we see the results of recently concluded Maharashtra and Haryana assembly elections and compare them with this year's Lok Sabha elections, the same trend is visible there as well. If more state elections pending in coming months continue to show this trend, this would mean a comeback of regional satraps, while also a one party dominance at national level.*

In 2019 Lok Sabha elections, BJP repeated its 2014 performance in Rajasthan, making a clean sweep on all 25 seats of the state. This was a bit surprising as in the assembly elections held less than six months back, the party had to face electoral defeat at the hands of Congress and was left with only 73 seats while the Congress won 100 in the 200 member assembly. Compared to the whopping 163 seats in

2013 assembly elections, the 2018 performance of BJP could at best be called drubbing at the hands of the electorate while Congress' gain from 23 in 2013 to 100 in 2018 could be summed up as an apt comeback. Why then within five months the electorate changed its mood drastically once again? Since the trend in the state has been that the winning party in assembly elections maintains its lead in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections too (something which electoral experts call 'honeymoon period'), this result contradicts that trend as well. To understand the reasons for this drastic change, we need to first understand the reasons that brought a change of government in the state after 2018 assembly elections.

### The Issue of Farm Distress and its Impact

Alike the country, Rajasthan was also witnessing a prolonged period of farm distress due to near stagnant rural incomes, rising input costs, climate change and decreasing returns on agricultural investment due to declining costs of farm produce vis-à-vis other goods. The government apathy in terms of not ensuring proper implementation of state procurement of food grains etc on MSP also played a role in it, and steps like GST on tractors were met with strong opposition from the farming community. The state witnessed a number of big farmer protests, some of them led by the CPI (M)'s All India Kisan Sabha and the opposition Congress took advantage of this situation.

Under Sachin Pilot, the state Congress worked hard to divert the farm distress and anger emanating from it against the ruling BJP government and Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje by holding them responsible for the plight of farmers. To attract farming community towards the party the Congress also promised a loan waiver for farmers within ten days of coming to power. The effectiveness of this campaign could be understood from the fact that five months before the polls, Vasundhara Raje government too announced a loan waiver for farmers, clearly under pressure from Congress' aggressive posturing on this issue.[1] However, since the waiver was only up to loans worth Rs 50,000 taken from

cooperative banks, Congress attack is as 'tokenism' and in turn promised a bigger waiver covering all farmers.

This attracted the farm votes and Congress managed to make a comeback. However, when it came to implementing those promises, the Congress was not as efficient as it was in raising the expectations. Firstly, the scheme was delayed; in place of the promised 10 days it took around two months. BJP used this opportunity to stage walkout from state assembly and organize protests in the state and only after that the government announced the waiver.[2] Secondly, it did not implement its promise in to-to. While it had promised a loan waiver for all farmers, when it came to implementation, the Congress government excluded nationalized banks. As only cooperative banks were included in loan waiver, a significant section of farmers who had taken loans from other banks were left out. Clearly, Sachin pilot forgot his own attack against Vasundhara Raje few months back when he criticized her loan waiver for being restricted only to cooperative banks.

Under the final scheme, waivers as small as Rs 50 to 5000 were also given to a significant number of farmers, constituting around 8.5% of the total 20.6 lakh plus beneficiaries; this led to humiliation of the government in press.[3] In fact, the blues around loan waiver are continuing even after Lok Sabha elections as a couple of farmers under loan have committed suicide and the opposition BJP is using these instances to corner Gehlot government. The government tried to pacify the sentiments by talking about loan waiver on Kisan Credit Card loan from other banks but there was no mention of the scheme in the Budget of 2019-20 presented by Ashok Gehlot government.[4]Clearly, these limitations in terms of loan relief disenchanted a huge section of farmers who had aggressively voted for the Congress in assembly elections while overall beneficiaries also remained limited. As per the data of CSDS-Lokniti, only 35% farmer respondents accepted to have benefitted from the scheme and Congress' lead among them compared to BJP was not very severe.[5]

**Problems in Candidate Selection**

Another factor that severely hurt Congress' prospects was a faulty choice of candidates. One major reason for this was the favourable results after 2018 elections. Since Congress formed the government in the state after these elections, most of the party stalwarts who had significant support base joined the government. Since almost all of them preferred to remain ministers in the state cabinet, the party had to rely on second rung leaders who were not that strong. One very evident case in this regard is that of Congress' Raghu Sharma, who had defeated BJP's candidate in Ajmer Lok Sabha by-election despite every effort possible by the central and the then state government of BJP. After the assembly elections, Sharma who had contested and won from the Kekri assembly constituency of the state on Congress ticket resigned from his membership of Lok Sabha and joined the state cabinet. Unwilling to risk his ministerial portfolio, Sharma refused to contest again from Ajmer Lok Sabha seat, thus forcing the party to choose a comparatively weaker candidate.

The candidate that Congress chose to replace Sharma was Riju Jhunjhunwala, a Baniya from nearby Bhilwara district. In Ajmer, Sharma who comes from the Brahmin community had won the by-election in a Jat versus other castes contest, as other communities generally unite to check Jat dominance. However, in place of fielding a Brahmin again, the party made a miscalculation by fielding a Baniya; BJP won this seat by a margin of more than 4 lakh votes. Similar mistake in terms of ignoring caste calculations was done by Congress on Jaipur Urban seat. Here too, the Congress fielded a Baniya candidate Jyoti Khandelwal against BJP's sitting MP Bohra who comes from the Brahmin community, despite knowing it well that Baniyas are not willing to leave BJP bandwagon. BJP won the Jaipur Urban seat also by a margin of more than 4 lakh votes.

Further, the party fielded 5 former MLAs again in the Lok Sabha who had lost their seats in 2018 assembly elections. Some of these

were Rafiq Mandeliya from Churu, Shravan Kumar from Jhunjhunu etc, and these people failed to give a tough contest to BJP candidates, helped by the Modi factor as they had already been rejected by the electorates just few months back.

**BJP's clever strategy: Saturating the anti-incumbency against Vasundhara Raje government**

During both the assembly election 2018 and Lok Sabha 2019, a slogan that kept on resonating was- *Modi tujhse bair nahin, Rani teri khair nahin* (Modi, we have nothing against you but Rani or Cm Vasundhara must go). Not just common voters, but even a significant number of BJP cadres and leaders were witnessed talking about it as back as the run up to assembly election. Some state based BJP watchers allege that this slogan came from the party high command, not the common voters and it was the central party leadership and its loyalists who pushed and popularized it. The purpose, they maintain, was to kill two birds with one stone-get rid of Vasundhara Raje and saturate the anti-incumbency to assembly elections, making sure the results in Lok Sabha remain un-affected.

Given the troubled past between Vasundhara Raje and the BJP central leadership, this theory could not be outrightly rejected. Raje had continued to remain the state CM despite the willing ness of Modi-Shah leadership to change the state CM in the middle of the term and that conflict had caused a lot of bad blood between both camps. Since Raje has been a strong regional leader since a long time, some people also saw her as a potential threat to one-upmanship of the Modi-Shah leadership. Whatever be the case, it is quite clear that the slogan actually succeeded in capturing the minds of the people.

While some people became critical of the government after voting for it once just few months back because of getting unsatisfied with it, others had simply decided tactically that they will vote out BJP in the state but vote for it in Lok Sabha. According to a survey by CSDS-Lokniti done in the state in December, nearly half of the respondents said they

will vote for the BJP in Lok Sabha.[6] "In Rajasthan, we had Gehlot and Pilot, but in Delhi what is the alternative" is a statement that was repeated by a number of respondents, signaling that BJP's campaign regarding 'NOTA facor' when it comes to Modi did reach far and wide. Further, Congress failed in projecting Rahul Gandhi as a credible alternative to Modi in this election, among the common voters.

**Election management and alliances**

This time, the Congress' campaign lacked the rhythm and enthusiasm in Rajasthan, unlike 2018 assembly elections while the BJP, known for superior election management skills utilized immense financial and manpower resources available at its disposal to the fullest; this difference between campaigns of both parties quite was visible too. CM Ashok Gehlot focused too much of his time and energy in Jodhpur, where his son was contesting, wasting priority time on just one seat which it also failed to win.

Further, Congress missed the opportunity to build pre-electoral alliances with smaller, sectional parties like the Jat voters based Rashtriya Loktantrik Party of Hanuman Beniwal and the Bhartiya Tribal party of Chotu Vasava. Nagaur based Beniwal has a strong appeal among the Jat youth of not just Rajasthan but also nearby states like Haryana. He had contested the 2018 assembly elections in Rajasthan from the banner of his newly formed party and won three seats. The Congress could have tied up with him as Beniwal's opposition to Vasundhara Raje is well established but it instead relied on Jyoti Mirdha, the granddaughter of stalwart Jat politician and former Nagaur MP late Nathuram Mirdha. The BJP high command, much against the wishes of Vasundhara camp sealed a deal with Beniwal by giving him 1 seat in alliance. This helped BJP in doing exceedingly well among the Jat voters while Beniwal won his seat as well, defeating Mirdha by a margin of more than 1.5 lakh votes.

Another case is Bhartiya Tribal Party, a regional party based in Rajasthan and Gujarat. The party was founded by a Gujarati tribal MLA

from Bharuch district Chotu Vasava. Vasava has a strong support base among tribals, especially Bhils. While Meenas are the most influential tribal community of Rajasthan, southern Rajasthan's Banswara-Dungarpur region is dominated by the Bhils and Damor Meenas. The party made its entry in Rajasthan's politics this assembly election and with consistent efforts and radical posturing, it has succeeded in capturing the imagination of tribals of Banswara. In 2018 assembly elections, his party fielded candidates in the region and won two seats. An alliance with him could have helped Congress in preventing split of Tribal voters, traditionally considered Congress supporters but party's inability to do that cost it dearly. While BTP candidate Kantilal made the contest for Banswara ST seat triangular causing a split by polling more than 2.5 lakh votes, an overwhelming percentage of tribal voters went with the BJP on this and other seats of the state.

While BJP surged ahead of Congress in terms of alliances and management, it also left no opportunity to gain electoral dividends by fanning the communal sentiments. An example of that could be seen from the use of Ram Navami and Dussehra as an opportunity to polarize voters by the BJP during elections. Ram Navami fell between the campaigning schedule and RSS affiliated organizations used the moment to its fullest. Ram Navami-Dussehra processions, a characteristic feature of RSS where volunteers march with sticks and weapons were taken out at maximum places and attempts were made to disturb communal harmony which led to riots and stone pelting in some places like Jodhpur's Sardarpura, CM Gehlot's constituency.[7] The mobilization in these processions was shown as a 'Hindu awakening' against forced secularism and Muslim appeasement by Congress. In places like Churu, inflated numbers about people who joined the procession were paddled as proofs that BJP is sure to win as 'all the Hindus are with it'. These acts, coupled with support to the people allegedly involved in cow related vigilantism and lynchings in places like Alwar were used by party to communalise the electorate wherever possible and it did benefit the party electorally.

**In-fighting and camp wars**

The in-fighting that Congress suffered during the elections had its roots in the party's decision to bring back Ashok Gehlot to the state and make him the CM, instead of Sachin Pilot. Pilot was the state president of Congress prior to elections and clearly he was very much in command of the campaign in the state that led the party to victory in Rajasthan in 2018 assembly elections, while Gehlot was mostly busy in being political consultant to national party president Rahul Gandhi. But to balance the old guard and the new, Congress leadership made Gehlot the CM while Sachin Pilot was made deputy CM. The scheme failed to control the in-fight and the common voters too felt it to be a bit unjust. A large number of supporters of Sachin Pilot, mostly from the Gurjar community voted for BJP this time (1/4th if we go by the CSDS Lokniti survey mentioned previously). In majority of the group interviews I conducted while covering elections, the Gurjars in Dausa-Ajmer-Sawai Madhopur region said they will vote BJP to teach Congress a lesson, which did not make Sachin Pilot,a Gurjar, the CM despite assurance. Respondents from other communities like the Rajputs said they voted Congress in the assembly as they were angry with the CM Vasundhara and with her gone, they have no issues with Modi.

Though both the CM Ashok Gehlot and Deputy CM Sachin Pilot tried to lead a united campaign, local level infighting and camp wars severely affected its chances on various seats. On the Churu seat where Congress fielded former MP Rafiq Mandeliya, its lone Muslim candidate in the state, local MLAs and the lone Congress minister from Churu allegedly worked against him; Mandeliya lost by a margin of more than 3 lakh votes. BJP also suffered from this on a number of seats but by the end it succeeded in putting its house in order. For example, on the Meena dominated Dausa ST seat, heavy factionalism forced it not to declare its candidate till three days before the last date of filing nomination. However, despite all efforts by stalwart Meena leader and Rajya Sabha MP Dr. Kirodi Lal Meena seeking ticket for his wife Golma Devi and ex MP OP Hudla lobbying for self, the party fielded former MP Jaskaur

Meena from Dausa ST. This clearly enraged Kirodi supporters from Meena community who openly declared that they will vote Congress as "Dr. Sahab has been cheated by BJP". But on the other hand it united all other communities behind BJP who were opposed to Kirodi and his Meena community's one upmanship, including the Gurjars who had violent clashes with Meenas during the Gurjar reservation agitation. Jaskaur Meena ended up winning by around 78000 votes, the lowest margin in the state.

**Extent of impact in terms of results and conclusions from the mandate**

BJP's vote share in 2019 increased to 58.4%, recording a gain of more than 3.5% over the 2014 performance. It won 24 seats while the 25th seat of the state was won by its alliance partner Rashtriya Loktantrik Party. Though the Congress did manage to increase its vote share by 1.6% when compared to 2014 Lok Sabha elections, it failed to win a single seat despite having been in power in the state. Bigwigs like CM Gehlot's son, world discuss throw champion Krishna Poonia and former Finance minister Jaswant Singh's son Manavendra lost. Barring two in all other seats, BJP's victory margin is above 1 lakh votes.

**Table: Who Voted Whom in Both Elections**

| | Voted for Cong (%) | Voted for Cong (%) | Voted for BJP (%) | Voted for BJP (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2018 VS | 2019 LS | 2018 VS | 2019 LS |
| Brahmin | 39 | 15 | 45 | 82 |
| Rajput | 35 | 40 | 53 | 57 |
| Other Upper Caste | 30 | 19 | 50 | 58 |
| Jat | 30 | 13 | 26 | 85 |
| Other OBCs | 38 | 23 | 46 | 72 |
| SCs | 39 | 54 | 34 | 39 |
| STs | 41 | 38 | 40 | 55 |
| Muslim | 62 | 79 | 14 | 19 |

*(Source: The Hindu, Lokniti-CSDS Post Poll Surveys during 2018 Assembly elections and 2019 Lok Sabha elections)*

In fact if we compare the voting pattern of various communities in 2018 assembly election and 2019 Lok Sabha elections, only the Muslim and the SC voters stayed with Congress while the upper caste (especially Brahmins), OBCs  and Jat voters made an en mass tactical shift, from Congress to BJP. The BJP increased its vote share among all communities this time, including the Muslims, when compared with its 2018 performance.

While electoral trend in Rajasthan used to be that the winning party in assembly election used to triumph in upcoming Lok Sabha elections as well, BJP this time succeeded in reversing it. The people of Rajasthan voted quite differently in the assembly and national elections. While BJP remained unbeatable on the national level, it failed to bridge the gaps at state level. If we see the results of recently concluded Maharashtra and Haryana assembly elections and compare them with this year's Lok Sabha elections, the same trend is visible there as well. If more state elections pending in coming months continue to show this trend, this would mean a comeback of regional satraps, while also a one party dominance at national level.

**Notes**

1.   'Rajasthan farmers get Rs 50,000 loan waiver papers', The *Economic Times*, 5 June, 2018
     https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/rajasthan-farmers-get-rs-50000-loan-waiver-papers/articleshow/64457680.cms?from=mdr

2.   'Opposition BJP stages walkout from Rajasthan assembly over loan waivers', *Business Standard*, 23 January, 2019.
     https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/opposition-bjp-stages-walkout-from-rajasthan-assembly-over-loan-waivers-119012300626_1.html

3.   'After mocking UP, Rajasthan gives up to Rs 5K waiver to 1.7lk farmers', *The Economic Times*, 4 March, 2019.

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/after-mocking-up-rajasthan-gives-up-to-rs-5k-waiver-to-1-7-lk-farmers/articleshow/68248655.cms?from=mdr

4.   'Rajasthan Budget Mum on Kisan Credit Card Loan Waiver, Hikes Cow spending by 145%', The Wire, https://thewire.in/government/ashok-gehlot-rajasthan-budget-2019

5.   Sanjay Lodha, 'Post-poll survey: Incredible repeat of 25-0 score for BJP in Rajasthan', *The Hindu*, 25 May, 2019. https://www.thehindu.com/elections/lok-sabha-2019/post-poll-survey-incredible-repeat-of-25-0-score-for-bjp-in-rajasthan/article27249626.ece

6.   Sanjay Lodha, 'Post-poll survey: Incredible repeat of 25-0 score for BJP in Rajasthan, *op. cited.*

7.   Rajan Pandey, 'Congress is Putting up a Strong Fight in Rajasthan but BJP is Likely to Pull Ahead', *The Wire*, 22 April, 2019. https://thewire.in/politics/elections-2019-rajasthan-bjp-congress

# Parliamentary Elections (2019) in Haryana & Delhi : Outcome and Consequences

**Shiraz Sheikh**

*The electoral outcome in Haryana and Delhi was a microscopic reflection of the national trend. However, the sweeping victory of BJP in Haryana and in the national capital has its own nuances and implications. This article specifically focuses on certain determinants which shaped the nature of verdict in these two cases. The article attempts to make separate studies of the electoral strategies of main parties in these two cases and examines how party-face, alliance arithmetic and campaign rhetoric resulted in the massive victory for the BJP. The article further attempts to exhibit correlation between the result and its implications for the polity and party politics in Haryana and Delhi.*

The massive electoral victory of Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2019 Loksabha election reflects a fundamental change the way politics is being played out in India. All those markers around which mobilization used to be anchored became irrelevant in the shadow of personality centric election. This election was centred on three major issues. Firstly, this election was effectively turned into a quasi-presidential style campaign. The incumbent BJP fought on the face of Prime Ministerial candidate, Narendra Modi and projecting the opposition parties as weak

and leaderless. Secondly, the election witnessed sharp religious divide leading to deep polarization. Those who voted for the BJP were convinced that other parties thrive on minority-appeasement politics and BJP is the true guardian of the majority-interest. Thirdly, despite abysmal performance of the incumbent government, voters were made to believe that Modi deserves another term to harvest what he sowed in his tenure. As a consequence of these narrative; and opposition's failure to offer counter narrative and an alternate leadership, the BJP managed to secure unprecedented scale of electoral victory.

The electoral outcome in Haryana and Delhi was a microscopic reflection of this national trend. However, the sweeping victory of BJP in Haryana and in the national capital has its own nuances and implications. This article specifically focuses on certain determinants which shaped the nature of verdict in these two cases. The article attempts to make separate studies of the electoral strategies of main parties in these two cases and examines how party-face, alliance arithmetic and campaign rhetoric resulted in the massive victory for the BJP. The article further attempts to exhibit correlation between the result and its implications for the polity and party politics in Haryana and Delhi.

## Breaking Trends: How BJP Swept Haryana Loksabha Elections

The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) that won decisive mandate at the national level swept all the seats in Haryana. Not only BJP won all the 10 seats, they won it with substantial margins. It trumpeted the second largest party Indian National Congress (henceforth Congress) by a margin of 30 percent. The overall vote share of BJP was as high as 58 percent while Congress managed to secure respectable 28 percent vote share however insufficient to win a seat. The Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) performed below its potential and secured mere 2 percent of vote share. The Jannayak Janata Party (JJP), a splinter faction of INLD led by Dushyant Singh Chautala – the grandson of Om Prakash Chautala – fought in alliance with the new entrant Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Although the JJP-AAP alliance failed to impress and got only 9 percent

of total votes polled, it however reduced the vote share of INLD. Another electoral alliance of the Loktantra Suraksha Party (LSP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) failed to make an impactful beginning in Haryana politics. The vote share of LSP-BSP alliance was abysmally low at 4 percent. Traditionally the Haryana voter never rallied behind one party and always held the elected ruler accountable and put a check on them by altering the government periodically. Not only this election broke this past trend but also ruptured the dynastic hegemonies and caste-based preferences.

**Drifting Towards a New Trend**

Haryana as a new state came to its existence in 1967. Earlier it was part of Punjab state. Under the Punjab Reorganization Act 1966 the Haryana state was constituted on linguistic and cultural basis. Since then both the state assembly and Loksabha elections were conducted. The first election conducted in 1967 gave Congress a clear mandate in both state and national level. The erosion of Congress influence began with the emergence and consolidation of Janata Party during the emergency period in the Hindi belt. The Janata movement was collective response of anti-Congress opposition parties that led to the birth and rise of Janata Dal. The Janata Dal led by VP Singh was formed with the merger of various political parties including Janata Partyfactions that comprised Bhartiya Jana Sangh which was later transformed as BJP.

The first round of elections in Haryana in 1967 gave Congress a clear mandate in both the state assembly as well as in national election. The Congress dominance continued until 1977 when its state monopoly was broken by Janata Party. On the other hand its performance in Loksabha election in Haryana witnessed a decline in 1989 when Janata Dal toppled it in national election and Lok Dal defeated Congress in the state assembly election in 1987. However the equation reversed in the next elections when the Congress recaptured power in the state but conceded defeat in national election to BJP led alliance in 1996. From there a predictable pattern in Haryana election became apparent.

The pattern was that the incumbent party in state suffered loss in the national election. However this trend was halted in 2009 as illustrated in the following table:

**Table. 1: Comparative Party Performance in State and National Elections since 1977**

| Year of State Elections | Single Largest Party/Alliance | Year of National Election | Single Largest Party/Alliance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1977 | Janata Party | 1984 | INC |
| 1982 | INC | 1989 | Janata Dal |
| 1987 | Lok Dal | 1991 | INC |
| 1991 | INC | 1996 | BJP+ |
| 1996 | HVP | 1998 | HLD+ |
| 2000 | INLD | 1999 | NDA |
| 2005 | INC | 2004 | INC |
| 2009 | INC | 2009 | INC |
| 2014 | BJP | 2014 | BJP |
|  |  | 2019 | BJP |

*Source: Election Commission of India*

After the first election held in 1967, the Congress party dominated both the state and national elections for the next three terms. It was only in 1977 a collective challenge under the banner of Janata Party altered the equation. Thereafter a pattern was visible that the Haryana voter weighs the performance of the state government and votes accordingly. However, there was rupture in the trend in 2019 when despite high level of dissatisfaction with state government and incumbent legislators the voter preferred to reelect the BJP candidates. Anurag Jain in his study found that voters in Haryana voted in the name of Narendra Modi.[1] Besides this, the outcome of the election was also indicative of changes in dynastic domination based on identity centered mobilization.

### The Decay of Political Clans

The Haryana elections have always been about political dynasties and elites. There have been four major political clans which dominated the state politics. The political families have alternatively changed and shared power among themselves. These families were hardly out of power and to stay relevant and the leaders of these clans even defected to opposition parties, formed their own parties after being ousted from parent parties.

One such politically influential family was of Chautalas. Om Prakash Chautala was the founder of INLD. O. P.Chautala rose to political prominence in the late 1980s when he served as a state chief minister for a brief period between 1989 and 1991. Later he served as full time head of the government from 1999 to 2005. Chautala belonged to politically rooted family. His father Chaudhary Devi Lal was instrumental in the formation of separate Haryana state in 1966. Devi Lal also served as state chief minister and as deputy prime minister of India. Chautala's political career came to an end in 2013 when he along with his son Ajay Singh Chautala were convicted in the case of illegal recruitment of 3200 teachers during his fourth term. Both of them were sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment.[2] Thereafter, Chautala's grandsons Dushyant and Digvijay Chautala succeeded over the party leadership. Mobilizing on the family legacy, both the brothers turned out as damp squib. In the parliamentary elections of 2019 the party struggled to manage 2 percent vote share.

The second most influential family was of Congress leader Bhupindra Singh Hooda who served as chief minister for consecutive terms between 2005 and 2014. Before taking state responsibility he was elected MP from Rohtak parliamentary seat for four terms between 1991 and 2004. He made his political stature by defeating Chaudhary Devi Lal for consecutive elections from Rohtak constituency. In his heydays he became indispensible for Congress survival in the state. He became mass leader by organizing many farmer movements. He became the

face of Jat community who are influential social constituency in the state. Hooda lost his political clout in 2014 when under his leadership Congress conceded massive defeat to the BJP.

During that period he was accused of corruption charges in an alleged land scam related to DLF-Robert Wadra land deal.[3] The defeat in the state election and allegation in the land scam eroded significance of Hooda Family. This erosion was completed when Deependra Hooda, the son of Bhupendra Hooda lost from his father's traditional Rohtak constituency. Hooda himself lost from Sonipat parliamentary seat. As a consequence of this outcome, Haryana Congress faced leadership crisis for a short span of time.

The Bishnois are another political clan in Haryana who lost their credential as a consequence of the electoral outcome in 2019 election. Bhavya Bishnoi was the face of this dynasty in this election. He is the grandson of Chaudhary BhajanLal, a Congress stalwart who served as state chief minister twice from 1979-1985 and 1991-1996. His son Kuldeep Bishnoi also joined Congress and contested from Bhiwani parliamentary constituency in 2004. In that election he defeated former chief minister BansiLal and Ajay Kumar Chautala.

After he was ousted from Congress, he along with his father founded Haryana Janhit Congress (HJC) in 2007. Almost a decade after its formation the HJC was merged with the Congress in 2017.[4] In 2019 parliamentary election the Congress fielded Bhavya Bishnoi, a 26 year old cricketer in domestic leagues, from Hisar constituency. Campaigning on his grandfather's political legacy he promised to make Hisar as the new capital of Haryana.[5] An inexperienced candidate and devoid of local support he gathered 15 percent votes on his party's name. On the other hand the wining BJP candidate Brijendra Singh secured 51 percent of vote share. However the BJP candidate too was from dynastic background. His great grandfather Sir Chhotu Ram was Unionist Party leader during British Raj. His father Chaudhury Birendra Singh was a

Congress leader who joined BJP in 2004 and served as Union Minister under Modi government.

Other influential candidates who lost in this election were Kumari Selja – currently a Member of Parliament from Upper House. She is Congress's Dalit face in the state and won multiple parliamentary elections since 1991 and served as central minister under Manmohan Singh government. Ashok Tanwar was another prominent Dalit leader of Congress who lost his constituency in this election. Tanwar was also the president of Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee. ShrutiChoudhary was another dynastic politician from Congress who lost in this election. Her grandfather BansiLal was former Chief Minister of Haryana. Her parents are seasonal politicians and previously served as ministers in the state government.  This losing streak of dynastic politicians, indicates a change towards the state politics and how the outcome was mandate in favour of new politics.

**Dissolving Caste Binaries: A New Equation**

Historically, Haryana politics always revolved around caste identities, especially around the Jat and non-Jat binaries. Jats are less than one fourth of the total population but their political clout dwarfs the numeric equation. Prior to 2014 all chief ministers except Bhajan Lal were from Jat community.

The Jats are closely knit social group which honours traditional community ethos. They are connected through community run educational institutes and Khap Panchayats.[6] The Khap Panchayats are instrumental in mobilizing the community for common cause, social or political. Many of the decisions of Khap Panchayat are binding on the community, especially the rural Jat population. This capacity to act collectively and vote *en bloc* made them politically important despite their being not more than 25 percent of the population. The elections in Haryana were always seen as contestation between Jat and non-Jat parties. The BJP which came to state power in 2014 and made a non-Jat chief minister pitched itself as non-Jat party in the 2019 parliamentary

election. However BJP did not antagonize the Jatcommunity, even in 2014 it fielded record 25 Jat candidates. In the last general election it gave party tickets to two Jat candidates. Both of them emerged victorious with huge margin.

The Jat and non-Jat factors are determinative of poll outcome. Before this election there was sharp divide between the Jat and non-Jat segments. The Dalits were not at ease with them due to various reasons. But the divide sharpened after 2016 Jat agitation in which the state witnessed widespread violence and chaos for 10 days.[7] The agitators demanded reservation in educational institutions and state employment. The BJP government agreed to give them 10 percent reservation. This move resulted in the shifting of Jat votes in favour of BJP. A post-poll survey showed that 50 percent of Jats voted for BJP, an unprecedented number for the party.[8]

Not only BJP managed to get Jat support it also brought the Dalits who were traditionally voting for Congress in its favour. A very high percentage, around 58 percent of Dalit votes were cast in favour of BJP.[9] Dalits and Jats were the two traditional political constituencies of the Congress which drifted away to strengthen the BJP. The other two caste groups - the non-Jat upper caste which is 15 percent of the total population and Other Backward Class, the Ahirs voted for BJP *en masse*. A post-poll survey carried out by the CSDS-Lokniti found about 74 percent of these two social groups voted for BJP.[10] These statistics indicate towards a change that all caste segments shifted their preference to BJP. The critical question that emerges is that how the BJP became a catch-all-party and earned the confidence of all social groups?

There were an array of factors which worked in favour of BJP to transcend the caste boundaries. First, the BJP contested in the name of Modi. This tactic turned the Haryana election into presidential style where main opposition parties failed to present a counter leadership option. A post-poll study conducted by the CSDS-Lokniti found half of the voters who voted for Modi said they would have voted differently if

Modi was not projected as the face of BJP. Secondly the Jat votes went in favour of BJP due to apparent infighting among their leadership. The Jats were also satisfied with the BJP led government's decision to give 10 percent reservation to Economically Backward Class (EBC) among Jats. Thirdly, in this election, nationalism was another factor that motivated the voters to transcend their regional identity. Central government was projecting a muscular posturing against Pakistan after terror attack on Indian security personnel in Pulwama. After the incident in which 40 members of security forces died, India carried out air strikes on terror hide outs and training camps in Balakot within Pakistan territory. It was seen as befitting reply to the enemy. Haryana which sends high percentage of soliders to Indian Army resonated with government response to Pakistan. Fourthly, the non-Jat upper caste voters which despise the Jat domination saw BJP as platform to counter their hegemonic status. The consolidation of all these social segments resulted in BJP's decisive clean sweep in Haryana.

**Delhi Elections: Image, Polarization and Populism at Work**

Elections in Delhi have always been two party affairs - a sharp contestation between BJP and Congress. Since the constitution of Delhi legislative assembly in 1991 these two parties have switched power between them. The contestation became triangular in 2013 with the entry of Aam Aadmi Party in the state election. AAP, a by-product of 2013 anti-Congress movement, rose to power in December 2013 assembly election. Arvind Kejriwal was elected as Chief Minister who formed a minority government with the Congress support. The AAP government lasted for only two months. In 2014 Kejriwal who introduced a third force in Delhi politics decided to contest the parliamentary election and fielded more than 400 candidates. Arvind Kejriwal contested against BJP's prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi from Varanasi constituency in Uttar Pradesh. Although Kejriwal lost from there, his party won four seats from Punjab. In Delhi the BJP won all the seven seats.

In 2015 Delhi assembly election AAP created history by winning

67 seats out of the 70 seats. Arvind Kejriwal became the Delhi Chief Minister for the second time in a short span of time. He has been appreciated for his welfare schemes in education and health sectors. However after five year since AAP's participation in general elections it once again failed to open its account in the second stint in Delhi in 2019. In this election BJP retained all the seven seats. In the Delhi battle Congress was not even considered as a formidable force. However Congress vote share was higher than that of the AAP. The BJP riding on the second Modi wave improved its vote share by 10 percent from the last general election. In this election the BJP vote share was 56.6 percent, way ahead of Congress which secured 22.5 percent and ended up as runner-up. The AAP vote share dipped by 14 percent from previous election and was reduced to mere 18 percent in 2019 election. It was more shocking for the AAP as it holds 67 assembly seats with 54.3 percent vote share. The BJP secured lead in 65 assembly segments while Congress lead in 5 assembly segments.

The defeat of Congress is comprehensible as there was apparent infighting among Delhi leadership and its failure to project counter narrative to BJP's ultra-nationalist project. What is intriguing is how AAP which is ruling Delhi and with satisfactory performance ended up so poorly. The Delhi voters traditionally voted on caste and class interests. But this time a Grand National Narrative from the incumbent BJP overrode this consideration. The essential elements of this narrative were leadership image, identity polarization and welfare populism.

**Image Crafting: If Not Modi, Who Else?**

Individuals are important in representative politics. Voters see their representative as connecting link through which their interests are manifested in the polity. Throughout history the commoners always looked for a messiah, the great leader to bring change, reform and uplift them from their wretched life. They seek for a leader, who is charismatic, a strongman who will protect and possess ability to take tough decision and above all has resemblance to their life. Therefore an image of a

leader who is seeking their support is essential. The image of the party, he is representing is also important. But at times some individual became larger than the party. In the general election of 2019 NarendraModi was that messiah whose image was risen above BJP.

In the run up to 2014 election he was projected as anti-corruption crusader and *VikasPurush*(development man). He then sold the dream of *acche din* (better days) and *vikas* (development). During the campaign, a Congress leader called him *neechAadmi* (vile man) and "*Chaiwala*" (tea vendor). He made it a class issue and propagated that the elitist and feudal party like Congress is intolerant to the idea of OBC running for premiership. The BJP then designed a campaign called "*Chai pe Charcha*" (discussion over tea) in which party leaders were indulged in discussion with commoners at tea stalls.  In that election Modi rose to power with massive mandate. During his term he failed to fulfill his commitments of better days. Therefore in the next election it was necessary to craft a new image free from legacy burden.

This election was not about development, growth, corruption, governance or polices but it revolved around Modi. He was projected as "non-corrupt bachelor, who is "not in politics for himself"[11] but for the emancipation of the masses. In reverence his admirers revered him as a Fakir - an ascetic mendicant who has renounced materialism and risen above sins.[12] He was shown as a "Chawkidar" - a guardian who will defend the country against the internal and external enemies. He was marketed as "the challenger of status quo and slayer of the post-colonial elite."[13] The election was personalized and everything was Modi vs. the rest. And it was made out that there was no alternative to replace him. A satellite TV channel named NaMo TV was launched to amplify the image campaign which disappeared after the election.[14] A biopic on Modi named "PM Narendra Modi" starring Vivek Oberoi was also to be released during that period. In contrast the opposition was inefficient to counter this image projection.

The image fight was also determinative of Delhi outcome. The BJP

fought on Modi's face while the challengers Kejriwal and Rahul Gandhi appeared weak. Kejriwal was projected in media as 'agitator chief minister' who did not come out of his Lokpal movement mode. He was portrayed as small leader good at local governance. Since his party was no national force his projection as challenger to Modi did not resonate with the masses. Aam Aadmi Party was also projected as proxy team of Congress and desperately trying to forge alliance with the party. On the other hand Rahul Gandhi, the main opposition face against Modi was painted as a soft person - a reluctant politician too innocent for Indian politics. On the other hand people preferred a decisive leader. *India Today's* Political Stock Exchange poll found that the public this time was convinced by Modi's muscular aura and popularity soared after he carried out attacks on terror launch pads in Pakistan.[15] These image contrast moulded public preference in favour of a strongman and they overlooked competence and credentials of BJP candidates.  But this image of Modi did not work in vacuum and was supported by identity polarization and a populist campaign.

**Identity Polarization and Vote Consolidation**

Between the two elections the BJP constantly promoted Hindutva - a form of cultural nationalism based on the exclusivist assumption that the holy land of Hindustan belongs to Hindus embedded by "bond of common blood" and Muslims have been "foreign invaders."[16]This assumption is embodied in the genealogy of social identity theory of "in-group" and "out-group," the binary of "us" vs. "them". In case of Hindutva, the Muslims became the default out-group for political reasons. The BJP, which adopted Hindutva as its official guiding credo in 1989 Palampur Resolution, projected itself as masculine nationalist party with exclusivist tilt against inclusive and secular nationalism.[17] Because the Congress inherited power at the time of colonial retreat and based its nationalism on anti-colonialism narrative, the BJP chose to otherize Muslims in their narration of Hindu Nationalism.

Muslim otherization has become an instrument of political

mobilization among the Hindutva constituency. In the last five years, Muslim representation in Indian politics has been eroded near to invisibility. Muslims are 14.2 % of the Indian population, but in 2014 only 22 Muslim parliamentarians were elected in the house of 543. In that election, the BJP fielded 428 candidates, including seven Muslims, of whom none were elected. Thereafter, the BJP won many state elections. A study in 2018 found that there were only 4 Muslims out of 1418 BJP Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs).[18] In 2017 state election of Uttar Pradesh which has 403 legislative assembly seats, BJP did not field a single Muslim candidate. In 2019 general election BJP fielded six Muslim candidates (3 from Jammu and Kashmir, 2 from West Bengal and 1 from Lakshadweep). None of the candidate won. The subtle message was, Muslims were not desirable and Hindu majoritarian endorsement will be sufficient.

This otherization was constructed with the help of symbolisms which later permeated in politics. These symbols include cow/beef, monuments (temples and mosques); iconography (appropriation of anti-Muslim icons); Pakistan and new categories of "Love Jehad". These symbols were attributed meanings and dovetailed with Hindu pride and glorification to create binary of social identities, that are not primordial and pre-given they are manufactured and instrumentalized to attain socio-political ends. The impact of this sharp polarization reflected on 2019 election.

A study conducted by CSDS-Lokniti found the 2019 verdict was "a manifestation of the deepening religious divide in Indian society."[19] The study illustrated that the BJP was able to receive consolidated support from all Hindu castes and communities. Compared to 2014 election BJP's Hindu vote share increased by 8 percent in this election. The BJP received 44 percent Hindu vote while its allies secured 8 percent votes from Hindu community. It received substantial support of all castes as illustrated in the following table:

**Table: 2. Comparative illustration of BJP's support among Hindu communities**

| Hindu Caste | Vote for BJP in 2014 (%) | Vote for BJP in 2019 (%) |
|---|---|---|
| All Hindus | 36 | 44 |
| Hindu Upper castes | 47 | 52 |
| Hindu OBCs | 34 | 44 |
| Hindu Dalits | 24 | 34 |
| Hindu Adivasis | 37 | 44 |

*Source:Lokniti Post Poll Survey 2014 and 2019*

The study showed that the majority Hindus felt close of the BJP while minority community at large kept away from the party. The divide was most blatant in the states where Muslim population was high such as Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. In Assam the Hindu vote share for BJP was 70 percent while for Bihar, UP and West Bengal it was 65, 60 and 57 percent respectively.

The Delhi election was no different from this national trend. The BJP had massive support from Hindu upper caste. Their vote share from this community was as high as 75 percent while Congress and AAP received only 12 and 13 percent respectively.[20] BJP's vote share from Dalits (44 percent) OBCs (65 percent) was also very high. On the other hand BJP got only 7 percent vote from Muslims while Congress was supported by 66 percent Muslims. The AAP which is in power received 18 percent vote share. Paradoxically, the AAP came third in almost all assembly segments. The BJP won 65 assembly segments while Congress secured lead in five Muslim majority assembly segments in Ballimaran, Chandni Chowk, Matia Mahal, Okhla and Seelampur. It reflected that Muslims who voted for AAP in assembly election did not see it as national force capable of stopping BJP. Besides image and polarization the third factor that worked in favor of BJP was its populist posturing.

**Populism as Electoral Strategy**

When erstwhile aristocratic republics were transformed into democracies, a new governance model was designed in which the citizens were delegated with the power to elect their representatives. In that governance model the political parties were the instrument through which commoners were represented in the polity. It was propagated that the voters were rational and would cast their preference based on rational choice. The political parties competed to shape voters' preferences through the tactics of mobilization. There are varying methods and design of this mobilization that may mould voters' choice in favour of the shaper. Populism is one such powerful and effective method to cultivate popular support. In the 2019 election competitive welfare populism took centre stage of political campaign. Both the incumbent BJP and challenger Congress sought refuge in populist rhetoric.

The populism help parties to consolidate the floating votes not attached to any party ideology. For this precise reason, the populism has been a powerful instrument in the hands of its architects. In 2014 development and growth was the major plank of election. Modi promised the creation of millions of jobs. Above all he made voters believe that only he can deliver and bring change. During the first term Modi government initiated many welfare schemes related to affordable housing scheme (*PM Awas Yojana*), sanitation and toilets scheme (*Swachh Bharat Mission*), electrification of poor households (*Saubhagya*), clean fuel for cooking (*Ujjwala Yojana*) and many more. Despite these schemes it failed to generate jobs and large scale workforce shrunk.

According to the NSSO data which was buried by the government, nearly 30 million jobs were lost with recoded 40% shrinking in casual farm labour.[21] The BJP led government addressed this crisis by announcing direct income support. The scheme was called *Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojna* that offered Rs. 6000 annually to the bank accounts of any farmer owning upto 2 hectares of land.[22] In response, Congress in its electoral promise came with minimum income

guarantee scheme. The scheme was named as *Nyuntam Aay Yojna* abbreviated as *NYAY* meaning justice. Under the scheme, 50 million families were to be supported with upto Rs. 72, 000 per year.[23] These schemes were devoid of policy articulation and reminded of the popular slogan "*Garibi Hatao*" by Indira Gandhi in 1971.

The BJP government which used to oppose the reservation system in principle amended the constitution in January 2019 to provide 10 percent reservation to Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of the General Category in government jobs and educational institutions.[24] The total reservation reached to 59 percent and in the election season no political party dared to oppose it. To counter this move the Congress promised that if they are elected 33 percent government jobs will be reserved for women.[25] The AAP which lacks national party credentials could not offer counter to these populist rhetoric. They were already in the midst of populist scheme such as free WiFi for Delhi citizen; mammoth subsidy for utility bills such as water and electricity consumption, and free health services through *Mohalla* clinics. Before the election the AAP government also announced door to door delivery for 40 government services. This scheme did not materialize as Delhi Lieutenant Governor who represents the central government rejected the idea citing many objections.[26] It was visible that long term empowerment polices were replaced with short term welfare schemes without constitutional guarantees. This populism worked for Modi while Congress and other parties were drowned in Modi wave. This sloganeering worked in Delhi elections too where BJP swept all the seats.

## Conclusion

The results have incurred multipronged consequences for party politics in Haryana and Delhi as well as on national polity. There have been organizational rejig in Haryana Congress followed by the election debacle. During the election there was apparent fissure between Bhupendra Singh Hooda and HPCC president Ashok Tanwar. After the election Hooda pressed hard on the central leadership to replace Tanwar

from his position. In a show of strength he had series of meetings with his loyalists and organized a grand rally at Rohtak indicating formation of new party if his demands were not met. Without the official communication from the Congress he projected himself as future chief ministerial candidate. Since state election is slated down the line this year Congress was under pressure to make swift decision. The party replaced Tanwar with another Dalit leader Kumari Selja who was named new HPCC president. Hooda a prominent Jat face was named as leader of its legislature and chief of election management. Thus he became a *de facto* Chief Minister face. Since Jat votes are consequential in the state and BJP is consolidating non-Jat communities Congress wants to regain its Dalit-Jat-Muslim combination.

For other parties the Loksabha election posed an existential question. The two pre poll alliances of Jannayak Janata Party-Aam Aadmi Party and Loktantra Suraksha Party-BahujanSamaj Party were dissolved after the dismal performance. The JJP and BSP forged a new alliance to contest the upcoming assembly election. However within a month's time Mayawati and Dushyant Chautala announced the end of alliance. The split might help in Congress's revival which is banking on Jat and Dalit votes. In Delhi which will see election next year the organizational consequences are yet to appear. However it is speculated that due to the demise of Congress stalwart leader Sheela Dixit there will be less antagonism. The former chief minister had visible tussle with All India Congress Committee (AICC) in-charge Delhi P. C. Chacko over the working of local level bodies of the party. For AAP it is bigger challenge as it has to retain its position. The party is witnessing defection as AlkaLmaba has gone back to Congress. The AAP is now seems to be concentrating on assembly election and paradoxically benefits from the fact that its prominent faces who lost in the parliamentary election will be contesting the assembly election. And since there was no alliance with the Congress in the last election both parties will go it alone in the election.

More than organizational recalibration and dwindling alliance arithmetic the election outcome had radical impact on national polity and the basic template of Indian political system. The results reinforced the notion that local considerations and issues are not sufficient to fetch voters' confidence in national election.  A party requires to lay out national vision – ambiguous or concrete. The BJP laid out the policy vision of "New India" but did not spell out its details. They were aggressive and rhetorical but convincing in their campaign. The method turned out to be productive and yielded massive mandate for BJP. The verdict was interpreted as legitimization and endorsement of party's policies and structural changes it made. This perception may result in the continuation of those policies.

The results had greater impact on the basic framework of Indian political system. BJP is emerging as a hegemonic party capturing power in the centre and states alike. Instead of multiparty democracy India is appearing as one party dominant system. In 1960s Rajni Kothari characterized Indian political system as the "Congress 'System'" which continued till 1980s. The quintessential feature of this system was that Congress was the locus around which other parties revolved.  Kothari called Congress a party of consensus that functioned "through an elaborate network of factions which provides the chief competitive mechanism of the Indian system," and saw "political competition internalized and carried on within the Congress."[27] He further observed that there were oppositional groups operating in the margin but did not "constitute alternatives to the ruling party. Their role is to constantly pressurize, criticize, censure and influence it;" rather sectional groups "help in the articulation of the opposition."[28]

The BJP that have campaigned for a "*Congress Muqt Bharat*" is emerging as a dominant party around which consensus is built. A new party system is consolidating where the BJP is functioning as locus and its allies and factions are playing oppositional role. The Congress and other chief opposition parties such as left parties and regional parties

are pushed to the margin and their capacity to challenge and compete is waning. It is visible when BJP formed governments in Goa and Karnataka by co-opting other factions opposition failed to resist it. BJP is now main opposition party in Sikkim without winning a single seat in election. Like in the period of Congress system when politics revolved around strong leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi today it is Narendra Modi. The nature of parliamentary democracy seems to be tilting in favour of presidential style election.

**Notes**

1.    Anurag Jain, 'Beyond the Binaries of Caste, in Haryana' *The Hindu*, 30 May 2019.

2.    Sana Shakil, 'Chautala Sentenced to 10 Years in Jail in Teachers Recruitment Scam,' *India Today*, 23 January 2013. URL:  https:/ /www.indiatoday.in/india/north/story/chautala-sentenced-to-10-years-in-jail-in-teachers-recruitment-scam-152249-2013-01-22

3.    Aman Malik, 'DLF-Robert Vadra Controversy: A News Round-Up,' *liveMint*, 16 August 2013, URL: https://www.livemint.com/Politics/ blyiB4vh8SxBgjy54H1BGP/DLFRobert-Vadra-controversy-A-news-roundup.html

4.    'Bishnoi's Party Decides to Merge with Congress', *The Hindu*, 27 April, 2016.

5.    Bhaskar Mukherjee, 'Riding on Family Legacy, Congress' Bhavya Spices Up Contest,' *Hindustan Times*, 23 April, 2019.

6.    A *KhapPanchayat* is a conservative community organization governed by traditional code of the constituting social groups. It also acts as quasi-judicial body

7.    AnumehaYadav, 'Jat Violence: What Exactly Happened in Haryana (and Why),' *Scroll.in*, 1 March 2016,  URL: https://scroll.in/article/ 804313/jat-violence-what-exactly-happened-in-haryana-and-why

8.   Jain, 'Post-Poll Survey: Beyond the Binaries of Caste in Haryana,'

9.   *Ibid.*

10.  *Ibid.*

11.  BarkhaDutt, 'In 2014, Modi ran on Aspiration. In 2019, He is Running on Fear,' *The Washington Post*, 15 April 2019. URL: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/04/15/modi-ran-aspiration-he-is-running-fear/

12.  PM Modi's Q&A Session In London With Prasoon Joshi, *NDTV India*, 19 April 2018, URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nN555pGMH80

13.  NilanjanMukhopadhyay, 'Has Modi Evolved from Being a Strong Leader to a Crafty One as Well?' *The Economic Times*, 23 May 2019.

14.  The Wire Staff, 'NaMo TV: It Came, We Saw, It Conquered (the EC). And Now it's Gone,' *The Wire*, 20 May 2019, URL: https://thewire.in/media/as-polls-draw-to-a-close-namo-tv-slips-off-air

15.  'PSE: Will Airstrike on Terror Camps in Balakot Benefit Modi in Elections?,' *India Today*, 7 March 2019, URL: https://www.indiatoday.in/programme/political-stock-exchange/video/pse-will-airstrike-on-terror-camps-in-balakot-benefit-modi-in-elections-1472880-2019-03-07

16.  VinayakDamodarSavarkar (2018), *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* Hindi SahityaSadan, New Delhi, pp. 52-53 &87-92.

17.  VenkiteshRamakrishnan, 'The Hindutva Road,' *Frontline*, Vol. 21, No. 25, 4-17 December 2004.

18.  Christophe Jaffrelot and Gilles Verniers, 'The Dwindling Minority,' *The Indian Express*, 30 July 2018.

19.  ShreyasSardesai and VibhaAttri, 'Post Poll Survey: The 2019

Verdict is a Manifestation of the Deepening Religious Divide in India,' *The Hindu*, 30 May 2019.

20.    BiswajitMohanty, 'Post-Poll Survey: Horses for Courses: Choices Differ for Assembly, Loksabha in Delhi,' *The Hindu*, 30 May 2019.

21.    Jay Mazoomdaar, 'Casual Farm Labour Shrinks by 40% Since 2011-12, Total Job Loss Nearly 3 Crore: NSSO Data Shows,' *The Indian Express*, 21 March 2019.

22.    See the scheme document 'PradhanMantriKIsanSAmmanNidhi (PM-KISAN)' at URL: http://www.pmkisan.gov.in/Documents/ PMKisanSamanNidhi.PDF

23.    INC Loksabha Manifesto, 'Congress Will Deliver,' *The All India Congress Committee*, New Delhi, 2019, pp. 20-21.

24.    'Centre Decides to Give 10 % Quota for Poor from General Category,' *The Hindu Business Line*, 7 January 2019, URL: https:/ /www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/centre-decides-to-give-10- quota-for-poor-from-general-category/article25933044.ece

25.    INC Loksabha Manifesto, 'Congress Will Deliver,' p. 39.

26.    'Delhi L-G sends Back AAP Govt's Proposal for Home Delivery of Several Services,' *Hindustan Times*, 27 December 2017.

27.    Rajni Kothari, 'The Congress 'System' in India,' *Asian Survey*, Vol. 4, No. 12, December 1964, p.1163.

28.    *Ibid*, p. 1162.

# The 'Nota' Factor in Karnataka: The Trends and Issues
# (Lok Sabha elections 2014 & 2019)

S.Y. Surendra Kumar

*The 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the preference for NOTA was more or less the same, as it secured just 1.04 per cent of the total votes. However, in states like Bihar and Assam, the NOTA got around 2.08 per cent of the total votes and the lowest was in Sikkim 0.65 per cent and just 100 votes in Lakshadweep. In the case of Bihar, of the total 40 seats, in 27 constituencies, the NOTA secured more than 10,000 votes and in 17 constituencies the NOTA vote share was more than 2 per cent. NOTA vote share was significant in Jammu & Kashmir (1.79 per cent), and in Andhra Pradesh (1.49 per cent), which was more than the BJP and INC vote share. Some of the other states included Chhattisgarh (1.44 per cent), Gujarat (1.38 per cent), Punjab (1.12 per cent), West Bengal (0.96 per cent), Himachal Pradesh (0.87 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (0.84 per cent), Haryana (0.68 per cent) and so on. Although, NOTA effect has not been very significant or a major threat to dominant parties like BJP and INC, but NOTA has been opted by voters across the states, and Karnataka is no different in this regard.*

The 16th (2014) and 17th (2019) Lok Sabha elections was notable in many ways. For the first time in the 16th Lok Sabha, the Bharatiya

Janata Party (BJP) on its own secured 282 Lok Sabha seats; and as part of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) it wound up with 334 seats. The 17th Lok Sabha, further boosted the BJP tally to 303 seats and with its allies it managed to get 353 seats. On the other hand, the Indian National Congress (INC) was reduced from 209 seats (2009) in the previous general election to 44 seats (2014); and as part of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) it managed just 59 seats. However, the 2019 elections, it slightly improved its tally to 52 seats and with alliance it got 91 seats. At the same time, in comparison with the 2009 general elections, the 2014 elections saw a high voter turnout of 66.4 per cent and it further improved to 67.11 per cent in 2019 elections.

Many argue that one reason for the high voter turnout could be on account of the 'None of the Above' (NOTA) option, which was made available to voters for the first time on the EVMs (Electronic Voting Machine). Earlier, the procedure for "no vote" was governed by section 49(O) of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, which required the voters to disclose their identity i.e., the voter had to approach the presiding officer at the polling booth and sign (or give his/her thumb print) on form 17A. Since this violated the concept of secret ballot, the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in 2009, with the intention to initiate electoral reforms, which might lead to the right to recall if the candidates did not perform well in terms of their electoral promises. Ruling in favour of the PUCL, the Supreme Court on 27 September 2013 stated that NOTA was not a "right to reject", but was a right "to register a negative opinion". Subsequently, it directed the Election Commission of India (ECI) to include NOTA in EVMs. The ECI accordingly provided the NOTA option for voters in both the Assembly elections in November 2013 and the general elections in April-May 2014.

The provision of neutral/protest/negative voting is available for voters in many European counties like Greece, France, Belgium, Finland, Sweden, and Spain and in South American countries like Brazil, Chile and Colombia and also in the few states in United States of America[1].

Among the South Asian countries, Bangladesh and Pakistan also introduced the NOTA option in 2008 and 2013 respectively. However, India took a longer time to offer the NOTA option because the political establishment was cold towards implementing it.

**Debate on NOTA**

The debate on the utility of NOTA still continues. The ECI has been in favour of NOTA, along with rights-based civil society groups and personalities like former Vice President of India, Krishan Kant[2]. Political parties like the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and BJP welcomed the Supreme Court judgment, on the ground that it would lead to electoral reforms[3]. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) also endorsed the verdict on the grounds that even Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was in favour of the right to reject[4]. Those supporting NOTA argue that this option will (i) compel the major political parties to project candidates known for integrity; (ii) be an incentive to urban voters who are cynical about elections, political parties and candidates, to vote, and ultimately lead to high urban voter turnout in successive elections; (iii) avoid bogus voting, since hitherto genuine voters were not taking the trouble to vote; (iv) ensure secrecy to voters opting for NOTA; and (v) indirectly enable the voter to help the system in preventing the criminalization of politics, corruption, and abuse of power by political functionaries. In addition, India being a democratic country, it is important that each distinctive opinion is given equal weight, however small its overall proportion may be.

Among those initially opposed NOTA was the CPI(M), which argued that NOTA does not serve any purpose, as the votes will be considered as invalid. One of its leaders, Sitaram Yechury, commented that the Supreme Court judgment "was an abnormal situation that needs to be corrected"[5]. The CPI(M) position was endorsed by Somnath Chatterjee, former speaker of the Lok Sabha and even former President of India, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, described NOTA as "worthless", and had *advised the young voters to do a background check of the candidates and vote for a person of integrity*[6].

Those opposing NOTA also argue that (i) it is a negative vote in character, which threatens the essence of democracy in the long run; (ii) many Western countries which had introduced this negative vote have discontinued the practice; (iii) it will have less impact on the winning candidate, as NOTA votes will be treated as invalid; and (iv) it will not be easy to motivate voters to visit the polling booth and cast NOTA, since most voters making the effort to vote may want to vote for winning candidates on the bases of caste, religion, party or ideology, or yield to the candidates' pressure or persuasion.[7] Moreover, it would also be difficult for the majority of illiterate voters to understand the concept of a negative vote.

Nevertheless, in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, for the first time NOTA secured a countrywide vote share of 1.1 per cent, which was more than the vote share managed by parties like the CPI (M) and the Janata Dal (United). Around 59.7 lakh voters across all the 543 constituencies opted for NOTA, led by Meghalaya (2.8 per cent), Gujarat (1.8 per cent), Chhattisgarh (1.8 per cent), Dadra and Nagar Haveli (1.8 per cent), Tamil Nadu (1.4 per cent), and Kerala (1.2 per cent)[8]. The highest preference for NOTA was in the Naxal-affected areas in Chhattisgarh and Puducherry saw three per cent of its electorate choosing NOTA, which was the highest in any state or Union territory.

The 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the preference for NOTA was more or less the same, as it secured just 1.04 per cent of the total votes. However, in states like Bihar and Assam, the NOTA got around 2.08 per cent of the total votes and the lowest was in Sikkim 0.65 per cent and just 100 votes in Lakshadweep[9]. In the case of Bihar, of the total 40 seats, in 27 constituencies, the NOTA secured more than 10,000 votes and in 17 constituencies the NOTA vote share was more than 2 per cent[10]. NOTA vote share was significant in Jammu & Kashmir (1.79 per cent), and in Andhra Pradesh (1.49 per cent), which was more than the BJP and INC vote share. Some of the other states included Chhattisgarh (1.44 per cent), Gujarat (1.38 per cent), Punjab (1.12 per

cent), West Bengal (0.96 per cent), Himachal Pradesh (0.87 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (0.84 per cent), Haryana (0.68 per cent) and so on[11]. Although, NOTA effect has not been very significant or a major threat to dominant parties like BJP and INC, but NOTA has been opted by voters across the states, and Karnataka is no different in this regard.

**NOTA in Karnataka**

In Karnataka, 2014 Lok Sabha elections, NOTA secured around 2.49 lakh votes, constituting 0.8 per cent of the votes in the state, which was equal to the AAP vote share (0.8 per cent) and a little less than that of the BSP (0.9 per cent). In 2019 Lok Sabha elections, NOTA secured just 0.71 percent and in 23 constituencies it got less than one percent of the total votes, in way the overall preference for NOTA by the voters remained the same as 2014. At the same time, NOTA votes were more than the CPM and CPI (0.05 percent), but this time BSP managed to secured 1.17 percent, but could not win a seat.

The possible reasons for a subdued NOTA effect in the state could be that both the BJP and the INC managed together to get around 84 per cent (2014) of the vote share, followed by JD(S) (11 per cent).[12] In 2019 elections, BJP and Congress got 51.38 percent and 31.88 per cent respectively, a total of 83 percent. Other parties like JD (S) got 9.67 percent and BSP with 1.17 per cent.[13] Thus, both the elections, indicates that voters in Karnataka continue to prefer the prominent national parties and regional candidates. Nevertheless, in-depth constituency-wide analysis indicates that NOTA have made a good beginning. There are also many interesting trends in the state, noted below.

*1. NOTA vis-à-vis the dominant political parties*

The intention of the PUCL to introduce NOTA was to ensure that the voters would use NOTA to reject candidates who do not respect human rights/ the Indian Constitution or support a pro-people environmentally suitable development policy.[14] Subsequently, the intention was also to reject candidates with criminal and corrupt backgrounds.

But in reality, people use NOTA keeping other considerations in mind, such as to express disappointment with a particular candidate or party. They may also use this option considering that the candidates they prefer are unlikely to win as they belong to regional parties or are independent candidates. For example, in 2014 lok Sabha elections, both the BJP and INC secured 43.0 per cent and 40.8 per cent of the total votes respectively, despite many of their candidates facing corruption and criminal charges. In the Chikkaballapur constituency, for example, candidates like Veerappa Moily (INC), Bache Gowda (BJP) and H.D. Kumaraswamy JD(S), who face allegations of corruption or criminal charges, secured 93 per cent of the votes; NOTA secured just 0.61 per cent. On the other hand, an independent candidate, like the former Chairman of Infosys, V. Balakrishnan of the AAP from the Bangalore Central constituency, despite having a clean track record and being popular in the constituency, lost. This indicates that voters still continue to prefer candidates from the prominent parties, and possibly use NOTA if they are not satisfied with these parties, rather than preferring other candidates from the list.  As a result, in 2014, around 34 per cent of elected MPs had declared criminal charges against them,

Similar trend continued in 2019 elections, with higher percentage of MPs facing criminal charges, i.e., of 539 winning candidates 43 per cent (233 MPs) have criminal charges and majority of MPs are from Kerala[15]. In the case of Karnataka, the MPs with criminal charges are significant like D. K Suresh (INC) of Bangalore Rural, has five criminal cases, followed by BJP MPs - Nalin Kumar Kateel (Dakshina Kannada) and Ananth Kumar Hedge (Uttara Kannada) with four serious criminal cases each and Prathap Simha (Mysore) and Shoba karandlage (Udupi Chikmagalur) have three criminal cases and the other BJP MPs from Bidar, Dharward, Kolar, Shimoga and Kopal have also facing criminal charges against them[16]. Hence, voters prefer candidates from dominant parties despite the candidate having criminal charges or facing serious criminal charges, rather than candidates with clean track record from other political parties or Independent candidates.

## 2. Significant NOTA numbers

The voters across the state have opted for NOTA and in many constituencies the preference is high and in some it very low. Nevertheless, NOTA secured more than 10,000 votes in 11 constituencies in 2014 Lok Sabha and in 14 constituencies in 2019 Lok Sabha elections, in a way indicating the preference for NOTA is increasing across constituencies, both in rural and urban.

**Table 1: NOTA Performance Lok Sabha 2014 and 2019**

| Rank | Constituency | NOTA Votes 2014 | | Rank | NOTA Votes 2019 | |
|------|--------------|------|-----------|------|------|-----------|
| | | No. | % of total | | No. | % of total |
| 1 | Uttara Kannada | 16277 | 1.63 | 1 | 16017 | 1.39 |
| 2 | Raichur (ST) | 13176 | 1.36 | 2 | 14921 | 1.33 |
| 3 | Koppal | 12947 | 1.29 | 10 | 10813 | 0.91 |
| 4 | Dharwad | 12937 | 1.24 | 25 | 3512 | 0.29 |
| 5 | Tumkur | 12934 | 1.17 | 14 | 10295 | 0.83 |
| 6 | Chamarajanagar (SC) | 12697 | 1.12 | 4 | 12716 | 1.00 |
| 7 | Bellary (ST) | 11320 | 1.08 | 16 | 9024 | 0.74 |
| 8 | Belgaum | 11500 | 1.07 | 26 | 3233 | 0.27 |
| 9 | Bagalkot | 10764 | 1.00 | 9 | 11328 | 0.94 |
| 10 | Gulbarga (SC) | 9888 | 0.99 | 12 | 10487 | 0.88 |
| 11 | Chikkodi Kannada | 10289 | 0.96 | 13 | 10362 | 0.85 |
| 12 | Bangalore North | 11996 | 0.88 | 8 | 11632 | 0.75 |
| 13 | Bijapur (SC) | 8287 | 0.86 | 6 | 12286 | 1.11 |
| 14 | Chitradurga (SC) | 8895 | 0.81 | 23 | 4368 | 0.35 |
| 15 | Bangalore Central | 8449 | 0.79 | 11 | 10760 | 0.90 |
| 16 | Mysore | 8924 | 0.77 | 22 | 5346 | 0,41 |
| 17 | Udupi Chikkamagalur | 7828 | 0.76 | 18 | 7510 | 0.65 |
| 18 | Bangalore Rural | 9871 | 0.68 | 5 | 12454 | 0.77 |
| 19 | Bangalore South | 7414 | 0.67 | 15 | 9938 | 0.84 |
| 20 | Hassan | 7334 | 0.64 | 7 | 11662 | 0.92 |

| 21 | Shimoga | 7077 | 0.63 | 21 | 6868 | 0.54 |
|----|---------|------|------|----|------|------|
| 22 | Chikkaballapur | 7682 | 0.61 | 17 | 8025 | 0.58 |
| 23 | Dakshina Kannada | 7109 | 0.59 | 20 | 7380 | 0.55 |
| 24 | Mandya | 6021 | 0.50 | 24 | 3526 | 0.26 |
| 25 | Kolar (SC) | 5098 | 0.45 | 3 | 13889 | 1.1 |
| 26 | Davanagare | 4536 | 0.41 | 27 | 3098 | 0.26 |
| 27 | Haveri | 3806 | 0.34 | 19 | 7412 | 0.59 |
| 28 | Bidar | 2817 | 0.29 | 28 | 1948 | 0.17 |

*Source: Data compiled from Karnataka Lok Sabha Election Results - 2014 & 2019[17]*

Possible reasons for Uttara Kannada retaining highest preference for NOTA in both the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections, could be the combination of high literacy rate, better awareness about NOTA; absence of a third dominant party like JD(S); and voters having less faith in the contesting candidates in terms of their performance. The possible reasons for the low preference for NOTA in Bidar could be that this constituency had 24 candidates (2014) and 23 candidates (2019) contesting, as a result the votes got divided and lack of awareness among the voters about NOTA could also be the possible reason.

*3. NOTA secured 3rd, 4th and 5th positions in many constituencies*

Although, NOTA was introduced in 2014 election for the first time, but NOTA performed better than expected and has improved in terms of votes in 2019 elections.

**Table 2: Position of NOTA**

| Sl. No. | Position | Number of Constituencies 2014 | Number of Constituencies 2019 |
|---------|----------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Third position | 04 | 08 |
| 2 | Fourth position | 05 | 10 |
| 3 | Fifth position | 10 | 03 |
| 4 | Above fifth position | 09 | 07 |

*Source: Same as Table 1.*

In 2014 elections, NOTA secured third position in four constituencies, which was just behind the BJP and INC candidates, replacing JD(S), which secured the third position in most of the other constituencies. NOTA also secured the 4th and 5th positions in five and ten constituencies respectively, clearly making a significant impact above the regional parties and independent candidates. Overall, NOTA stood at the 5th position or less than the 5th position in 19 constituencies, clearly indicating the emerging trend in Karnataka politics.

Preference for NOTA increased in 2019 elections, as it secured 3rd and 4th positions in 18 constituencies compared to just 9 constituencies in 2014 elections. Hence, preference for NOTA is increasing. Although, neither the BJP nor the INC need to worry as the margin between NOTA and these parties' candidates is very high in most of the constituencies, but it was an embarrassment for other parties like BSP, CPI, CPM and independent candidates.

*4. NOTA performed better than other parties and Independent candidates*

Although the BJP and the INC together secured 84 per cent (2014) and 83 per cent (2019) of the total vote share, but in many constituencies, NOTA preference was higher than for candidates from BSP, CPI, CPM and AAP, clearly indicating that after BJP/INC, they choose to certain extent NOTA. (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Parties which got lesser votes than
NOTA 2014 Lok Sabha Elections**

| Sl. No. | Party | Seats Contested | Constituencies where they secured less votes than NOTA |
|---------|-------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | AAP | 28 | 19 |
| 2 | BSP | 27 | 17 |
| 3 | JD(S) | 25 | 6 |

**2019 Lok Sabha Elections**

| Sl. No. | Party | Constituencies where they secured less votes than NOTA |
|---------|-------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | BSP | 10 |
| 2 | Uttama Prajaakeeya Party | 27 |

*Source: Same as Table 1.*

In the 2014 election, the JD(S), which has for a long time been an alternative to the BJP and the INC in the state, has significant presence in most of the constituencies. As a result, it was able to secure 11 per cent of the votes. However, six of its candidates secured a smaller votes share than NOTA. The BSP secured 0.9 per cent of the votes and performed badly in 17 constituencies, securing a smaller vote share than NOTA. The AAP made its début by contesting all the seats and secured 0.8 per cent of the votes, but most of its candidates lost their deposits; in 19 constituencies it got a smaller vote share than NOTA.

In the case of 2019 elections, BSP improved its vote share, but secured less votes to NOTA in 10 constituencies. At the same time, the Uttama Prajaakeeya Party which was started by the popular Kannada film star Upendra, made its debut in 2019 elections. However, performed poorly as it got less votes compared to NOTA in all the seats it contested, except Davanagere constituency. Thus, NOTA securing more votes than these parties in different constituencies is a cause of concern for these parties and also for Independents.

### 5. NOTA a spoilsport?

In the constituencies where the winning margin was smaller, political parties and candidates considered NOTA to be a spoilsport, as the winning candidates argued that the winning margin would have been high, had NOTA was not introduced and the losing candidates felt that their chance of winning would have been higher without NOTA (see Table 4).

**Table 4: Winning margin vis-à-vis NOTA**
**(2014 Lok Sabha)**

| Sl. No. | Constituency | Winning margin | NOTA secured votes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Chikkodi | 3003 | 10289 |
| 2 | Raichur | 1499 | 13176 |
| 3 | Mandya | 5518 | 6021 |

**(2019 Lok Sabha)**

| Sl. No. | Constituency | Winning margin | NOTA secured votes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Chamarajanagar | 1,817 | 12716 |

*Source: Same as Table 1.*

In Chamarajanagar (SC), was a close fight between V. Srinivas Prasad (BJP), had lost the Assembly election (2018) and R. Dhruvanarayana (INC), incumbent MP and the BSP was trying to capitalise on the direct fight between these two candidates, however it was NOTA which emerged as a spoilsport by securing more votes than the margin of victory. The possible reasons would be that JD (S) workers/ sympathisers did not want to vote for INC or BJP, so they might have opted NOTA; and the all-India trend indicates that preference for NOTA is high in reserve constituency; so Chamarajanagar was no different, as non SC/ST voters might have preferred NOTA over candidates. Nevertheless, in view of these results, both winning and losing candidates would conclude that NOTA cannot be ignored in the longer term, and that they need to work hard to reduce the voters' preference for NOTA.

*6. Urban vs Rural preference for NOTA*

In the all-India context, both urban and rural voters have taken to NOTA to some degree, though there was a wide gap between the two. In Karnataka, the statistics clearly indicate that slightly more urban voters opted for NOTA than rural voters (see Table 5).

**Table 5: Urban vis-à-vis rural preference for NOTA (%)**

| Sl. No. | Constituency | NOTA share (2014) | NOTA share (2019) |
|---------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Chikkaballapur (Rural) | 0.61 | 0.58 |
| 2 | Bangalore Rural (Rural) | 0.68 | 0.77 |
| 3 | Bangalore North (Urban) | 0.88 | 0.75 |
| 4 | Bangalore Central (Urban) | 0.79 | 0.90 |
| 5 | Bangalore South (Urban) | 0.67 | 0.84 |
| 6 | Mysore (Urban) | 0.77 | 0.41 |

*Source: Same as Table 1.*

In 2014 elections, in Bangalore South, the percentage of NOTA votes was less compared to other Bangalore constituencies, because two high-profile candidates were contesting, namely, Ananth Kumar (BJP), and Nandan Nilekani (INC), who together secured 93 per cent of the votes polled.[18] In Chikkaballapur and Bangalore Rural, the preference was less for NOTA compared to the urban areas, possibly indicating that rural voters continue to prefer candidates from the national parties.

The 2019 elections, Bangalore Central, Bangalore South and Bangalore Rural saw increase in NOTA vote share. The possible reasons could be that the Bangalore Central saw around 22 candidates contesting and three high profile candidates competing, the incumbent candidate P.C Mohan (BJP), Rizwan Arshad (INC) and Prakash Raj (Independent), as a result in the triangular fight, the voters might have preferred NOTA than the candidates. Similar has been the case of Bangalore South, with 25 candidates battling it out, with Tejasvi Surya (BJP) and Hariprasad (INC) being the popular candidates. In Bangalore Rural in addition to 15 candidates, the INC and JD (S) alliance to certain extent did not work at the booth level in most of the constituencies, as a result, the possibility of JD (S) party workers/sympathisers opting for BJP or NOTA was high, and so was the case with INC party workers/ sympathisers opting for BJP or NOTA.

Interestingly the preference of NOTA in Bangalore North and

Mysore saw a decline, might be due to the two high profile candidates Sadananda Gowda (BJP) and Krishna Byregowda (INC and JD (S) alliance), were successful in getting majority of votes 53 per cent and 43 per cent respectively. In the case of Mysore both the popular candidates Prathap Simha (BJP) and C. H. Vijyashankar (INC and a former BJP leader) together secured 94 percent of votes, thus giving less scope for NOTA. Overall, NOTA is successful in penetrating into both urban and rural areas.

*7. Preference for NOTA in Reserved Constituencies*

At the all-India level, most of the reserved constituencies have witnessed a high percentage of voters opting for NOTA in both 2014 and 2019 elections. That is on an average the NOTA vote share (2019) was 1.76 per cent in ST seats and 1.16 per cent in SC seats, in comparison to 0.98 per cent in general seats.[19] Thus, similar trend is also visible in Karnataka (see Table 6).

**Table 6: NOTA performance in reserved constituencies**

| Sl.No. | Constituency | 2014 | | 2019 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Raichur (ST) | 13176 | (1.36%) | 14921 | (1.33%) |
| 2 | Bellary(ST) | 11320 | (1.08%) | 9024 | (0.74%) |
| 3 | Chamarajanagar (SC) | 12697 | (1.12%) | 12716 | (1.00%) |
| 4 | Gulbarga (SC) | 9888 | (0.99%) | 10487 | (0.88%) |
| 5 | Bijapur (SC) | 8287 | (0.86%) | 12286 | (1.11%) |
| 6 | Chitradurga (SC) | 8895 | (0.81%) | 4368 | (0.35%) |
| 7 | Kolar (SC) | 5098 | (0.45%) | 13889 | (1.1%) |

*Source: Same as Table 1.*

The constituencies like Raichur, Chamarajanagar, Bijapur and Kolar secured more than one per cent of votes polled. The possible reasons are that the non-SC/ST castes in these constituencies might prefer NOTA over the candidates due to perpetuating caste prejudice or disappointed with the performance of candidates/parties. Nevertheless,

Kolar constituency saw increase in NOTA votes, possibly because of the anti-incumbency factor against INC candidate K. H, Muiyappa, who represented Kolar since 1991, but lost in 2019; and INC and JD (S) alliance was not favoured by some of the voters, who opted for NOTA. But Bellary and Chitradugra registered less NOTA votes compared to 2014 elections, and it might be due to the reasons that both BJP and INC candidates together were successful in securing 96 per cent and 94 per cent of total votes respectively. Overall, except in Bijapur and Kolar seats, preference for NOTA has declined, indicating that several other factors might be guiding the voters to prefer or not to prefer NOTA.

**Concluding Observations**

NOTA vote share has been 1.08 per cent (2014) and 1.04 per cent (2019) at the all-India level, which is not very significant. In Karnataka it was less than one per cent in both 2014 and 2019 elections. However, it should be clear from the preceding analysis that NOTA in the state has made a beginning and showed a performance better than expected. Moreover, similar to the national pattern, in Karnataka the NOTA might have contributed to higher voter 68.62 per cent (2019) and 67.20 per cent (2014) compared to the 58.83 per cent in 2009 Lok Sabha elections[20].

Preference for NOTA, if it grows across the state, would keep the political parties and their candidates on their toes to address their constituents' demands and problems. Parties like the JD(S), BSP, CPI, CPM and other regional parties and independent candidates need to work towards ensuring that voters opt less for NOTA. If not, NOTA is likely to emerge as a third or fourth alternative choice for the voters. At the same time, it seems that NOTA has been utilized by the voters for their own various intentions and not necessarily to decriminalize politics or prevent corrupt politicians from entering Parliament. Therefore, more awareness generation on the utility of NOTA needs to be undertaken by the ECI and civil society groups, to ensure that NOTA serves the true purpose for which it was introduced.

To this end, it is important that the ECI and political parties/ candidates ensure that the details of candidates are accessible to voters. At the same time, the voters need to make an extra effort to know the background of all the candidates before casting NOTA. Subsequently, NOTA should be empowered with the right to recall or the right to reject, i.e. if more than 50 per cent prefer NOTA, re-elections should be held, or else many voters will still continue to vote for candidates with criminal or corrupt background, since NOTA would be considered as an invalid vote. As of now, NOTA has no impact on the final outcome, but it is a first step towards further electoral reforms for protecting the rights of voters and deepening democracy in India.

**References**

1.    *Association for Democratic Reforms* (2019), 'Constitutional Importance of NOTA and Right to Secrecy while Voting', Available at https://adrindia.org/sites/default/files/FAQ-%20None%20of %20the%20Above%20option%20in%20EVM%20(Right%20to %20Reject).pdf

2.    *National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution: A Consultation Paper on Review of Election Law, Process and Reform Option,* 8 January 2001, at www.lawmin.nic.in/ncrwc/ finalreport/v2b1-9.html

3.    Manjari Katju : 'The 'None of the Above' Option', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2013, XLVIII(42), 19 October, p. 12.

4.    'SC Verdict: Parties React Cautiously, CPI (M) Opposes', *The Hindu* (Bangalore)*,* 27 September, 2013, p. 1.

5.    *Ibid.*

6.    Jaideep Shenoy: 'Abdul Kalam urges youths to choose good candidates in Lok Sabha polls', *Times of India* (Bangalore), 1 April, 2014, p. 2.

7.    Sanjay Kumar: 'Is NOTA serving any purpose?', 2014 *The Mint,*

24 April, at http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/b6ZPsuUYS2G3fWR2 KItpaJ/Is-NOTA-serving-any-purpose.html

8.      Bharti Jain: 'Election Results: NOTA garner 1.2% of country's total vote share', 2014 *Times of India* (Bangalore), 17 May, p. 1**.**

9.      Devesh K Pandey: 'NOTA most popular in Bihar', 24 May 2019, *The Hindu (Bengaluru)*. Available at https://www.thehindu.com/ elections/lok-sabha-2019/nota-most-popular-in-bihar-8-lakh-shun-parties/article27237461.ece

10.     Kumar Anshuman: 'NOTA votes rise, turn big factor in many seats', 2019 *The Economic Times*, 31 October. Available at https:// economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/nota-votes-rise-turn-big-factor-in-many-seats/articleshow/ 71829683.cms?from=mdr and also see Devesh K Pandey, op.cit.9.

11.     'Lok Sabha Elections Results 2019: Most NOTA votes were cast in Bihar', 24 May 2019. Available at https://www.firstpost.com/ politics/lok-sabha-election-results-2019-most-nota-votes-were-cast-in-bihar-maharashtra-recorded-486902-such-votes-with-palghar-topping-the-list-6693611.html

12.     Karnataka Lok Sabha Election Results - 2014, 'Party wise total vote share', at www.ceokarnataka.kar.nic.in

13.     'Karnataka Lok sabha Elections 2019- Vote Share' 23 May 2019. Available at https://www.karnataka.com/elections/lok-sabha-elections-2019-karnataka-results/

14.     PUCL, 2014. 'Vote for principled politics: Use NOTA effectively', *Press Release* , 23 March, p. 3.

15.     'house that!, crime rewarded with parliament seats', *The New Indian Express*, 26 May 2019, p.9

16.     National Election Watch: 'Winners with declared serious criminal

cases', 2019 Available at http://myneta.info/LokSabha2019/index.php?action=summary&subAction=winner_serious_crime&sort=candidate#summary

17. Karnataka Lok Sabha Election Results – 2014 & 2019. Available at www.ceokarnataka.kar.nic.in and 'Lok Sabha Elections 2019-Party wise elections results' http://www.elections.in/karnataka/

18. Karnataka Lok Sabha Election Results, *op.cit.*12.

19. Ishaan Bansal and Mrunal Marathe (2019), 'Most NOTA votes in SC, ST reserved seats', *Business Standard*, 25 August. Available at https://www.business-standard.com/article/elections/2019-ls-polls-most-nota-votes-in-sc-st-reserved-seats-naxal-hit-areas-119081900121_1.html

20. Karnataka Lok Sabha Election Results - 2009, 2014, 2019. Available at http://ceokarnataka.kar.nic.in and see Karnataka Lok Sabha Election Results - 2019, 'comparative statement of turnouts in elections', at https://www.ceokarnataka.kar.nic.in/PCELE 2019/COMPARATIVESTATEMENTOFTURNOUTSINTHE ELECTIONS.pdf

# Assam: Dominance of National Parties in a Regional Context

**Dhruba Pratim Sharma**

*The 2019 elections, held in the backdrop of massive protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 was seen as a litmus test for the BJP in terms of retaining its base among the state's indigenous communities that were bitterly opposed to the Bill. The party's success in neutralising opposition to the controversial Bill amongst non-Muslims, diverting attention towards increase in percentage of Muslim population, marked a continuation of the trend witnessed in the 2016 Assembly election when it managed to patch up a 'rainbow coalition' with regionalist groups raising the issue of protection of land and identity from 'illegal Bangladeshi Muslim migrants'. Political dominance that the BJP enjoyed since 2014 in Assam remains a significant factor apart from the leadership of Modi in giving the NDA an edge over other parties in the Lok Sabha elections. The Lok Sabha elections to Assam held in 2019 seemed to represent continuity with the political consolidation of the BJP that was witnessed during the Assembly elections held in 2016. The BJP's ability to craft social coalition with the leadership of diverse ethnic groups and forge electoral alliance with prominent regional players like the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and the Bodoland People's Front (BPF) in 2016 proved to be a masterstroke leading to the formation of the first ever BJP led government in the state.*

Issues relating to ethnic and religious identity came to the fore as the State of Assam went into one of its most keenly contested Lok Sabha elections in April 2019. In the backdrop of three successive wins by the Congress in the Assembly polls since 2001 and of the BJP's upsurge in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls and the 2016 Assembly elections, the polls promised to be a clash of titans in a largely bipolar scenario between two national parties with active intervention of ethnic-regional players. The relatively recent rise of the BJP, a party representing Hindu nationalism at the national level, in a state that has traditionally witnessed the dominance of ethnic politics based on linguistic and tribal identities raises issues relating to the salience of religion as a political factor in an ethnically divided milieu and the trends towards religious consolidation where the issue of illegal immigration from across the international border emerges as a main factor of religious polarisation.

**The Socio-political Setting**

The state of Assam consists of three main regions:

i) The Brahmaputra Valley, the traditional homeland of the Assamese-speaking people and of indigenous tribes such as the Bodos, covering as many as 106 of the state's 126 Assembly constituencies, and 11 of the state's 14 Lok Sabha constituencies;

ii) The Barak Valley in southern Assam, predominantly Bengali-speaking, with 15 Assembly constituencies, constituting two Lok Sabha constituencies; and

iii) The two hill districts of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar (Dima Hasao) in central Assam which are dominated by hill tribes and are governed by Autonomous Councils, constituting 5 Assembly constituencies and one Lok Sabha constituency.

According to the 2011 census, 61.5% of the State's population was Hindu by religion, 34.22% was Muslim, and 3.7% was Christian, the percentage of Muslim population being the second highest among

the Indian states (*Census of India, 2011*). Nine out of the 32 districts of Assam are Muslim majority according to the 2011 census of India, of which two (Karimganj and Hailakandi) are in the Barak valley and seven (Dhubri, Goalpara, Barpeta, Morigaon, Nagaon, Darrang and Bongaigaon) in the Brahmaputra valley. The share of the Assamese speakers in Assam was 48.80% in 2011 census. Assamese-speaking Muslims, also known as Khilonjia Muslims, including groups such as Goria and Moria are estimated to be around 40 lakhs out of a total population of 1 crore Muslims in Assam (*The Indian Express*, 8.04.2016). Scheduled Tribes account around 13% of population in Assam, of which Bodos are estimated to constitute about 40% (*Census of India, 2011*).

The state had been largely a Congress bastion since Independence, enabled by the forging of a strong base among social groups such as the Muslims, Scheduled Castes and Tea workers. The post-2000 period in the state was characterized by more than a decade of Congress dominance, marked by the decline of the AGP, the strengthening of the BJP, and the emergence of the AIUDF as a strong force among religious minorities, and of the Bodo Peoples' Front (BPF) as the dominant party among the Bodo tribe. An important feature since 2009 has been a decline in militancy due to severe losses borne by major insurgent outfits. The 2014 Lok Sabha polls brought in the BJP as a dominant player for the first time, as the party secured half of the State's fourteen seats, with the Congress and AIUDF getting three each, and one seat going to an independent candidate. In the State Assembly elections held two years later, the BJP in alliance with two major regional outfits, the AGP and the BPF dislodged the Congress and came to power in the State with the promise of saving the 'nation, land and foundation' (*jati*, *mati*, *bheti*) from 'foreigners' or 'illegal migrants'. The stage was thus set for a major contest between forces led by the two national players in the Lok Sabha elections of 2019.

The state witnessed a three-cornered contest in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, with the INC, the BJP-led NDA and the AIUDF as the major

players. To the extent that the AIUDF put up candidates in only the three constituencies that it had won in the 2014 elections, the contest was largely bipolar in most of the other constituencies with one exception, Kokrajhar that saw significant presence of smaller parties and independent candidates. Though Congress and AIUDF contested on their own, the latter unilaterally restricted its participation to three of its strongholds, announcing that this move was to strengthen the secular camp against the BJP's communal agenda, while Congress contested in all seats. The BJP put up candidates in 10 out of the State's fourteen constituencies, leaving four for its alliance partners, three for the AGP and one for the BPF. The elections, held in three phases saw large voter turnouts, the highest being in Dhubri at 90.66 % and lowest in Lakhimpur at 75.17%.

The results of the 2019 election reinforced the growing dominance of the saffron party that gained nine seats, increasing its tally by two from that of the 2014 elections, while Congress managed to retain its score of three seats from 2014, and that of AIUDF declined by two seats. Though BJP lost the Nowgong seat in the Brahmaputra valley that it had held since 1999, it could make up for this loss as it gained all the three seats outside of the Brahmaputra valley, of which two had been won by Congress and one by AIUDF in 2014. The Congress made up for its losses in the hill districts and in Barak valley by gaining two seats in Brahmaputra valley, one from BJP and the other from AIUDF. The independent candidate who had wrested the Kokrajhar seat from BPF in 2014 could manage to retain it. Thus in terms of seats gained or lost from 2014, AIUDF was the only loser, though it could retain one of the three that had won in 2014, and BJP the only gainer.

The 2019 elections, held in the backdrop of massive protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016[1] (CAB) was seen as a litmus test for the BJP in terms of retaining its base among the state's indigenous communities that were bitterly opposed to the Bill. The party's success in neutralising opposition to the controversial Bill

amongst non-Muslims, diverting attention towards increase in percentage of Muslim population, marked a continuation of the trend witnessed in the 2016 Assembly election when it managed to patch up a 'rainbow coalition' with regionalist groups raising the issue of protection of land and identity from 'illegal Bangladeshi Muslim migrants'. Political dominance that the BJP enjoyed since 2014 in Assam remains a significant factor apart from the leadership of Modi in giving the NDA an edge over other parties in the Lok Sabha elections. The Lok Sabha elections to Assam held in 2019 seemed to represent continuity with the political consolidation of the BJP that was witnessed during the Assembly elections held in 2016. The BJP's ability to craft social coalition with the leadership of diverse ethnic groups and forge electoral alliance with prominent regional players like the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and the Bodoland People's Front (BPF) in 2016 proved to be a masterstroke leading to the formation of the first ever BJP led government in the state. The major challenge during the Lok Sabha election before the BJP in the state was the perpetuation of the social base that shifted to the party during Assembly elections of 2016, retaining its alliance with the AGP and the BPF. The BJP could eventually retain its alliance with AGP and BPF preserving its newly attained regional character which helped to withhold the consolidation of the anti-BJP votes, while the opposition projected the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) as the most significant issue apart from projecting the failure of the BJP led government at the Centre on various fronts during the campaign. The NDA could remain cohesive and fought the election on three major issues of the leadership of the Prime Minister, development activities of the Union government and the performance of the BJP-led government in Assam since 2016.The BJP through retaining the AGP and the BPF could neutralise much of the opposition that it could have faced on the election front due to its firm stand on the CAB. Popularity of prime ministerial candidate coupled with the satisfaction level of the voters with the performance of Union and State governments across regions and diverse social groups in the state certainly provided an edge to the NDA.

However, the social polarisation along religious lines emerged as the major subtext in this election as the divide along religion overwhelmed divisions along caste, class, language and ethnicity.

The NDA won nine out of 14 seats it contested and could secure a vote share of 47 per cent. Within NDA, both AGP and BPF could not win a single seat. AGP contested on three seats while BPF contested on the single seat of Kokrajhar which was retained by an independent candidate[2]. The BJP won nine out of 10 seats it contested with a vote share of 36.05 per cent. The AGP could not secure any seat but doubled its vote share from 4 per cent to 8 per cent. The vote percentage per seat contested for the BJP remains quite high at 54.32 per cent as compared to other parties. The Congress won three seats as in 2014 and secured 35 per cent vote share. Congress witnessed an increase of around 6 per cent vote share but failed to increase its seat tally. The *All India United Democratic Front (*AIUDF)[3] contested elections only on three seats and thus the Congress could get the anti-BJP votes in all other seats left by the AIUDF. The AIUDF, contesting on three seats, could win only the Dhubri seat which was retained by the party's President Badruddin Ajmal. It suffered an erosion of two seats and secured 8 per cent vote share, losing 7 per cent from that of 2014. The decline in vote share of AIUDF in part can be attributed to the party's strategy of contesting in only three seats in the state. It contested only in Dhubri, Barpeta and Karimganj, all having significant presence of Muslim population. Also the decline happened as a significant share of traditional voters of AIUDF shifted to Congress this time even in the constituencies that AIUDF contested. It is evident as proportionately large number of Bengali speaking Muslim voters voted for the Congress in this election. Even though the Congress did not reciprocate the AIUDF's gesture and fielded its candidates in all seats including the ones where the AIUDF was contesting, the BJP lost no opportunity of accusing the two parties of having a tacit alliance. This accusation by the BJP of a perceived understanding between the Congress and the AIUDF seems to have put off traditional Hindu supporters of the Congress and thus

disadvantaged it in constituencies which had once been its strongholds, but not having large share of religious minority votes.

Traditionally, BJP had been strong in the Bengali speaking Barak Valley region but its phenomenal performance in Lower and Upper Assam in terms of vote share and seat share in 2014 represents a moment of linguistic transcendence for BJP in Assam (Goswami & Tripathi, 2015). It unequivocally showed new strategy of political realignment by BJP in Assam which had upset the electoral dominance that Congress had enjoyed across regions in Assam. The main achievement for the Congress was to be able to minimise influence of the AIUDF, the only party that lost both in terms of number of seats and vote share from 2014. Nowgong is a pointer in this direction as it happens to be Badruddin Ajmal's home constituency. Significantly all gains for the Congress were in the Brahmaputra valley. As compared to 2014, Congress not only retained its only seat in this valley but gained two. The AIUDF did not contest in any seat in Upper Assam and secured its only seat in Lower Assam, with 12 per cent vote share in that region. It secured 16 per cent vote share in Barak Valley but could not retain its seat in this region. While one compares the vote share and seat share of Lok Sabha elections of 2019 and the Assembly elections of 2016, a trend towards deepening dominance of BJP becomes evident. As compared to the Assembly elections the BJP witnessed significant surge in vote share across regions.

The BJP's alliance strategy remained instrumental in containing the Congress. The Congress failure in not getting major regional players onboard and stitching a counter grand-alliance in the region added to its difficulty and it could not convert its vote share into seat share. Working out a coalition with regional players turned out to advantage BJP during the Assembly elections as it not only enhanced its legitimacy and acceptability in a region characterised by deep linguistic and ethnic diversity, but also served to prevent a split in the anti-Congress votes (Tripathi et. al., 2018). The brief breakup of the BJP-led alliance in Assam

as the AGP withdrew support over the question of Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2016 (CAB) did put a question mark over BJP's ability to perform in the 2019 election, given the role that ethnicity and regionalism play in the political and electoral mobilisation in Assam (Times of India, 2019). However, with the return of the AGP-BJP–BPF alliance in March, electoral prospects considerably improved for the BJP (Hindu, 2019). Considering the fact that both the Congress as well as AIUDF cut into each other's social base in the Lower Assam and Barak Valley, a grand alliance by the BJP against the Congress could withhold the split of anti-Congress votes and contributed in part to the phenomenal performance of the NDA across regions in Assam, while Congress and AIUDF did cut into each other's vote in three seats, contributing to the loss for both parties in Karimganj. Given the fact that the AGP could double its vote share from 4 per cent to 8 per cent despite contesting on just three seats and the BJP could maintain roughly the same vote share as in 2014 while contesting on 10 seats, it becomes apparent that mutual transfer of votes did strengthen the NDA. The vote percentage per seat contested for AGP remained quite high at 32 per cent, though it could not win any seat.

The traditional Congress support base comprising the tea tribe workers, Muslims and Scheduled Tribe voters appears to have suffered a split, as the BJP could attract tea workers and Scheduled Tribes as its new social base since 2014 (Sharma, 2014). BJP's wins in Upper Assam constituencies of Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, Jorhat and Tezpur along with the Autonomous District seat in Barak Valley indicates a shift of votes of Tribal and tea workers[4] to BJP. In all the five constituencies, the tea workers and STs constitute significant voting population. The BJP fielded three candidates belonging to the tea worker community from Dibrugarh, Tezpur and Karimganj, who won their respective seats. Apart from these constituencies, the tea worker and ST population remains dispersed in other constituencies too and their shift to the BJP has considerably deepened the BJP's dominance in Assam. However, the Kokrajhar Lok Sabha seat marked an exception to the BJP's

dominance over seats having significant tribal population. Naba Sarania an independent candidate could retain this ST seat. It can be attributed to non-tribal support especially from Muslims under influence of All Bodoland Minority Students Union (ABMSU) that openly supported him, along with a considerable proportion of non-tribal Hindus including non-Bodo tribes. The consolidation over tea worker and ST votes coupled with the huge shift of caste Hindu voters towards NDA enabled its even performance across regions. The BJP's alliance with AGP remained instrumental in forging caste Hindu consolidation towards NDA. It clearly indicates the trend towards polarisation along religious lines that overwhelmed the differences and division existing along the lines of language and ethnicity.

**Religious Polarisation and Vote Pattern**

Religion as a marker of polarisation assumed greater salience than language and ethnicity. A record voter turnout during this election particularly in constituencies having significant Bengali speaking Muslim population was in particular symptomatic of social polarisation. Assam witnessed a record voter turnout in 2019 and it exceeded the previous record voter turnout witnessed in 2014. While the average voter turnout remained 81.5 per cent, the average turnout in Upper Assam constituencies was 78.3 per cent. The turnout in four out of five Lower Assam constituencies exceeded the average turnout. The turnout in Karimganj and Silchar in the Barak Valley region too remained high, though slightly below the average voter turnout in Assam. The turnout in Kaliabor, Nowgong, Dhubri, Mangaldai, Kokrajhar and Barpeta constituencies with significant presence of Muslim population exceeded the state's average. While Dhubri witnessed 90 per cent turnout, the figures for Barpeta, Mangaldai and Nowgong remained 87 per cent, 84 per cent and 83 per cent respectively.

An analysis of the vote share in terms of language and religion presents a scenario of intense polarisation along religious lines. It indicates that while the language became secondary in determining

voter's choice, language emerged as the primary determinant particularly in Barak Valley having significant presence of Bengali speaking population. Overall, the divide emerges sharply as the Hindu Bengalis appear to have predominantly voted for the NDA and the Muslim Bengalis for Congress, except in the three seats contested by the AIUDF, which witnessed a split in Muslim votes. One of the major successes of NDA in this election appears to have been to neutralise the political opposition to the CAB. The BJP gained significant support among Bengali speaking Hindu voters who supported the Bill. The consolidation of Bengali speaking Hindu towards BJP becomes apparent with its unprecedented performance in the Bengali dominated Barak Valley wherein the party secured both the seats.

## Conclusion

In a socially diverse state that had undergone prolonged ethnic conflict and insurgency, polarisation along religious lines cutting across ethnic cleavages raises the issue of the salience of religion as a political factor in an ethnically divided milieu. If there has been one issue that consistently dominated Assam politics in the last four decades, it has been that of large-scale illegal migration from Bangladesh, based on fears that the migrants' growing numbers were reducing the natives to a decided minority. Specifically, it was the growth in percentage of Muslim population in many districts that began to be focused upon, and it was this religious angle of the immigration issue that became a handy tool for the BJP to establish roots in Assam. The genius of the BJP lay in its ability to convert anti-outsider sentiments among Assamese and tribal populations into fear of being outnumbered by 'illegal migrants' belonging to one religious category, and to accommodate regional aspirations within its larger framework of religious nationalism.

The BJP's advocacy in favour of the Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2016 that seeks to bestow citizenship upon certain categories of non-Muslim migrants escaping religious persecution in neighbouring Muslim-majority countries including Bangladesh was expected to pose a major

challenge to it in terms of retaining its base among the state's indigenous communities that were bitterly opposed to the Bill on the ground that it would lead to influx of persecuted refugees from neighbouring Bangladesh. While regionalist sentiments were against any further influx of foreigners in the region, organisations representing local Muslim populations also opposed the Bill as it sought to discriminate between migrants on religious grounds. The BJP's ability to neutralise opposition to the controversial Bill amongst non-Muslims, diverting attention towards increase in percentage of Muslim population in previous censuses, presumably due to unabated influx from Bangladesh with Congress' patronage marked a continuation of the trend witnessed in the 2016 Assembly election when it managed to patch up a 'rainbow coalition' with regionalist groups raising the issue of protection of *'jati, mati, bheti'* (community, land and homestead) from 'illegal Bangladeshi Muslim migrants' and drawing support from diverse ethnic communities.

The 2019 Lok Sabha poll marks a sharpening of the trends towards polarisation, with the AIUDF's decision not to field candidates against Congress in all but three constituencies being interpreted by the BJP as an open Muslim consolidation in favour of Congress. The upsurge of the BJP, a party representing Hindu nationalism at the national level, in a state that has traditionally witnessed the dominance of ethnic politics based on linguistic and tribal identities marks the trends towards religious consolidation where the issue of illegal immigration from across the international border emerges as a crucial point of religious polarisation.

**Notes**

1.  The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 seeks to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955 to relax the requirements for citizenship by naturalization for non-Muslim migrants belonging to six religious categories from three neighbouring countries including Bangladesh.

2.  AGP contested on Kaliabor, Barpeta and Dhubri seats.

3.  The AIUDF, founded in 2005 and led by Maulana Badruddin Ajmal, a noted cleric as well as business magnate, draws strength from

the fear among migrant Muslims settled in central and western Assam of being persecuted on suspicion of being Bangladeshi infiltrators.

4.  Tea workers in context of Assam are mostly descendants of migrants from Jharkhand, Chhatisgarh, Bengal, Orissa and Bihar. They are also termed as 'tea and ex-tea garden workers' or 'tea tribes'. They have significant presence in Lakhimpur, Jorhat, Tezpur and Nagaon districts of Assam. They are classified as Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in Assam. Their demand for being recognized as a Scheduled Tribe group in the state is under consideration and enjoys the support of the BJP government both at the centre and the state

**References**

- Tripathi Vikas, Tamasa Das & Sandhya Goswami : 'National Narrative and Regional Subtext: Understanding the Rise of BJP in Assam', *Studies in Indian Politics*, 2018, 6(1), 60-70. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2321023018762676

- Goswami, Sandhya and Vikas Tripathi: 'Understanding the Political Shift in Assam', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 2015 Vol. 50, Issue 39. https://www.epw.in/journal/2015/39/notes/understanding-political-shift-assam.html

- Sharma, Dhruba Pratim: 'Saffron Surge in Assam', *Research Journal Social Sciences*, (Department of Political Science, Panjab University, Chandigarh), Vol. 22, No. 2, 2014, pp. 224-233.

- 'AGP quits NDA as Cabinet approves Citizenship Bill', *The Times of India,* 9 January, 2019.

- 'Lok Sabha Elections: BJP-AGP alliance back on track in Assam', *The Hindu,* 13 March, 2019.

# Nineteenth Lok Sabha Verdict in Kerala: Factors and Issues

**Josukutty C.A.**

*This paper attempts to examine the factors and forces that influenced the voting behavior of people in the 19th Lok Sabha elections in Kerala. This is primarily an empirical study. Data for this study was collected by the Survey Research Centre of the Department of Political Science, University of Kerala in April 2019 from a total of 2000 respondents spread over 14 Lok Sabha constituencies in Kerala through systematic random sampling with the help of a closed ended questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to get the opinion and perception of people on a wide range of issues such as important factors that influenced voting, major campaign issues, performance of the central and state governments, preferred Prime Ministerial candidate, and the controversy over the entry of women into Sabarimala temple. The 19th Lok Sabha verdict gave the UDF a sweep of 19 seats and the LDF was limited to one seat. The UDF increased its vote share by almost ten percent compared to the 2016 Assembly elections. There was a deficit of almost eight percent for the LDF compared to the 2016 Assembly elections. The BJP could increase its vote share only by one percent*

The 19th Lok Sabha election campaign and results in Kerala were unique in many respects. For the first time in the recent history of Kerala

the electoral scene witnessed a truly triangular fight among three coalition fronts namely the Left Democratic Front (LDF), the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Second, religious faith became a major campaign issue in the election on account of the Supreme Court verdict that lifted the ban on the entry of women of menstruating age into the Sabarimala Ayyappa Temple and the agitations against the State Government's attempts to implement the court verdict[1]. In many constituencies, especially in Pathanamthitta, where the Sabarimala temple is situated, election campaign centered around women's entry into Sabarimala shrine. Religious sentiments were emotionally and blatantly used by political parties to influence voters. In addition to this, the candidature of the then Congress president Rahul Gandhi in Wayanad constituency and his projection as the next Prime Minister kept alive the hopes of an alternative dispensation to the Modi led NDA at the centre. Though these factors constituted the context of the 19th Lok Sabha election in Kerala, there were also a host of other factors that influenced the voting behaviour of people.

This paper attempts to examine the factors and forces that influenced the voting behaviour of people in the 19th Lok Sabha elections in Kerala. This is primarily an empirical study. Data for this study was collected by the Survey Research Centre of the Department of Political Science, University of Kerala in April 2019 from a total of 2000 respondents spread over 14 Lok Sabha constituencies in Kerala through systematic random sampling with the help of a closed ended questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to get the opinion and perception of people on a wide range of issues such as important factors that influenced voting, major campaign issues, performance of the central and state governments, preferred Prime Ministerial candidate, and the controversy over the entry of women into Sabarimala temple.

The 19th Lok Sabha verdict gave the UDF a sweep of 19 seats and the LDF was limited to one seat. The UDF increased its vote share by almost ten percent compared to the 2016 Assembly elections. There was a deficit of almost eight percent for the LDF compared to the 2016

Assembly elections. The BJP could increase its vote share only by one percent (table 1).

**Table 1 : Vote Share of different fronts in Assembly 2016
and Lok Sabha 2019  Elections in Kerala**

| Fronts | Vote %   Assembly 2016 | Vote %  Lok Sabha 2019 |
|--------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| UDF    | 38.8                  | 47.35                  |
| LDF    | 43.3                  | 35.20                  |
| NDA    | 14.62                 | 15.60                  |

*Source: Election Commission of India, www.eciresults.nic.in.*

**Important campaign issues**

Elections are occasions when people and civil society discuss and debate pertinent social and economic issues that affect daily lives. The issues which more than fifteen percent of people considered important on the eve of the election in Kerala were demonetization (22.3%), entry of women in Sabarimala (19%), hike in oil price (18.1 %) and the performance of union government (16.1 %) (figure 1). The second set of issues which were considered important by 5 to 10 percent  of the respondents included corruption (7.9 %), national security (7.1%) and farming crisis (5.8%).

**Figure 1**
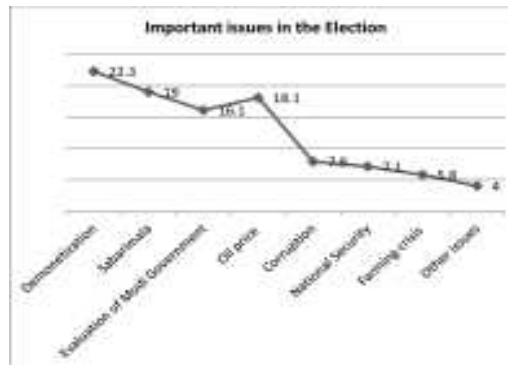


*Source: Field Study by Survey Research Centre (SRC), April 2019*

It is clear that while voting people had in mind prominently issues related to the performance of central government. It is to be noted that in this segment of questions only 2.2 percent considered evaluation of the performance of state government important[2]. At the same time it must be noted that controversy over the entry of women into Sabarimala Ayyappa Temple influenced people in a big way. Despite the hype over Sabarimala as a highly emotional issue, demonetization was considered the most important election issue.

**Figure 2**
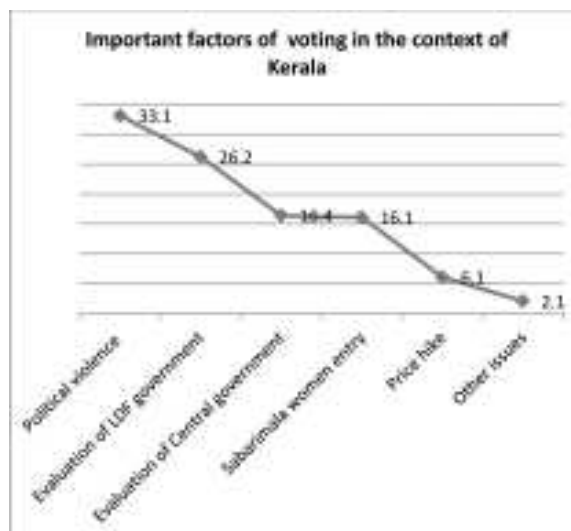


*Source: Field Study by SRC, April 2019*

Though in LokSabha elections national issues and performance of central Government figure prominently, local issues such as political violence and the performance of state government also figure at another level. Political violence (33.1%), (Figure 2) evaluation of LDF government (26.2%) women entry into Sabarimala (16.1) were considered to be the most important issues that influenced the voting.  But when queried along with options for evaluation of central and state governments, the respondents clearly identified performance of central government as key

factors (see figure 1 and figure 2). Political violence was a key issue in the election especially in the constituencies of Kasaragode, Kannur and even Kozhikode in Northern Kerala. The voters hold primarily CPM and BJP responsible for political violence[3]. The murder of two Congress workers allegedly by the Left supporters has gone against the Left in the elections.

**Performance of Central Government**

An important assumption about voting behaviour is that every election is a verdict about the performance of the government. In the survey a few questions were, framed to elicit the opinion of the respondents on their assessment of the performance of the central government. They were related to drawbacks of the NDA government, the performance of the government in general and opinion on giving one more opportunity for Modi government.

**Figure 3**
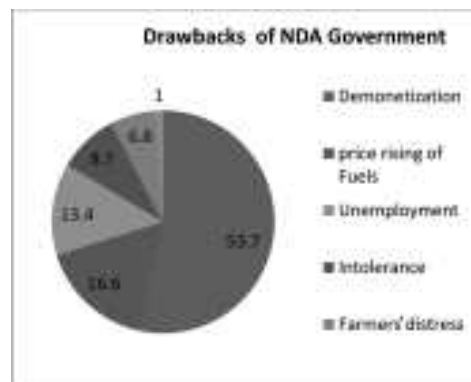


*Source: Field Study by SRC, April 2019*

Regarding the failures of the government a substantial section of 53.7% (figure3) consider demonetization as the most important failure of the ruling front. It is followed by rising price of fuels, unemployment, and intolerance and farmers' distress. In most of these issues the government was on back foot that the NDA focused their campaign on

national security in the backdrop of the terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir and air strikes in Balakot[4].

**Table 2 : Performance of BJP Government**

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Bad | 629 | 31.5 |
| Average | 603 | 30.2 |
| Very Bad | 351 | 17.2 |
| Good | 283 | 14.3 |
| Very Good | 134 | 6.8 |
| Total | 2000 | 100 |

*Source:  Field study by SRC, April 2019*

The survey clearly establishes that the five year rule of BJP led NDA government at the centre has poor level of popular satisfaction in Kerala. The people who considered the government as either bad or very bad constitute 49.1 percent (table 2) whereas very good and good amounts to only 19.9 percent. About 30.2 percent considers the performance of government just average. People's perception about poor performance of government has adversely affected electoral fortunes of NDA in Kerala.

**Table 3 : Another Chance for Modi Government**

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| No | 1431 | 71.6 |
| Yes | 422 | 21.1 |
| No  opinion | 147 | 7.3 |
| Total | 2000 | 100.0 |

*Source: Field Study by SRC, April 2019*

A huge majority 71.6% of people (table 3) in Kerala said no to one more chance for Modi government at the centre. Only 21.1% felt that NDA government deserves to be given one more chance. It establishes that people in Kerala wanted a change of government at the centre and voted against the NDA.

The campaign slogan of the opposition led by the congress against the NDA at the national level was 'Choukidar chor he' referring primarily to allegations of corruption in the purchase of Rafael fighter planes from France[5]. About 48.3 percent believed that there was substance in the allegation, but 30% ignored it as mere election time slogan[6].

**Figure 4**
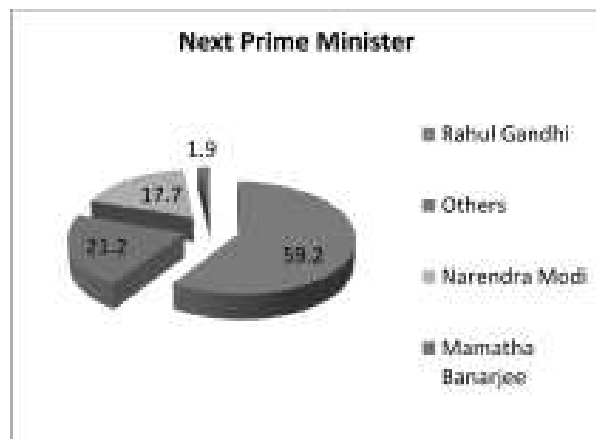


*Source: Field Study by SRC, April 2019*

The survey shows that a large majority of people (59.2%) in Kerala believed that Rahul Gandhi would be the next Prime Minister of India whereas only 17.7 percent were of the opinion that Narendra Modi would be the next Prime Minister of India. Kerala was of the few states in India were Rahul Gandhi was the preferred Prime Ministerial candidate to Narendra Modi. This perception contributed to the victory of the UDF in Kerala in a big way**.**

**Table 4 : Central Government's Approach to Kerala**

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Not Favourable | 1357 | 67.9 |
| Favourable | 423 | 21.1 |
| No opinion | 219 | 11.0 |
| Total | 2000 | 100 |

*Source: Field Study by SRC, April 2019*

Another key factor that figured in the voting of people in Kerala was people's perception about how central government treated Kerala. On a number of instances such as flood relief, Kerala has complained about the step motherly treatment of the central government. A large majority of 67.9 (table 4) percent felt that the approach of the central government towards Kerala was not favorable**.**

**Secularism and Minorities**

Kerala's mindset as a progressive society and its demographic composition with minorities constituting 45 percent of the total population have a bearing on the election results. Secularism and communalism were widely discussed topics in Kerala during the Lok Sabha election. A substantial section believed that the Congress (45.8%) and LDF (27.6%) would safeguard secular democracy better than the BJP (16.6%) (table 5).

**Table 5 : Secular Democracy**

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Congress | 916 | 45.8 |
| BJP | 331 | 16.6 |
| LDF | 551 | 27.6 |
| Don't know | 202 | 10.0 |
| Total | 2000 | 100 |

*Source: Field Study by SRC, April 2019*

The minority religious groups namely Christians and Muslims constitute about 45 percent of Kerala's population[7]. Their support is vital for political parties to win elections in Kerala. The Hindutva agenda of the BJP has kept the minorities away from the party. The inability of the BJP to win over the minorities in Kerala is considered as one of the major reasons for the failure of the BJP to assume political power in Kerala. According to the survey 67 percent of respondents consider that minorities would be insecure under Modi government[8]. This could be weighed as a major factor in deciding the voting behaviour of people in Kerala in the last Lok Sabha elections.

**Table 6 : Rahul Gandhi's Candidature in Wayanad**

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Necessary | 943 | 47.2 |
| Unnecessary | 739 | 37.0 |
| No opinion | 318 | 15.8 |
| Total | 2000 | 100.0 |

*Source: Field Study by SRC, April 2019*

The candidature of Rahul Gandhi in Wayanad was a big boost to the UDF in Kerala (table 6). The general perception in Kerala was that the UPA was going to form the next union government. Therefore the candidature of Rahul Gandhi conveyed a message that Kerala was voting for the next prime minister. This perception worked in favour of the UDF in the elections. Rahul's candidature helped the congress to capture anti-BJP votes in substantial numbers. The loss of the LDF in many of its strong bastions was due to the Rahul effect.

**Sabarimala Issue**

The most intensively and emotionally figured campaign issue in the 19th Lok Sabha election in Kerala was the Supreme Court verdict permitting entry of women into Lord Ayyappa temple in Sabarimala. According to the survey, the people held the court (31.4%), the LDF (30.2%) and BJP (24.7%) (figure 5) as primarily responsible for the issue.

**Figure 5**
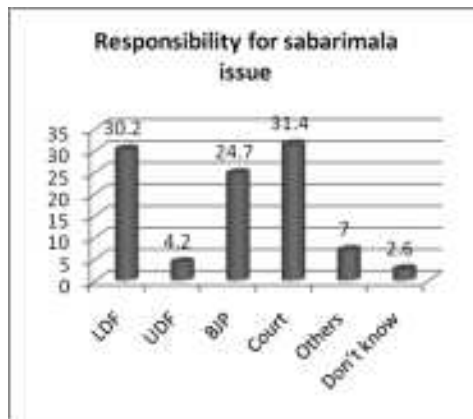


Source: Field Study by SRC, April 2019

Equally important is the finding that 46.3 percent of the respondents held the state government and 38.9 % central government for making the issue complicated[9]. The surprisingly interesting fact is that only a small percentage of 4.2% held the UDF responsible in this regard. Similarly a large section of 58.6 percent (table 7) was dissatisfied with the stand of the Kerala government on the issue. Only 29.5% consider the position of the Kerala government in this case as correct.

**Table 7 : Kerala Governments' Stand on Sabarimala**

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Wrong | 1172 | 58.6 |
| Right | 589 | 29.4 |
| No opinion | 239 | 12.0 |
| Total | 2000 | 100 |

Source: Field Study by SRC, April 2019

Echoing similar feelings a big majority of 64.9 percent (figure 6) felt that the government would have filed a review petition to revoke the order of the court. The refusal of the government to file a review petition

and the security provided to women trying to enter the temple has worked against the LDF in the election.

**Figure 6**
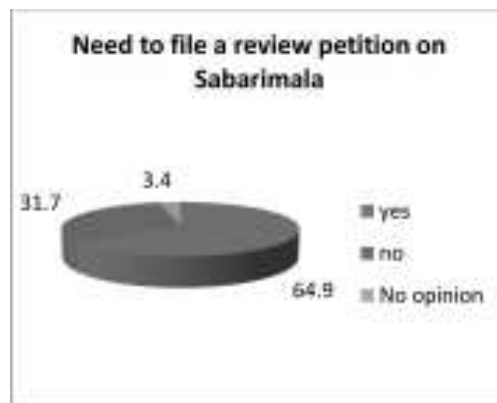
At the same time it must be noted that people perceive that the BJP (57.9%) exploited the situation for political gain than any other party[10]. The stand taken by the UDF on Sabarimala had the highest popular acceptability (32.1%) than that of the CPM (29.7%) and BJP (19.1%)[11]. As per most of the indicators the central or State government or courts were held responsible for Sabarimala issue by the public. This perception among the voters worked to the advantage of the UDF in the elections.

**Conclusion**

On the basis of the analysis of the data the following conclusions could be drawn about the voting behaviour in the 19th Lok Sabha elections in Kerala.

1. There was a strong sense of dissatisfaction among the voters in Kerala on the performance of the central government on issues such as demonetization and hike in oil price. This was visible in the voters' reluctance to give NDA one more chance to form the government, poor rating of central government and preference for Rahul Gandhi as the next

Prime Minster. This was further reinforced by Kerala's traditional opposition to Hindutva politics and demographic composition of Kerala with minorities constituting 45 percent of the population.

2. The perception among the voters that the LDF and BJP were responsible for vitiating the atmosphere in Sabarimala worked to the advantage of the UDF. Only 3.7% held the UDF responsible for the Sabarimala controversy. The voting pattern in this respect was advantageous to the UDF than the BJP, though the entire episode benefitted the latter politically. It is true that it has increased the vote share of BJP slightly. More importantly, it has contributed to the shift of majority community votes from the LDF to the UDF.

3. There was a popular perception in Kerala that the UPA led by Rahul Gandhi was the viable alternative to the NDA. This perception among the voters helped UDF to muster large segment of minority and anti-BJP votes to its kitty. The candidature of Rahul Gandhi in Wayanad contributed to the consolidation of majority and minority community votes both from the LDF and NDA to UDF. The huge margin of victory by the UDF in many constituencies is due to the 'double shift' (shift from both minority and majority and from LDF and BJP) of votes to the UDF. The increase in the vote share of NDA could be attributed to the shift of a portion of majority community vote from LDF and UDF. The loss of some caste Hindu votes from UDF is compensated by both minority and majority consolidation in favor of the UDF from different quarters especially the LDF. In this process of shifting of votes the LDF had no means to compensate the loss of both minority and majority community votes that it could muster in the Assembly election in 2016.

4. Though the verdict could not be interpreted primarily as a vote against the state government, (performance of state government has fairly good satisfaction level with the voters), it was on the defensive on the issue of political violence and it had cost the Left clearly in many of its citadels in Northern Kerala. Moreover, the Left was not perceived as an alternative to the BJP nationally.

5.  It is to be noted that the BJP succeeded in consolidating the votes of a large number of caste Hindus including the NSS and a section of the backward caste communities and put up a triangular fight in many constituencies though it could not win a single seat. This is because the political dynamics of Kerala is still bipolar-dominated by the UDF and LDF. It is evident from the percentage of vote that the BJP has secured that Kerala is still reluctant to embrace Hindutva Politics in a big way as it has happened in other parts India.

6. Though the election was held in the backdrop of the reverberations of Sabarimala agitation, the verdict in Kerala was a political vote too. The consolidation of votes in favour of the UDF was both the result of national and regional political contexts and the political fall out of the Sabarimala agitation. The verdict reflected the anti-BJP politics of Kerala, dissatisfaction with the functioning of the central government and the perception of UPA as a viable alternative to the NDA. Most of the factors that influenced voting behaviour in the 19th Lok Sabha elections were favorable to the UDF. The survey shows that the voters did not held UDF significantly responsible for any of the issues that prominently influenced voting behavior. The UDF did not face the wrath of anti-incumbency as they were not in power either at the centre or states. At the same time there are a number of factors that made the Congress led UPA a much favoured alternative to form the next government at the centre.

**Notes and References**

1.   Lord Ayyappa Temple at Sabarimala customarily banned women between the ages of ten and 50 from entering its premises. In September 2018, Supreme Court of India ruled the ban 'illegal and unconstitutional' and ordered female pilgrims access to the temple. The Government of Kerala decided to implement the court order. There was huge opposition to the court's verdict and the decision of the state government to implement it especially from

religious and caste groups. The agitation was spearheaded by the BJP and Sanghparivar organizations. This was an important campaign  issue in 19th Lok Sabh  in Kerala. Acevendo, Deepa Das (2019), 'The Battle for Sabarimala: How a Hindu Temple Became a Crucible for Indian Gender Politics', https://www.foreign affairs.com/articles/india/2019-04-04/battle-sabarimala? accessed on 12-08 2019.

2. Field Survey conducted by the Survey Research Centre, Department of Political Science, University of Kerala in April 2019

3. The murder of two youth Congress workers at Periya in Kasaragode district in February 2019 allegedly with the connivance of CPM became a major campaign issue all over Kerala. The Left especially the CPM was on the defensive on this  issue.*The Hindu,* 24 April 2019  'Two youths hacked to death by gang', https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/two-youths-hacked-to-death-by-gang/article26936099.ece, accessed on 13-08 2019

4. On February 26, 2019, Indian fighter fighter planes crossed over into the Pakistani air space and carried out missile attacks on terror camp in Balakot town of Khyber Pakhtunwa province. It was said to be a 'revenge' for the  Pakistan supported terror attack that killed over 40 CRPF jawans on 14 February 2019 at Pulwama in Jammu and Kashmir. Maya Mirchandani (2019), 'After Balakot, time for a diplomatic offensive', March 2,  https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/balakot-time-diplomatic-offensive-48692/  accessed on 10-08 2019

5. Anil Urs,  (2018), 'Rafael deal is biggest corruption case of NDA government:,  Rahul Gandhi', February 10, https://www.thehindu businessline.com/news/national/rafael-deal-is-biggest-corruption-case-of-nda-govt-rahul-gandhi/article22715554.ece. accessed on 10-08 2019

6.   Field Survey conducted by the Survey Research Centre, Department of Political Science, University of Kerala in April 2019

7.   Kerala Religious Census, https://www.census2011.co.in/data/religion/state/32-kerala.html, accessed on 8-11-2019. As per the Census 2011, Muslims and Christians constitute 26.56 and 18.38 percent of Kerala population respectively.

8.   Field Survey conducted by the Survey Research Centre, Department of Political Science, University of Kerala in April 2019.

9.   *Ibid*

10.  *Ibid*

11.  *Ibid*

# UDF Wave Eliminated
# LDF and BJP in Kerala

**K.M. Sajad Ibrahim**

*Sabarimala issue was the important factor in the LDF's debacle in the election. However, owing to a strong anti-NDA wave in Kerala, the BJP could not gain from its agitations against the LDF government. In this situation it was very easy for the UDF to sweep the election except in one constituency. The chance for the split of anti-NDA votes between the UDF and LDF was eliminated with the Sabarimala temple issue. In fact, the massive support received by the UDF from all caste/class sections substantiate the unpopularity of LDF in the general election 2019, despite any notable anti-incumbency feeling on its overall governance.The presence of Rahul Gandhi as the candidate in Wayanad constituency was a morale booster for the UDF. Hence, two important reasons for the UDF's stunning victory are the LDF government's actions in the Sabarimala issue and the anti-NDA mood in Kerala which largely favoured a UPA government at centre.*

A huge sweep for UDF in Kerala in the 2019 Lok Sabha election once again indicates the unique political culture of the state, voting against the national trend. When the BJP made big waves in almost all the states in India, its attempt to open an account in Kerala remains a

pipe-dream. The victory of Congress led United Democratic Front (UDF) in 19 out of 20 seats was a shocking for the Communist Party of India (Marxist) led Left Democratic Front (LDF), which won the Assembly election in 2016 in big margin. There were not many contentious issues which directly affected the performance of the LDF government in Kerala. However, the verdict of Supreme Court on lifting the ban on the entry of women between 10 and 50 into Sabarimala temple and the hasty decision of LDF government to implement it had provoked uproar from the public. Similarly, the anti-incumbency wave against National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government was a serious issue in Kerala, as noticed in the NES 2019 study. In fact, the election verdict in Kerala was the outcome of many factors, mostly against the NDA government led by Narendra Modi. Likewise, the role of minority religious communities and caste groups was also crucial in the verdict.

The UDF had won 12 seatsin the 2014 general election, overcoming the anti-incumbency wave, leaving only eight seats to the LDF. However, in the 2016 Assembly election, the LDF under the leadership of Pinarayi Vijayan secured 91 seats while the UDF finished with 47 seats and the BJP opened its account by winning one seat. The remaining one seat went to an independent, P.C.Geroge, who was expelled from the Kerala Congress (M) of UDF in April 2015. The massive victory in 2019 was an unexpected one for the UDF as there were no noticeable merits in favour of them since the Assembly election 2016. Since the bipolar coalition politics in 1982 the UDF had the advantage over the LDF in the general elections, except in 2004. However, both the fronts alternately ruled Kerala since 1982. Two notable sweeping election verdicts, other than 2019, were in 1977 and 2004. In the post-emergency 1977 general election the Congress-Communist Party of India (CPI) led coalition won all the seats. Likewise, in 2004 the LDF secured 18 seats, and the UDF had to satisfy with one seat, and the remaining one went to NDA coalition. Another exceptional outcome of the election 2019 was 77.68% of voter turnout, the third highest after the elections in 1989 and 1977. In 1989 election, which was held under

the backdrop of the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, recorded 79.3% voter turnout, while in 1977, in the post-emergency election, noted 79.2%. In 1977 and 1989 the highest voter turnouts were due to special situations. If so, what led to the third highest voter turnout in 2019 which gave a big mandate in favour of the UDF?

**Important Political Events since 2014**

The UDF victory in 12 seats in the2014 general election was not repeated in the 2016 Assembly election due to the anti-incumbency wave that led to a huge victory for the LDF. Since then the Congress party had been battling with factionalism as well as the corruption charges. Kerala Congress - Mani (KCM) left the UDF immediately after the 2016 assembly election as a mark of protest against some congress leaders who had indirectly accused him of corruption charges that led to the UDF defeat in the election.[1] However, KCM re-joined the UDF after a series of negotiations with the Congress and other UDF coalition partners which agreed to support Mani's candidate for the Rajya Sabha election. This led to further uproar within the Congress party for sacrificing its seat in the Rajya Sabha election.[2]

The decision of LDF to admit new parties in its fold in December 2018 was another important development of coalition politics of Kerala. They are Loktantrik Dal of Veerendra Kumar MP, Democratic Kerala Congress of Francis George, Indian National League (INL) and Kerala Congress (B) of R Balakrishna Pillai. The INL has been awaiting entry into the LDF for over 20 years. Main aim of the LDF was to exploit their vote share in their respective regions, even if it was a marginal one, to strengthen the coalition. Unfortunately, such efforts were in vain in the 2019 election outcome.

To expand its base in Kerala has been the primary motto of the BJP for the past two decades. However, the leadership struggles due to factionalism created roadblocks in the BJP's attempt to compete with the LDF and UDF. To overcome the factional feuds, Kummanam

Rajasekharan, a fellow traveller of the Sangh Parivar, was appointed as the BJP State President in December 2015. When the BJP opened an account in the 2016 Assembly election in Kerala, a wave of enthusiasm emerged. However, Rajasekharan was nominated as Governor of Mizoram in May 2018 as he could not make any further progress for the party in Kerala. When P.S. Sreedharan Pillai was appointed as the BJP Chief in Kerala in July 2018, there was no change in the factional feuds. The factionalism was also visible in the BJP's Sabarimala agitation.[3]

**Why 2019 Election was different from the 2014?**

Most striking point in the 2019 election was the tremendous increase in the vote share of the UDF, 42% in 2014 to 47.2% in 2019. While comparing to the 2016 Assembly election, the UDF had only 38.5%, an increase of 8.7% in 2019. (Table 1) The vote share increase of the UDF was mainly from the LDF account than the BJP. In the case of LDF, its vote share went down from 40.1% in 2014 to 34.2% in 2019. The LDF had 42.5% vote share in the 2016 Assembly election, a decline of above 8% decline in 2019. Although the BJP's vote share noticed an increase of 4.5% from the 2014 election, its vote share almost remained the same comparing its performance in the 2016 Assembly election.

**Table 1: Votes Received by Coalitions/Parties in 2014 and 2019**

| Party/Coalition | 2014 LokSabha Election | | 2019 LokSabha Election | | 2016 Assembly Election |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Seats Won | Vote Share | Seats Won | Vote Share | Vote Share |
| UDF | 12 | 42 | 19 | 47.2 | 38.5 |
| LDF | 8 | 40.1 | 1 | 34.2 | 42.5 |
| BJP | 0 | 10.8 | 0 | 14.8 | 14.6 |
| Others (including independent and NOTA) | 0 | 5.9 | 0 | 3.7 | 4.2 |

*Source: CSDS Data 2019. All figures are percentages*

The LDF suffered serious setback in the central Kerala region (Table 2), as its vote share declined from 41.8% in 2014 to 28.3% in 2019. The defeat of LDF candidates in the region was in big margin, above one lakh in four constituencies out of six. In other regions noticed only a marginal decline of vote share, especially in Travancore and Malabar. BJP's vote share steadily increased in Travancore from 11.9% to 19.6%; in Cochin from 10.7% to 14.6%. But no notable increase of BJP vote in Malabar. UDF victory in all the regions noted with big margins, except four constituencies out of 19.[4] In Wayanad constituency, Rahul Gandhi won the election with an all-time record margin of above four lakh. His presence as a candidate in the Wayanad constituency was an important factor to increase the vote share of the UDF.[5]

### Table 2 :Kerala - Reserved Category-wise Results of 2014 Lok Sabha Election

| Region | UDF vote % | | NDA Vote % | | LDF vote % | | Others vote % | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2014 | 2019 | 2014 | 2019 | 2014 | 2019 | 2014 | 2019 |
| Malabar | 43.4 | 45.0 | 9.9 | 9.8 | 39.6 | 38.4 | 6.1 | 6.8 |
| Cochine | 38.8 | 53.0 | 10.7 | 14.7 | 41.8 | 28.3 | 7.2 | 4.0 |
| Travancore | 43.2 | 43.8 | 11.9 | 19.6 | 39.2 | 36.0 | 4.6 | 0.6 |
| **Total** | **42.0** | **47.0** | **10.8** | **14.8** | **40.1** | **34.2** | **5.9** | **3.7** |

*Source: ECI data compiled by CSDS Data 2019*

**Impact of Anti-Modi Wave**

The general mood of Keralites in the 2019 election was against the Modi government, which was very well noted in the CSDSNES 2019. In general, the performance of the NDA government was far from satisfactory. In the NES 2019 study while 43.8 % out rightly commented full dissatisfaction, another 19 % made somewhat dissatisfaction with the NDA government. It means altogether nearly 63 per cent of people recorded dissatisfaction with the Modi government (Table 3). Rafale aircraft deal was one of the controversial issues levelled against the Modi

government just before the election. In Kerala 70.6 % heard the issue and 43.6 % recorded wrong doing by the NDA government (Table 4). The demonetisation decision of the NDA government had badly affected the normal life of people in Kerala for nearly three months. In the NES 2019 about 76 per cent of the people commented that it was unnecessary. (Table 5). Other notable response against the NDA government was on the question of giving one more term to NDA government. Here, the NES 2019 found 58.3% opposed in giving one more chance to the Modi-government. Similarly, in the selection as the next prime minister of India, Rahul Gandhi secured the highest support of 47.4 % followed by Narendra Modi securing only 10.9%. All these indicate the anti-NDA government attitude of people in Kerala.

**Table 3: Performance of the BJP-led NDA Government**

| | |
|---|---|
| Fully satisfied | 10.1 |
| Somewhat satisfied | 23.2 |
| Somewhat dissatisfied | 19.0 |
| Fully dissatisfied | 43.8 |
| No response | 3.9 |

*Source: CSDS Data 2019*

**Table 4: Response on NDA Government' Rafale Aircraft Deal**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Have you heard the deal | Yes | 70.6 |
| | No | 29.4 |
| If yes, any wrong doing by the government | Yes | 43.6 |
| | No | 8.5 |
| | Can't say | 16.1 |
| | No response | 2.4 |

*Source: CSDS Data 2019*

**Table 5: Response on the Demonetization Decision by the Government**

| Necessary | 16.7 | Can't say | 3.1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Unnecessary | 75.9 | No response | 1.9 |
| Other answer | 2.3 | | |

*Source: CSDS Data 2019*

**Sabarimala Issue and the LDF's Debacle**

The Supreme Court verdict of lifting the ban on the entry of all women into Sabarimala temple irrespective of age on the eve of election changed the political situation in Kerala. In fact, the LDF government's policy of implementing the decision invited much public outrage. The situation was viewed by the BJP as a golden opportunity to expand its influence in Kerala. As such, the BJP tried to exploit the situation of Sabarimala sentiments among the traditional Hindu voters, who strongly reacted against the LDF policy. During the election campaign the BJP widely used the Sabarimala issue, to woo the voters.In fact, the BJP had high expectations on winning two seats in Kerala,one in Thiruvananthapuram where it reached second position by losing with a slim margin of around 15,000 votes in 2014 election against the Congress candidate Sashi Tharoor and the other in Pathanamthitta, the epicentre of Sabarimala temple. Kummanam Rajasekharan, the former President of BJP contested the election in Thiruvananthapuram after relinquishing his position as the Governor of Mizoram. Similarly, in Pathanamthitta another key BJP Leader K.Surendran, who was imprisoned for over two weeks during the Sabarimala agitation, contested the election. There was a strong media forecast of BJP's victory in these constituencies due to its hectic campaign.[6] However, both of them lost the election in big margins. Although Rajasekharan retained second position in Thiruvananthapuram, the margin of defeat was nearly one lakh. In Pathanamthitta, Surendran could reach only in third position. In the rest

of their strongholds too the BJP could not make much impact. An increase of four percent vote for BJP from the 2014 election was not significant considering the increase in the polling percentage.

However, CSDS NES 2019 found that Sabarimala issue was an important concern of the people in Kerala. The decision of Supreme Court on women entry into the Sabarimala temple was opposed by 61.7 % of people; 48.4 % strongly opposed and 13.3 % somewhat opposed. Among them, the opposition of women voters deserve special attention, who outnumbered men in voter turnout by 910,435.[7] The Supreme Court decision was opposed by 66.9% (fully opposed by 54.8% and somewhat opposed by 12.1%) Table 6.  Similarly, the handling of the Sabarimala temple issue by the LDF government also received the same response from the people as 55.6% opposed it, including those fully opposed and somewhat opposed). In this category, the response from women is more significant, as 45.7% expressed strong opposition comparing to 37.4% men. All these indicate a strong opposition against the Supreme Court verdict on Sabarimala as well as against the action taken by the LDF government.

Here, the question is why the BJP was unable to get any advantage in the election, which led the Sabarimala agitation against the government? NES 2019 discloses the undercurrents behind the BJP's setback in the election. Although Kerala electorates opposed the LDF government actions on the Sabarimala temple issue, they were not ready to support BJP due to the anti-incumbency wave against the NDA government. The beneficiary of this situation was the UDF, which followed a soft policy during the agitations, supporting the devotees and opposing the government actions on Sabarimala temple issue.

**Table 6: Opinion on the Verdict of Supreme Court
on the Sabarimala Temple**

|                  | Total | Male | Female |
|------------------|-------|------|--------|
| Fully Support    | 13.7  | 17.1 | 10.1   |
| Somewhat support | 12.4  | 16.1 | 8.8    |
| Somewhat oppose  | 13.3  | 15.1 | 12.1   |
| Fully oppose     | 48.4  | 41.7 | 54.8   |
| Can't say        | 8.2   | 7.7  | 8.6    |
| No Response      | 4     | 2.2  | 5.5    |

*Source: CSDS Data 2019*

**Table 7: Satisfaction with the Kerala Government's
handling of the Sabarimala issue**

|                       | Total | Male | Female |
|-----------------------|-------|------|--------|
| Fully satisfied       | 14.2  | 17.7 | 10.2   |
| Somewhat satisfied    | 17.5  | 18.6 | 15.9   |
| Somewhat dissatisfied | 14.6  | 15.6 | 13.9   |
| Fully dissatisfied    | 41    | 37.4 | 45.7   |
| Can't say             | 8.5   | 8.3  | 8.4    |
| No Response           | 4.3   | 2.4  | 6      |

*Source: CSDS Data 2019*

**Influence of Caste/Class factor**

A caste/class factor in the voting trend equally played an important role in the outcome of the general election 2019. Most notable in the vote share of various castes is the steady increase of Nair votes in favour of BJP. The Nairs, one of the upper castes, constitutes around 14%

of the total population in Kerala. In the 2019 election the BJP received 43% of Nair votes, an increase of 7% from the 2014 election. Similarly, the LDF lost 8% of Nair votes, from 30% in 2014 to 22% in 2019. The Nair Service Society (NSS), the powerful organisation of Nairs, had strong objection to the way the LDF handled the Sabarimala issue. The rejection of the NSS demand for filing a review petition in the Supreme Court on Sabarimala verdict by the LDF government, had aggravated the relations between the Nair community and the LDF. This led to the shifting of more votes in favour of BJP. The UDF also received one percentage more votes of Nairs from the 2014 election. However, in the case of Ezhavas, which constitutes about 26% of population, no substantial change is noted in 2019, although Bharat Dharma Jana Sena (BDJS) the political wing of Sree Narayana Dharma ParipalanaYogam (SNDP), the organisation of Ezhava community, had alliance with the NDA.

The role of minority communities in the election outcome of Kerala is significant as they constitute about 45% of the total population (Muslims 27% and Christians 18%). While most of the Christian population is concentrated in central Kerala, Muslims dominate in many northern districts. An-anti-Modi response is visible in 2019 from the Muslim voters as the BJP lost 14% of their votes from the 2014 election. The LDF received 9% more Muslim votes this time, from the 2014 election, while the UDF retained strong support from the Muslims with an additional increase of two percent from the 2014 election. Almost same trend is visible in the vote share of Christians, as the BJP lost 7% of their votes this time from the 2014 election. The LDF lost two percent Christian votes, while the UDF received 70% votes of Christians in 2019, an increase of 5% from 2014 election. The voting trends of minority communities reflect an anti-Modi response. (Table 8)

**Table 8: Caste and Community Vote Shares of
Various Coalitions/Parties**

|  | UDF | | BJP + Others | | LDF | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **2014** | **2019** | **2014** | **2019** | **2014** | **2019** |
| Nairs | 34 | 35 | 36 | 43 | 30 | 22 |
| Ezhavas | 30 | 28 | 23 | 21 | 47 | 45 |
| Muslims | 63 | 65 | 16 | 2 | 21 | 30 |
| Christians | 65 | 70 | 9 | 2 | 27 | 25 |

*Source: CSDS Data 2019. All figures are percentages rounded off to the next digit.*

The voting trend based on economic class illustrates considerable shift from LDF to UDF and BJP. The lower and middle class which constitute majority of population moved away from the LDF. On the other hand, the support for the UDF from all the classes noted considerable increase from 2014 election. (Table 9)

**Table 9 : Economic Class of Respondents**

|  | UDF | | BJP | | LDF | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **2014** | **2019** | **2014** | **2019** | **2014** | **2019** |
| Poor | 38.0 | 38.6 | 8.4 | 16.2 | 41.2 | 39.3 |
| Lower | 44.0 | 50 | 9.5 | 13.3 | 44.0 | 34.9 |
| Middle | 47.1 | 47.8 | 5.9 | 14.7 | 42.4 | 34.7 |
| Rich | 44.4 | 50.5 | 22.2 | 15.7 | 27.2 | 28.1 |

*Source: CSDS Data 2019*

**Conclusion**

Sabarimala issue was the crucial factor in the LDF's debacle in the election. However, owing to a strong anti-NDA wave in Kerala, the BJP could not gain from its agitations against the LDF government. In this situation it was very easy for the UDF to sweep the election except in one constituency. The chance for the split of anti-NDA votes between

the UDF and LDF was eliminated with the Sabarimala temple issue. Further, women in Kerala were instrumental in the defeat of LDF.In fact, the massive support received by the UDF from all caste/class sections substantiate the unpopularity of LDF in the general election 2019, despite any notable anti-incumbency feeling on its overall governance.The presence of Rahul Gandhi as the candidate in Wayanad constituency was a morale booster for the UDF. Hence, two important reasons for the UDF's stunning victory are the LDF government's actions in the Sabarimala issue and the anti-NDA mood in Kerala which largely favoured a UPA government at centre.

## Notes

1.     The Hindu, 7 August 2017; Jayakrishanan Nair, Kerala Congress (Mani) severs over three-decades-long relation, walks out of UDF, at: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/53586774.cms? utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

2.     For the detailed story see  http://www.newindianexpress.com/ states/kerala/2018/jun/08/kerala-km-mani-joins-udf-congress- divided-over-rajya-sabha-seat-1825459.html

3.     For detailed reports see: Factionalism rears its head in BJP again, https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/factionalism-rears- its-head-in-bjp-again/article25636882.ece ; BJP factions lobby for Kerala president post, https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/ politics/300518/bjp-factions-lobby-for-kerala-president-post.html ; Kerala leadership's response to the arrest of leaders has come in for criticism, https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/bjp- set-for-factional-feud-again/article25708059.ece

4.     See General Election To Lok Sabha - 2019candidate Wise Results: http://www.ceo.kerala.gov.in/generalelection2019.html

5.     For the detailed version of the impact of Rahul Gandhi on Kerala election see https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/tracking- indian-communities/is-rahul-another-tourist/

6.     See the reports https://scroll.in/article/920736/kerala-bjp-increased-its-vote-share-in-2014-will-it-win-its-first-lok-sabha-seat-here-in-2019; https://www.indiatoday.in/elections/lok-sabha-2019/story/kerala-lok-sabha-polls-pathanamthitta-sabarimala-bjp-ldf-udf-1508397-2019-04-23 ; andhttps://www.thenewsminute.com/article/if-exit-polls-right-it-means-kerala-people-lack-political-awareness-state-bjp-chief-102151

7.     As per the Election Commission of India data, total voter turnout in Kerala was male: 9700572  and female: 10611007. See: http://www.ceo.kerala.gov.in/generalelection2019.html

# General Elections 2019 in India: Political Interludes behind the Success of BJP and NDA

**M.R.Biju &**
**M.R.B. Anantha Padmanabha**

*The 2019 Indian general election was held in seven phases from 11 April to 19 May 2019 to constitute the 17th Lok Sabha. The votes were counted and result was declared on 23 May. About 900 million people were eligible to vote and turnout was over 67 per cent - the highest ever as well as the highest participation by women voters. The Bharatiya Janata Party won 303 seats, further increasing its substantial majority and the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance won 353 seats. The Indian National Congress won 52 seats, and the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance won 91. Other parties and their alliances won 98 seats. The Congress again failed to secure the requisite 10% of the seats (54 seats) in the Lok Sabha. Keeping this in background an attempt has been made in this paper to examine the reasons behind the success of BJP and NDA in the recently concluded 17th Lok Sabha Polls in India. It has been categorized under five major heads. Part-I Unfolds the reasons/ under currents for the overwhelming success of the BJP, Part-*

*II Examines the Election Strategies framed and executed by the NDA and BJP, Part-III Evaluates the leadership exhibited by Narendra Modi, Part-IV Deals with the vote share gained by BJP and NDA in various segments and Part-V brings together the major findings of the study.*

## Part - I

### Reasons for the Overwhelming Success of the BJP

The 2019 Lok Sabha election results have been marked by the poor performance of parties that are perceived to be family-run enterprises. Narendra Modi pilloried the Gandhis for not having worked their way up in politics. By doing so, he tapped into the growing disenchantment with the politics of entitlement - in particular, with political families of 'social justice' parties, such as Samajwadi Party and Rashtriya Janata Dal in the north and Janata Dal (Secular) in the south. Today, the Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and Rashtriya Janata Dal are staring at a bleak future, having won five, 10 and zero seats this time. Their performance was no less dismal five years ago. On both occasions, they were swept aside by the Modi wave. Their style of politics has also been rejected. Having set out to challenge feudal tendencies in society, they are paying the price for internalising them. With Amit Shah and Modi at the helm, the BJP has managed to project itself as the mascot for determined, self-made individuals who break out of their socio-economic constraints. They have termed this the New India - impatient with categories of not just caste, but more disconcertingly, 'secularism'. It is a sizeable force, which identifies with the rugged confidence of the present BJP top leadership; it is, of course, true that local BJP leaders have fielded their kith and kin who have won, riding the Modi wave.

While this is a new sub-alternism, it does not mean that 'caste' as a political category is on the wane. The BJP has, in fact, consolidated its hold on the lower castes whose aspirations were not addressed by traditional social justice parties - this is even as Modi said in his victory address that there were only two castes, 'the poor and those who serve the poor'. Issues of caste need to be seen through the prism of a young, upwardly mobile society which disregards the politics of entitlement. If the 2014 Lok Sabha elections were marked by anti-incumbency, pro-incumbency was the keynote of the 2019 elections as BJP decimated the opposition. The BJP juggernaut rolled across its bastions in the north and west of the country - in bellwether state UP its vote share shot up from 42.6% in 2014 to 49.5%, negating the impact of SP BSP and RLD joining hands - while making significant incursions into the south (Karnataka, Telangana) and east (Bengal, Odisha). At last count BJP had wins/leads in 303 seats and its allies in 50 seats, giving NDA a thumping majority in the Lok Sabha.

What accounts for the shift from anti-incumbency in 2014 to pro-incumbency in 2019? It's not as if the economy has changed much. On the positive side inflation was managed well during NDA's first term (but faces upward pressure now). On the negative side joblessness appears to have grown more acute. One could attribute BJP's success to better administration of welfare schemes, the Balakot strikes which retaliated against Pakistan's sponsorship of terror groups, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's personal popularity. But while all these factors may have played a role they do not, even in combination, satisfactorily account for the magnitude of BJP's sweeping victory.

It's possible some deep structural shifts are taking place in the Indian polity. The so-called "secular" model many other parties have followed is to work with conservative Muslim clerics to secure the Muslim vote, and then add on specific castes as each party's USP relying on post-Mandal social engineering. Thus SP is the party of Yadavs, BSP of

Jatavs and so on. This model, however, offers plenty of opportunity for counter mobilisation. BJP has moved into this vacuum swiftly and effectively. It may have capitalised, for example, on the unseen backlash to aggressive expansion of caste reservations, cementing its support among upper castes with the EWS quota. Hindu upper castes would comprise a solid bloc that can neutralise the Muslim vote (which, in any case, is split among several parties). Alongside, Modi also projects a different kind of backward caste identity that's fluid, aspirational, upwardly mobile and less dependent on specific caste networks. As smartphones spread and cities expand, this style may appeal more to Hindu lower castes. BJP alone has around 300 Lok Sabha seats which gives it the power to override even its allies in the next government. With great power, however, must come great responsibility. The Indian polity is dynamic and the voter can never be taken for granted. Now that BJP has acquired enough confidence in government it must utilise the first hundred days of its second tenure to launch the transformative leap that the economy badly needs - more so since global headwinds are growing - even as it fully respects constitutional values in letter and in spirit. BJP started on the right, reformist note in 2014 but veered off track following Congress accusations of it being anti-poor, lurching later into radical socialist experiments such as demonetisation.

"Factor" markets of land, labour and capital need market-oriented reform for efficient allocation of resources; so do agriculture and education. At the same time, the state must step in and provide quality inputs where the market cannot provide these (such as healthcare, basic education). Unproductive subsidies must be cut, and the autonomy of public institutions respected and expanded. Such reforms, whose objective is to ramp up India's global competitiveness, may be painful at the beginning. But BJP has the mandate and trust of the people, and must be bold enough to push them through. A powerhouse economy and its spinoff benefits will, in turn, yield a political bonanza for BJP by the time the next general election come round in 2024.

## Final Tally

| NDA - 352 | | UPA – 91 | | Others - 99 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BJP | 303 | Congress | 52 | All India Trinamool Congress | 22 |
| Shiva Sena | 18 | DMK | 23 | YSR Congress Party | 22 |
| JD(U) | 16 | NCP | 5 | Biju Janata Dal | 12 |
| Lok Jana Shakti Party | 6 | J & K National Conference | 3 | Bahujan Samaj Party | 10 |
| Shiromani Akali Dal | 2 | IUML | 3 | Telangana Rashtra Samithi | 9 |
| Apna Dal (Soneylal) | 2 | JDS | 3 | Samajwadi Party | 5 |
| AIADMK | 1 | Jharkhand Mukti Morcha | 1 | Telugu Desam Party | 3 |
| AJSU Party | 1 | Kerala Congress (M) | 1 | CPI (M) | 3 |
| Independent-BJP | 1 | Viduthalai Chiruthalgal Katchi | 1 | CPI | 2 |
| NDPP | 1 | Independent - Congress | 1 | AIMIM | 2 |
| Rashtriya Loktantrik Party | 1 | | | Independent | 2 |
| | | | | Aam Aadmi Party | 1 |
| | | | | AIUDF | 1 |
| | | | | Sikkim Krantikari Morcha | 1 |
| | | | | Mizo National Front | 1 |
| | | | | Naga People's Front | 1 |
| | | | | National People's Party | 1 |
| | | | | Revolutionary Socialist Party | 1 |

*(Source : Business Line, 25 May, 2019 - Election Cancelled for Vellore Constituency - Total Seats - 543)*

| | NDA | | UPA | | Others | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2019 | 2014 | 2019 | 2014 | 2019 | 2014 |
| North | | | | | | |
| Chandigarh | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| Delhi | 7 | 7 | | | | |
| Haryana | 10 | 7 | | 1 | | 2 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 4 | 4 | | | | |
| Jammu and Kashmir | 3 | 3 | | | 3 | 3 |
| Punjab | 4 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 4 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rajasthan | 24 | 25 | 1 | | | |
| Uttar Pradesh | 64 | 71 | 1 | 2 | 15 | 7 |
| Uttarkhand | 5 | 5 | | | | |
| West and Central | | | | | | |
| Chhattisgarh | 9 | 10 | 2 | 1 | | |
| Dadar and Nagar Haveli | | 1 | | | 1 | |
| Daman and Diu | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| Goa | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | |
| Gujarat | 26 | 26 | | | | |
| Madhya Pradesh | 28 | 27 | 1 | 2 | | |
| Maharashtra | 41 | 42 | 5 | 6 | 2 | |
| South | | | | | | |
| Andhra Pradesh | | 2 | | | 25 | 23 |
| Karnataka | 25 | 17 | 2 | 11 | 1 | |
| Kerala | | | 19 | 12 | 1 | 8 |
| Lakshadweep | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| Puducherry | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| Tamilnadu | 1 | 2 | 37 | | | 37 |
| Telangana | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 10 | 14 |
| East | | | | | | |
| Andaman & Nicobar Islands | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| Bihar | 39 | 33 | 1 | 7 | | |
| Jharkhand | 12 | 12 | 2 | 2 | | |
| Odisha | 9 | 1 | | | 12 | 20 |
| Sikkim | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| West Bengal | 16 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 22 | 36 |
| North-East | | | | | | |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 2 | 1 | | 1 | | |
| Assam | 9 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Manipur | 1 | | | 2 | 1 | |
| Meghalaya | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Mizoram | | | | 1 | 1 | |
| Nagaland | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| Tripura | 2 | | | | | 2 |

*(Source : Business Line, 24 May, 2019)*

## Part II

## Systematic Election Strategies

The time bound, systematic and behind the scenes outreach programmes of the BJP and its leadership played a crucial role in its electoral victory. The party chief Amit Shah was cautioning party workers that anything short of complete enthusiasm and hard work for the Lok Sabha polls could lead to defeat and a decline of the BJP and Sangh Parivar. A large part of the BJP's strategy was centered around Prime Minister Modi as its most charismatic leader. It also worked to create a category of voters who would vote above parochial concerns. The opposition's disarray with regard to leadership helped drive home this point of a decisive leader. Beneficiary as voter Six months before the polls, a list of beneficiaries of the Modi government's welfare programmes was shared with every Lok Sabha constituency, and party workers were asked to reach out to them. Party president Amit Shah had also revealed that around 161 call centres had been set up by the party with over 15,000 callers to help with the outreach.

"The benefits, unlike under previous governments, were not specific to one community and helped the party break caste barriers and identity issues," said a senior leader. After the seventh phase of polling it was revealed that women, for the first time in independent India's history, had come out to vote in as many numbers as men and as the results - started pouring in on Thursday, the party was assured of victory. "Women and young people 'who saw welfare programmes being delivered created a set of voters who helped break caste arithmetic," said a senior party leader. The party's greatest challenge was the formidable caste arithmetic of Uttar Pradesh's Mahagathbandhan of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Samajwadi Party (SP). Senior leaders said the aggression among the support bases of both these parties helped along a process of "reverse - polarisation." "Our voters saw this aggression by SP and BSP voters and consolidated firmly behind us - non-Yadav OBCs, non-Jatav dalits and upper castes, added to women

and the young, this was a formidable combination," said the source. Real time feedback and the addressing of it by Prime Minister Modi was reflected in his tour plans that mostly concentrated on seats where the party needed a boost rather than go to strongholds. The BJP's planning for the Lok Sabha polls began nearly three years ago with Shah coming out with focus areas for the party's expansion. A list of 120 seats mostly in what he termed as the "Coromandel Coast", where the BJP hadn't won ever but had registered some votes in 2014, were concentrated on. In Odisha as in West Bengal, the BJP slowly ate up, the Congress and Left's space as the opposition, giving it nearly 30 extra seats.

## Part III

## Leadership of Narendra Modi

One factor that stands out in the verdict of the 2019 general election is the ringing endorsement of a single leader, Narendra Modi. It was Mr Modi all the way except in some states of the South where the BJP, has no presence and where his Hindi oratory is ineffectual. Across the rest of India, the voters wanted someone who made them feel secure. No one else inspired similar trust - not Rahul Gandhi, Mayawati, Akhilesh Yadav, Mamata Banerjee, N. Chandrababu Naidu, K. Chandrasekhar Rao and not even Sharad Pawar. What were the fears driving the voter and where did they originate? The structural origins of these fears can be traced to the less than robust liberal revolution that India experienced over the past seven decades. The liberal push in India led to a forced restructuring of society through an ever expanding agitation for granting special rights not only to dalits, tribals, minorities and the other backward classes, but also to women, the disabled, gays and transgenders. Such restructuring was neither very successful, nor consistent; yet it threatened traditional social, cultural and religious hierarchies.

The liberal reshaping of India was resisted at every step. Counter-revolutionary social–forces were always waiting in the wings. They took various forms from the periodic cow protection agitations led by sadhus

to the movement for the destruction of the Babri Masjid and construction of a Ram Temple at the site, to the lynching of cow traders and beef-eaters. To say that Rahul Gandhi was no match for Modi begs the real question. Rahul Gandhi and the OBC parties offered the protection and continuation of an evolving liberal vision. They may have different perspectives and horizons of operationalising this vision, but they were broadly for the ongoing expansion of the rights of marginalised sections of society. This election was against that vision in all its forms.

The counter-revolution taps into fear. Prime Minister Narendra Modi tapped into the fears that the liberals aroused. First and foremost, he tapped into the fear of the Hindu majority that they were being marginalised in their "own country" and their privileges were shrinking because of the expanded rights of others. The latter was addressed directly by Prime Minister Modi by announcing a 10 per cent job quota for the upper castes. He probably knew that his pronouncement that a Hindu could never be a terrorist may sound like pure rhetoric, but it assuaged many of his listeners that their religion was better than others and it was time that other religious communities recognised it. By constantly rubbishing the Metropolitan elite, his resourcefulness consistently coined new phrases to denigrate and criminalise them (Lutyens' gang, Half- Maoists, Urban Naxals, Khan Market gang, etc), and Prime Minister Modi tapped into the fear that the system was being manipulated to partisan ends by a small urban elite. By constantly hammering that Indian liberals were friends of Pakistan (and therefore anti-national), he created the fear that they not only under-estimated Islamic terror, but by speaking out for the minorities, starting a dialogue with Kashmiri leaders or better relations with Pakistan, they encouraged terrorism. On the eastern borders of India, he heightened the existing anxiety about Muslim illegal immigrants (potential recruits for Islamic terror) outnumbering Hindus and promised citizenship to Hindu immigrants. Many of these fears exist historically across India, especially because of the lingering trauma of Partition.

**Part – IV**

**Performance**

### a. Gains in Semi-Rural Areas

With the 2019 general election, the BJP has managed to shed its tag of being an out-and-out urban party by winning 123 rural seats, bettering its tally of 115 in 2014. The saffron party has also done well in the semi-rural belt and has enhanced its tally from 127 in 2014 to 141 in 2019. In its traditional stronghold of urban seats, the BJP has slipped marginally to 39 from 40 in 2014. Analysts say that the BJP moved into rural territories due to their welfare schemes. "For a rural voter, things like toilets, gas connections and houses are of utmost importance.
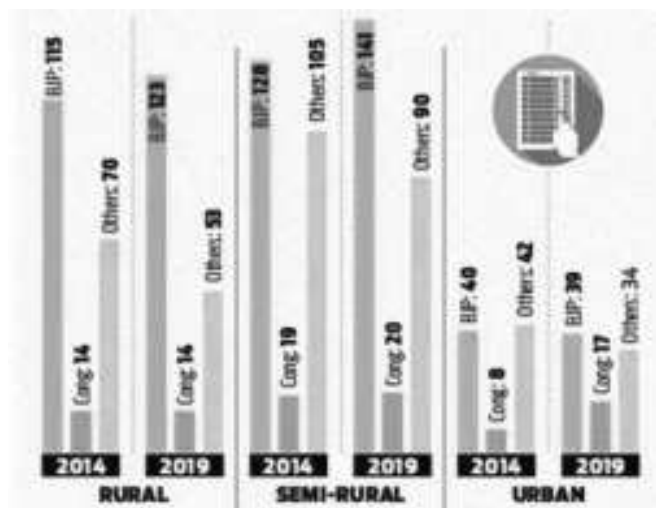


*(Source : The New Indian Express 25 May, 2019)*

The BJP, through schemes like Swachh Bharat, Awas Yojana and Ujjwala scheme, has helped it garner support from rural voters. They have successfully blurred the lines between rural and urban India," a political researcher at the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) said. In the traditional stronghold of urban areas, the BJP and its allies have

done exceedingly well. In Delhi, the BJP won all the seven seats. In the other two metros of Kolkata and Chennai, where the party had a negligible presence, the BJP won one seat while it drew a blank in Tamil Nadu. In other cities too, the BJP fared well by winning one of the four seats on offer in Hyderabad, both seats in Ahmedabad and one each in Pune, Chandigarh and Lucknow.

### b. BJP got 50% vote share in 200 seats

The BJP secured over 50% vote share in more than 200 constituencies across the country, according to the tentative figures of the Election Commission. The party's share crossed the halfway mark in all the - 26 constituencies of Gujarat and about 40 seats in Uttar Pradesh. The same trend was noticed in the 25 constituencies of Madhya Pradesh, 23 of Rajasthan, 20 of Karnataka, 14 in Bihar and in nine of the 10 constituencies of Haryana. In all the seven seats of Delhi, it bagged over 50% vote share. In the eight constituencies of Mumbai North, Bhilwara, Navsari, Surat, Vadodara, Faridabad, Karnal and Kangra, the BJP got over 70% share of the votes polled. The highest of 74.73% was in Navsari, as per the data available through the Commission's website at 6 p.m. on Thursday. It did not secure 50% share in any of the constituencies in Odisha. State-wise analysis revealed that the highest gain of 23.29% - from 34.70% to 57.99% - for the BJP was registered in Haryana, where it is in power. In 2014 also, it had bettered its performance compared to 17.21% in 2009.

The second highest gain of about 21.5%, from the previous figure of 18%, was recorded in West Bengal, where the party came close to the 43.54% vote share of the Trinamool Congress. While in Himachal Pradesh, the party's vote share went up by more than 15% to 68.93%, about 10% gain was reported from Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and Delhi. In Karnataka and Tripura also, the figure increased by about 8% compared to 2014.

### c. Beter Performance in the reserved Constituencies

The SC/ST violence, which erupted in various parts of the country last year, was touted to be a major poll issue with pundits saying it could be a factor against the BJP which had won 63 of 128 reserved seats in 2014. However, the BJP and Narendra Modi successfully warded off these fears and in 2019, emerged victorious in 78 reserved seats. With their allies, the count went up to 86, amounting to around 68 per cent.
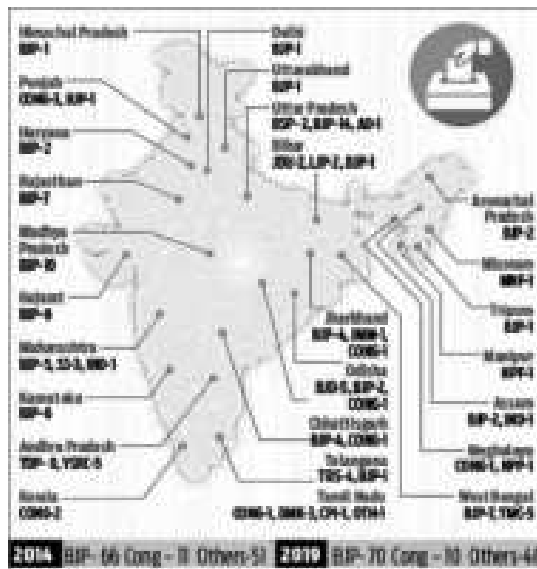


*(Source : The New Indian Express 25 May, 2019)*

According to political experts, the BJP, by making microscopic calculations, was able to do this. "They did not have a blanket strategy for wooing the SCs and Dalits. For example, they increased the representation of non-Jatavs in local governments and local bodies. Similarly, in other places, they had different welfare-based strategies," said Aditya Nigam, professor at the Centre for Studies on Developing Societies. Nigam felt that Dalit issues which hit the headlines like the Rohith Vemula

case did not resonate with the people on an individual level. "It did not affect them hence they did not feel the need to be anti-BJP."

## Part – V

## Concluding Observations

The definitive nature of the Bharatiya Janata Party's victory in the 17th general election marks an unmistakable inflection point in the journey of the Republic. If the 16th general election in 2014 catapulted the BJP as the primary role of Indian politics, relegating the Congress to a distant second, 2019 establishes it as the overarching hegemon. For good reasons, this result is being viewed as an endorsement of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's persona, and his imprint on this victory is distinctive. But it will be a folly to ignore the underlying structural reasons that made this victory possible, and its sweep so deep and wide. It takes strong personalities to popularise an idea, but it is those ideas that outlive personalities that define the course of a people or a nation. The outcome, hence, must be understood as an electoral endorsement of Hindutva, or Hindu nationalism, the creed that guided the BJP and its forebears for nearly a century since Vinayak Damodar Savarkar wrote the treatise by the same title. Narendra Modi, who counts Savarkar as a critical influence, has been the catalyst and the alchemist of the transformation in the way India imagines itself. In recess, if not in irreversible decline, is the idea of India that had grown from the freedom movement, and had prevailed for most part of the history of the Republic.

Championed by the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, it sought inspiration from the millennia old civilisation, the Vedas and the Upanishads, but also strived to build India into a modern society with a scientific temper and liberal values. The idea outlived Nehru, but it had begun to fade soon after his passing. Nehru and his mentor, Mahatma Gandhi, were the prime targets of derision for the proponents of Hindutva in the early years. With the 2019 result, Hindutva has pushed Nehruvian secularism to the margins of Indian politics. The Congress, now led by Nehru's great-grand son Rahul Gandhi, did better than in

2014, but not enough to even be recognised as the official Opposition in the Lok Sabha. Now, BJP is bound to uphold secular ideals or to protect the integrity of existing institutions may amount to demanding an abandonment of its very core beliefs. Gaining the trust of all citizens will be a necessary prerequisite for Modi to drive India's continuing journey to become a global leader. It is only reasonable that the government and the Prime Minister be asked to live up to the promise they continuously make 'sabka saath, sabka vikas' (with all development for all)'. These tenets must be felt in the daily lives of the marginalised sections of the population, and Narendra Modi must add a third tenet to make his mantra meaningful: 'sabka vishwas' (the trust of all). (The Hindu dtd.24 May 2019).

Indian voters have shown remarkable maturity and thoughtfulness in delivering a stable government at the Centre. They realise the necessity of a stable government, and so often vote differently in national and State elections. Forecasts of political and economic instability made in 2014, when the macro economy was vulnerable, proved incorrect. Similar forecasts were made this year, based on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led National Democratic Alliance's losses in the Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan Assembly elections. The pundits should bow to the greater wisdom of the people - in this election, the BJP has swept the same States. The Congress under-estimated the voters' continuing need for good governance. The Congress did not choose dynamic Chief Ministers when it had the option. It also underestimated the voters' need for a positive narrative. Talking of slow job growth and farmer distress did not work. The Nyuntam Aay Yojana scheme (the Congress's proposed social welfare programme) was not acceptable as a substitute for jobs. On the other hand, the BJP promised to improve ease of living, beyond just the ease of doing business, and strengthen the self-respect and ability of the average citizen to do more, which is exactly the right approach for an aspirational India.

There was fear of competitive populism in the event of a weak

government being elected at the Centre. Now the BJP will hopefully focus, as promised in its manifesto, on infrastructure, housing, technology, health, education, water, environment, and facilitate the move away from agricultural jobs to raise farmer incomes. Only 23% of rural income now comes from farming, and there is a major ongoing shift to add value in agriculture. Apart from this, administrative reforms should be the focus. There are police and judicial reforms on the anvil. Well-targeted direct benefit transfers will efficiently deliver relief to the really distressed at low cost. Humility should come with strength. After an exceptionally bitter election season, the NDA will hopefully follow a constructive and inclusive agenda and encourage moderate progressive stances. Institutions are the backbone of any economy and must be strengthened. The people know that the government took difficult decisions to clean up the system, and chose to give it a second chance. It is time to meet their expectations.

## References

1.   Harish Khare, The 2019 Vote: An Intoxicating Verdict, *The Hindu,* 24 May, 2019

2.   'Ajay Gudavathy, History Repeats Itself for TDP', *Ibid.,*

3.   The Editorial, *The Hindu, Ibid.,*

4.   'Pushkar Banakar, Microscopic Calculations Work', The New Indian Express, 24 May, 2019

5.   'Pushkar Banakar, Saffron Brigade Blurs Rural Urban Divide', *Ibid.,*

6.   'Namita Bajpai, SP-BSP Gathbandhan Faces Existential Crisis in UP', *Ibid.,*

7.   Neera Chandhoke, The Making of the 2019 Verdict, *The Hindu,* 27 May, 2019

8.   Facing the Debacle, Editorial, *The Hindu*, 25 May, 2019

9.   Panneer Selvan, 'Electoral Outcomes Don't Alter the Purpose of Journalism', *The Hindu*, 27 May, 2019

10.   Ritwika Mitra, 'The Rise and Rise in Saffron Party's Vote Share',
      *The New Indian Express*, 25 May, 2019

11.   Ramakrishan S. , 'A Reflection of People's Trust in Modi', *Ibid.*,

12.   Zoya Hasan, No Easy Solutions for the Congress, *The Hindu,*
      25 May, 2019

13.   Ashima Goyal, 'The NDA has its Task Cut Out', *Ibid.*,

14.   Bharath Bhushan, 'Tectonic Shift towards a very Different India',
      *Deccan Chronicle*, 25 May, 2019

15.   The Editorial, *Deccan Chronicle*, 25 May, 2019

16.   Sanjay Kumar, 'A Clear Vote for Nationalism and Signaling an
      End to Caste Politics', *Ibid.*,

17.   Singh K.C. 'Time for Rise of Modi the Statesman', *Ibid.*,

18.   Ruchir Sharma, 'Modi vs Modi', *The Times of India,* 24 May, 2019

19.   The Editorial, *The Times of India*, 24 May, 2019

20.   Neerja Chowdhury, 'Modi all the Way', *Ibid.*,

21.   Parthasarathy G., 'BJP's Pakistan Conundrum', *Ibid.*,

22.   Ramesh M., 'India and the Perils of being an Outlier', *Business
      Line*, 25 February, 2019

23.   The Editorial, *Business Line*, 25 February, 2019

24.   Anubhav Mishra, 'How Chowkidar became a Brand', *Business
      Line*, 25 February, 2019

25.   Poornima Joshi, 'After Modi Meets the President', *Ibid.,*

26.   Richa Sharma, 'No Progress for Congress', *The New Sunday
      Express*, 26 May, 2019

27.   Valsan Thampu, 'Will the Congress Panic and Commit Harakiri?',
      *Ibid.*

28.　　George T.J.S., 'All Set for the Next 20 Years', *Ibid.,*

29.　　How India Voted: Verdict 2019, *Business Line*, 24 May, 2019

30.　　Poornima Joshi, Modi 2.0: 'Bigger and Broader', *Ibid.,*

31.　　Suhas Palshikar, Turning Social Consolidation on its Head, *The Hindu*, 26 May, 2019

32.　　Sandeep Shastri et.al;　'Explaining the Modi Sweep Across Regions', *Ibid.,*

33.　　Quraishi, 'It's Time to take Stock of Electoral Process', 25 May, 2019

34.　　Shiv Visvanathan, 'What the Thumbing Mandate for Modi Means', *Ibid.,*

35.　　Vidya Subramanyam, 'The Leader who is Bigger than his Party', *Ibid.,*

36.　　Rajeev Bhargava, 'How to Rescue Genuine Secularism', *The Hindu*, 28 May, 2019

37.　　SHashi Sekhar, 'Global Implications of the Mandate', *Ibid.,*

38.　　The Editorial, *The Hindu, Ibid.,*

39.　　'Four A Rediscovery of India, Editorial', *The Hindu,* 24 May, 2019

40.　　https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019_Indian_general_election

# The 2019 People's Verdit in Goa : Lessons for the BJP

**Alaknanda Shringare**

*While the BJP swept many states of India, it is a mixed result for BJP in Goa. Goa retained its old equation with South Goa seat won by the BJP and North Goa by the Congress. The BJP could not repeat its 2014 victory in Goa. The slide of BJP in 2019 Lok Sabha election can be attributed to the death of Manohar Parrikar, internal conflicts among the coalition partners of BJP and the unfulfilled promises of the BJP made in the past.*

Goa once again restored its power equation with North Goa seat won by the BJP and South Goa by the Congress. The Modi wave which swept both the Lok Sabha seats of Goa in favour of BJP in 2014 could not create the same impact in 2019. BJP lost the South Goa seat to the Congress by a slim margin of 9755 votes while it continued its victory in North Goa with its candidate Shripad Naik winning the seat for the fifth time. Despite the margin of victory has been reduced from 105599 votes in 2014 Lok Sabha elections to 80247 votes in 2019, Naik was able to muster the support of significant number of voters (57 percent) in North Goa constituency. Shripad Naik is representing North Goa since 1999 except for 2009 Lok Sabha election when Congress-NCP alliance worked in favour of the alliance. The BJP in Goa attributed the 2014 victory to Modi factor and hopeful of repeating the same in 2019. Though the BJP was hopeful of winning both the seats in Goa, BJP's candidate Narendra Sawaikar faced a defeat in South Goa. Sawaikar lost to the Congress's candidate Fancisco Sardinha by a margin of 9,755 votes.

Goa has two Parliamentary seats, for which voting took place on 23rd April 2019. There were a total of 12 candidates, six from each constituency. Out of the 12 candidates only two women candidate contested the election, one from South Goa on Shiv Sena ticket and other was an independent candidate contested from North Goa seat. There were 11,35,811 voters of whom 5,80,043 were female voters and 5,55,768 male voters. The disparity between male and female voters increased in 2019 compared to 2014 elections which can be attributed to the fact that most of the male family members are working abroad. Since 2014 number of women voters voting in the elections is more compared to men voters. This is also true for assembly elections since 2007 elections which indicate that women voters are going to play crucial role in the coming elections in Goa. In recent years number of people acquiring Portuguese citizenship also has increased as a result there is a dip in the number of electorate in some of the constituencies of Goa. The 2019 Lok Sabha election witnessed a total of 13,386 which amounts to 1.17 percent first time voters who exercised their right to vote in election (Herald, 2019). Goa witnessed an overall 75 per cent voter turnout, with 77 per cent in North Goa and 73 per cent in South Goa (Election Commission of India, 2019). Compared to assembly elections, Lok Sabha elections very often witnessed less voter turnout in Goa.

From North Goa seat BJP fielded its sitting MP Shripad Naik. Congress nominated it's party President Girish Chodankar from North Goa seat while the AAP nominated Pradeep Padgaonkar as its candidate. For the South Goa seat BJP's sitting MP Narendra Sawaikar, Congress's Francis Sardinha and AAP's Convenor Elvis Gomes were main contenders. There were no major alliances of parties for the 2019 elections in Goa. As an alliance partner of the BJP in the state, Goa Forward party (GFP) decided not to contest election. Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) broke its alliance with the BJP just before the elections. It initially decided to contest Lok Sabha seats but later contested only by-elections which were held along with the Lok Sabha elections. BJP, Congress and AAP were the three major parties at

election but looking at the past performance of the AAP the contest was mainly between the BJP and the Congress.

**Brief review of Parliamentary elections**

Since 1989 Goa had witnessed bi-polar contest between two national parties Congress and the BJP for the Lok Sabha elections. Congress was the main contender for the Lok Sabha elections against the regional parties of Goa since 1970s while the BJP entered the political scene of Goa in the 1990s.

When in most of the states of India the Congress was the first choice of majority of voters, in case of Goa, regional parties were preferred over national parties by the voters. This was true not only for the assembly election but also for Lok Sabha elections. Goa thus was an exception compared to other states of India. Goa was liberated in 1961 from the Portuguese rule and till 1977 regional parties dominated the political scene of Goa both at the state and national elections. The Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) and the United Goans Party (UGP) were the two important regional parties of Goa. MGP under Dayanand Bandodkar formed the first government and ruled the state from 1963 to 1977.

For the purpose of general elections Goa is divided into two parliamentary constituencies Mourmugoa (South Goa) and Panaji (North Goa). In 1962 Lok Sabha election Goan voters voted for the first time to choose the national government. In this election voters' choice was regional parties and not the national parities. It is since 1977 Lok Sabha elections, Congress party represented Marmugao constituency, except for 1996, 1999 and 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) represented Panaji constituency from 1967 to 1996 with an exception of 1971 and 1991 Lok Sabha elections when Congress won from this constituency. The BJP entered into the politics of Goa initially as an ally of MGP for the assembly elections. BJP first contested the assembly elections in 1989 when it won no seat and got less than 1 percent of the vote (Editorials, 2000, p. 3784) but later in

an alliance with MGP it created its base in Goa. Since then there is a gradual rise of the BJP in the politics of Goa. The role of Parrikar as a leader of the BJP cannot be neglected in this growth. BJP got benefitted from eroding the vote base of the MGP not only at assembly elections but also in the Lok Sabha elections. In the 1999 Lok Sabha elections BJP won both the Parliamentary seats of Goa. It repeated the same victory in 2014 Lok Sabha elections.

Community voting is very clearly visible in Goa, North Goa having a large number of Hindu population generally voted for either MGP or BJP and South Goa with sizable number of Christian population voted mostly for Congress with some exceptions in both the cases. With a view to spread its vote base in South Goa, Parrikar embarked upon mission Salcete on the eve of 2004 Lok Sabha elections. However, the mission did not yield result in 2004 but Parrikar did not abandon the mission. It was believed that Parrikar with his mission Salcete made inroads into the South Goa which was considered to be the bastion of the Congress. The strategies of supporting the independents to reduce the tally of Congress also worked well for the BJP in 2012 election. However, the present BJP leadership denied adoption any special mission for winning voters of Salcete in the 2019 elections. In the absence of Parrikar who attracted large number of Christian voters towards BJP, voters in South Goa once again seems to have moved back to traditional voting pattern in 2019 Lok Sabha election.

The 2014 Lok Sabha election results were a big victory to BJP. At the national level the 2014 election results were attributed to Modi wave in India which once again swept large parts of India in 2019 elections. While for Goa 2014 was the year for the BJP by winning both the Lok Sabha seats but the same trend did not continue in 2019 elections. The possible reasons for this could be absence of Parrikar, internal conflicts among alliance partners of BJP and non-fulfilment of promises made by Modi government.

### Leadership of Parrikar

One of the reasons for the defeat of BJP could be absence of its leader Manohar Parrikar. Parrikar was associated with the BJP since its emergence in Goa. The BJP and Parrikar became co-synonymous with each other's identity so much so that there are many who believed that without Parrikar BJP will not survive in Goa. Parrikar also developed as one of the most dynamic and charismatic leader of Goa and is called the 'architect of modern Goa'.

When he became the Defence minister of India, it created leadership vacuum in the party. Though Laxmikant Parsekar became the CM of Goa, Parrikar's weekend visits were seen as Goa being indirectly governed by him. His resignation as Defence Minister to become the Chief Minister of Goa in the wake of results of assembly election of 2017, signal the fact that in the absence of Parrikar, the BJP does not have strong political leader and BJP requires Parrikar for its survival in Goa. With the death of Parrikar on 17th March 2019 there were apprehensions over the continuation of the BJP government in the state and also its impact on the Lok Sabha elections scheduled on 23rd April. This is the first time the BJP went to the polls without Parrikar. Parrikar's absence did create problem for the BJP in the form of conflict between the alliance partners. Though there were differences among the alliance partners it was Parrikar who was holding them together.

### Conflict Between the Allies

The declaration of by-elections along the side of Lok Sabha elections created a divide between the BJP and its ally Maharashtrawadi Gomant Party (MGP), with MGP wanting to contest both the Lok Sabha constituencies and also by-elections especially of Shiroda constituency. While MGP wanted to field its own candidates for Lok Sabha seats, the Goa Forward Party (GFP) also an alliance partner in the BJP led coalition government in Goa made its stand clear that as an ally of NDA it would not contest against its official candidate. There were pressure on the MGP not to contest the by-elections and Lok Sabha elections. The MGP had three MLAs in the assembly of Goa.

The death of Manohar Parrikar changed the political equations in Goa. In rounds of meeting to decide on the next Chief Minister candidates both the alliance partners (MGP and GFP) bargained for cabinet berth to their elected MLAs. MGP decided to support any national party which assures them three cabinet berths and three corporations to its members while on the other hand the Goa Forward party demanded for cabinet berth to all its three MLAs and deputy Chief Ministers post. In the political developments which took for the selection of CM and formation of government, MGP lost two of its MLAs to BJP. The BJP decided to make Pramod Sawant as the Chief Ministerial candidate who was also the choice of Parrikar to succeed him as the CM. The BJP was able to engineer a split within the MGP as Sudin Dhavlikar was firm on contesting the elections. With two of his MLAs joining the BJP, Sudin Dhavalikar was left alone in the MGP. He was also dropped from the Cabinet hours after two MGP MLAs Dipak Pawaskar and Goa tourism minister Manohar Ajgaonkar broke away from the MGP and merged its legislative wing with the BJP (India Today, 2019). After meeting this humiliating treatment Pandurang Dhavalikar who was firm on his decision to contest Shiroda by-election withdraw his support to the BJP led coalition government at the state. On the pretext of lack of time to plan the campaign strategy Dhavalikar later decided not to contest the Lok Sabha seat but extended support to  the Congress candidate from South Goa.

After a bitter experience with the BJP, Sudin Dhavalikar claimed that in 2014 Sawaikar got a lead of over 35,000 voters from three constituencies of Marcaim, Ponda and Shiroda which have MGP base (Herald, 2019) and he also claimed that voters did not like the way BJP played politics with MGP which will result in BJP's defeat in South Goa. MGPs decision to support Congress in 2019 Lok Sabha elections was expected to have worked in favour of Congress in South Goa.

## AAP as a Third Party

Since statehood political contest at Lok Sabha elections is

mostly bi-polar with BJP and the Congress and their allies. With no major parties at fray except for AAP to challenge the Congress and BJP, the contest was mainly between the Congress, AAP and the BJP. However, due to its past record in Goa in the 2014 Lok Sabha and 2017 assembly elections AAP was not seen as an important contender by both the national parties in 2019 Lok Sabha election. Anti-incumbency factor in South Goa was very much evident and the new entrant AAP was expected to play a big role in South Goa. The presence of AAP especially in South Goa predicted to have an impact on Congress vote share as the anti-BJP votes will be split but the results of the election show that the AAP failed to influence the voters in its favour. With a total vote share of 3 percent its performance in the South Goa (5 percent) is better compared to North Goa (1 percent) but did not dent the prospect of the Congress from winning South Goa seat.

The AAP in Goa in its Lok Sabha election manifesto said the coastal state's 'ECG' - an acronym for Environment, Culture and Governance - is sputtering and promised a revival of the three sectors (Business Standard, 2019). In the last few years concern over environment, culture and governance were major issues affecting the state. It also promised sustainable mining and special status to Goa. AAP also has adopted new strategy of campaigning in the Lok Sabha elections. It has put up banners all over promoting its candidates with mobile number and requesting people to give missed call to that number. AAP volunteers called all those people who gave missed call and explained to them about the party, its achievements in New Delhi, about the 2019 Lok Sabha election and asked about their willingness to become AAP volunteers. From South Goa both Congress and AAP candidate are from Catholic community which has divided the voters from this community.

**Issues at election**

The CSDS post poll data reveal that more than the leadership factors, it was the regional factors that determined the voters' choice of the party in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections (Shringare, 2019, p.20).

The two seats from Goa might not be the determining factors from the point of formation of government at the centre but for Goa they provide representation at national parliament. In recent years the issues of demand for special status to Goa and the ban on mining proved to be determining factors for the people while voting for a party. These are the issues where the state government looked towards the centre for a solution or some action. The efforts made by the state government and by the MPs to put these issues for discussion in Parliament were the determining factors for the voters at the time of elections. Congress accused the BJP candidates for not giving any voice to Goa in Parliament in the last five years and also not using MPLAD and Adarsh Gram Yojana funds effectively.

While examining the 2019 election results one has to keep in mind two important issues. The first is the granting of special status to Goa and second is the mining issue. Special status to Goa was one of the important campaign issues of the BJP in 2012 assembly elections. After coming to power in the state, the BJP government passed a resolution in the Goa legislative assembly in 2013 demanding special status for Goa and an appeal was made to the central government. Modi during his campaign for 2014 Lok Sabha elections, promised the people of Goa that once BJP comes to power at the centre it will grant special status to Goa. BJP's victory at the centre raised the expectation from BJP for granting special status to Goa. Though BJP was in power in the state as well as well as at centre it did not contribute positively for Goa to get special status. There is a general perception that on the issue of special status BJP has lost the trust of people. This became the first blow to the credibility of promises made by Modi to the people of Goa.

The second issue is of mining. Since the ban on mining, it has become an important issue in Goa. Based on various reports of illegal mining, the Supreme Court ordered ban on mining in Goa in the year 2012. After 19 months ban was lifted in 2014, but it is only in October

2015 fresh extraction of iron ore started.  However, the extent of mining activities was limited and could not benefit large number of those who were dependent on mining for their livelihood. Government started schemes to reduce the burden of truck owners who lost their source of income with the ban. However, the initiatives of the government were not enough to reach out to all those who were affected. The disappointment with the government was visible in mining areas where BJP MLAs tried their best to keep up the hope of mining affected people but most of them faced defeat in 2017 elections. Once again in 2018 Supreme Court stopped all the mining activities in Goa till the fresh leases (not fresh renewals or other renewals) and environmental clearances are granted. Supreme Court questioned the second renewals given to 88 mining companies. Goa government's demand for mining law to be amended to allow the same leaseholders to continue the mining operations did not materialize. Government's inability to find the solution to the ban was creating unrest among the people. Mining is a major source of employment in Goa. It is claimed that it affects 60,000 people directly employed in mining activities and 3,00,000 (as claimed by Goa Mining Peoples' Front) people indirectly dependent on mining. Goa Mining Peoples' Front (GMPF) President said that, "We are not for any particular party, this time we will vote for the candidate who will assure us that our livelihood will be protected" (Herald, 2019). While filing a nomination from South Goa, the Congress candidate accused the BJP for the existing mining problem in Goa and appealed to the voters of South Goa with a promise to resolve the mining issue and work for getting special status to Goa. It claimed that it has strategies to restart the mining in a sustainable manner in Goa. To attract the voters who were concerned about employment opportunities in Goa Congress in its manifesto promised for a dedicated ministry of fisheries, tourism development bank to provide subsidised loan to anyone who wants to start a tourism related business and creation of jobs (Times of India, 2019).

As per the ADR Goa Survey Report (2019), around 66 percent voters listed better employment opportunities as their top priority followed

by cleanliness/garbage issue, food prices and quality roads (Herald, 2019). Mining also provided employment opportunities to thousands of people in Goa. The ban on mining has added to the existing problem of unemployment in the state. Every political party during campaign promised to find solution to the mining problem.

There were unsuccessful efforts made by the mining dependent people to pursue the state and the central government to bring laws to restart mining. In the December 2018, three day dharna was held by around 1000 mining affected people in Delhi, demanding resumption of mining. The BJP government both in state and centre could not find a solution to mining dependent people have affected voting behaviour in 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Mining issue changed the arithmetic in this election.

The local factors mainly determined the election results of 2019 Lok Sabha elections in Goa. The concerns over development and unemployment are high in the minds of the voters. If not mining parties hoping to win next elections should come out with an alternative for generating employment in the state. The impact of increasing number of women voters and out migration of the local population cannot be neglected on the election results.

### References

- *Business Standard,* 5 April, 2019, Retrieved November 1, 2019, from AAP manifesto promises to address Goa's failing 'ECG': https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/aap-manifesto-promises-to-address-goa-s-failing-ecg-119040500885_1.html

- *Editorials.* 'Goa: New Lamps for Old'. *Economic and Political Weekly* , 2000, Pp.3784-3785.

- *Election Commission of India.* May 2019, Retrieved October 22, 2019, from file:///C:/Users/admin/Downloads/7%20-%20 constituency_(pc)_wise_summary.pdf

- *Herald.* 12 April, 2019, 13,386 eligible to vote for the first time.

- *Herald.* 25 April, 2019, 'Will MGP support to Congress have huge impact on BJP in South'?

- *Herald.* 25 April, 2019, 'Will MGP support to Congress have huge impact on BJP in South Goa'?

- *Herald* 2 April, 2019, 'Will Sattari be a lifeline for Shripad Naik in North Goa'.

- *India Today.* 27 March, 2019, Retrieved October 12, 2019, from Goa Deputy CM Sudin Dhavalikardropped from the Cabinet hours afterMGP MLAs join BJP: https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/goa-deputy-cm-sudin-dhavalikar-dropped-from-cabinet-hours-after-mgp-mlas-join-bjp-1487579-2019-03-27.

- Shringare, A. 10 August, 2019, Goa 2019 Verdict: Sway of Regional Factors. *Economic and Political Weekly* , pp. 19-20.

- *Times of India.* 19 April 2019, Retrieved October 15, 2019, from Mining and tourism get priority in Congress manifesto: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/elections/lok-sabha-elections-2019/goa/news/mining-and-tourism-get-priority-in-cong-manifesto/articleshow/68947245.cms

# General Election 2019 and Northeast India: Stunning Victory for the BJP and Dwindling Congress and Regional Parties

**V. Bijukumar**

*The political pragmatism of the BJP brought huge electoral dividends to the party in the northeast region. The leadership vacuum was promptly attended to by encouraging defection in other parties and poaching their leaders. It helped the party mobilize diverse communities to the party fold and strengthen its base electorally. Apart from all these, the party could highlight the developmental initiatives undertaken by the NDA government during the past five years in the region. With a development-centred positioning, it succeeded in arresting the growing protest against the CAB and resentment towards the BJP. Thus a religiously and culturally different political terrain antithetical to BJP's Hindu nationalist ideology became another party stronghold.*

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its regional alliances in the northeast states received a thumping victory in the elections to the 17th Lok Sabha. The Modi wave, which swept the mainland India in the election, has not evaded India's northeast. In fact, the onward march of the BJP in mainland India was aided by its spectacular performance in the northeast region. The BJP and its alliance parties bagged 14 and

three seats out of the 25 seats, respectively, spread across eight states. The grand old Congress party could manage only four seats, while independents won the remaining four. Out of the eight states in the region, the BJP is currently in power in Assam, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur, and shares power with its regional allies - the National People's Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) - in Meghalaya and Nagaland, respectively. While the BJP is not part of the governments in Mizoram and Sikkim, the ruling parties are part of the North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA) that supports the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre. The Congress, which dominated in the politics of northeast for a long time, in the midst of virulent ethnic assertions, identity politics, extremist activities and mobilisation and ascendance of ethnoregional parties, is virtually not holding power in any of the states in this region.

It has to be reminded that in the General Election 2014 of the 25 seats spreading across the region, the Congress could win only 8 seats while the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) secured 10  seats (BJP-8, NPP -1, NPF -1), Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPIM) retained 2 seats, All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) -3, Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) and Independent one seat each. It has to be reminded that in 2009 election, of the 25 seats in the region, the Congress secured 13 seats, BJP - 4, CPIM - 2, AsomGanaParishad (AGP) - 1, AIUDF - 1, Bodo People's Front - 1, NPF -1,  SDF -1.Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)-1. Apart from winning seats in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, in other NE states like Manipur, Meghalaya, Sikkim and Tripura, the party's candidates secured 11.98%, 9.16%, 2.39% and 5.77% votes respectively.

In the 2019 general election, the largest share of BJP's spectacular victory in the northeast came from the party which ruled Assam. While the BJP won nine of the 14 seats, the Congress won three and one each by the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) and independent. In 2014, the BJP got only seven seats, while the

Congress and AIUDF got three  each and one by independent. In 2014
and 2019, the BJP's alliance partners like the AsomGanaParishad (AGP)
and the Bodo People's Front (BPF) drew blank. Of the 10 constituencies
the BJP contested, it emerged victorious in nine such as Karimganj,
Jorhat, Guwahati, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, Mangaldoi, Silchar, Autonomous
District and Tezpur, and got defeated only in Nowgong by the Congress.
On the other hand, the Congress contested all the 14 seats, but could
win only three seats - Nowgong, Barpeta and Kaliabor. The AIUDF, which
contested in three of its strongholds, could win only Dhubri where its
leader and two-time Member of Parliament (MP) BadruddinAjmal defeated
the AGP. Kokrajar, the lone constituency contested by the BPF was
won by the independent candidate Naba Kumar Sarania. In Assam, the
ruling BJP secured 36.05 % votes against the narrow margin of
35.44 % of the Congress. The AGP secured only 8.23 %, while the
AIUDF and the BPF got 7.80 and 2.48 %, respectively.

    In another BJP ruled state,Arunachal Pradesh, the general and
assembly elections were held simultaneously, which witnessed triangular
contest between the BJP, Congress and the People's Party of Arunachal
Pradesh. The BJP bagged both seats in spite of the volatile issues of
Citizen Amendment Bill (CAB) and Permanent Certificate by state
government. In the Arunachal West, union minister KirenRijiju defeated
NabamTuki, the Congress candidate and former Chief Minister. In the
Arunachal East, Tapir Gao of BJP defeated the nearest Congress
candidate LowangchaWanglat. The BJP's vote share in the state shot
up to 58.22 % as against 20.69 % of the Congress. In the ethnically
polarised state of Manipur, the BJP and Naga People's Front (NPF) won
the two constituencies of Inner Manipur and Outer Manipur, respectively.
While BJP's Rajkumar Ranjan Singh defeated Congress'
OinamNabakishore Singh in the Inner Manipur, NPF's Lorho S. Pfoze
defeated BJP's HoulimShokhopao Mate in the Outer. The Congress
candidate K. James could emerge only in the third position. In the BJP
ruled Manipur, the ruling party secured 34.22 % votes as against the
24.63 % of the Opposition Congress.

In the two constituencies of Meghalaya, the Congress and National People's Party (NPP) retained their seats in Shillong and Tura, respectively. The Shillong constituency witnessed multicornered contest between the Congress, BJP and other smaller parties. Vincent Pala, the sitting MP from the Congress, defeated United Democratic Party's (UDP) JeminoMawthoh, and the sitting MLA and BJP's candidate SanborShullai emerged in the third position. The congress secured 53.52 % votes and the UDP got 34.08 %, while BJP won only 9.78 % votes. The urban voters went for the BJP and rural voters preferred the Congress. In Tura constituency, NPP's Agatha Sangma, daughter of late P.A. Sangma, defeated the Congress candidate and former chief minister MukulSangma. Although the NPP is a constituent of BJP-led NEDA, it contested alone and BJP put up its own candidate. In the state as a whole the Congress emerged with 48.28 % votes. While the NPP got 22.27 %, UDP and BJP received 19.55 and 7.93 %, respectively.

In Mizoram, the lone reserved seat for Scheduled Tribe (ST), where women voters have outnumbered men, the Mizo National Front (MNF) candidate C. Lalrosanga defeated Lalnghinglova Hmar who contested as an independent supported by principal opposition parties like the Congress and the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM). Although MNF is part of the NEDA, both MNF and the BJP contested alone. While the MNF secured 44.89 % votes, the Congress - ZPM backed-independent secured 43.26 % and the BJP managed to get only 5.75 % votes. In Nagaland, the ruling party, NDPP, captured seat from NPF which was represented by the former Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio. The only one seat in Nagaland witnessed three-cornered contest between Congress, NDPP and National People's Party (NPP). The NPF, the main opposition party in Nagaland, decided not to field a candidate and extended its support to the Congress. However, seven of the 27 MLAs of NPF had pledged their support to NDPP candidate. The lone seat was won by TokhehoYepthomi of NDPP, the ally of BJP in the state, by a margin of 16,344 votes against the Congress leader K L Chishi. In the state as a whole, the NDPP got 49.73 % votes against 48.11 % of the Congress.

Since BJP supported its ally NDPP, it could not secure separate vote share.

In Sikkim, the Sikkim KrantikariMorcha (SKM) captured the lone seat from the Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF). Its candidate Indra Hang Subba defeated SDF's DekBahadurKatwal. In fact, the SDF candidate was winning the lone seat. However, over years its vote share has decreased. For instance, in 2004 it secured 69.84 %, in 2009 only 63.30 %, which again got reduced to 52.98 % in 2014. While the SKM got 47.46 %, SDF and BJP received 43.92 and 4.71 %, respectively. At the same time, the Congress could manage only 1.13 % votes. The two constituencies of Tripura - West Tripura and East Tripura - witnessed a multi-cornered contest between the Congress, BJP, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) or the CPM and the Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT). The BJP captured both the constituencies from the CPM. Since 1996, the CPM has been consecutively winning from both these seats. In the state as a whole, the BJP emerged as a force to reckon with bagging 49.03 % votes against the Congress (25.34 %), CPM (17.31 %) and IPFT (4.16 %).

**Framing Appropriate Strategy**

For a long time, in the region, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was almost a non-entity and remained as the strong hold of Congress and regional parties. However, since 1990s this border region with great ethnic complexity emerged as an attractive destination for the Hindu nationalist forces not only because of its electoral ambition but of its larger agenda of bringing the tribal communities into the Hindutva fold. The emergence of BJP, whose ideology and programmes are often contradict the ethos of the region, as a potential political force has to be analysed in the larger context of the decline of ethno-regional parties and the crisis of secular and progressive forces.  By expanding its mass base in NEI, the BJP wants to shed its image as a North-Indian Hindu Nationalist Party and to project its image as an all inclusive political

entity crosscutting caste, region and religion and trying to occupy the vacuum created by the Congress and other regional parties.

The specular victory of the BJP and its allies in the Northeast came as a surprise for the political pundits as the party during the campaign was struggling to overcome the ethnic resent created by the proposed Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) 2016. The CAB categorised illegal minorities into two - Muslims and non-Muslims - by changing the definition of the illegal migrants. The Bill sought to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955 to provide citizenship to illegal migrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, who are Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian extraction. In other words, the proposed amendment sought to make non-Muslim illegal migrants from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh eligible for citizenship. It is also surprising that the Act does not have a provision for Muslim sects like Shias and Ahmediyas who also face persecution in Pakistan. The Bill has generated resentment among the tribal and non-tribal communities of the Northeast India as they thought that the move of the Union government was an assault on the distinct cultural identities of the region. However, the BJP could counteract such resent highlighting its developmental programmes for the region and the corruptions during the Congress regimes in various states. Moreover, the pertinent factor behind the BJP's success story was its strategy of alliance building with smaller and regional parties, and encouraging defection among the Congress party and poaching its leaders.

**Erosion of the Opposition Parties**

India's northeast, for a long time, is considered to be strong political bastion of the Congress party, inspite of highly volatile identity politics, ethnic assertions, extremist activities and strong sense of alienation of some ethnic communities from the national mainstream. Though, number of ethno-regional political parties sprang up at various point of time, the fortunes and the widespread presence of the Congress

however has not been seriously challenged.  As a 'catch- all party' it could mobilize divergent social groups and categories to its fold and crafted an art of governance as an inclusive mechanism.  Even though, on many occasions, the Congress met adverse situations in mainland India, its mass base and electoral fortunes rarely dwindled in the northeast. The party's constructed image of the architect of many accords intended to bring peace and normalcy in the region and the sacrifice of its own governments in the aftermath of the conclusion of such accords always found in the imagination of the people. It has to be reminded that Congress governments at the Centre at various points of time scripted history in the region by signing many accords such as the Shillong Accord (1975), Assam Accord (1985), Mizo Accord (1986), Tripura Accord (1988), Darjeeling Accord (1988), Bodo Accord (1993) by entering into peace talks with extremist elements within the constitutional framework.  However, there are certain instances that in the aftermath of the Assam Accord and Mizo Accord, the Congress lost power in Assam and Mizoram to the ethno-regional political parties such as the AsomGanaParishad  (AGP) and Mizo National Front (MNF) respectively.

In the 2019 general election, the Congress failed to capitalise on the resentment against the CAB towards the ruling BJP in the region, especially in Assam. Secondly, the 'go it alone policy' of the party in various states costed it more. While the BJP could forge an alliance with AGP and BPF in Assam, the Congress fought on its own strength. In fact, by entering into an alliance with AGP and BPF, the BJP benefitted more than its allies, as they could not get a single seat. Of the three seats - Dhubri, Barpeta and Kaliabor - contested by AsomGanaParishad (AGP), it lost two (Barpeta and Kaliabor) to the Congress, and Dhubri to All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF). The Bodo People's Front (BPF)'s lone Kokrajhir seat was won by the independent sitting Member of Parliament. If the Congress could forge an alliance with AIUDF, the situation would have been different. For instance, in Karimganj

constituency, the BJP won with a vote share of 44.62% against 41% of the AIUDF. The Congress secured 11.36%. In fact, the victory of the BJP was due to the splitting of votes between the Congress and AIUDF in the constituency. The Congress had an apprehension that such an alliance with AIUDF, a Muslim party, would be projected by the BJP that it had entered into an alliance with Muslim party to defeat BJP in the state. Thirdly, perhaps the colossal damage of the Congress could have been averted if it allied with the AGP when it parted away with the NEDA over the CAB.

Although the AGP struck an alliance with the BJP in the Assembly Election in 2016 and became a partner in the BJP government, the issue of Citizenship (Amendment) Bill (CAB) 2016 brought by the BJP-led NDA government at the centre continued to strain its relationship with the party.In January 2019, the AGP left the BJP alliance over the CAB. It accused the BJP of not committed to implement the letter and spirit of the Assam Accord. It apprehended that once the Bill is passed, Assam will be the breeding ground of Bangladeshis. The AGP was under tremendous pressure from the various organisations led by KrishakMuktiSangramSamiti (KMSS). P.K. Mahanta himself observed that CAB would frustrate the Assam Accord by lifting the constitutional safeguard accorded to indigenous people in the state.[1] Mounting pressure from civil society and ethnic organisations forced three AGP ministers to resign from the SarbanandaSonowal-led BJP government, which was not accepted by the chief minister. The AGP stitched its alliance with the BJP towards the close of the general election 2019, though it created rankles in the party as some leaders openly criticised the move. Along with other organisations protesting against the CAB, the AGP met the JPC when it visited Assam and apprised their stiff opposition to the amendment.The AGP's alliance with the BJP costs the prospects of the party more. The BJP could attract sizeable number of Assamiya middle class by raising the ethno-regional issues such as the CAB.

To conclude, the political pragmatism of the BJP brought huge electoral dividends to the party in the northeast region. The leadership vacuum was promptly attended to by encouraging defection in other parties and poaching their leaders. It helped the party mobilize diverse communities to the party fold and strengthen its base electorally. Apart from all these, the party could highlight the developmental initiatives undertaken by the NDA government during the past five years in the region. With a development-centred positioning, it succeeded in arresting the growing protest against the CAB and resentment towards the BJP. Thus a religiously and culturally different political terrain antithetical to BJP's Hindu nationalist ideology became another party stronghold.

**Notes**

1.      'Bill will frustrate Assam Accord: Mahanta', *The Assam Tribune,* 8 May 2018.

# Lok Sabha Elections 2019: Karnataka Politics at the Crossroads

**M.J. Vinod**

*There seems to be no end to the malaise in Karnataka politics. The ongoing crisis was perhaps waiting to happen. All the previous terms of Chief Minister Yediyurappa have been truncated ones in the midst of truncated assemblies. Even the present one is fraught with challenges and uncertainties. Though the BJP has been getting a larger vote share over the years, yet a clear majority has eluded it. The Congress and the JD(S) need to expand their support base as well as deal with internal fissures and revolts. To take things forward it may be useful for all the parties to learn from the past mistakes. Karnataka politics is clearly at the crossroads and it has been so for quite a while now. The powers struggle is yet to fully uncoil. All the parties are still caught in inter-party and intra-party struggles. The road ahead is bumpy and full of uncertainties and possibilities. The time has come to eschew narrow political interests and focus on governance.*

**Background**

    Karnataka witnessed frantic political activities right since the May 2018 State Assembly elections. The Assembly elections had thrown up an inconclusive verdict and the state government has constantly been on the tenterhooks since then. The intention at that stage seemed not

so much to get to power, as much as to disrupt BJP's winning streak. Ever since May 2018 when Chief Minister Yediyurappa resigned, he has tried all possibilities to get back to power. Especially after the by-elections at that point of time, there were strong possibilities of the BJP government collapsing.

The Lok Sabha elections in Karnataka took place in two-phases on 18th and 23rd April 2019.  In the first phase Mandya witnessed the highest voter turnout of 80.24% and the lowest in Bangalore South of 53.48%. The Lok Sabha election results in Karnataka turned out to be a major setback for the then JD(S)- Congress ruling coalition. The BJP won 24 of the 28 Lok Sabha seats in the state. The two-phase elections were significant for the reason that for the first time the Congress and the JD(S) fought the elections together on a common platform. The Congress and the JD(S) put up candidates in 22 and 6 constituencies respectively, whereas the BJP contested 27 seats backed by an independent candidate in Mandya.

The seat distribution was highly contentious especially in the Old Mysore region, where the Congress and JD(S) have been traditional rivals over the years. Differences within the then ruling coalition were capitalized upon by the BJP. The BJP candidates triumphed relatively easily in many of the traditional Congress and JD (S) strongholds, especially in the Old Mysore region. Traditionally if one were to look at the party strongholds, the BJP has been strong in the Bombay-Karnataka region, the Congress in the Hyderabad-Karnatak region and the JD(S) was confined to silos in the Old Mysore region. A mix of political parties plays out in Bangalore extending up to Chitradurga and Kolar.

**Good Arithmentic, Bad Chemistry**

Though the Congress and the JD(S) got their arithmetic right, there was just no chemistry between the two. It turned out to be an unnatural alliance. While the JD(S) derived its support base largely from the Vokkaligas, the support base of the Congress cut across castes, regions and religions. Valerian Rodrigues argues that the inability of the coalition

to forge an overlapping voting base is what led to the overwhelming defeat in the very area of its strength.[1]

The decision to ally kept out the sentiments and concerns of the local leaders, for which both the parties paid a heavy price. Former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah also contributed his mite to the internal pressures faced by the alliance. It may be recalled that after the last Karnataka Assembly elections, the Congress and the JD(S) decided to join hands to stop the BJP juggernaut in the Lok Sabha elections. What was to follow was a rancorous campaign that lasted a month. It collapsed because of internal rebellion and rampant mistrust. The history of Karnataka politics shows that no coalition has completed its full term.

The fall of the 14-month coalition was perhaps waiting to happen. The decision of the Congress to piggy back on the JD(S) was a strategic mistake. The JD(S) lost six of the seven seats it contested. The only seat it retained was in Hassan. The defeat of Deve Gowda in Tumkur and his son Nikhil in Mandya were the last nails in the coffin for the JD(S). Its concentration of power and greed for power were also responsible for its defeat. So also the defeat of Congress stalwarts like Mallikarjun Kharge, Veerappa Moily and K.H. Muniyappa exposed the rickety nature of the alliance and damage it caused to the electoral fortunes of the Congress. All the three coastal districts of the State went to the BJP.

Technically the battle lines were clearly drawn for a bipolar contest between the BJP on the one hand and the alliance on the other. Yet its inherent contradictions led to its failure. Even if the coalition partners agree upon a common minimum programme, it does not seem to work out. The chances of a coalition arrangement working out at the state level, tends to succeed if a national party leads it.[2] The strategy of the BJP was also to give seats to all the victors of the 2014 Lok Sabha elections much in advance. Prime Minister Modi and BJP President clearly had a say in the selection of the candidates.

**Analysing the Results**

The results suggest that electoral arithmetic does not necessarily

imply a personal chemistry. The much showcased alliance between the congress and the JD(S) did not take off, given the opposition from among the grass roots party workers in both the parties. Both the parties had major differences over sharing of seats. Ultimately the Congress put up candidates in 23 seats, and the JD(S) in 7.

In the whole process the BJP made major gains, with Prime Minister Modi the chief campaigner. The BJP won 25 of the 28 seats with the highest vote share of 51.38% since 1984. This meant that in terms of votes the BJP secured more than half the votes polled. The Congress secured 31.88% and the JD(S) 9.67%.

The traditional caste factor tended to work in favour of the BJP. As Sandeep Shastri comments the only gel that kept the two parties together was the common desire to keep the BJP out. But it backfired and the Congress and the JD(S) could only secure one seat each. The BJP backed an independent candidate Ms. Sumalatha, the widow of the well-known Kannada cine actor Ambraeesh who contested from the prestigious Mandya constituency. She created history by becoming the first independent candidate in 52 years to win a Lok Sabha election.

In terms of caste dynamics, the coming together of the Congress and the JD(S) did not necessarily consolidate the Vokkaliga vote in favour of the alliance. Rather it went in favour of the BJP. The alliance tended to do better vis-à-vis the Backward Classes and the Dalit vote. Minority communities tended to vote in for the alliance, unlike the tribal vote which largely went to the BJP.[3] The main contests especially in South Karnataka has been traditionally between the two coalition partners. They had contested against each other over the decades and were now asked to work together to consolidate their votes. However, the traditional bastions of the Congress and the JD(S) especially in the old Mysore region were totally breached by the BJP. Riding on the Modi wave, the BJP consolidated its traditional electoral dominance in the three coastal districts of the state. It won the Dakshina Kannada seat for the eighth consecutive time since 1991. The BJP's dominance in the north-west

parts of Karnataka was such that it had won 15 seats consecutively for the last three lok Sabha elections.

The BJP recorded almost a flawless victory in Karnataka. In the 2019 elections, the BJP secured seats in almost every state of the country and ceased to be only a North Indian party.[4] Such was the ferocity of the Modi wave that even Congress President Rahul Gandhi lost the elections. After Nehru and Indira Gandhi, Modi has been the third Prime Minister and the first non-congress one to be able to retain power for a second term with a full majority in the lok Sabha.[5]

The Lok Niti-Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) study points out that the support for Modi and the dissatisfaction with the Congress-Janata Dal (S) coalition was primarily responsible for the BJP's surge in Karnataka. The popularity of the BJP among the Lingayats has been such that it secured 87% of the Lingayat votes.[6] Perhaps barring the Muslims, the BJP managed to consolidate its base among most of the religious and caste communities in the state.

Most of the Congress and JD(S) stalwarts lost the elections. Prominent losers included Veerappa Moily, Mallikarjun Kharge, Deve Gowda, K.H.Muniyappa, Nikhil Kumaraswamy, Madhu Bangarappa, B.K.Hariprasad, D.R.Patil and A. Manju. Trouble started brewing right since the formation of the alliance, specially over seat sharing. This led to dissidence within the respective party's rank and file. Perhaps the fall of the coalition was waiting to happen given its internal bickering. The Congress party's strategy to piggy-back on the JD(S) failed miserably. There are clearly lessons for both the parties. The seat sharing arrangement went awry for the Congress in particular. It led to a severe erosion of the Congress vote base.

After the election results were announced, there were clear signs of rebellion. Roshan Baig took on the Congress leaders like Dinesh Gundu Rao, former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Congress General Secretary K.C.Venugopal. He contended that the three were responsible for the debacle in the elections. Roshan Baig was expelled from the

party. Deve Gowda accused Siddamaraiah for the collapse of the government.

**Uncertainties and Dilemma of Government Formation**

The dilemma and uncertainties over government formation has continued even after the Lok Sabha results were announced in Karnataka. The game of musical chairs continues, leading to the disqualification of 17 Congress and JD(S) legislators by the Assembly Speaker K.R.Ramesh for rebelling against the Kumaraswamy government ahead of a trust vote. Subsequently the matter was upheld by the Supreme Court, while permitting the disqualified MLA's to contest the by polls. It also upheld that if elected they could even hold the post of ministers or any public office.

The three judge bench of the Supreme Court headed by N.V. Ramanna, Sanjeev Khanna and Krishna Murari held that the Speaker in the exercise of his powers under the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution "does not have the power to either indicate the period for which a person is disqualified, or to bar someone contesting elections."[7] That portion of the Speaker's Order that ensured the disqualification of the members was struck down by the court. Hence the Court upheld the order of disqualification of the Speaker, but struck down the period of disqualification. They turned down the argument of Kapil Sibal who appeared for the Karnataka Congress, that the Speaker had exercised his jurisdiction in the Assembly and hence the order as well as duration cannot be questioned. His argument that the matter ought to be sent to a Constitutional bench given its grave constitutional implications also was not considered by the Court.

It may be recalled that the resignation and subsequent disqualification had paved the way for a change of government in Karnataka. The effective strength of the Assembly came down from 225 to 208 following the disqualification of the members. Some analysts argue that the BJP tried to subvert the Anti-Defection law by getting the Congress and JD(S) MLA's to resign from the House, only to get them

elected on a BJP ticket later. In 2008, MLA's had resigned in single digits. In this case it has been en masse. The magic number to get a simple majority now stood at 105. After the failure of the trust vote the Kumaraswamy government resigned. This led to the B.S.Yediyurappa assuming reins as chief Minister since the BJP had 105 members in the house with the support of an independent.

Karnataka which used to be a pocket borough of the Congress for many decades has tilted towards the BJP. In 2014 elections, the BJP secured 17 of the 28 seats and in 2019 it won 25 of the 28 seats. It only indicates that the fragility of the alliance and its internal contradictions were capitalized upon by the BJP. The JD(S) pinned its hopes on the grandfather and grandchildren, given the family fiefdom it has always been.  Nikhil and Prajwal were the sons of Kumaraswamy and H.D. Revanna respectively. Neither did this go well with the voters. This happened in spite of Deve Gowda having said that he would like to retire from active politics. The JD(S) tended to give the impression that they were running short of candidates. Sumalatha, wife of Ambareesh after being denied a Congress ticket was capitalized upon by the BJP. Needless to say, large number of grass roots JD(S) workers who were unhappy with the Gowda family covertly extended their support to Sumalatha. Hence the JD(S) and Congress in spite of forming an alliance, tended to work at cross-purposes with one another. The lesson for the Congress was its decision to remain a junior partner to the JD(S) in spite of having 79 seats in the Karnataka Assembly, as opposed to the 37 seats secured by the JD(S). Both the Congress and the JD(S) could not secure their secular votes which were necessary to give them a chance.

**The Road Ahead**

There seems to be no end to the malaise in Karnataka politics. The ongoing crisis was perhaps waiting to happen. All the previous terms of Chief Minister Yediyurappa have been truncated ones in the midst of truncated assemblies.  Even the present one is fraught with challenges

and uncertainties. Though the BJP has been getting a larger vote share over the years, yet a clear majority has eluded it. The Congress and the JD(S) need to expand their support base as well as deal with internal fissures and revolts.

To take things forward it may be useful for all the parties to learn from the past mistakes. Karnataka politics is clearly at the crossroads and it has been so for quite a while now. The power struggle is yet to fully uncoil. All the parties are still caught in inter-party and intra-party struggles. The road ahead is bumpy and full of uncertainties and possibilities. The time has come to eschew narrow political interests and focus on governance.

### Endnotes

1.    Valerian Rodrigues, 'Making Sense of Karnataka Politics', *The Hindu*, 17 July, 2019.

2.    https://www.dailypioneer.com/2019/columnists/the-epic-fall-of-coalition-governments.html

3.    Sandeep Shastri and Veena Devi, 'BJP's Southern comfort: Success in Karnataka', Economic and political Weekly, Vol. LIV, No. 31, August 3, 2019, p. 12.

4.    https://scroll.in/article/927848/a-spatial-analysis-of-lok-sabha-results-shows-bjps-strategic-growth-across-india

5.    https://www.zeebiz.com/india/news-lok-sabha-election-results-2019-analysis-modi-magic-sweeps-india-as-bjp-crosses-300-mark-opposition-bites-the-dust-99960

6.    https://www.livemint.com/politics/news/how-the-modi-wave-bypassed-southern-states-1559487932169.html

7.    https://www.indiatoday.in/elections/story/karnataka-bypolls-15-assembly-seats-to-vote-on-dec-5-rebels-allowed-to-contest-1618564-2019-11-13

# 17th Parliament Elections:  A Clear Mandate in Tamil Nadu

**P. Sakthivel**

*17th Parliament election results in the state of Tamil Nadu have once again proved that the hegemony of Dravidian party, the DMK and the national parties such as the BJP and Congress will have to depend heavily on the support of either the DMK or AIADMK to secure decent votes in the Parliament election. The election results explicitly show that the electorates in the state have shown scant respect for national issues and they were much concerned about local issues such as water crisis, agricultural issues, unemployment or any other issues which will affect the livelihood of the people. The verdict of the 17th Parliament election indicated that the national parties, the Congress and BJP, should understand the sentiments of the state people and try to address the local peoples' issues in the state of Tamil Nadu, then only they can expand their base in the Dravidian soil.*

**Introduction**

Unlike other Indian states, the Parliament election battle in the state of Tamil Nadu is always between the two prominent Dravidian parties, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and All Indian Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK). The national parties, the Congress and the BJP had also aligned with any one of the Dravidian

parties and tested electoral water in the state. Barring a few stray incidents, polling in 38 Lok Sabha seats[1] and by-polls to 18 Assembly constituencies went off peacefully.

The turnout for the 17th Parliament election was 70.90 per cent[2], about 3 per cent lower than that of the 2014 parliament elections[3]. For by-election to 18 assembly constituencies, 71.62 per cent votes were polled. It is interesting to note that, reserved constituencies for both the Lok Sabha and Assembly by-polls saw very impressive turnover.  For instance, Harur (SC) constituency registered highest turnout of 86.96 per cent, followed by Nilakottai 85.50 per cent, Gudiyatam 81.79 per cent, Poonamallee 79.14 per cent and Periyakulam with a turnout of 64.89 per cent. As far as general constituencies were concerned, Pappireddipatti recorded highest polling of 83.31 per cent, Thiruporur 81.05 per cent and Sholingur 79.63 per cent[4].

**Voting Turnover in Tamil Nadu**

| Year of Lok Sabha Polls | Polling Percentage |
|---|---|
| 2019 | 70.90 |
| 2014 | 73.7 |
| 2009 | 73.0 |
| 2004 | 60.8 |
| 1999 | 57.9 |
| 1998 | 57.9 |
| 1996 | 66.9 |
| 1991 | 63.9 |
| 1989 | 66.8 |

**Source**: *The Hindu, April 19,2019; The Hindu, March 26, 2019.*

It is very clear from the above table that nearly one crore voters never cast their votes in the Parliament election, despite the hectic campaign by the Election Commission to achieve free and fair election

and to reach cent per cent voting.  But an analysis of voting percentage shows that the polling percentage for Assembly elections in the state of Tamil Nadu was higher compared with Parliament election.  During the past 30 years, the highest polling percentage of 78 was recorded during 2011 Assembly elections and the lowest 57.95 was recorded during 1998 Lok Sabha polls.  Several factors such as political apathy, absence of voters from the native place where their names are enrolled in the voters' list,  fear of losing one day wage etc. are responsible for non-voting behaviour in the state[5].

**Voting Percentage since first General Elections in Tamil Nadu**

| Year | Voters | Votes Polled | Percentage |
|------|--------|--------------|------------|
| 1952 | 26980956 | 15620228 | 57.89 |
| 1957 | 17514993 | 8356337 | 47.71 |
| 1962 | 18675436 | 12843984 | 68.77 |
| 1967 | 20797325 | 15928296 | 76.59 |
| 1971 | 23064985 | 16566514 | 71.83 |
| 1977 | 27185924 | 18254144 | 67.14 |
| 1980 | 28113893 | 18767818 | 66.76 |
| 1984 | 30957439 | 22591943 | 73.09 |
| 1989 | 40027212 | 26764812 | 66.87 |
| 1991 | 39917777 | 25514736 | 63.92 |
| 1996 | 42486212 | 28438929 | 66.94 |
| 1998 | 45577323 | 26412069 | 57.95 |
| 1999 | 47733623 | 27676543 | 57.98 |
| 2004 | 47252275 | 28732954 | 60.81 |
| 2009 | 41641299 | 30390960 | 72.98 |
| 2014 | 5,37,52,682 | NA | 73.67 |
| 2019 | 5,86,00,000 | 4,23,26,721 | 70.90 |

*Source: The Hindu (Tamil), 14 April, 2014. p.3, The Hindu, 25 May 2019.p.8.*

**Dravidian Party Hegemony**

The credible electoral alliances formed by the DMK6, incessant election campaign conducted by the president of the DMK, M.K.Stalin, anti-incumbency wave in the state, failure on the part of the BJP to establish 'Modi Wave' etc. have paved way for the stunning victory of the DMK-led alliance in the 17th Parliament election. The DMK won 23 seats, the Congress 08, CPI 02, CPI(M) 02, AIADMK 01, IUML 01 and VCK 01 seats in the election.

| Name of the Political Party | No. of Seats Won |
|---|---|
| Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) | 23 |
| Indian National Congress | 08 |
| Communist Party of India (CPI) | 02 |
| Communist Party of India (Marxist) | 02 |
| All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) | 01 |
| Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) | 01 |
| Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) | 01 |

Source: *http://www.elections.in/tamil-nadu/*

By securing 1,38,77,622 votes(32.78 per cent) the DMK won 23 seats in the state of Tamil Nadu and emerged as a third-largest party in the 17th Lok Sabha. It is significant to note that some of its candidates have won the election by a margin of more than five lakh. For instance, in Dindigul, the party candidate P.Velusamy defeated the PMK candidate by a margin of 5,38,972 votes. In this election the DMK party chief M.K.Stalin have adopted different campaign strategy by meeting the people in their villages, conducting grama sabha meeting and seeking the problems faced by the local people and rendering assurance that if the party voted to power it will solve the problems, conducting informal election campaign in places like farmer's market and Bus stop.

| (Seats won) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Name of the Political Party | 1999 | 2004 | 2009 | 2014 | 2019 |
| AIADMK | 10 | 07 | 09 | 37 | 01 |
| DMK | 12 | 16 | 18 | - | 23 |
| Congress | 02 | 10 | 08 | - | 08 |
| PMK | 05 | 05 | - | 01 | - |
| DMDK | - | - | - | - | - |
| MDMK | 04 | 04 | 01 | - | 01 |
| BJP | 04 | - | - | 01 | - |
| CPM | 01 | 2 | 01 | - | 02 |
| CPI | - | 2 | 01 | - | 02 |
| VCK | | | | | 01 |
| IUML | | | | | 01 |

*Source:  The Hindu, March 9, 2014.*

The campaign by the BJP, especially its Prime Minister candidate Narendra Modi did not yield substantial votes to BJP.  Even places such as Kanyakumari, Coimbatore, Tiruppur etc., the BJP fared very poorly in this election. The Hindu organizations such as RSS, VHP, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, the All India Students' Organization affiliated to the BJP, Hindu Munnani etc. had also campaigned for the BJP in this election. This election once again proved the fact that the Hindutva agenda did not influence the voters, including the young voters, in a big way. Lack of strong regional leader, strict adherence to Hindutva ideology, aggressive Nationalism propaganda, weak party branches in the rural areas of Tamil Nadu etc. have finally paved the way for BJP's electoral debacle in this parliament election.

**Prominent Losers**

Prominent leaders of the AIADMK, BJP, Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK) were thoroughly defeated in the election. The BJP's state president Tamilisai

Soundararajan who contested in Thoothukkudi constituency was defeated by Kanimozhi of DMK by a margin of 3,47,209 votes. The other prominent BJP leaders such as Pon.Radhakrishnan and H. Raja were also badly defeated in the election. Apart from the BJP leaders, M.Thambi Durai of AIADMK, E.V.K.S.Elangovan of Congress, Anbumani Ramadoss of PMK, L.K.Sudhish of DMDK were also faced defeat in this election.

**Polling in Different Zones**

While analyzing zone-wise polling percentage, an average of 71 per cent polling was recorded in the 2019 Parliament election. Significantly, in northern districts of Tamil Nadu -better known as the 'Vanniyar belt', constituencies like Vellore, Arakkonam, Tiruvannamalai and Arani have an average polling of 72 per cent. The political analyst observed that very robust voting by both the two major caste groups in this belt, the Vanniyars and the Dalits, was responsible for the surge in voting percentage in the constituency. Generally, the Vanniayars vote more in number to PMK and the Scheduled Castes cast vote to AIADMK and VCK. But in this election, the DMK-led alliance secured considerable votes in this region. Even the prominent leader of PMK, Anbumani Ramadoss, who contested in the Dharmapuri constituency, was also defeated by a margin of 63,460 votes.

### North Zone

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chennai North | 61.76 | Vellore | 72.38 |
| Chennai Central | 57.86 | Tiruvannamalai | 71.27 |
| Chennai South | 57.43 | Arani | 76.44 |
| Tiruvallur | 72.02 | Villuppuram (SC) | 74.96 |
| Sriperumpudur (SC) | 60.61 | Kallakuruchi | 76.36 |
| Kancheepuram (SC) | 71.94 | Cuddalore | 74.42 |
| Arakkonam | 75.45 | Chidambaram (SC) | 78.43 |

*Source: T.K.Rohit, The Hindu, 19 April 2019.p.04.*

## Central Zone

Six Parliamentary constituencies in this region cover almost all delta districts of Tamil Nadu, witnessed brisk polling. Polling was by and large peaceful in this region except a few minor incidents in Chidambaram (SC) constituency. It is significant to note that, EC of India has identified several polling booths in Chidambaram constituency as '*highly sensitive'* and extra security forces were deployed in order to conduct the election peacefully. The most important issues that lingered in the minds of delta district voters were Hydrocarbon, Neutrino, Methane, Cauvery water issue, lack of support price for food grains etc. The DMK's election campaign over these issues had prompted the voters to vote in favour of the DMK-led alliance. Some of the farmers association had also extended support to DMK-led front.

| | |
|---|---|
| Mayiladuthurai | 71.13 |
| Perambalur | 76.55 |
| Tanjore | 70.68 |
| Nagappattinam  (SC) | 77.28 |
| Tiruchirappalli | 71.89 |
| Karur | 78.96 |

*Source: T.K.Rohit, The Hindu, 19 April 2019. p.04.*

## West Zone

It was widely believed that west zone was AIADMK fort, but the myth was broken in this election, as the Party was thoroughly defeated in this region. Even popular leaders of the party including M.Thambi Durai were also bitterly defeated in this election. Youth and first time voters voted more in number in almost all the zones. They wanted to have a change in the politics and willing to have a government which is completely free from any kind of corruption charges both at the centre and state level.  The same trend was also reflected in Muslim majority

areas in Coimbatore. The Muslims in the state of Tamil Nadu were considered as traditional voters of the DMK. This time the DMK entered poll pact with the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), one of the prominent Muslim political party in the state. Lack of substantial data to argue that, more number of Muslim votes polled to DMK-led front but by analyzing the percentage of votes secured by the DMK-led front in the Muslim dominant areas such as Delta Districts, Coimbatore, Ramanathapuram, Tenkasi, Kadayanallur, Vellore, Ambur, Vaniyampadi, North Madras etc. It was unblemished fact that, the DMK mustered more number of votes than any other political parties in this election.

| | |
|---|---|
| Krishnagiri | 73.89 |
| Dharmapuri | 75.92 |
| Salem | 74.94 |
| Namakkal | 79.75 |
| Erode | 71.15 |
| Tiruppur | 64.56 |
| Nilgiris (SC) | 70.79 |
| Coimbatore | 63.67 |
| Pollachi | 69.98 |

*Source: T.K.Rohit, The Hindu, 19 April 2019.p.04.*

**South Zone**

Compared with previous elections, polling in the South Zone was very peaceful. The Thevar community are predominant in the southern states of Tamil Nadu. Since the days of M.G.Ramachandran the Thevar community was considered as a powerful vote bank of AIADMK. The same trend was continued even during Jayalalithaa's regime in the state. More number of MPs and MLAs were elected from this community and they enjoyed considerable amount of support from the ruling AIADMK government. The party had also appointed a good number of ministers

for the community. Unlike previous elections, this election witnessed a different voting trend that the Thevar community not only cast their vote to AIADMK and equally they cast their vote to DMK-led alliance. Except Theni Parliament constituency, where the Deputy Chief Minister's son contested in the election, the AIADMK was thoroughly defeated in the region.

| Madurai | 62.01 | Virudhunagar | 70.27 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dindigul | 71.13 | Tuticorin | 69.41 |
| Sivagangai | 71.55 | Tenkasi (SC) | 71.60 |
| Theni | 75.28 | Tirunelveli | 68.09 |
| Ramanathapuram | 68.26 | Kanyakumari | 62.32 |

*Source: T.K.Rohit, The Hindu, 19 April 2019. p.04.*

**NOTA**

The NOTA (None of The Above) option was introduced in all the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) after the Supreme Court direction in 2013. NOTA option was already introduced in five Assembly elections held in 2013 (Delhi, Mizoram, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan) and bye-election to Yercaud (Tamil Nadu).

Significantly, the number of NOTA Voters across the country, in the previous elections, have pressed or cast NOTA vote to express their dissatisfaction against political class or against politicians or candidates who are contesting in the election. The data analysed by The Hindu[7] found that constituencies reserved for ST/SC are over-represented in the list of seats with most NOTA votes. It means the upper caste Hindus or other than SC and ST, in some states, was not ready to cast their votes to ST & SC candidates. But they prefer to press the NOTA button.

Across Tamil Nadu, 5.27 Lakh voters chosen to press NOTA, expressing their dissatisfaction with the candidates who have contested in the elections. The results show that a considerable number of NOTA votes polled in reserved constituencies such as Kancheepuram (SC) and Nilgiris (SC). In Tamil Nadu highest number of 21,661 NOTA votes polled

in Kancheepuram (SC) constituency. Similarly, more NOTA votes polled in Nilgiris reserved constituency.

| Name of the Constituency | NOTA votes polled |
|---|---|
| Kancheepuram (SC) | 21,661 |
| Krishnagiri | 19,835 |
| Nilgiris (SC) | 18,149 |
| Arani | 16,921 |

*Source: The Hindu (Tamil), 24 May, 2019.*

In the previous elections in the state of Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh, especially the Naxal affected areas, nearly 40,000 voters have used NOTA option because of the campaign made by Naxalites for boycotting of election or choosing NOTA option. Inspector-General of Police (IG)  Gadchiroli, Ravindra Kadam said that "the Naxals' role behind the rampant use of NOTA cannot be ruled out. "It is likely that Naxals may have prompted the Villagers in their meetings to go in for NOTA option in the Electronic Voting Machine, in case they thought that the candidate had not done anything to them or even visited their hamlets" the police officer said[8].

While analyzing several NOTA votes polled in the state of Tamil Nadu, caste has prompted the voters to choose the NOTA. Generally, the voters who are not ready to cast their vote in favour of an SC/ST candidate in the reserved constituency preferred to vote for NOTA. More NOTA votes polled in Kancheepuram, Nilgiris and other reserved constituencies than in the general constituencies.

**BJP's Poor Performance**

Elections in India on several occasions have witnessed different types of waves such as anti-incumbency wave, sympathy wave, personality cults etc. It is significant to note here, that there was no strong wave, including the Modi Wave, prevailed at the time of 17th Parliament elections in Tamil Nadu. The BJP was managed to align with

AIADMK, PMK, and DMDK. The BJP contested in very few seats only and drew blank in this election. Prominent leaders of the party, including state president Tamilisai Soundararajan, Pon. Radhakrishnan (former union minister), H.Raja, C.P.Radhakrishnan etc. were defeated at the hands of DMK-led alliance in the election.

Traditionally the presence of Hindutva forces such as RSS, VHP, HM etc. was felt in very few pockets in Tamil Nadu such as Kanyakumari, Tirupur, Coimbatore, etc. The BJP since its entry into Tamil Politics is increasingly focusing its attention in Kanyakumari, Coimbatore and Tiruppur districts. Votes secured by the BJP in the 17th Parliament election are presented below.

| Name of the Constituencies | Votes Secured by the BJP |
|---|---|
| Kanyakumari | 3,62,976 |
| Coimbatore | 3,91,505 |
| Tutucorin | 2,15,282 |
| Sivagangai | 2,29,898 |
| Ramanathapuram | 2,94,748 |

The BJP has secured more than 3 lakh votes in Kanyakumari and Coimbatore constituencies. In three constituencies the party secured more than 2 lakh votes. The results clearly show that the 'Modi Wave' or 'Modi factor' had not significantly influenced the voting behaviour of people of Tamil Nadu. In constituencies like Coimbatore and Kanyakumari the voters were aware of the performance of the BJP government (2014-2019) and this sentiment was not significantly transferred in to in terms of votes in favour of the party. Further, local issues such as water crisis, unemployment, Hydrocarbon, Neutrino, Methane, Cauvery water issue, agricultural issues, etc. have, certainly, exercised the minds of the common people in Tamil Nadu and it was visible in the voting pattern also.

**Conclusion**

The mainstream Dravidian parties, the DMK and AIADMK,

contested the 17th Parliament elections in the absence of their leaders the Karunanidhi of DMK and Jayalalithaa of AIADMK. The election campaign was led by M.K.Stalin (DMK) and the present Chief Minister of the State Edappadi Palanisamy. The DMK-led front won 38 seats, except Theni constituency, and AIADMK won a lone seat.  DMK president M.K.Stalin emerged as a key campaigner as well as crowd puller of the party and proved his leadership qualities by securing nearly 1.4 crore votes in this election (DMK won 23 seats). Compared with the previous election, low voting turnout was witnessed in the 17<sup>th</sup> Parliament elections. Last time 73.67 per cent votes polled but this time the figure was 70.90 only.  As like in the previous elections, the high percentage of voting was polled in rural areas than urban centres.  In some areas nearly 80 per cent votes were polled and in Chennai urban constituencies 57 per cent votes were polled.

Despite the campaign by BJP prime minister candidate, Narendra Modi, the BJP's performance in this election was dismal.  All the prominent leaders of the party were bitterly defeated in the hands of the DMK. The Hindutva outfits such as VHP, HM, RSS etc. have campaigned in favour of BJP but their efforts were a futile exercise.  In north India the 'Modi Wave' was visible but in the state of Tamil Nadu it was ambiguous and voters have chosen to vote DMK-led front.

Similarly, the AIADMK's performance in this election was dismal despite the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister actively campaigned for the party in almost all the districts. Some of the regions, for instance, the South Zone and West, once it was considered as 'AIADMK Fort' but this time the party unable to muster substantial votes. The election results once again proved that the voting behaviour of people of Tamil Nadu was again significantly influenced by local or constituency issues such as water crisis, unemployment, Agricultural issues, Hydrocarbon, methane, neutrino etc.

17th Parliament election results in the state of Tamil Nadu has once again proved that the hegemony of Dravidian party, the DMK and

the national parties such as the BJP and Congress will have to depend heavily on the support of either the DMK or AIADMK to secure decent votes in the Parliament election. The election results explicitly show that the electorates in the state have shown scant respect to national issues and they were much concerned about local issues such as water crisis, agricultural issues, unemployment or any other issues which will affect the livelihood of the people. The verdict of the 17th Parliament indicated that the national parties, the Congress and BJP, should understand the sentiments of the state people and try to address the local peoples' issues in the state of Tamil Nadu, then only they can expand their base in the Dravidian soil.

## Notes and References

1.  Parliament election to Vellore constituency was not conducted in the first phase, due to allegations of cash for vote to voters and Election Commission has postponed the election. Election to Vellore constituency was conducted separately and the DMK won the seat.

2.  T.K.Rohit, *The Hindu*, 19 April 2019. p.04.

3.   In the 2014 Parliament election, 73.7 per cent votes were polled in the state of Tamil Nadu. *The Hindu,* 26 March 2019. p.04.

4.  T.K.Rohit, *The Hindu*, 19 April 2019. p.04.

5.  Dennis S.Jesudasan, *The Hindu*, 26 March 2019. P.4.

6.  The DMK entered poll alliance with INC, CPI, CPI(M), IUML, VCK and Indian Jananayaka Katchi (IJK). The AIADMK entered poll pact with BJP, PMK, DMDK and Tamil Maanila Congress (TMC). Apart from these fronts the other prominent political parties who contested in the elections were AMMK, Naam Tamizhar Karchi, Manitha Neya Makkal Katchi etc. Nearly 1.24 per cent (5,27,014 votes) polled to NOTA.

7.  See for details, *The Hindu*, 19 April, 2014.p.1.

8.  *Times of India*, 19 May 2014.

# 17th Lok Sabha Polls in Punjab : An Analysis

**Rajvinder Singh**

*No election in Punjab has ever been completely free from the shadow of the state's dark days of militancy. And, this Lok Sabha election was no different. The overall scenario is that Congress has benefited the most in the vote share as well as seats count and the AAP lost its sheen in Punjab. The result comes as a big boost to the leadership of Amarinder, considered to be a strong leader independent of the high command in New Delhi. In the changing order of Punjab politics the voters are asking questions, seeking answers and demanding accountability from their representatives. All hope is not lost for the third alternative in the state as PDA has got around 15 lakh votes which is more than the votes polled by AAP. The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD's) defeat on eight seats indicates that the party has not revived as expected after its poor performance in the assembly polls. The SAD has to clearly work hard to reconnect with masses and shed their baggage of 10 years of sacrilege riddled governance.*

Going against the overwhelming trend in almost all north Indian states, the Congress has won eight of the 13 Lok Sabha seats in Punjab. The mandate has reaffirmed the voters' faith in the leadership of Chief Minister Captain Amrinder Singh. The results are, in a sense, a

continuation of the anti-NDA mood of Punjab's electorate, which had surfaced in the 2017 assembly elections, in which the Congress had won 77 out of the 117 seats. The SAD-BJP combine, which ruled the state for 10 years, had finished a poor third, winning only 18 seats. Amrinder established himself as the tallest leader in the party defeating BJP's nationalism narrative in the border state. Countering the two year anti-incumbency factor, he led the congress party to victory. On the contrary, the Congress in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh where party was voted to power six months ago, registered a miserable performance. Punjab continues to be free of the 'Modi wave', which has once again swept across the rest of India. Punjab stands out as blue in an island of saffron across much of the India. Modi has never been a factor in Punjab, and this unique situation continues in the border state, despite his nationalistic campaign. Most of the constituencies which have a substantial urban population have voted for the Congress.

The other reason why the 'Modi magic' has failed to work is because the BJP's alliance partners, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), continue to be unpopular. The SAD lost eight of the 10 seats it contested, with only Badal family members Harsimrat Kaur and husband Sukhbir Singh Badal winning in Bhabinda and Ferozpur respectively. Another reason for the poor show of SAD was that the party split into two, with its old guard, primarily from the Majha Area of Punjab, breaking away to form a new political outfit, known as SAD Takslali earlier this year. The main reason of breakaway's serious difference between SAD (B) senior leader and party president Sukhbir Singh Badal, have cited the Deara Chief Ram Rahim Singh as one of the primary reason. The Taksalis, led by outgoing Khadoor Sahib SAD MP Ranjit Singh Brahmpura, hold the Badals responsible for the downfall of the SAD because the party failed to take action against those who had desecrated the Guru Granth Sahib in 2015 when Badal was the chief minister and Sukhbir Badal the deputy Chief Minister[1].

The BJP's footprint in the state remains limited to the three seats it shares with the SAD. It was the Gurdaspur and Hoshiarpur seats this

time. The charisma of the film star Sunny Deol helped BJP to win the Gurdaspur seat, trouncing the experienced and three time former MLA and present Congress state president Sunil Jakhar by over 82000 votes. Considering that Jakhar had won the 2017 by- election poll by 193000 votes, there has been a massive shift of 2.70 lakh votes from the congress to BJP in just 18 months.

This time, voters have also rejected the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), in which many had reposed their faith in 2014. The AAP won 4 seats (24% vote Share in Punjab) in the Lok Sabha polls of 2014. But this time, only Bhagwant Mann, the party's state chief, managed to retain his Sangrur seat. In 2014 AAP was a fresh player in Punjab politics and it surprised many by polling a large chunk of votes. The sudden rise of the party in Punjab politics started to decline even before 2017 state assembly elections due to in house fighting that further worsened after the state assembly polls. As a result the party's vote share in 2019 Lok Sabha election came down to 7.4% (see table 1). As compared to 2014 Lok Sabha election, AAP lost 17% of vote share in 2019.

In 2014 Lok Sabha election Congress party lost 12.13% vote share to AAP. Congress had secured 33.2% votes in 2014. But the figure rose to 40% in 2019 Lok Sabha election (see table 2). The party had won just 3 seats in Punjab in 2014 but this time it managed to bag 8 seats.

In 2014 SAD (B) had lost 7.5% vote share and its figure was reduced to 26.3% compared to the previous election. This time the figure rose a little to 27.4% with a gain of 1.1% as compared to 2014 election. The SAD (B) contested 10 seats in 2014 and 2019, and respectively won 4 and 2. BJP had lost 1.36% vote-share in 2014, when its vote share was 8.7%. In 2019 election the party gained 0.93 % and its figure stands at 9.3. BJP contested 3 seats in 2014 and 2019 and won the two both the time. In this election the BJP have no loss and no gain.

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) substantially increased its vote share after contesting the current election as a member of the Punjab

Democratic Alliance (PDA), a coalition comprising of six political parties-the BSP, Punjab Ekta Party (PEP) led by Sukhpal Singh Khaira who left the AAP just before the election, Lok Inssaf party led by Simarjit Singh Bains , Nawan Punjab Party led by Dharmvir Gandhi, (AAP rebel Member of parliament), Communist Party of India and the revolutionary Marxist party of India. PDA collectively garnered 10.6% of the total votes. This could give the BSP a much needed fillip in the state where dalits account for around 32% of the population, the highest among the states in terms of dalit population. The BSP contested three seats- Jalandhar, Anandpur Sahib and Hoshiarpur constituencies. In the 2014 Lok Sabha election the party had fielded candidates from all 13 seats in the state and its vote share was 1.9%. In 2019 BSP contested only three seats but its overall vote share rose to 3.49%. The election results were not encouraging for AAP rebel leaders like Sukhpal Singh Khaira and Masater Baldev Singh who resigned from the party and formed a new front. Khaira could poll only 38,199 votes from Bathinda and master Baldev Singh polled 43,932 votes in Faridkot constituency.

In 2019 election, overall voter turnout in Punjab was 66 per cent, the lowest in the last 10 years. It is lower by 4% as compared to 2014. This time over 1.53 lakh (1.12%) voters chose, the None of The Above (NOTA) option which resulted in the defeat of over a dozen political candidates in the state. This clearly shows that the Punjabi voters are not very happy with the political class. Another factor that influenced the Punjab election was the Punjabi Diaspora in large numbers settled in developed countries. However, this time, their participation was low. In 2017 assembly elections the NRI's had participated in large numbers mainly to canvass for the Aam Admi Party (AAP). The Canadian based supporters of AAP had even chartered a flight from Toranto to New Delhi (Jan 19, 2017). The situation was starkly different this time. "They are disappointed. They realise their efforts to usher in change in their motherland will not bear fruit. We don't want to waste our money and energy on a futile exercise. They have lost faith in India's political class as a whole. Beantbir Singh, a Brampton based realtor said."[2]

**Table 1: Party wise vote share in 2019 Parliamentary results in Punjab**
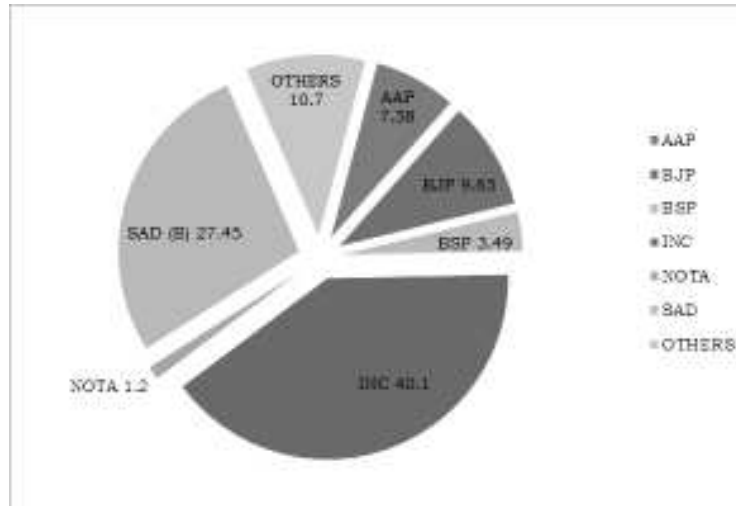


*Source: Election Commission of India*

**Table 2: Comparison 2019 with 2014 parliamentary results based on the vote share and seats won**

| Party | Seat contested | Seat won | Change (of seat) from 2014 | Vote Share (%) | Change from 2014 (vote %) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Congress | 13 | 8 | +5 | 40.1% | +7 |
| SAD+BJP | 13 | 4 | -2 | 37.1% | +2.1 |
| AAP | 13 | 1 | -3 | 7.4% | -17 |
| PDA+others | 13 | 0 | 0 | 15.4% | |
| Total | | 13 | | 100 | |

*Source: Election Commission of India*

**Issues Dominating the Election Campaign**

The political discourse for this election is no longer the issue of development or other serious issues like drug menace or sand mafia

that dominated during the 2014 election or the agrarian crisis and large-scale unemployment that dominated the 2017 Vidhan Sabha election. Real issues are getting buried under the din of propaganda, be it religious sacrilege of Guru Granth Sahib or anti-Sikh riot of 1984. The drug menace has still not been eradicated and the illegal sand mining under political patronage is still on but suddenly, the ghost of 1984 anti-Sikh riots was pulled out and SAD-BJP leaders were gunning for the Congress. The SAD-BJP is harping on nationalism and Balakot air strike and strong leadership of Modi against Who? At an election rally in Jharkhand, Narendra Modi challenged the Congress to contest elections in Punjab and Delhi in the name of Rajiv Gandhi. Modi referred to the alleged role of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots following the assassination of Indira Gandhi[3]. Congress found itself on the defensive over the party leader Sam Pitroda's remarks "Hua to Hua" about the 1984 anti-Sikh Riot[4]. Modi in Hoshiarpur rally capitalised on the issue and said: "My Sikh brothers and sisters had been burned alive and we are still to get justice but the real face of Congress emerged yesterday which is trying to get away with it all by saying "Hua To Hua". Can Punjab forget 1984 massacre? Who's responsible for 1984 riots? Can this Congress survive in Punjab? Is this the justice that Congress wanted to deliver?[5]

On the contrary, for a party that was known by its "secular" credentials, the Congress has focused its entire Lok Sabha campaign in Punjab, where it is in power, on purely religious issues. The party had challenged the previous SAD-BJP government over the sacrilege issue in almost every election rally. As Amrinder Singh said the sacrilege issue certainly works against the Badals, adding that Hindutva did not impact the polls in Punjab[6]. The SAD had touched new low last year when the Badals were held responsible for the 2015 cases of the desecration of the Sikh holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib which is considered to be a living guru. The Congress holds the Badals, who control the Akali Dal, accountable for failing to take action against those responsible for the sacrilege of the Guru Granth Sahib. The Akalis had

been in power when the desecration incidents occurred in 2015 at Bargadi Village. Another religious aspect that the Congress has clung on to is the promise to rid the Shiromini Gurudwara Prabndhik Committe (SGPC) of political control of SAD. The SGPC controls historical gurudwaras across Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. Elections to the body are held every five years and majority of the members are Akali leaders or those supported by the Akali Dal. At a political rally in Sangrur, Amarinder said that like any other Sikh, he felt strongly about freeing the SGPC of political control.

The Badal family resorted to apologising at the Golden Temple for its acts of omission and commission, whatever wrong happened during its ten year rule, but it was not enough for the Sikh community. During election campaign some Panthic outfits staged a dharna (protest) for two days outside the former CM's village blaming the Badal family for the sacrilege issue.[7] Former deputy CM Sukhbir Singh Badal in an interview said "Amarainder was using the sacrilege issue merely to divert the attention from his utter failure as an administrator of state and, he is running away from the core issue of development, governce and welfare of people. "Every issue has an expiry date but Amarinder continues to play with fire keeping the sacrilege issue alive," he added.[8] SAD spokesman said in interview that "It is ironical. A so-called secular party is talking only about *panthic* issues and the *panthic* party the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) is asking about unrepaired roads, missing old-age pension, unemployment and lack of health and education facilities.[9] The issue did not seem to resonate much with the voters, since the two members of the Badal family who did fight the elections won. After the election result union minister Harsimart Kaur Badal said "the verdict in Ferozpur and Bathinda came as a slap on the face of those who tried to defame SAD and Badal family over the sacrilege issue. It was a false propaganda to harm us.[10]

In the 2017 assembly polls, 'drug abuse' took centre-stage in Punjab. Congress & AAP had gone to town accusing the SAD-BJP govt of patronising the drug trade. Prakash Singh Badal's government was

accused of giving political and police patronage to the drug trade, and the CM's son and deputy-CM Sukhbir Singh Badal had responded by saying that the two opposing parties' allegation that the state was full of addicts was "the biggest disservice" to Punjab. But everyone is silent this time. Voters won't hear much about the drugs issue in any party campaign rally in Punjab in this Lok Sabha election. Its state chief Captain Amarinder Singh had even gone to the extent of holding the 'Gutka Sahib' - a collection of five Sikh prayers - in his hand and swearing to rid the state of drugs within four weeks of coming to power. It seems that the issue has vanished from the agenda of all political parties. It's not as though the problem has disappeared from society in the last two years. So, why was it dropped off the political radar? Now, the issue is a touchy one for the Congress. First, the drug menace in Punjab is a complicated problem due to its position as a border state, with no quick-fix solutions. Two years into power and despite a host of measures, Amarinder is facing heat because of a series of drug overdose deaths reported across the state. The AAP had made the drug issue the mainstay of its assembly election campaign in 2017. In his rallies, the AAP convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal made the 'patronage' accusation against the Akalis. AAP seems on back foot because when Kejriwal offered a "humiliating" apology in a defamation case filed by the Akali leader. The apology, much publicised by Majithia, deflated the AAP cadre, and saw its party chief as having "sold out" the cause for the sake of convenience. In effect, the AAP has shied away from raking up the drug issue in this election.

No election in Punjab has ever been completely free from the shadow of the state's dark days of militancy. And, this Lok Sabha election was no different. Paramjit Kaur Khalra bought from the Khadoor Sahib seat in Tarn Taran district, which was the epicentre of Punjab's militancy in 1980s-90s. Paramjit Kaur is wife of Jaswant Singh Khalra, a bank official-turned-human rights activist. Jaswant was abducted from his house by the police in 1995 and then murdered. He had spent most of his life searching for Sikh youths, who had gone missing and were

suspected to have been killed by the police during those years of militancy. Paramjit's electoral battle and her campaign pitch that revolved around the grim militancy years have brought the issue back in focus in this Lok Sabha poll. Paramjit has been given a ticket by rebel Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira's newly formed Punjab Ekta Party. Khaira, along with half a dozen AAP MLAs, broke away from the party in August last year after he was removed as the leader of the Opposition. After Khaira announced Paramjit's candidature, SAD (Taksali) withdrew its candidate General (retired) J. J. Singh from the seat in her support. Paramjit's main backing in this election came from the breakaway factions of mainstream parties, and this made her more than just a 'fringe' element. She was pitted against SAD candidate Bibi Jagir Kaur, a former chief of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), and Congress' Jasbir Singh Dimpa. But Congress wrested the panthic seat of Khadoor sahib from the SAD after 38 years where the party candidate Jasbir Singh Dimpa came victorious. Parmjit Kaur who got 214489 votes (20.5%) finished third.

**Dwindling Role of AAP**

The biggest loser in these elections has been the AAP. The Congress came victorious in three seats it had won last time. Bhaghwant Mann's victory meant the Arvind Kejriwal-led party at least opened its account in the Lok Sabha, since it drew a blank in Delhi, which it has ruled since 2015. Meanwhile AAP candidates in the remaining 12 seats lost their deposit by failing to get even one sixth of the valid votes polled.

The AAP had surprised itself and many others by winning four seats in Punjab in 2014 parliamentary election, despite having come into being just months before. People were attracted to the AAP in hordes, after years of alternating between Congress and Akali rule. Significantly, it managed to break the traditional Congress-Akali Dal hegemony over the state, securing over 24 per cent of the votes, and there by expanding its footprint.  Punjab was once seen as a fertile ground for the AAP to conquer after Delhi in 2015. The party was the

hot favourite ahead of the 2017 assembly elections, but lost the plot on the eve of the polls, gathering only 20 of the 117 seats in the assembly with its vote-share dropping marginally to 23 per cent. However, it managed to do enough to be the main opposition party in the Vidhan Sabha. The AAP, was unable to keep its flock together as most of it's heavy weights chose to break away from autocratic high command and form their own groups. Hit hard by the rebellion and split, the party could not lead. Second, the AAP had to pay a heavy electoral price for hobnobbing with radical elements. It is believed that after AAP took the help of some NRI radical fringe groups for election campaigning, the entire non-Sikh community voted in favour of the Congress - which came to power winning 77 of 117 seats in assembly election.

The inability of the AAP's central leadership to trust local leaders has probably been its biggest failing in Punjab. In August 2016, it unceremoniously removed its state president Sucha Singh Chhotepur following allegations of corruption, none of which were ever proved. Chhotepur was among the 13 candidates who had contested the Lok Sabha polls on the AAP ticket in 2014. AAP's propensity to remote-control its Punjab affairs from Delhi has also been the principal bane of its strategy, approach and management. Party leaders in Delhi have been accused of interfering too much in the day-to-day affairs of the state unit, instead of strengthening the organisation within the state. The AAP leadership's inability to tolerate dissent or deal with dissenters tactfully has also proved fatal to its growth. Every attempt of the top crust in Delhi to brazen it out has cost it heavily in Punjab[11]. The two MPs, Dr Dharamvira Gandhi from Patiala and Harinder Singh Khalsa from Fatehgarh Sahib, are now rebels in 2015. Gandhi has created his own political outfit, Nawan Punjab Party, while Khalsa has joined the BJP before 2019 election. Even a mild and moderate personality like H.S. Phoolka, who lost from Ludhiana in 2014 but later won the assembly polls from Dakha, has left the party. A long-standing lawyer for victims of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, Phoolka resigned from the AAP to launch a non-political outfit that has been working towards freeing SGPC of

political control. Popular singer Jassi Jasraj, who was one of the forebears of the party in the state and was chosen to take on bigwigs like Harsimrat Kaur Badal and Manpreet Badal from Bathinda, was thrown out barely a year later for raising his voice against the Delhi leadership. Bhai Baldeep Singh, who was the party's candidate for Khadoor Sahib in the Lok Sabha polls, is nowhere to be seen. Even actor-turned-politician Gurpreet Singh Ghuggi, who was chosen to lead the AAP ahead of the assembly polls, was removed soon after the elections. Fast forward five years, and the only candidates who are active and not estranged from the party are sitting MPs Bhagwant Mann and Prof. Sadhu Singh. The Delhi team is considered largely responsible for the AAP losing the 2017 assembly elections, and the state unit now wants to run the show with minimal interference from them.

**Kejriwal's Apology**

Members of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Punjab, caught off-guard by chief Arvind Kejriwal's apology to Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Bikram Singh Majithia. Drugs have emerged as one of the most emotive issues in Punjab, reeling under a crippling addiction epidemic that is said to have hit the youth particularly hard. The AAP had made the drug issue the mainstay of its assembly election campaign in 2017. In rally after rally, party convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal made the 'patronage' accusation against the Akalis. With the SAD-BJP government facing 10 years of anti-incumbency, the AAP's campaign gained much traction with voters, The AAP also called then-revenue minister Bikram Singh Majithia, who had been summoned by the Enforcement Directorate in a drug-related case, the 'kingpin', and promised to 'jail' him the day the party came to power in Punjab, but Kejriwal's decision to withdraw his accusations against the former Punjab revenue minister has demolished the cornerstone of the party's anti-Akali narrative in Punjab, where their 2017 assembly election campaign was centred on Majithia's alleged involvement in a multi-Crore drug racket. The party, in fact, had promised to put Majithia behind bars

the day they came to power. The AAP's onslaught against Majithia continued after the elections, with the party criticising the Captain Amarinder Singh-led Congress government for going "soft" on Majithia.

With their chief's apology, the party's members have been painted as hypocrites in front of voters. Bhagwant Mann, in protest, resigned from his post as the president of the party in the state throwing AAP Punjab into a crisis. However, in January this year, AAP declined Mann's resignation, and the Sangrur MP has since continued as the state party chief. In a Twitter tirade, leader of the opposition in the Punjab assembly and AAP MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira termed the apology a "meek surrender". "We're appalled and stunned by the apology of Arvind Kejriwal tendered today," the MLA said, adding, "We don't hesitate to admit that we haven't been consulted on this meek surrender by a leader of his stature. He said he would meet the press Friday to "continue our tirade against the burning issue of drugs destroying the youth of Punjab.[12]" "What face do AAP leaders have to show after that apology? They not only took their own cadre, workers and volunteers for a ride, but also the people of Punjab over the drug issue," said MLA Simerjit Singh Bains of the Lok Insaaf Party, which called off its alliance with AAP following the apology[13]. Also on Twitter, Kharar MLA and journalist Kanwar Sandhu added, "Arvind Kejriwal's apology to Bikram Majithia in the defamation case on drugs is a let-down to the people, especially the youth of Punjab. We in Punjab have not been taken into the loop.[14]"

The party's Punjab unit is sharply divided between those who owe their allegiance to the Delhi leadership and those who support the state leadership, the latter largely throwing their weight behind Khaira. The AAP ally in the state, the Lok Insaaf Party (LIP), represented in the house by two brothers, has backed Khaira too. It has also suffered one leadership crisis after another, changing its leader of opposition twice and suffering a vertical split when Sukhpal Singh Khaira took away half-a-dozen MLAs and formed his own political outfit called the Punjab Ekta Party, which has fielded its own candidates in opposition to the AAP's

official candidates. Khaira group protested against the "undemocratic" manner in which the party was being run, where the opinion and wishes of the local leadership hardly mattered. Khaira, who had resigned over AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal's 'dictatorial' attitude, said the new party will be a Punjab-centric regional party. Now, state party chief and Sangrur MP Bhagwant Mann is trying to prevent more defections, after one MLA from his camp and one from the Khaira camp joined the ruling Congress before election.

The AAP MLA from Jaito, Master Baldev Singh, resigned his primary membership of the party. In a letter addressed to party convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has expressed his resentment, "Instead of expressing faith in the abilities of Punjabis and rewarding them you preferred to send an army of outsiders to muzzle the voice of our people. The said army was headed by two arrogant *subedars* who indulged in every mean maneuvers (sic) to promote their near and dear ones". He added "Thereafter all sorts of allegations including exchange of money, favouritism, nepotism and exploitation of women started gaining ground. Lots of AAP volunteers from Punjab tried to complain about their arrogant activities but you always turned a blind eye to save your blue eyed boys. This arrogant and over confident attitude of the party hierarchy led to a crashing defeat of AAP in Punjab in the 2017 assembly elections. As a result of your dictatorial, arrogant and autocratic style of functioning, pioneers of AAP like Prashant Bhushan, Yogender Yadav, Medha Patikar, Kiran Bedi, Dr. Gandhi, H.S.Khalsa, Sucha Singh Chottepur, Gurpreet Ghuggi, Ashish Khetan, Ashutosh, H.S.Phoolka etc. have all left the party or have been thrown out in a humiliating manner."

About two years ago, the Aam Aadmi Party was considered a major political force emerging in Punjab. Now, it resembles a house of cards. Mann, however, disagrees that the party is on the decline in the state. Mann said "the party however can take the solace from the fact that it still has presence in the state and can work on political vacuum

for a third alternative.[15] He added, 'People say the broom has come apart. I am telling them that the new broom is made of silver, those who left never believed in AAP's ideology. They were hankering after power. Now they are out and the party is much better without them."[16] He added.

**Conclusion**

The overall scenario is that Congress has benefited the most in the vote share as well as seats count and the AAP lost its sheen in Punjab. The result comes as a big boost to the leadership of Amarinder, considered to be a strong leader independent of the high command in New Delhi. In the changing order of Punjab politics the voters are asking questions, seeking answers and demanding accountability from their representatives. All hope is not lost for the third alternative in the state as PDA has got around 15 lakh votes which is more than the votes polled by AAP. The SAD's defeat on eight seats indicates that the party has not revived as expected after its poor performance in the assembly polls. The SAD has to clearly work hard to reconnect with masses and shed their baggage of 10 years of sacrilege riddled governance.

**References**

1. *Times of India*, 17 December 2018

2. *The Tribune*, 14 May, 2019

3. *Times of India*, 6 May, 2019

4. *ibid*

5. Interview on local TV Channel

6. *Indian Express*, 9 May, 2019

7. Interview on Local Punjabi TV Channel

8. Interview on local Punjabi TV channel

9. *Indian Express*, 24 May 2019

10. Ram, Ronki. 'What went wrong with the Third Alternative?

Exploring the Rise and Demise of Aam Aadmi Party In Punjab'. *Journal of Sikh and Punjab Studies.* Vol.25, No1. Spring 2018, pp.15

11. Twitter page named 'Sukhpal Singh Khaira'

12. *The Tribune*, 16 March 2019

13. Twitter page named 'Kanwar Sandhu'

14. *The Tribune*, 6 May 2019

15. *The Tribune*, 16 May 2019

16. *The Tribune*, 16 May 2019

# Introduction of Proportional Representation : Better Alternative to the First-Past-The-Post System in India

**Jose George**

*Preportional Representation systems are a common choice in many new democracies. Over twenty established democracies, and just under half of all 'Free' democracies, use some variant of PR. In a young democracy like India where genuine political, social and economic democracy is still a distant dream, a government with a brute majority would have developed a tendency to turn authoritarian and dictatorial in nature. Analysis of voting figures shows that if the proportional representation was made applicable in Indian Lok sabha elections, no party would have formed a government with a brute majority. A government not enjoying big majority would have no option but to run the government with a consensus of representatives in the parliament. At least their capability to do harm to the people would have been limited. Given the result of 2019 Lok Sabha elections and tendency of bulldozing of anti-people bills in the parliament, a system of proportional representation would have enhanced the vitality of Indian democracy.*

Three warnings voiced by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar In his last speech in the Constituent Assembly on the adoption of the Indian Constitution

(November 25, 1949) still reverberate in our ears - that the political democracy cannot be achieved without social and economic democracy.

Ambedkar stated: *"On 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequalities. In politics we will be recognising the principles of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one vote. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment, or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of our political democracy."*

Even the political democracy and parliamentary system which Ambedkar eulogised in his speech were subject to trial many a times in India. Worst episode was the Indira Gandhi regime's internal emergency phase of 1975-77. Current dispensation of Narendra Modi as Prime Minister is also resorting to authoritarian approach by way of undermining the constitutional institutions and attempting to replace the existing parliamentary system into the presidential system type mannerisms. Even to retain the political democracy guaranteed by the constitution certain institutional mechanism has to be adopted which may result in furthering the democratisation of the Indian polity and society. Matured electoral system will go a long way in guaranteeing the triumph of the representative democracy.  It would be interesting to go through various electoral systems and find out a viable one for India.

**Different Electoral Systems**

Though there are several electoral systems in existence in the world, for the sake of brevity, we can categorise them into three major systems- the plurality-majority, the proportional and the semi-proportional.

### I. The Plurality Majority

Among the plurality-majority group three main types can be identified:

#### (i) First Past the Post (FPTP)

FPTP is the most popular election system where a candidate who gets more votes than all other candidates is declared elected, and will be chosen as the representative. This is the electoral system followed in most of the parliamentary democracies like that of the one in India and UK.

#### (ii) Block Vote (BV)

The Block Vote is an electoral system in which a voter can select as many candidates as there are seats. The candidates with the greatest number of votes are elected. If, for example, there are three Council seats for a particular election, and suppose there are seven candidates for those seats, the top three vote-getters would win election to those seats. This system is sometimes also referred to as plurality-at-large voting or multiple non-transferable voting. This system is followed in India in electing members to the Executive Committee of cooperative societies.

#### (iii) The Two-Round System (TRS)

It is not one round election, but takes place in two rounds if required. If no candidate or party receives an absolute majority in the first count, then a second round of voting is done between the top two candidates who got the maximum number of votes. The winner of this second round is declared elected.

### II. The Proportional Representation (PR)

It is another popular system of election prevalent in many countries. PR is recommended to rectify some of the shortcomings in the FPTP. In FPTP the seat is awarded to the individual candidate who receives the most votes in an election from a given constituency. In many instances a single party or coalition of parties who secures minority votes

in legislative bodies may secure majority seats in that legislature. Such a majority will be deciding and implementing their policies even on that majority of people who did not support them during election.

*(i) Proportional Representation by way of Single Transferable Vote (STV)*

In this system the preference marking is optional, and voters are not required to rank-order of all candidates; if they wish, they can mark only one. After the total number of first-preference votes is tallied, the count then begins by establishing the quota of votes required for the election of a single candidate. The quota used is normally the "Droop Quota", calculated by a simple formula as follows:

Quota required to win the seat = {total valid votes divided by (Number of seats +1) +1}. For instance, suppose the number of valid votes is 100 and the number of seats to be filled are four, then 100 is divided by 4+1, that is 5. The figure we would be getting is 20. If we add the figure '1' to that we will get the figure '21'. So '21' is the required quota for getting candidate elected in this case.

The result is determined through a series of counts. At the first count, the total number of first-preference votes for each candidate is ascertained. Any candidate who has the number of first preferences is greater than or equal to the quota is immediately declared elected. In the second and subsequent counts, the surplus votes of elected candidates (i.e. those votes above the quota) are redistributed according to the second preferences on the ballot papers. For fairness, the entire candidate's ballot papers can be redistributed, but each at a fractional percentage of one vote, so that the total redistributed vote equals the candidate's surplus. If a candidate had 100 votes, for example, and their surplus was five votes, then each ballot paper would be redistributed according to its second preference at the value of 1/20th of a vote. After any count, if no candidate has surplus of votes over the quota, the candidate with the lowest total of votes is eliminated. His or her votes are then redistributed in the next count to the candidates left in the race

according to the second and then lower preferences shown. The process of successive counts, after each of which surplus votes are redistributed or a candidate is eliminated, continues until either all the seats for the electoral district are filled by candidates who have received the quota, or the number of candidates left in the count is only one more than the number of seats to be filled, in which case all remaining candidates bar one are elected without receiving a full quota.

### *(ii) Party- list proportional representation system*

List system as it exists in some countries are a family of voting systems emphasizing proportional representation (PR) in elections in which multiple candidates are elected through allocations to an electoral list. List system, is a method of voting for several electoral candidates, usually members of the same political party, with one mark of the ballot. It is used to elect the parliaments of many western European countries, including Switzerland, Italy, and Germany. Electors vote for one of several lists of candidates, usually prepared by the political parties. Each party is granted seats in proportion to the number of popular votes it receives. There are several rules for computing the number of seats awarded to a party. Seats are usually awarded to candidates in the order in which their names appear on the lists. Although ordinarily the list system forces the voters to cast their votes for parties rather than for individual candidates, a number of variations on the system permit voter preferences for individuals to be taken into account. Proportional system would give regional parties and independent candidates a better chance of getting into parliament and bring in different voices to nation-building.

### *III. The semi-proportional*

Partial List based Proportional Representation or Mixed-Member Proportional (MMP)

It is a mixed electoral system in which voters get two votes: one to decide the representative for their single-seat constituency, and another one for a political party. This is a kind of Mixed Electoral System that

tends to combine features of the majoritarian i.e. First Past The Post, Two round systems and the Proportional Representation systems. It is also referred to as Additional Member System (AMS) or Top Up System. Under MMP system, a set of the seats are allocated using the First Past The Post system whereby the candidates/political parties are voted directly by the electorate in the constituencies and whoever get the majority of votes gets the seat. The second set of the seats reallocated using the proportional system is to compensate any disproportionality produced by FPTP allocation. For example, a party that gets 10 per cent of the vote nationally, but has got no seat because none of its candidate got a majority will be awarded with 10 percent of the second set of seats using the PR system.

Seats in the legislature are filled firstly by the successful constituency candidates, and secondly, by party candidates based on the percentage of nationwide or region-wide votes that each party received. The MMP was originally used to elect representatives to the German Bundestag. Later it has been adopted by Bolivia, Lesotho and New Zealand. It was also used in Romania during its 2008 and 2012 legislative elections. In Germany, it is used at the federal level, and in most states. MMP is known as personalized proportional representation. In the United Kingdom such systems are used in Scotland, Wales, and the London Assembly. They mention it as additional member systems. In the Canadian province of Quebec, where an MMP model was studied in 2007 is called the compensatory mixed-member voting system. Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) retains the proportionality benefits of Proportional Representation (PR) systems and also ensures that voters have geographical representation. They also have the luxury of two votes, one for the party and another for their local MP. One way is to have one vote for the party list and another vote for the territorial constituency.

Preportional Representation systems are a common choice in many new democracies. Over twenty established democracies, and just under half of all 'Free' democracies, use some variant of PR. PR systems are dominant in Latin America and Western Europe, and make up a third

of all the systems in Africa. While seats are often allocated within regionally-based multi-member districts, in a number of countries (e.g. Germany, Namibia, Israel, Netherlands, Denmark, South Africa, and New Zealand) the parliamentary seat distribution is effectively determined by the overall national vote.

**Measures to strengthen Democracy**

Proportional representation helps to contain the influence of money in elections to a large extent. Moreover, as the contest will be directly between parties and not candidates, the influence of caste, religion, region and other parochial considerations too can be reduced. The desired change for a discussion on the policies of the various contesting political parties can be ensured. As people vote for parties, there need not be any worry that their vote will not count. Each vote counts, has an equal value and will add up to decide on the number of seats a political party wins. These are the things that really strengthen a democracy, as all shades of political opinion get a place for representation. Strong opposition, a hallmark of democracy, can check the otherwise possible transformation of parliamentary democracy to fascism. Adolf Hitler became the Chancellor of Germany in 1932 with a mandate of 33.1 percent of the German electorate. 66.9 percent of the Germans did not vote for him, just as 69 percent of Indians did not vote for Modi in 2014 Lok Sabha election.

History of South Asia shows that if the leadership is not guided by the spirit of democracy and if the ruling party is enjoying absolute majority in both houses of parliament, then there is every possibility that the ruling click would soon turn into authoritarian/semi-fascist. India lived through this bitter experience during 1975-77, the internal emergency period. India is experiencing the repeat of almost the same during the time of Narendra Modi's regime. Unfortunately this is happening in the communally charged atmosphere created by the majority Hindutua forces even without declaring a formal emergency and without having a majority in the Rajya Sabha. An electoral system based on complete Proportional

Representation, or partial list based or Mixed Member Proportion (MMP) may not throw up a situation of brute majority. The lessons from V P Singh government in 1989 and H.D. Deve Gowda ministry in 1996 shows that, the absence of brute majority and less opportunity to declare emergency will be good for the country. At least a coalition ministry with only simple majority cannot bring more harm to the people. All these justify the reason for India to opt for a Proportional Representation pattern in its legislatures.

However, in consideration of the level of maturity of the Indian voters and in consideration of voters' expectation to get optimum help from the constituency based representative, a workable suggestion would be the introduction of partial party based list system. If that is introduced, 542 Lok Sabha constituencies in India can be divided into 271 dual member constituencies. Each constituency based voter would be allowed to cast two votes-one for the individual candidate and the second one to the recognised political party at the state/national level. The candidate who gets maximum vote can be declared as constituency based representative. The 2nd vote given to the party list can be pooled together and the Election Commission can assign as many party representatives as per the proportion of the vote secured as per the party list published before the election. In order to ensure representation for women, the Election Commission can insist to the political parties to prepare the list of candidates in such a way that every second or third candidate in the list should be a woman. It can have several advantages like reduced influence of Money and Muscle power, representation of different linguistic and regional groups in the Parliament etc. The details can be worked out with the help of experts.

The tall claims of the Election Commission of India, of conducting 'Free and Fair' elections, ring hollow following the experiences of the 2014 and 2019 elections. Alleged manipulation of voting Machines by hackers to help the BJP to tilt the result in their favour is an open secret now. With the unabashed and unbridled splurge of money for campaigning Election Commissions' position also became a question mark. The BJP

had used its corporate backing to the hilt to launch an advertisement blitzkrieg. The fairness in allocating the entire national political parties equal amounts of time to reach their message to the people of our country through Doordarshan and All India Radio pale in comparison before this. Hundreds of crores of rupees were seized by the Election Commission, but that proved to be only a tip of the iceberg, as thousands of crores more were put into 'buying votes' and went undetected. The BJP was both the beneficiary. Naturally the parties that are on the wrong side of the corporate, and stand for the interests of the working class are at a disadvantage in this uneven contest. Money power tilted the balance, setting aside the entire semblance for fairness.

**Why India Needs a Proportional Representation System?**

In the 2014 Lok Sabha election the BJP won a majority of 282 seats out of a total of 543 seats with a mere 31 per cent of total votes. No party has ever before won more than half the seats with a vote share of just 31 per cent. The previous lowest vote share for a single-party majority was in 1967, when the Congress won 283 out of 520 seats with 40.8 per cent of the total valid votes polled. In 2014 Lok Sabha elections the Congress secured 19.3 percent votes, winning 44 seats, while in 2009 Lok Sabha the BJP secured 18.5 per cent votes but won 116 seats. In Uttar Pradesh, the BSP's stronghold, it managed to get 20 per cent of votes, but did not win a single seat in 2014. Again, in Tamil Nadu in 2014 Loka Sabha elections though the DMK and its allies together garnered 27 percent votes without getting any seats. From Odisha, though the Congress did not get any seats, they could obtain 26 percent votes.

From West Bengal, the Left Front got nearly 30 per cent votes in 2014 Lok Sabha elections but managed to get only two seats. Thirty one per cent votes were cast for the BJP, was only 20 per cent of the eligible voters, and only 14 percent of India's total population. That means, practically 86 per cent of Indian population, 80 per cent of eligible voters, and 69 per cent of the valid votes cast were not for the BJP. This means, only 16.5 crores of Indians had voted for the BJP, out of the 54.1 crore

people who had bothered to go to the polling booths. Still, the fact of the matter is that the BJP won an absolute majority on its own and governed our country for the 2014 -2019 period.

In the 17th Lok Sabha election which was held in April- May 2019, the BJP got 303 out of a total 542 seats following the First Past The Post (FPTP) system of voting.  Since they got only 37.43 per cent of the total polled votes, if the Proportional Representation principle is applied, the BJP was entitled for only 202 Seats out of 542 total seats in the Lok Sabha. Again, since  the NDA (National Democratic Alliance) led by the BJP got only 45 per cent votes, they were  entitled for only 244 seats instead of the actual number of  353 seats they managed to get. On the other hand, Indian National Congress would have got 104 seats in proportion to their 19.51 per cent votes, instead of the actual number of 52 seats they obtained. Instead of their present figure of 91, Congress led UPA (United Progressive Alliance) would have got 141 seats in proportion to the 26 per cent votes they obtained in the poll. Partiers and individuals outside NDA and UPA would have got 157 seats in proportion to their total vote share of 29 per cent.

In a young democracy like India where genuine political, social and economic democracy is still a distant dream, a government with a brute majority would have developed a tendency to turn authoritarian and dictatorial in nature. The dark pages of Indian democracy authored by Indira Gandhi during internal emergency period of 1975-77 can be attributed to the brute majority she got in 1971 (352/518) Lok Sabha election in the aftermath of  defeating  Pakistan in December 1970 war and  creating a new country Bagladesh, by forcibly bifurcating the erstwhile Pakistan.  In 2019 election Narendra Modi and BJP's  narrative was built around communal nationalist jingoism, along with the issues of fighting terrorism after the  death of over 40 soldiers in Pulwama (Kashmir)  terror attack on February 14, 2019 and the retaliatory airstrike by the IAF in Pakistan territory Balakot soon after. Election campaign by BJP brushed aside all other issues of day-to-day concerns of the people.

Analysis of voting figures shows that if the proportional representation was made applicable in Indian Lok sabha elections, no party would have formed a government with a brute majority. A government not enjoying big majority would have no option but to run the government with a consensus of representatives in the parliament. At least their capability to do harm to the people would have been limited. Given the result of 2019 Lok Sabha elections and tendency of bulldozing of anti-people bills in the parliament, a system of proportional representation would have enhanced the vitality of Indian democracy. The history of countries like Israel and Germany shows that absence of absolute majority for a single party would not affected the vigour and drive of a country.

In consideration of the level of maturity of the Indian voters, and in consideration of voters expectation to get optimum help from the constituency based representation, to begin with, a workable proposition would be the introduction of partial party based list system or the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) Representation system. The proposal is to divide the now existing 542 Lok Sabha constituencies into 271 dual member constituencies. Each constituency based voter would be allowed to cast two votes- one for the individual candidate and the second one to a recognised political party at the state/national level. The candidate who gets maximum vote from the given constituency can be declared as constituency based representative. The 2nd vote given to the party list can be pooled together and the Election Commission can assign as many party representatives as per the proportion of the votes secured by each party as per the priority list published by the parties prior to the election.

Since the BJP got only 37.43 per cent of popular votes in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP, it would have been entitled for 152 seats, which is half of the 303 seats it won from the territorial constituency based result, and 101 seats from the percentage-wise proportional representation. It would have made a total of only 252 seats for the BJP out of the 542 seats in the Lok Sabha. The total tally of the BJP led

NDA then would have been 177 from territorial constituency and 122 from the proportional list system, together making a total of only 299 seats against the present total of 353 seats. In the dual member constituencies for the Congress Party  it would have been half of 52 that is 26 seats from territorial constituency wise result and 53 seats from proportional representation as the Congress Party  got 19.51 per cent of popular votes. It would have made a total of 79 seats for the congress out of the 542 seats in the Lok Sabha. The total tally of Congress led UPA then would have been 47 seats from the territorial constituency and 71 seats from the proportional list system, together making a total of 118 seats against the  total of  91 current seats.

The outcome of brute majority reflected in the working of parliamentary democracy will be very harmful if the approach of the dominant political party is not guided by the spirit of democracy and respect for the opinion of minority. This has actually happened after the Narendra modi led government was voted to power for the 2nd time in May 2019. Political analysts are of the view that one cannot expect such a democratic behaviour from a party like BJP who gets its inspiration from an authoritarian, male exclusive Hindu communal organisations like the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (RSS). Analysts apprehension came true during  the 1st session of the Parliament which was convened on 17th June 2019 and concluded on 7th August 2019. This session witnessed the introduction of 38 Bills other than that of the Finance and Appropriation Bills. Of these 28 were passed including the controversial ones like the Jammu and Kashmir reorganisation Bill, 2019 which provided  for the reorganisation of the state of J & K into the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh by abrogating article 370 and 35A of the Indian constitution which provided for a special status for the state of J & K. Another controversial Bill is the Muslim women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill 2019, which mentions the divorce by a Muslim male as a criminal offence contrary to the case in other religious communities where such divorces are considered as a civil offence.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla even labelled it as the most

productive sitting of Lok Sabha since 1952. Incidentally,  none of these legislations introduced in this session were referred to any Parliamentary Committee. Modi Government cleverly achieved this by postponing the constitution of  the Standing Committee after the 17th Lok Sabha elections in May 2019. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government led by the BJP has rushed through all these Bills thanks to their brute majority in Loka Sabha and by successfully managing most of opposition parties, including the state parties who are standing for strengthening the Indian Federal system, by applying the carrot and stick approach. The experience of the Indian Parliament after the May 2019 election further reiterates the need for adopting the Proportional Representative system to save Indian democracy from the ramifications of brute majority and to save Indian democracy from the behaviour of political parties which are not guided by the spirit of democratic functioning.

Finally, the democratisation of the Indian society in its fullest sense-politically, socially and economically-would be the ultimate guarantee for the emergence of genuine democracy in India.

# Implementation of Systematic Voter's Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) Programme during the 2019 LokSabha Elections : A Study in the Context of Andaman & Nicobar Islands

S.S. Sreekumar

*The Election Commission of India initiated a programme "Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP)". The activities of the SVEEP began during the General Elections, 2014. Focusing the relevance of voter education in a developing country like India, the present study attempts to examine the SVEEP activities undertaken in the Island territory prior to the recent Lok Sabha Elections and studies the extent to which the fruits of voter education reached to the marginalised groups, especially women. The study was conducted in the context of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Focusing on electoral participation, the author examines the way in which marginalised classes have been brought to the mainstream for political participation. The paper also brings out the challenges for political participation of the marginalised group and gives suggestions.*

Democracy, generally means that a people rule themselves through periodic elections of their highest leaders in which nearly all adults can participate, for whichever offices they are eligible, and under

the rule of law. Prior to the declaration of the 17th Lok Sabha by the Election Commission of India, the Prime Minister urged and appealed to the people of India to actively participate in the election terming it as the "celebration of democracy".

The Election Commission of India initiated a programme "Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP)". The activities of the SVEEP began during the General Elections, 2014. Focusing the relevance of voter education in a developing country like India, the present study attempts to examine the SVEEP activities undertaken in the Island territory prior to the recent Lok Sabha Elections and studies the extent to which the fruits of voter education reached to the marginalised groups, especially women. The study was conducted in the context of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Focusing on electoral participation, the author examines the way in which marginalised classes have been brought to the mainstream for political participation. The paper also brings out the challenges for political participation of the marginalised group and gives suggestions.

One of the most important and outstanding political development in recent years has been the rapid spread of democracy as a political idea throughout of the world. Democracy is a universally recognized ideal as well as a goal, which is based on common values shared by people throughout the world irrespective of cultural, political, social and economic differences. As an ideal, democracy aims essentially at preserving and promoting the dignity and fundamental rights of the individual, achieving social justice, fostering economic and social development of the community and strengthening the cohesion of society. As a form of government, democracy is the best way of achieving these objectives; it is also the only political system that has the capacity for self-correction. There are strong pieces of evidence of an overwhelming appeal of the democratic idea, by which we mean "the claim by citizens that they should, in some ways, exercise substantial control over the decision made by their state or government"[1]. However, while democracy

is not yet uniformly practised, nor indeed uniformly accepted, in the general climate of the world opinion, Amartya Sen is of the opinion that "democratic governance has now achieved the status of being taken to be generally right"[2].

A developing democracy like India needs the wider participation of people irrespective of caste, colour, creed and sex. Generally, the term "political participation" refers to those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly in the formation of public policy. These activities include casting votes, seeking information, holding discussions, attending meetings, staging strikes and demonstrations, communicating with legislators and the like. According to Herbert McClosky, "Participation is the principal means by which consent is granted or withdrawn in a democracy and the rulers are made accountable to the ruled."[3] As NoorjahanBava puts it, "direct and indirect participation of citizens in public affairs is the lifeline of a participatory democracy"[4]. Political participation means not only exercising the right to vote, but also power sharing, co-decision making, co-policy making at all levels of governance of the state[5]. It is broadly defined as being a process through which individual plays a role in political life of his society, has the opportunity to take part in deciding what the common goals of that society are and the best way of achieving these goals. Political participation refers to actual participation in these voluntary activities by which members of the society share in the selection of rules and directly or indirectly in the formulation of public policy[6].

**Barriers to Participation**

There exists various hindrances for common people to participate in political activities. In a democratic set up, only a strong and legitimate government can formulate public policy and implement programmes. Active political participation of the citizens is a pre-requisite for a strong and legitimate governance machinery. A common feature observed in many developing countries is that active political participation is yet to be materialized. Let us examine the reasons.

1. A crucial problem facing developing countries like India is that *people seems to be apathetic*. Political apathy is the major hindrance to establish a strong governance.

The political culture of a nation / community determines the nature and extent of political apathy. The common human nature or the orientations and attitudes of the people towards the political system is the significant aspect for the formation of *democratic culture*. In those nations having subject political culture, the people may not develop a participatory approach. This may lead to political apathy. Other reasons include problems in the legal framework of the elections; inadequate electoral procedures and voting arrangements/facilities; the way in which electoral disputes are being dealt with by the relevant body/bodies; insufficient levels of accountability of elected candidates to their constituents; the lack of political maturity of parties; complex inter and intra-party politics .

2. Another relevant factor which influences the voter turnout in many developing societies is the feeling among the citizenry that the participation of one person cannot count. Many people often think that *my vote* may not be  considered *as valuable in a large country where millions have the right to exercise franchise .*

*3.* Yet another variable /element related to non participation is the thinking  among many citizens that *my lone participation will not make any changes in the outcome*. They think that their presence or franchise will not value in the final outcome. This kind of psychology develops the tendency for non participation in political activities including exercising franchise*.*

*4. Lack of awareness regarding democratic values also contributes to low turnout in elections. This factor is more applicable in the case of people from remote rural areas.*

*5.* The political parties and the candidates contesting in elections should develop close association with the public. Studies and surveys

reveal that this kind of contact between the contesting candidates and the electorate is lacking in urban areas. This leads to the phenomena called *urban apathy*.

6. The lack of genuine democracy in a county, peoples' perceptions of not being able to influence the political agenda and the lack of interest in political life are all factors that can influence the levels of electoral participation considerably.

On the basis of the theoretical background , it can be observed that lack of awareness and political apathy are factors affecting low turn out in developing counties like India. To have political stability and to attain legitimacy, it is the need of the hour to take immediate steps to empower and enrich the public in such a way that every vote counts leading to a stronger democracy. It is with this objective in mind that the Election Commision of India started a programme known as Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP).

**Indian Scenario**

The electoral data as per the final publication of summary revision 2014 released by the Election Commission of India on 14th February, 2014 shows that out of a total of 814,591,184 electors in the country, male electors constitute 52.4%, female electors 47.6% and electors belonging to the category "Others" constitute 0.0035%.Among the 28 states and 7 union territories, 21 states/UTs have a higher proportion of female electors than that of the national proportion of 47.6%. There are 8 states/UTs where the number of female electors exceeds that of male electors. Puducherry with 52.01% female electors has the highest proportion of female electors, followed by Kerala with 51.90%. The National Capital Territory of Delhi has the lowest proportion of female electors at 44.57%, followed by Uttar Pradesh with 45.20% female electors. 17 states/UTs have electors belonging to the "Others" category, with Karnataka having the largest number of such electors, followed by Uttar Pradesh[7].

**Table 1 : States & UTs where the Number of
Female Electors Exceeds that of Male Electors**

| State /UT | No. of Males | No. of Females | No. of Males (%) | No. of Females (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Puducherry | 424,958 | 460,488 | 48.0% | 52.0% |
| Kerala | 11,442,927 | 12,349,343 | 48.1% | 51.9% |
| Manipur | 852,953 | 886,052 | 49.0% | 51.0% |
| Mizoram | 341,934 | 354,514 | 49.1% | 50.9% |
| Daman & Diu | 50,595 | 51,665 | 49.5% | 50.5% |
| Meghalaya | 769,711 | 783,317 | 49.6% | 50.4% |
| Goa | 520,264 | 523,040 | 49.9% | 50.1% |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 375,927 | 377,289 | 49.9% | 50.1% |

*Source: Election Commission of India (as on 14th February, 2014).*

**Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVVEP)**

Across the world, many democracies are experiencing declining voter turnout and increasing apathy to vote amongst specific groups of people. In the last Lok Sabha elections in 2009, 417 million voters turned up to vote. Nowhere else have so many people turned up to vote. Yet, one has to take into consideration the fact that although 717 million were registered as electors, as many as 300 million people did not turn out to vote in the Lok Sabha election 2009. When looked at closely, one finds that, in the Indian scenario, generally speaking women, youth and urban electors have less than overwhelming participation in elections. Experience shows that even greater awareness does not necessarily get converted into greater participation. Voter education needed to be given due and strong emphasis with the kind of seriousness and depth it deserves by the election management bodies. Voters' education is not only the correct but also the most appropriate way to improve participation in a democracy compared to any other alternative. Realising this, several countries have voters' education as part of their constitutional mandate.

The theme chosen for the Diamond Jubilee Year of the ECI in 2010 was "Greater Participation for a Stronger Democracy". ECI realised that it needed to tread the last mile, where it was imperative that issues like healthy and complete Electoral Rolls, urban apathy, women's participation deficit and youth indifference to the electoral process had to be tackled. Participation based on voluntary inclination/motivation of the individual voters and persuasion by election management machinery, instead of compulsory voting was to be encouraged. Voter education held the key for this to materialise. The Commission thus decided to bring voter education to the centre table of election management and allocated it necessary priority and resources. A commemorative postal stamp on Election Commission of India was brought out as part of the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the Commission. The stamp displayed on its face ordinary Indians exercising their franchise along with a display of the EPIC. Such moves were indicative of a new era to begin in which the Commission was going to be among the public more and more.

To meet the challenge of eligible and yet unregistered citizens and not-so-high voter turnout, ECI consciously introduced a process of dialogue with citizens. It started reaching out to citizens to understand what was stopping them from registering in the electoral rolls and voting. Certain amounts of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities were taken up in 2009 to benefit the voters. This was subsequently revamped in 2010 as a national programme titled Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) [8.]

The massive SVEEP programme is implemented at national, State, district and booth level. The SVEEP Division of ECI formulates policies, lays down the framework, plans interventions and monitors implementation, besides carrying out a continuous discourse with the voting public, civil society groups and media from a national perspective. Realising the intricacies involved in bringing about a behavioural change among people, ECI emphasised on social orientation and a collaborative

approach in the whole process of SVEEP, going much beyond the ordinary understanding of election management. In each State CEO's office, an officer is assigned the charge of the SVEEP programme in the State. Core groups comprising representatives from educational institutions, youth organisations, women's organizations and civil society groups guide the State election machinery in evolving and executing a comprehensive SVEEP plan. At the district level the institution ofDistrict Collector, who is the administrative head of the district, traditionally plays a key role in election management. The District Collector is usually the District Election Officer (DEO) and spearheads the implementation of the SVEEP programme at the district level. A district SVEEP committee constituted at the district level is generally headed by the Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad (ZP) or Chief Development Officer or by DEO himself/herself to supervise the implementation of the programme in the district. Since 2006, ECI has introduced the institution of Booth Level Officers, popularly known as BLOs, who generally cover one or two polling stations and are responsible for maintaining the Electoral Roll in good health. Over the years, the Electoral Roll related work has become a perennial activity spreading almost throughout the year. The most differentiating part of SVEEP is the involvement of over nine lakh BLOs to reach out to current and prospective voters. The human to human interface and exchange is possibly unparalleled. They now constitute the primary block SVEEP related connectivity with citizens[9].

To encourage and felicitate outstanding contributions for greater electoral participation individuals and organisations are presented awards on the National Voters' Day. The National Best Electoral Practices Awards instituted since 2011 are given out to officials in various areas of the conduct of elections. The National Media Awards given simultaneously commend the efforts of media organisations for supporting SVEEP objectives through their voluntary campaigns[10].

**Figure - I : SVEEP – Process**

- Formation of SVEEP Core Committees at State and district Level
- Appointment of Nodal Officers at State and district Level
- Training and capacity building of officers

Situation Analysis through KABBP surveys for region specific gap analysis

- Identifying the lowest turnout PS and reasons
- Analysing Gender Gap
- Analysing gaps in registration
- Analysing gaps in turnout
- Analysing gaps and reasons for urban apathy/youth disconnect
- Identifying groups and communities that have recorded the lowest participation

- Preparation and sharing of National Framework of Action Plan
- Preparation of State SVEEP plans based on State level gaps and national framework
- Preparation of district SVEEP plans based on district and PS level gaps
- Drawing up monitoring, feedback and evaluation process and mechanism
- Resource allocation
- Content creation for creatives
- Calendar of activities.

- Educational institutions
- Govt. Departments
- Youth Organisations like NSS, NCC, NYKS
- Media Houses
- CSOs/NGOs
- Corporate Houses and PSUs
- Individual and group volunteers
- Associations and Federations
- Renowned individuals appointed as national & State icons.

Targeted Interventions

- Specific to the identified target group based on PS level situation analysis
- Specific to bridge gender gap
- Specific to overcome youth disconnect
- Specific to fight urban apathy

Inclusion

- Targeted interventions for participation of vulnerable, handicapped, tribals and other excluded and marginalised groups

IMF



**Figure 2 : SVEEP – Targeted Group.**

**Andaman and Nicobar Scenario**

Since this research paper is relating to Andaman and Nicobar islands, a brief profile of the island territory is since relevant given there.

The Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands is cut off from mainland by vast stretches of sea. Andaman and Nicobar Islands is situated in the Bay of Bengal between $6^0$ to $14^0$ north latitude and $92^0$ and $94^0$ east longitude. There are two groups of Islands i.e. Andaman and Nicobar separated by $10^0$ channel which is about 144 kms. wide and 400 fathoms deep. The total geographical area of Andaman and Nicobar Islands is 8249 sq. kms. The geographical area of Andamans is 6408 km. and that of Nicobar is 1841 sq.kms[11] (Census of India,1991). The Union Territory consists of more than 306 named and unnamed Islands and 260 named and unnamed rocks. However, only 36 islands are inhabited. Of these 24 are located in Andaman District and 12 in Nicobar District. At present there are three revenue districts, i.e. South Andaman District, North and Middle Andaman District and Nicobar District. Nicobar District is mostly inhabited by tribes and is declared as tribal area. There are nine tehsils and 555 revenue villages[12].

The *population* of these islands can be classified into two categories, the aborigines and immigrants. As per 2011 census the total population of the Islands comes to 3,80,581 and of which 2,02,871 are males and remaining 1,77,710 females recording a growth rate of 6.86 per cent[13]. The sex ratio of the islands is 876.The density of population is 46. The literacy rate registered in this UT is 86. 6 per cent (male literacy is 90.3 per cent and female literacy 82.4 per cent). The population of tribes has shown a decline from 29469 in 2001 to 28530 as per 2011 census, registering a decrease of 3.19 per cent. The population of tribes comes to 7.5 per cent of the total population [14].

Five linguistic groups constitute majority of this non- aboriginal population of the Islands. Bengali speaking people form the largest group, followed by Tamils, Hindustanis, Telugus and Malayalees. These five groups constitute 80.78 percent of the non-aboriginal population. Besides

these five major linguistic groups, there are persons speaking Punjabi, Urdu, Marathi, Oriya, Kannada, Nepali and other languages. They constitute 9.87 percent of total population. The Nicobari language is spoken by the Nicobarese, largest tribal group of the islands.

Let us examine the data relating to the last two Lok Sabha elections .

**Table - 2 : Polling Stations and Total Voters in 2009 LokSabha Election**

| SI.No. | Name of District | Total Polling Stations | Total Voters |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | South Andaman | 184 | 142129 |
| 2 | North and Middle Andaman | 112 | 71321 |
| 3 | Nicobar District | 49 | 41294 |
| Total | Three Districts | 345 | 254744 |

*Source:Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Andaman and Nicobar Administration, Port Blair.*

**Table - 3 : Polling Stations and Total Voters in 2014 LokSabha Election**

| SI. No. | Name of District | Total Polling Stations | Total Voters |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | South Andaman | 212 | 164107 |
| 2 | North and Middle Andaman | 114 | 69826 |
| 3 | Nicobar District | 60 | 23926 |
| Total | Three Districts | 386 | 257859 |

*Source: Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Andaman and Nicobar Administration, Port Blair.*

**Table - 4 : Total Electors in the Andaman and Nicobar Parliamentary Constituency** *(As on March,2019)*

| District | Male | Female | Third (Transgender) | Sex Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| North and Middle Andaman | 41662 | 38543 | 01 | 925 |
| South Andaman | 99839 | 88639 | 10 | 888 |
| Nicobar | 13328 | 12413 | - | 931 |
| **Total** | 154829 | 139595 | 11 | 902 |

*Source: Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Andaman and Nicobar Administration, Port Blair.*

**SVEEP Activities in the Island Territory**

Emphasis has been made to examine the activities undertaken under SVEEP prior to polling in the island territory. Information for preparing this Article has been collected from the local newspapers published from Port Blair.

All arrangements for polling on 11 April 2019 were made by the Returning officer and his team to send the polling officers and the materials in time to the remote far flung islands. Taking into account the peculiar geographical position of the Island Territory, steps were taken to arrange transportation facilities to various parts of the Andaman and Nicobar group of islands. Security arrangements for the smooth conduct of polls have also successfully completed well in advance.

To encourage and enrich the electorate to cast their valuable vote, the SVEEP activities have been elaborately conducted throughout the islands. Let us examine the efforts undertaken in various parts of the UT.

***Nicobar District***

Nicobar District is a tribal area and the main tribe residing there is Nicobarese. The District Administration, Nicobar planned and carried out various activities under SVEEP with the objective of spreading awareness among the voters. These programmes served as platform

whereby the importance of voting and the electoral rights of the people are communicated to them. The District Administration has scheduled various activities under SVEEP for wide dissemination of voter education to the public. Various competitions were organised for women, physically challenged voters, and senior citizens to impart the values of exercising franchise in a democratic society during the first week of April.

As part of celebrating *DeshKaMahaThyohar*, the Dist.Admn, Nicobars organised a *Cyclathon* exclusively for women under SVEEP activities. This is to emphasise the significance of women voters in General Election, 2019 and to ensure that no voter should be left behind. The race was flagged off by the Deputy Commissioner of Nicobar Dist. The race covered a distance of 12 KM which commenced from Gandhi Chowk and passed through Malacca to Mus Junction of the Nicobar Dist[15].

A Special Election Campaign for 'Divyang' persons was organised under SVEEP, Car Nicobar. The programme was organised at Kutchat Children's park, Perka, Car Nicobar on 4th of April. This was mainly to inculcate awareness among Physically Challenged Voters. Various competitions were organised and the Deputy Commissioner who congratulated the winners and the participants of the campaign. The officials of the District Administration present on the occasion explained the special arrangements made for Divyang persons to cast their vote. They would be accompanied from their houses by the respective Aanganwadi Workers to the polling stations and dropped back to their houses. Wheel chairs were arranged in coordination with the Health Department. Queue jumping for Divyang persons and Braille ballot paper, companion of blind etc, were also communicated. They were familiarised with the EVMs and VVPATs. All divyang persons, anganwadi workers, members of Tribal Council participated with lot of zeal and enthusiasm in various competitions that were organised on the theme "DeshkaMahathyohar- No Voter Left Behind".

As part of the special Campaign for Women under SVEEP, a

*Pinkathon* for women was organised by the District Administration at Nicobar. An awareness programme was also organised at Priyadarshini Auditorium exclusively for women. Deputy Commissioner, Nicobars District addressing the gathering encouraged everyone to cast their vote in the forthcoming elections. A demonstration of EVM operation was also conducted specifically for women.

### North and Middle Andaman District

SVEEP activities were also organised in North and Middle Andaman District especially meant to create awareness among women. A programme *MahilaMatdathaMahostav* was organised on 31st of March, 2019 at Mayabunder. The festival was inaugurated by the District Election Officer in the presence of Assistant Commissioner ( HQ). The officers in their speech emphasised the importance of ethical voting and the role of women in strengthening of democracy. Various programmes like rangoli competition, khadi and tug of war were organised on the occasion[16]. Women folk from all age groups participated enthusiastically. Awareness programmes in Rangat and Diglipur tehsils were organised on the occasion. The objective of celebrating Mahila Matdatha Mahostav is to encourage women voters to participate in the whole electioneering process and come forward in large numbers to exercise their franchise on 11th of April.

As part of the SVEEP activities the Department of Art and Culture, Andaman and Nicobar Administration in coordination with the ,District Administration organised a Photography Exhibition at Mayabunder ,North and Middle Andaman District, on 5th of April. Addressing the gathering the senior officials of District Administration highlighted on the elaborate arrangements made by the Election Commission of India for making the elections accessible for all and especially for persons with disabilities. The Deputy Commissioner, North and Middle Andaman told that the authorities have devised new methods to address election related grievances of the public in a time bound manner with special emphasis on the theme " No Voter Left Behind".

**South Andaman District**

Electoral Literacy Clubs were already constituted in major educational institutions in South Andaman District. These clubs made sincere   efforts in the registration of new voters and creating awareness among them. SVEEP activities have been undertaken in all Colleges in South Andaman District. From the part of the District Administration, all efforts were made to have demonstration sessions for operating EVM. The demonstration exercise covered all wards of Port Blair Municipal area and all villages in South Andaman District.. The Gram Panchayats also extended their cooperation in the matter.

In South Andaman District, the DGP and his team of Police officers visited various Police Stations and met the police personnel to review the election related preparedness. The senior police officers briefed them about the Model Code of Conduct, to ensure strict implementation and gave instruction to the District Police officers to take prompt action on all election related complaints.

As part of the awareness programmes, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) at frequent intervals interacted with the listeners of Radio through All India Radio. One among the programme was organised on 8th April, 2019. An episode of *Morning Tea - Aapke Saath*, the All India Radio, Port Blair broadcasted a phone - in programme on the topic *Voters' Awareness and Poll Preparedness* from 7.15 to 7.55 am. The CEO answered the questions and queries of the listeners[17]

**Confidence Building Measures**

A team of senior police officers consisting of Inspector General of Police, Dist. Superintendent of Police, SDPO and SHO Camphell Bay, Nicobar District visited the isolated polling stations of Great Nicobar and Little Nicobar islands on 1st of April, 2019. The IGP interacted with the police personnel deputed for election duty. The IGP also interacted with tribal leaders. Patrolling was also conducted in the villages to build confidence. On another occasion, the IGP visited the Police Station,

Car Nicobar and took stock of security preparedness in view of the elections. She directed the police staff to enforce the Model Code of Conduct as per guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India. The IGP briefed them about their role and responsibilities on the day of polling and told them to remain neutral and impartial while discharging their duties[18].

In the South Andaman District the DGP, A&N Police along with IGP(HQ), DIGP (intel), DSP and SDPO visited various police stations in the South Andaman and met the police personnel. This was mainly to assess the election related preparedness and briefed them about the Model Code of Conduct. The senior police officers reminded the police officers on election duty that it is the duty of the police force to implement the rule of law and the directions of Election Commission of India in its true letter and spirit. The DGP also instructed the SHO and Dy.SP to take action on all election related complaints and offences impartially. He took this opportunity to remind the police personnel about the conduct of police during elections, which should be impartial , professional and beyond question and emphasised on the importance of the impartial role of police not only as part of their duty but also as their moral responsibility towards the society. He further exhorted the policemen to work hard to gather intelligence on all fronts and ensure the voters are not influenced by corrupt practices. The DGP also highlighted the role of free election in a healthy democracy which is an essential requirement for creation of a fair and just society.

**General Elections, 2019**

The *2019 Indian general election* was held in seven phases from 11 April to 19 May 2019 to constitute the 17th LokSabha. The votes were counted and result was declared on 23 May. About 900 million people were eligible to vote and turnout was over 67 per cent - the highest ever as well as the highest participation by women voters.

According to the Election Commission of India I, 900 million people were eligible to vote, with an increase of 84.3 million voters since

the last election in 2014, making it the largest-ever election in the world. 15 million voters aged 18-19 years became eligible to vote for the first time. 468 million eligible voters were males, 432 million were females and 38325 identified themselves belonging to third gender. Total 71,735 overseas voters also enrolled.  The voter turnout was over 67 per cent - the highest ever as well as the highest participation by women voters.

This island territory has only one Parliamentary constituency**.** The total voters of the constituency comes to 3,17,878. 407. Electioneering in the islands was peaceful. There was no violation of Model Code of Conduct. For the lone Lok Sabha seat from Andaman and Nicobar Parliamentary Constituency 15 persons contested. The electorate of the Islands exercised their franchise during the Phase 1 on Thursday, April 11, 2019.As reported 2,06,157 persons exercised their  franchise, i.e 64.85 percent of the electorate[19.] Among the 168701 male voters, 107785 exercised their franchise, the percentage being 63.89. In the case of female voters out of 168701 voters 97214 exercised their vote, the percentage being 65.17, more than the UT average.

**Major Observations of the Study**

Voter education through SVEEP activities reveal the following findings.

1. Majority are of the view that they are aware of the political parties working in their area, though the *awareness is limited to symbol and not in substance.*

2. Majority opined that *exercising franchise* is the main act of participation. Other acts of participation like electioneering, working in political parties, are irrelevant for them.

3. Another noteworthy observation with regard to women voters is that among those who exercised franchise, majority opined that they took *decision independently*, i.e they are not influenced by husband or other family members.

4. Usually they are not interested in gaining knowledge in socio-political matters and issues. Many socio-political matters and incidents taking place in national and international spheres have less impact on the life of islanders. They are not taking care to respond to and react to major issues, though these affect them. They have a *passive attitude.*

5. It was observed that around 40*per cent used to attend meetings* of Gram Sabha. Reasons for non participation include lack of proper information regarding the conduct of meetings, absence of persons to accompany and absence of conducive environment for women to attend the meetings.

6. Majority of the respondents opined that they are *not members of any social or cultural organisation.* Even though some organisations are formally present in the rural area, they are not found to be active in mobilising rural women.

7. It is worthwhile here to note that 57 per cent are aware of the reservation applicable to women in PRI as a result of the 73rd amendment of the Constitution. Even 36 per cent women are of the view that the present reservation of 33 per cent has to be increased to 50 as done in states like Kerala.

**Challenges Facing Political Participation**

Certain challenges faced by the people of developing societies especially women have already been discussed**.**

1. The political arena in each country has its own peculiar features. However, one feature is common to all places i.e. it is uneven and not conducive to women's participation. In recently developed democracies there is limited contact and cooperation between women politicians and women organizations or other interest groups such as trade unions or labour unions. Moreover, women movements and women's groups in these areas either tend to keep away from women MPs, or do not invest in organized channels of communication and lobbying on issues related to decision making levels.

2. In many nations, 'traditional cultural values' mitigate against the advancement, progress and participation of women in political process. Society is dominated by the  perception that  women should only play the role of "working mother" which is generally low paid. Even in some developing societies, man tell woman how to vote. This is the environment that many women face one in which certain collective image of women in traditional, apolitical role continue to dominate.

3. Lack of confidence is one of the main reasons for women's under representation in formal political institutions. Women are good campaigners and organizers, but rarely contest parliamentary post. A certain culture of fear prevents women for contesting elections and from participating in political life.

4. Mass media in many nations tend to minimize coverage of events and organizations of interest to women. The media, including women's publications, does not adequately inform the public about the rights and roles of women in society. The fact that women are largely alienated from the political decision making process is also ignored by media.

5. Lack of sustained contact and cooperation with other public organizations such as trade (labour) unions and women's groups;

6. Lack of access to well-developed education and training systems for women's leadership in general, and for orienting young women towards political.

7. Women's low self-esteem and self-confidence, endorsed by certain cultural patterns which do not facilitate women's access to political careers**.**

**Suggestions**

1. First and foremost suggestion which can help in developing *orientation towards political objects* is to impart instruction in democratic values.  This can be initiated at the school level. The teachers can take

steps to *indoctrinate democratic principles* which can change attitude of students and in turn will help them in socialisation.

2. Studies reveal that *political process* has become *inaccessible* to disadvantaged sections especially women in the society. Lack of awareness and following traditional value patterns are factors for this phenomenon. *Political socialization* of the general mass especially women in rural areas is an urgent need of the day and this has to be taken up with the help and cooperation of civil society organisations. Rural mass need to know their legal rights and duties, nature of the Constitution, democratic processes and values, working of democratic including the Panchayati Raj Institutions and poverty alleviation programmes.

*3. Political parties have to indoctrinate democratic values* among the mass especially rural women which will facilitate their participation in political activities including casting vote.

*4. Strengthening the institution* of *Gram Sabha* and its functions is yet another suggestion for effective political participation of women. The conventional outlook created among the minds of the villagers that it is a platform for distribution of welfare schemes has to change. Gram Panchayat has a constitutional status with mandate and accountable to the Gram sabha.

5. Field experience of this researcher reveals that in many meetings of the Gram sabha, proper decorum has not been maintained. Consequently, many women are not in a position to attend the meetings. Another grievance is that they are not properly informed about the meetings. Due to this, only a privileged few could attend Gram Sabha meetings. The fact that Gram Panchayat is a having constitutional status and accountable to Gram sabha has to be instilled in the mind of every responsible villager. Then only all persons can get motivation to attend meetings of Gram Sabha.

6. Studies reveal that *persons from upper middle class* are not taking active interest in attending the meetings of Gram Sabha. This

also is not a promising trend. One suggestion in this regard *is to institutonalise a system of social audit* which is essential for improving local governance and for compliance with laws and regulations. Special efforts have to be made to undertake training and awareness campaigns for social audit by Gram Sabha.

7. During the last one decade, the island territory witnessed the existence of   Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working in various fields. This can be regarded as a promising trend. This will help to have a vibrant society. These NGOs can also act as agencies to mobilise rural women and chalk out programmes for capacity building measures for women with the help of panchayati raj institutions. This will in turn result in the *process political socialisation of women.*

8. I*nvolvement of voluntary organizations, non-governmental organizations, women's organizations, as well as institutions dealing with education, training and research have to be ensured in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and* review of all policies and programmes affecting women. Towards this end, they will be provided with appropriate support related to resources and capacity building which will facilitate them to participate actively in the process of the empowerment of women.

*Voters Education*

Creating awareness among people is not the responsibility of any one agency. Again greater awareness does not necessarily convert into greater participation. Behavioural changes hold the key, which is a much more complex task. At the grass root level the Gram Sabha and the Gram panchayats, the educational institutions, the voluntary organisations and NGOs have to initiate actions to inculcate democratic values, mobilising women, impart capacity building programmes . These actions at the grass root level will surely result in enriching and empowering rural women which will open new avenues for stronger political participation.

SVEEP- programme intensified the interventions on gender gap,

youth disconnect and urban apathy countrywide. Results received from SVEEP-initiatives bring home the justification of such special drives. In yet another effort to address citizen segments, CEOs and DEOs were directed to search for large or small groups who because of their vulnerabilities, handicaps, socio-cultural barriers or any other reasons stay outside the electoral process. The vision of SVEEP has evolved into a full-fledged component due to the relentless and innovative efforts that have gained momentum and established itself as a great contributor to the best practices of democracy.

### *Concluding Observations*

Participation is an integral part of democratic process and strengthening the quality of civic life. Political participation is not just casting vote. It includes wide range of other activities- like membership of political party, electoral campaigning, attending party meetings, demonstrations, communication with leaders, holding party positions, contesting elections, membership in representative bodies, influencing decision making and other related activities. The presence and participation of women in decision making process would enable them to revise the gender discriminatory policies. It has to be recognized *that rural women once empowered are found to be more effective in social change and community development than men.*

*Andaman and Nicobar Islands* are the only place in the country along with Lakshadweep which do not have a territorial optical fibre cable providing telephone and internet connectivity services for communication, adding only to the difficulty of expansive distance between islands, deep dangerous waters and dense jungles. The outreach initiative for voter education was launched as VATAN (Voter Awareness Team for Andaman and Nicobar) which performed more than 600 street plays to personally reach out to masses in the interiors of the UT which has minimal or no means of mass communication.

In the context of the island territory it can be observed that

*increasing voter turnout is not a factor determining political participation.* The voter turnout of women has increased when compared to the earlier elections. This is due to the impact of the 33 percent reservation given to women as a result of 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment. Besides this, the implementation of micro-finance schemes such as Self Help Groups has got positive impact on increasing the awareness of women leading to increased political participation.

**References**

1.  Mark, Joe I Krieger, William A. Joseph (2007): *Introduction to Comparative Politics,* Houghton Mifflin Com.

2.  AmartyaSen (1999): Democracy as a Universal Value, *Journal of Democracy.* 10. No 3 (July 1999) p. 3-17. (Internet text version pany, USA. P. 17.

3.  HerbertM.C.Closky (1968): 'Political Participation' in *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* Collier Macmillan, *,* New York.

4.  N. Bava. (1984): *Peoples Participation in Development Administration in India,* Uppal Publisher, NewDelhi.

5.  Singh J.P., 'Indian Democracy and Empowerment of Women', *The Indian Journal of Public Administration,*Oct-Dec, Vol. XLVI, No. 4, 2000, pp. 619.

6.  Srivastava Rashmi, 'Empowerment of Women Through Political Participation, with special reference to Madya Pradesh', in NirojSinha (ed), *Women in Indian Politics,* Anmol Publications, New Delhi, 2000, pp.206.

7.  Govt: of India, Press Information Bureau, *General Elections, 2014, Reference Handbook,* Ministry of Information and Broadcasting , Govt: of India, New Delhi,2014,p.26.

8.  Govt: of India, Election Commission, *Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP), India National Document, 2009-2014,* Election Commission , New Delhi, 2015, p.5

9.   *Ibid.*

10.  *Ibid*

11.  Census of India,1991: Andaman and Nicobar Islands, *District Census Handbook, Part XIII, A&B,* Directorate of Census Operations, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Controller of Publications, New Delhi, 1992 , p.8.

12.  Andaman and Nicobar Administration, *Andaman and Nicobar Islands at a Glance 2016,* Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Andaman and Nicobar Administration,  Blair 2017.

13.  Census of India 2011: *Primary Census Abstract, Data Highlights 2011, Andaman and Nicobar Islands* UT, Directorate of Census Operations, Andaman  and Nicobar islands Port Blair, 2013.

14.  *Ibid.*

15.  The *Daily Telegrams,* 5 April, 2019,p.1.

16.  The *Daily Telegrams,*  2 April, 2019

17.  The *Daily Telegrams*, 9 April, 2019

18.  The *Daily Telegrams*, 3 April, 2

19.  Data furnished from the Chief Electoral Officer, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Port Blair

*Book Review*

# A Fresh Look at Comprehending Indian History

**Jose T. Thomas, (2019) :** *India's Soft Power*, **Kottayam, Muziris Times, pp.111, (Malayalam),** ₹ **200.**

**B. Vivekanandan**

This book, *India's Soft Power (Bharathathinte Soumya Sakthi)* authored by Jose T. Thomas, is outstanding and thought provoking in its content. Like the author's celebrated previous book, *Kurisum Yuddhavum Samadhanavum (Cross And War And Peace),* this book also contains valid propositions for the attention of historians, who are engaged in writing India's history. The book is full of logic, embedded in high philosophy.

In the book, the author has rightly observed that we do not have a comprehensive book on Indian history featuring all its facets. This is because those who ventured writing it had adopted a skewed approach followed by European historians in writing histories of their countries, which is thoroughly unsuitable for writing India's history. It's unsuitability arises primarily from the fact that while Europe has a War tradition, India has an intellectual tradition. Therefore, the yardsticks to be used for recording their histories should necessarily be different.

As historians of countries, which have a war tradition, the primary focus of European historians has been on the divisiveness in them and its ramifications, besides on their rulers, their wars and conflicts and other events revolving around them. Their narratives have been largely confined to the stories of confrontations, victories and defeats, and their causes and consequences. Moreover, the European history writing has

displayed a strong male bias, as they narrated largely the stories of the heroism of wars of their male rulers. Therefore, the European approach is obviously unsuitable to capture the richness of India's past, or to record its history.

Being a Civilization marked by its intellectual tradition, during the last thousands of years India has nurtured the framework of 'unity in diversity', glued by equality, harmony and compassion. Gender equality has been a notable feature of Indian Society. As the author has emphasized in the book, India has the longest civilizational history, and has imbibed *Advaita,* embedded in Indian *Upanishads*, which proclaims universal equality and oneness of the humanity and its indivisibility. Therefore, a true comprehensive Indian history book would be the story of the evolution of the humanity as a whole. The material for writing it is avaitable in the 6,000 year old records of ancient Indian culture. The Indian approach has accepted both empirical evidence and intuition - based records, which keep proving themselves by later experiences, as valid sources. Thousands of years old intuitive discoveries of Indian Sages and Rishis, made through their deep meditation and unfailing intuition, backed by their credibility established in due course by later experiences, make them valid sources for writing India's history. Indeed, in the history of India, intuition of Sages and Rishis enjoys a valid position, besides other empirical evidence accrued from time to time. They include the origin of human life, cited in the *Advaita* philosophy, embedded in thousands of years old Indian *Upanishads,* which no Western Scientist could resolve till today through their presumed 'empirical' research. Albert Einstein once confessed that he could not resolve the question of how the first vibration of life occurred in the human body. This facet of India's history must also be taken into account while writing India's history.

India's history is a story of people's movement towards attaining universal unity of humans, invoking knowledge, equality, compassion and cooperation. It is people's history, the history of men and women

joining together as equal participants. In the book the author has discerned, with uncommon acumen, India's pivotal role in the ongoing overarching evolution of the humanity into a large 'Commune', obliterating all dividing lines. He has noted also the blooming of a new humanism, worldwide, through the cyber civil society, leading the humanity towards equality, equity, peace and social justice. In this emerging new world of equality, you discern the merger of all Civilizations into one, like the Supreme Soul in *Advaita*. In this profound transformation, compassion and human solidarity have become the super glue of the unity of the humanity. The author has underlined the fact that a compassionate and cooperative relationship has been, and is, the fulcrum of social relationship of the humanity. India has attained it thousands of years ago through its soft power, and the World is in the process of attaining it in the present epoch. It is true that beneath the ongoing shallow disturbances in the World, there is a strong undercurrent of human compassion and urge for solidarity worldwide which pulls the humanity towards becoming a large Commune. In this impending spectacular transformation, instead of kings and emperors and other privileged classes, common people - ordinary men and women - would become the makers of history. As the world gets transformed into a large Commune of all peoples, India's *Advaita* would be the driving force, positioning India's soft power as the light house of the evolving 'One World'. Therefore, as the author has said, keeping in view the time span and the richness of Indian Civilization, in the array of histories of world civilizations, the history of Indian Civilization deserves to be positioned at the apex.

In the book, he has presented the ongoing evolutionary process in the world in a larger canvas of the long history of the World developments ranging from the Big Bang to the present knowledge society, and also in the context of India's 6000 year old civilizational past.

I do agree with the author's observation that we do not have a

comprehensively written Indian history book dealing with all its facets, mainly because our historians have uncritically adopted a thoroughly inadequate yardstick which European historians have provided to them. Therefore, it is imperative that scholars who are writing India's history must reject the European yardstick first, as the starting point. Generally, the focus of European historians has been on the facet of divisiveness and its accompaniments, like confrontations, wars and conflicts, and their perpetrators - the war lords, kings and emperors. Obviously, this framework is thoroughly unsuitable to comprehend India's history, which has a spectacular intellectual tradition, encompassing discoveries of Sages and Rishis, made through their deep meditations and unfailing intuitions. This facet of Indian history must also receive adequate attention in books on India's history.

It is also imperative that contemporary historians should be able to see the enlarging movement towards the unity and well being of mankind and its harmonious relationship with nature and environment. They should see how a new generation, through its new connectedness, is coming up globally, with a new outlook transcending all cultures and continents. This ongoing process also strengthens the spectrum of unity in diversity. This historical evolution also must be recognized.

No doubt, a 'One World' is in the making quietly behind the occasional shallow confrontations of national establishments. India's *Advaita* philosophy, consciously or unconsciously, guides the vision of the urge for human equality. A historian must be able to see this coming together of the people around the world, bypassing all existing divides. A historian must recognize this fundamental fact when he writes India's history.

No doubt, this book will stimulate the movement for the building up of a One World before the setting of the 21st Century.

# Lok Sabha Election 2019

## State Wise Results

| Sl. No | Name of State | No. of Seats | Name of Party | % of vote share | seats won |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Andhra Pradesh | 25 | YSR Congress Party | 49.15% | 22 |
| | | | Telugu Desam Party | 39.59% | 03 |
| | | | BJP | 0.96% | - |
| 2 | Arunachal Pradesh | 02 | BJP | 58.22% | 02 |
| | | | INC | 20.69% | - |
| 3 | Assam | 14 | BJP (NDA) | 36.05% | 09 |
| | | | AIDF | 07.80% | 01 |
| | | | INC | 35.44% | 03 |
| | | | Ind | - | 01 |
| 4 | Bihar | 40 | BJP (NDA) | 23.58% | 17 |
| | | | Lok Janshakti Party | 7.86% | 06 |
| | | | Janatha Dal (U) | 21.81% | 16 |
| | | | INC | 7.70% | 01 |
| | | | Rashtriya Lok Samata Party (UPA) | - | - |
| | | | Rashtriya Janata Dal | 15.36% | - |
| | | | Nationalist Congress Party | 0.1% | - |
| 5 | Chhattisgarh | 11 | BJP | 50.70% | 09 |
| | | | INC | 40.91% | 02 |
| 6 | Goa | 02 | BJP | 51.18% | 01 |
| | | | INC | 42.92% | 01 |
| 7 | Gujarat | 26 | BJP | 62.21% | 26 |
| | | | INC | 32.11% | - |
| 8 | Haryana | 10 | BJP | 58.02% | 10 |
| | | | INC | 28.42% | - |
| | | | Indian National Lok Dal | 1.89% | - |
| 9 | Himachal Pradesh | 04 | BJP | 69.11% | 04 |
| | | | INC | 27.30% | - |
| 10 | Jammu and Kashmir | 06 | BJP | 46.39% | 03 |
| | | | INC (UPA) | 28.47% | - |
| | | | Jammu & Kashmir | 02.37% | - |
| | | | People's Democratic Party | - | - |
| | | | Jammu & Kashmir National Conference (UPA) | 07.89% | 03 |

| 11 | Jharkhand | 14 | BJP (NDA) | 50.96% | 11 |
|----|-----------|----|-----------|--------|-----|
| | | | All Jharkhand Students Union (NDA) | 4.33% | 01 |
| | | | INC | 15.63% | 01 |
| | | | Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (UPA) | 11.51% | 01 |
| 12 | Karnataka | 28 | BJP (NDA) | 51.38% | 25 |
| | | | Independent (NDA) | - | 01 |
| | | | INC (UPA) | 31.88% | 01 |
| | | | Janata Dal (Secular) (UPA) | 9.67% | 01 |
| 13 | Kerala | 20 | INC (UPA) | 37.27% | 15 |
| | | | Indian Union Muslim League (UPA) | 05.45% | 02 |
| | | | CPI(M) (LDF) | 25.83% | 01 |
| | | | Kerala Congress (M) (UPA) | 2.07% | 01 |
| | | | RSP (UPA) | 2.45% | 01 |
| | | | BJP (NDA) | 12.93% | - |
| | | | CPI (LDF) | 6.05% | - |
| 14 | Madhya Pradesh | 29 | BJP | 58% | 28 |
| | | | INC | 34.50% | 01 |
| 15 | Maharashtra | 48 | BJP (NDA) | 27.59% | 23 |
| | | | Shiv Sena (NDA) | 23.29% | 18 |
| | | | INC (UPA) | 16.27% | 01 |
| | | | NCP (UPA) | 15.52% | 04 |
| | | | All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen | 0.72% | 01 |
| | | | Independent | - | 01 |
| | | | Swabhimani Paksha (UPA) | - | - |
| 16 | Manipur | 02 | BJP | 34.22% | 01 |
| | | | Naga People's Front | 22.48% | 01 |
| | | | INC | 24.63% | - |
| 17 | Meghalaya | 02 | BJP (NDA) | 7.93% | - |
| | | | INC | 48.28% | 01 |
| | | | National People's Party (NDA) | 22.27% | 01 |
| 18 | Mizoram | 01 | Mizo National Front (NDA) | 44.89% | 01 |
| | | | Indian National Congress | - | - |
| 19 | Nagaland | 01 | Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDA) | 49.73% | 01 |
| | | | INC | 48.11% | - |
| 20 | Odisha | 21 | Biju Janata Dal | 42.76% | 12 |
| | | | BJP | 38.37% | 08 |
| | | | INC | 13.81% | 01 |
| 21 | Punjab | 13 | INC | 40.12% | 08 |
| | | | Shiromani Akali Dal (NDA) | 27.45% | 02 |
| | | | BJP (NDA) | 9.63% | 02 |
| | | | Aam Aadmi Party | 7.38% | 01 |

| 22 | Rajasthan | 25 | BJP (NDA) | 58.47% | 24 |
| | | | Rashtriya Loktantrik Party | 2.03% | 01 |
| | | | INC | 34.24% | - |
| 23 | Sikkim | 01 | Sikkim Democratic Front | 43.92% | - |
| | | | Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (NDA) | 47.46% | 01 |
| 24 | Tamil Nadu | 39 | Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (UPA) | 32.76% | 24 |
| | | | INC (UPA) | 12.76% | 08 |
| | | | CPI (UPA) | 2.43% | 02 |
| | | | CPI(M) (UPA) | 2.40% | 02 |
| | | | All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (NDA) | 18.48% | 01 |
| | | | Indian Union Muslim League (UPA) | 1.11% | 01 |
| | | | Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (UPA) | - | 01 |
| | | | BJP (NDA) | 3.66% | - |
| | | | Pattali Makkal Katchi (NDA) | 5.42% | - |
| 25 | Telangana | 17 | Telangana Rashtra Samithi | 41.29% | 09 |
| | | | INC | 29.48% | 03 |
| | | | BJP | 19.45% | 04 |
| | | | All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen | 2.78% | 01 |
| 26 | Tripura | 02 | BJP | 49.03% | 02 |
| | | | INC | 25.34% | - |
| | | | CPI (M) | 17.31% | - |
| 27 | Uttar Pradesh | 80 | BJP (NDA) | 49.56% | 62 |
| | | | Apna Dal (Sonelal) (NDA) | 1.01% | 02 |
| | | | Bahujan Samaj Party (MGB) | 19.26% | 10 |
| | | | Samajwadi Party (MGB) | 17.96% | 05 |
| | | | INC | 6.31% | 01 |
| 28 | Uttarakhand | 05 | BJP | 61.01% | 05 |
| | | | INC | 31.40% | - |
| 29 | West Bengal | 42 | All India Trinamool Congress | 43.28% | 22 |
| | | | BJP | 40.25% | 18 |
| | | | INC | 5.61% | 02 |
| | | | CPI (M) | 6.28% | - |
| **Union Territories and NCT of Delhi** | | | | | |
| 1 | Andaman & Nicobar Island | 01 | BJP | 45.30% | - |
| | | | INC | 45.98% | 01 |
| 2 | Chandigarh | 01 | BJP | 50.64% | 01 |
| | | | INC | 40.35% | - |
| | | | AAP | 3.02% | - |
| 3 | Dadra and Nagar Haveli | 01 | BJP | 40.92% | - |
| | | | Independent | 45.44% | 01 |

| 4 | Daman and Diu | 01 | BJP | 42.98% | 01 |
| | | | INC | 31.62% | - |
| 5 | NCT of Delhi | 07 | BJP | 56.56% | 07 |
| | | | INC | 22.51% | - |
| | | | Aam Aadmi Party | 18.11% | - |
| 6 | Lakshadweep | 01 | NCP | 48.61% | 01 |
| | | | INC | 46.86% | - |
| 7 | Puducherry | 01 | INC | 56.27% | 01 |
| | | | All India N.R.Congres (NDA) | 31.36% | - |

**APPENDIX-II**

# Vote Share and Seat Share of Parties in the 2019 Election

| Vote Share | | Seat Share | |
|---|---|---|---|
| BJP | 37.36% | BJP | 55.80% |
| INC | 19.49% | INC | 9.57% |
| AITC | 4.07% | DMK | 4.41% |
| BSP | 3.63% | AITC | 4.05% |
| SP | 2.55% | YSRCP | 4.05% |
| YSRCP | 2.53% | SS | 3.31% |
| DMK | 2.26% | JD(U) | 2.95% |
| SS | 2.10% | BJD | 2.21% |
| TDP | 2.04% | BSP | 1.84% |
| CPI(M) | 1.75% | TRS | 1.66% |
| Others | 22.22% | Others | 10.15% |

*Source: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Results_of_the_2019_Indian_general election accessed on 16-1-2020*

# Lok Sabha Election 2014

## State Wise Results

| SI. No | Name of State | No. of Seats | Name of Party | % of vote share | seats won |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Andhra Pradesh | 25 | Telugu Desam Party (NDA) | 29.10% | 15 |
| | | | YSR Congress Party | 28.90% | 08 |
| | | | INC | 11.5% | - |
| | | | BJP (NDA) | 8.50% | 02 |
| 2 | Arunachal Pradesh | 02 | BJP | - | 01 |
| | | | INC | - | 01 |
| 3 | Assam | 14 | BJP | 36.50% | 07 |
| | | | INC | 29.60% | 03 |
| | | | All India United Democratic Front | 14.80% | 03 |
| | | | Assam Gana Parishad | 3.80% | - |
| | | | Independent | - | 01 |
| 4 | Bihar | 40 | BJP (NDA) | 29.40% | 22 |
| | | | Lok Janshakti Party | 6.40% | 06 |
| | | | Rashtriya Janatha Dal (UPA) | 20.10% | 04 |
| | | | Janata Dal (U) | 15.80% | 02 |
| | | | Rashtriya Lok Samata Party (NDA) | 3.00% | 03 |
| | | | Nationalist Congress Party | 1.20% | 01 |
| | | | Indian National Congress (UPA) | 8.40% | 02 |
| | | | Independent | - | - |
| 5 | Chhattisgarh | 11 | BJP | 48.70% | 10 |
| | | | INC | 38.40% | 01 |
| 6 | Goa | 02 | BJP | 53.40% | 01 |
| | | | INC | 36.60% | 01 |
| 7 | Gujarat | 26 | BJP | 59.10% | 26 |
| | | | INC | 32.90% | - |
| 8 | Haryana | 10 | BJP | 34.70% | 07 |
| | | | INC | 22.90% | 01 |
| | | | Indian National Lok Dal | 24.40% | 02 |
| 9 | Himachal Pradesh | 04 | BJP | 53.31% | 04 |
| | | | INC | 40.70% | - |

*Source: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Results_of_the_2014_Indian_general election accessed on 16-1-2020*

| 10 | Jammu and Kashmir | 06 | BJP | 34.40% | 03 |
| | | | INC | 22.90% | - |
| | | | Jammu & Kashmir People's - Democratic Party | 20.50% | 03 |
| | | | Jammu & Kashmir National - Conference (UPA) | 11.10% | - |
| | | | Independent | - | - |
| 11 | Jharkhand | 14 | BJP | 40.10% | 12 |
| | | | Indian National Congress | 13.30% | - |
| | | | Jharkhand Vikas Morcha | 12.10% | - |
| | | | Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (UPA) | 9.30% | 02 |
| | | | Independent | - | - |
| 12 | Karnataka | 28 | BJP | 43.00% | 17 |
| | | | INC | 40.80% | 09 |
| | | | Janata Dal (Secular) | 11.00% | 02 |
| 13 | Kerala | 20 | INC | 31.10% | 08 |
| | | | CPI(M) | 21.60% | 05 |
| | | | CPI | 7.60% | 01 |
| | | | Indian Union Muslim League | 4.50% | 02 |
| | | | Kerala Congress (M) | 2.40% | 01 |
| | | | RSP | - | 01 |
| | | | BJP | 10.30% | - |
| | | | Ind (Backed by LDF) | - | 02 |
| 14 | Madhya Pradesh | 29 | BJP | 55.00% | 27 |
| | | | INC | 34.90% | 02 |
| | | | Bahujan Samaj Party | 3.8% | - |
| 15 | Maharashtra | 48 | BJP (NDA) | 27.30% | 23 |
| | | | Shiv Sena (NDA) | 20.60% | 18 |
| | | | INC (UPA) | 18.10% | 02 |
| | | | NCP (UPA) | 16.00% | 04 |
| | | | Swabhimani Paksha (NDA) | 2.30% | 01 |
| | | | Indian Bahujan Vikas Aaghadi | - | - |
| 16 | Manipur | 02 | BJP | 11.90% | - |
| | | | Indian National Congress | 41.70% | 02 |
| | | | Naga People's Front | 19.90% | - |
| | | | CPI | 14.00% | - |
| 17 | Meghalaya | 02 | BJP | 8.90% | - |
| | | | INC | 37.90% | 01 |
| | | | National People's Party (NDA) | 22.20% | 01 |
| | | | Nationalist Congress Party (NC) (UPA) | - | - |

| 18 | Mizoram | 01 | Indian National Congress | 48.60% | 01 |
|----|---------|----|--------------------------|--------|----|
| 19 | Nagaland | 01 | Naga People's Front (NDA) | 68.70% | 01 |
|    |         |    | INC | 30.10% | - |
| 20 | Odisha | 21 | Biju Janata Dal | 44.10% | 20 |
|    |        |    | BJP | 21.50% | 01 |
|    |        |    | INC | 26.00% | - |
|    |        |    | CPI | 0.3% | - |
| 21 | Punjab | 13 | INC | 33.10% | 03 |
|    |        |    | Shiromani Akali Dal (NDA) | 20.30% | 04 |
|    |        |    | BJP (NDA) | 8.70% | 02 |
|    |        |    | Aam Aadmi Party | 30.40% | 04 |
| 22 | Rajasthan | 25 | BJP (NDA) | 50.90% | 25 |
|    |           |    | INC | 30.40% | - |
| 23 | Sikkim | 01 | Sikkim Democratic Front | 53.00% | 01 |
|    |        |    | Sikkim Krantikari Morcha | 39.50% | - |
|    |        |    | BJP | 2.40% | - |
|    |        |    | INC | 2.30% | - |
| 24 | Tamil Nadu | 39 | All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagahm | 44.30% | 37 |
|    |            |    | Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam | 23.60% | - |
|    |            |    | BJP | 5.50% | 01 |
|    |            |    | Pattali Makkal Katchi | 4.40% | 01 |
| 25 | Telangana | 17 | Telangana Rashtra Samithi | 33.90% | 11 |
|    |           |    | INC | 20.5% | 02 |
|    |           |    | BJP | 8.50% | 01 |
|    |           |    | TDP | 3.10% | 01 |
|    |           |    | YSR Congress Party | 2.90% | 01 |
|    |           |    | All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen | 1.40% | 01 |
| 26 | Tripura | 02 | CPI(M) | 64.00% | 02 |
|    |         |    | INC | 15.20% | - |
|    |         |    | BJP | 5.70% | - |
| 27 | Uttar Pradesh | 80 | BJP (NDA) | 42.30% | 71 |
|    |               |    | Samajwadi Party | 22.20% | 05 |
|    |               |    | Bahujan Samaj Party | 19.60% | - |
|    |               |    | INC | 7.50% | 02 |
|    |               |    | Apna Dal | 1.00% | 02 |
| 28 | Uttarakhand | 05 | BJP | 55.30% | 05 |
|    |             |    | INC | 34.00% | - |
| 29 | West Bengal | 42 | All India Trinamool Congress | 39.35% | 34 |
|    |             |    | CPI (M) | 22.71% | 02 |
|    |             |    | BJP | 16.84% | 02 |
|    |             |    | INC | 9.58% | 04 |

| Union Territories and NCT of Delhi | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Andaman and Nicobar Island | 01 | BJP<br>INC | 47.08%<br>40.8% | 01<br>- |
| 2 | Chandigarh | 01 | BJP<br>INC<br>Aam Aadmi Party | 42.20%<br>26.80%<br>24.00% | 01<br>-<br>- |
| 3 | Dadra & Nagar Haveli | 01 | BJP<br>INC | 48.90%<br>45.10% | 01<br>- |
| 4 | Daman and Diu | 01 | BJP<br>INC | 53.80%<br>43.30% | 01<br>- |
| 5 | NCT of Delhi | 07 | BJP<br>INC<br>Aam Aadmi Party | 46.40%<br>15.10%<br>32.90% | 07<br>-<br>- |
| 6 | Lakshadweep | 01 | NCP<br>INC | 50.10%<br>46.60% | 01<br>- |
| 7 | Puducherry | 01 | All India N.R.Congres (NDA)<br>INC<br>All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam | 34.60%<br>26.3%<br><br>17.93% | 01<br>-<br><br>- |

APPENDIX-IV

# Vote Share and Seat Share of Parties in the 2014 Election

| VOTE SHARE | | SEATS SHARE | |
|---|---|---|---|
| BJP | 31.3% | BJP | 51.9% |
| INC | 19.5% | INC | 8.1% |
| BSP | 4.2% | BSP | 0 |
| AITC | 3.8% | AITC | 6.2% |
| AIADMK | 3.3% | SP | 0.9% |
| SP | 3.2% | AIADMK | 6.8% |
| CPM | 3.2% | CPM | 1.7% |
| TDP | 2.5% | BJD | 3.6% |
| SS | 1.9% | SS | 3.3% |
| DMK | 1.8% | TDP | 2.9% |
| BJD | 1.7% | TRS | 1.9% |
| Others | 23.6% | Others | 12.7% |

*Source: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Results_of_the_2014_Indian_general election accessed on 16-1-2020*

# Parliament Elections 2019

## NOTA Votes

| Constituency | Valid Votes | Nota Votes | NOTA % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gopalganj | 973216 | 51660 | 5.31 |
| Bastar | 871179 | 41667 | 4.78 |
| Paschim Champaran | 967237 | 45699 | 4.72 |
| Aruku | 1026561 | 47977 | 4.67 |
| Jamui | 908831 | 39450 | 4.34 |
| Nabarangpur | 1115118 | 44582 | 4.00 |
| Nawada | 907315 | 35147 | 3.87 |
| Samastipur | 983608 | 35417 | 3.60 |
| Jahanabad | 794382 | 27683 | 3.48 |
| Koraput | 1043600 | 36561 | 3.50 |
| Madhepura | 1108824 | 38450 | 3.47 |
| Valmiki Nagar | 997752 | 34338 | 3.44 |
| Gaya | 927218 | 30030 | 3.24 |
| Saran | 913389 | 28267 | 3.09 |
| Bhagalpur | 1010951 | 31567 | 3.12 |
| Dahod | 1031276 | 31936 | 3.10 |
| Singhbhum | 855059 | 24270 | 2.84 |
| Anakapalli | 1203594 | 34897 | 2.90 |
| Chhota Udaipur | 1199591 | 32868 | 2.74 |
| Khunti | 811132 | 21245 | 2.62 |
| Kodarma | 1178377 | 31164 | 2.64 |
| Karakat | 846694 | 22104 | 2.61 |
| Hajipur | 981605 | 25264 | 2.57 |
| Palghar | 1172462 | 29479 | 2.51 |
| Ratlam | 1365078 | 35431 | 2.60 |
| Aurangabad | 918963 | 22632 | 2.46 |

*Source: https://www.ndtv.com/elections/constituency.wise-nota-percentage-2019 accessed on 16-1-2020*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Vizianagaram | 1188389 | 29501 | 2.48 |
| Maharajganj | 950535 | 22168 | 2.33 |
| Purvi Champaran | 976694 | 22706 | 2.32 |
| Kanker | 1132480 | 26713 | 2.36 |
| Sarguja | 1251424 | 29265 | 2.34 |
| Almora | 678967 | 15505 | 2.28 |
| Gadchiroli-Chimur | 1118099 | 24599 | 2.20 |
| Srikakulam | 1131784 | 25545 | 2.26 |
| Darbhanga | 944528 | 20468 | 2.17 |
| Robertsganj | 967169 | 21118 | 2.18 |
| Dibrugarh | 994460 | 21288 | 2.14 |
| Banswara | 1409709 | 29962 | 2.13 |
| Mandla | 1485015 | 32240 | 2.17 |
| Faridkot | 955701 | 19246 | 2.01 |
| Arrah | 1058859 | 21825 | 2.06 |
| Tiruppur | 1097723 | 21861 | 1.99 |
| Tirupati | 1287734 | 25781 | 2.00 |
| Arunachal East | 288206 | 5575 | 1.93 |
| Mumbai South | 786496 | 15115 | 1.92 |
| Amreli | 891600 | 17567 | 1.97 |
| Mumbai North-West | 923272 | 18225 | 1.97 |
| Sasaram | 955761 | 18988 | 1.99 |
| Banda | 1015299 | 19250 | 1.90 |
| Panchmahal | 1063543 | 20133 | 1.89 |
| Mayurbhanj | 1127811 | 21343 | 1.89 |
| Coimbatore | 1227695 | 23190 | 1.89 |
| Udaipur | 1426339 | 28179 | 1.98 |
| Baramulla | 447422 | 8128 | 1.82 |
| Chennai Central | 771628 | 13822 | 1.79 |
| Nilgiris | 992570 | 18149 | 1.83 |
| Kachchh | 1004437 | 18761 | 1.87 |
| Warangal | 1042844 | 18801 | 1.80 |
| Giridih | 1087210 | 19708 | 1.81 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kishanganj | 1081881 | 19722 | 1.82 |
| Katihar | 1097150 | 20584 | 1.88 |
| Araria | 1149012 | 20618 | 1.79 |
| Kancheepuram | 1215951 | 21661 | 1.78 |
| Eluru | 1304043 | 23880 | 1.83 |
| Daman & Diu | 85982 | 1487 | 1.73 |
| Garhwal | 730508 | 12276 | 1.68 |
| Mumbai South -Central | 781683 | 13795 | 1.76 |
| Buxar | 970414 | 16447 | 1.69 |
| Shrawasti | 979899 | 17108 | 1.75 |
| Aska | 996518 | 17344 | 1.74 |
| Kheda | 1080356 | 18277 | 1.69 |
| Anand | 1090269 | 18392 | 1.69 |
| Korba | 1117698 | 19305 | 1.73 |
| Krishnagiri | 1141544 | 19825 | 1.74 |
| Thane | 1150092 | 20426 | 1.78 |
| Begusarai | 1205149 | 20445 | 1.70 |
| Kalahandi | 1207093 | 21199 | 1.76 |
| Mahasamund | 1198542 | 21218 | 1.77 |
| Rajampet | 1203015 | 21339 | 1.77 |
| Nandurbar | 1259813 | 21925 | 1.74 |
| Betul | 1335070 | 22787 | 1.71 |
| Bardoli | 1325124 | 22914 | 1.73 |
| Sriperumbudur | 1383439 | 23343 | 1.69 |
| North Goa | 421565 | 7063 | 1.68 |
| Junagadh | 989616 | 15608 | 1.58 |
| Chennai North | 939858 | 15687 | 1.67 |
| Madurai | 999839 | 16187 | 1.62 |
| Bhavnagar | 1024896 | 16383 | 1.60 |
| Bhiwandi | 988775 | 16397 | 1.66 |
| Anandpur Sahib | 1064592 | 17135 | 1.61 |
| Virudhunagar | 1057443 | 17292 | 1.64 |
| Purnia | 1135371 | 18569 | 1.64 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Godda | 1175353 | 18683 | 1.59 |
| Keonjhar | 1157085 | 19207 | 1.66 |
| Shahdol | 1217831 | 20027 | 1.64 |
| Chhindwara | 1227707 | 20324 | 1.66 |
| Chittoor | 1298916 | 20556 | 1.58 |
| Ongole | 1321503 | 20865 | 1.58 |
| Dadra & Nagar Haveli | 196033 | 2950 | 1.50 |
| Puducherry | 778561 | 12199 | 1.57 |
| Kalyan | 877301 | 13012 | 1.48 |
| Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg | 887325 | 13777 | 1.55 |
| Bansgaon | 955043 | 14093 | 1.48 |
| Berhampore | 975529 | 14381 | 1.47 |
| Ujiarpur | 954850 | 14434 | 1.51 |
| Ahmedabad West | 982305 | 14719 | 1.50 |
| Kaushambi | 959669 | 14769 | 1.54 |
| Chennai South | 1108966 | 16891 | 1.52 |
| Arani | 1126986 | 16921 | 1.50 |
| Rajkot | 1176953 | 18318 | 1.56 |
| Hoshangabad | 1247456 | 18413 | 1.48 |
| Valsad | 1241070 | 19307 | 1.56 |
| Rajnandgaon | 1287597 | 19436 | 1.51 |
| Sreerampur | 1381204 | 20501 | 1.48 |
| Alipurduars | 1359042 | 21175 | 1.56 |
| Mumbai North-East | 896527 | 12466 | 1.39 |
| Kandhamal | 928732 | 13253 | 1.43 |
| Nagarkurnool | 976322 | 13525 | 1.39 |
| Mahabubabad | 969452 | 14082 | 1.45 |
| Dumka | 1011572 | 14396 | 1.42 |
| Tiruchirappalli | 1033625 | 14437 | 1.40 |
| Fatehpur | 1028963 | 14692 | 1.43 |
| Erode | 1053068 | 14795 | 1.40 |
| Thanjavur | 1044118 | 15105 | 1.45 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pollachi | 1066765 | 15110 | 1.42 |
| Hamirpur | 1074623 | 15155 | 1.41 |
| Mirzapur | 1093612 | 15353 | 1.40 |
| Khammam | 1123999 | 15832 | 1.41 |
| Uttara Kannada | 1137463 | 16017 | 1.41 |
| Vadodara | 1205349 | 16999 | 1.41 |
| Salem | 1238329 | 17130 | 1.38 |
| Kakinada | 1217502 | 17153 | 1.41 |
| Rajahmundry | 1232340 | 18087 | 1.47 |
| Arambag | 1451486 | 20495 | 1.41 |
| South Goa | 419139 | 5436 | 1.30 |
| Autonomous District | 609541 | 8194 | 1.34 |
| Lohardaga | 806767 | 10783 | 1.34 |
| Pratapgarh | 902506 | 12159 | 1.35 |
| Hoshiarpur | 977923 | 12868 | 1.32 |
| Fatehgarh Sahib | 972903 | 13045 | 1.34 |
| Kaiserganj | 968232 | 13168 | 1.36 |
| Bahraich | 976659 | 13189 | 1.35 |
| Deoria | 1001942 | 13421 | 1.34 |
| Tenkasi | 1051513 | 14056 | 1.34 |
| Patan | 1111929 | 14327 | 1.29 |
| Firozpur | 1157142 | 14891 | 1.29 |
| Raichur | 1109464 | 14921 | 1.34 |
| Namakkal | 1118701 | 15073 | 1.35 |
| Medak | 1134833 | 15390 | 1.36 |
| Chidambaram | 1137657 | 15535 | 1.37 |
| Tezpur | 1174570 | 15626 | 1.33 |
| Jalna | 1192502 | 15637 | 1.31 |
| Amalapuram | 1214454 | 16449 | 1.35 |
| Visakhapatnam | 1223108 | 16646 | 1.36 |
| Nellore | 1269875 | 17161 | 1.35 |
| Bhilwara | 1293095 | 17418 | 1.35 |
| Hindupur | 1321086 | 17428 | 1.32 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jhargram | 1388522 | 17692 | 1.27 |
| Jalore | 1343905 | 17714 | 1.32 |
| Barasat | 1376997 | 17769 | 1.29 |
| Dhar | 1326203 | 17929 | 1.35 |
| Jhansi | 1362651 | 18239 | 1.34 |
| Thiruvallur | 1389914 | 18275 | 1.31 |
| Khargone | 1409184 | 18423 | 1.31 |
| Burdwan Durgapur | 1414467 | 18540 | 1.31 |
| Barmer | 1403275 | 18996 | 1.35 |
| Jalpaiguri | 1480994 | 19928 | 1.35 |
| Mumbai North-Central | 891115 | 10669 | 1.20 |
| Domariyaganj | 973512 | 11757 | 1.21 |
| Mumbai North | 977793 | 11966 | 1.22 |
| Jalandhar | 1006674 | 12324 | 1.22 |
| Sant Kabir Nagar | 1043233 | 12544 | 1.20 |
| Jorhat | 1045396 | 12569 | 1.20 |
| Banaskantha | 1089353 | 12728 | 1.17 |
| Barrackpore | 1091786 | 12731 | 1.17 |
| Rajmahal | 1034738 | 12919 | 1.25 |
| Adilabad | 1050694 | 13036 | 1.24 |
| Sambalpur | 1110999 | 13456 | 1.21 |
| Bikaner | 1086088 | 13510 | 1.24 |
| Sundargarh | 1086454 | 13675 | 1.26 |
| Palamau | 1195786 | 13961 | 1.17 |
| Dindigul | 1145869 | 14177 | 1.24 |
| Asansol | 1223688 | 14447 | 1.18 |
| Dum Dum | 1190669 | 14491 | 1.22 |
| Kadapa | 1213900 | 14692 | 1.21 |
| Kolkata Dakshin | 1191821 | 14824 | 1.24 |
| Lakhimpur | 1268369 | 15220 | 1.20 |
| Raigarh | 1334395 | 15729 | 1.18 |
| Maval | 1353093 | 15779 | 1.17 |
| Bolangir | 1290704 | 16001 | 1.24 |

| Diamond Harbour | 1392755 | 16247 | 1.17 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Anantapur | 1325840 | 16466 | 1.24 |
| Jhalawar-Baran | 1352788 | 17080 | 1.26 |
| Chittorgarh | 1441232 | 17528 | 1.22 |
| Mangaldoi | 1487589 | 18518 | 1.24 |
| Tura | 576587 | 6454 | 1.12 |
| Rae Bareli | 948304 | 10252 | 1.08 |
| Mahbubnagar | 974034 | 10600 | 1.09 |
| Tirunelveli | 1028803 | 10958 | 1.07 |
| Pune | 1024235 | 11001 | 1.07 |
| Zahirabad | 1033225 | 11140 | 1.08 |
| Tripura East | 1034203 | 11214 | 1.08 |
| Kangra | 995662 | 11327 | 1.14 |
| Raigad | 1013977 | 11490 | 1.13 |
| Viluppuram | 1123597 | 11943 | 1.06 |
| Tripura West | 1095795 | 11960 | 1.09 |
| Mahesana | 1069871 | 12067 | 1.13 |
| Bijapur | 1099068 | 12286 | 1.12 |
| Tiruvannamalai | 1139412 | 12317 | 1.08 |
| Guna | 1166020 | 12403 | 1.06 |
| Jalaun | 1117441 | 12514 | 1.12 |
| Nagaur | 1190075 | 13049 | 1.10 |
| Bathinda | 1182590 | 13220 | 1.12 |
| Dharmapuri | 1209826 | 13379 | 1.11 |
| Balurghat | 1184435 | 13414 | 1.13 |
| Raiganj | 1263360 | 13749 | 1.09 |
| Kolar | 1244662 | 13889 | 1.12 |
| Machilipatnam | 1227528 | 14077 | 1.15 |
| Baharampur | 1285911 | 14086 | 1.10 |
| Bargarh | 1233745 | 14167 | 1.15 |
| Gandhinagar | 1269876 | 14214 | 1.12 |
| Pali | 1344619 | 15180 | 1.13 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jadavpur | 1421353 | 15541 | 1.09 |
| Ganganagar | 1436222 | 15543 | 1.08 |
| Kaliabor | 1408774 | 15913 | 1.13 |
| Kokrajhar | 1463497 | 15988 | 1.09 |
| Khandwa | 1452133 | 16005 | 1.10 |
| Malkajgiri | 1545168 | 17895 | 1.16 |
| Amritsar | 847945 | 8713 | 1.03 |
| Secunderabad | 906068 | 9038 | 1.00 |
| Ballia | 980117 | 9615 | 0.98 |
| Sultanpur | 990545 | 9771 | 0.99 |
| Misrikh | 1016487 | 10181 | 1.00 |
| Sitamarhi | 1028531 | 10318 | 1.00 |
| Basti | 1044204 | 10335 | 0.99 |
| Surat | 1057880 | 10532 | 1.00 |
| Ludhiana | 1036417 | 10538 | 1.02 |
| Tikamgarh | 1086113 | 10599 | 0.98 |
| Fatehpur Sikri | 1026459 | 10692 | 1.04 |
| Dhaurahra | 1053042 | 10798 | 1.03 |
| Machhlishahr | 1024095 | 10830 | 1.06 |
| Hardoi | 1046534 | 11024 | 1.05 |
| Chandauli | 1073743 | 11218 | 1.04 |
| Dhenkanal | 1120268 | 11254 | 1.00 |
| Perambalur | 1091442 | 11325 | 1.04 |
| Ambedkar Nagar | 1078808 | 11344 | 1.05 |
| Kallakurichi | 1192799 | 11576 | 0.97 |
| Ramtek | 1184824 | 11920 | 1.01 |
| Bhongir | 1200610 | 12021 | 1.00 |
| Narsapuram | 1162375 | 12066 | 1.04 |
| Arakkonam | 1165881 | 12179 | 1.04 |
| Rajsamand | 1227174 | 12671 | 1.03 |
| Chamarajanagar | 1257942 | 12716 | 1.01 |
| Bapatla | 1253274 | 13218 | 1.05 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Narasaraopet | 1423973 | 13702 | 0.96 |
| Bankura | 1357836 | 14019 | 1.03 |
| Bishnupur | 1406212 | 14436 | 1.03 |
| Coochbehar | 1510193 | 14490 | 0.96 |
| Medinipur | 1395057 | 14758 | 1.06 |
| Murshidabad | 1438730 | 15025 | 1.04 |
| Chandigarh | 452233 | 4335 | 0.96 |
| Allahabad | 881431 | 7625 | 0.87 |
| Chatra | 917625 | 8312 | 0.91 |
| Shimla | 905251 | 8357 | 0.92 |
| Gonda | 915398 | 8418 | 0.92 |
| Siwan | 976324 | 8486 | 0.87 |
| Silchar | 941149 | 8547 | 0.91 |
| Peddapalle | 961080 | 8971 | 0.93 |
| Bhadohi | 1030303 | 9087 | 0.88 |
| Muzaffarpur | 1048915 | 9171 | 0.87 |
| Aonla | 1043597 | 9198 | 0.88 |
| Jhanjharpur | 1051359 | 9203 | 0.88 |
| Vaishali | 1065513 | 9217 | 0.87 |
| Thoothukkudi | 982029 | 9234 | 0.94 |
| Sivaganga | 1075185 | 9283 | 0.86 |
| Faizabad | 1077733 | 9388 | 0.87 |
| Nagapattinam | 992745 | 9463 | 0.95 |
| Gurdaspur | 1094327 | 9560 | 0.87 |
| Karur | 1093560 | 9603 | 0.88 |
| Munger | 1026526 | 9742 | 0.95 |
| Jalgaon | 1077975 | 10332 | 0.96 |
| Chikkodi | 1207187 | 10362 | 0.86 |
| Maharajganj | 1216438 | 10478 | 0.86 |
| Gulbarga | 1178874 | 10487 | 0.89 |
| Theni | 1162803 | 10686 | 0.92 |
| Bangalore Central | 1186474 | 10760 | 0.91 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mohanlalganj | 1258250 | 10790 | 0.86 |
| Koppal | 1176910 | 10800 | 0.92 |
| Patiala | 1166793 | 11110 | 0.95 |
| Unnao | 1225886 | 11190 | 0.91 |
| Bagalkot | 1193285 | 11328 | 0.95 |
| Jangipur | 1293149 | 11355 | 0.88 |
| Chandrapur | 1227097 | 11377 | 0.93 |
| Hassan | 1265890 | 11662 | 0.92 |
| Jodhpur | 1334555 | 11688 | 0.88 |
| Maldaha Dakshin | 1267140 | 12062 | 0.95 |
| Kota | 1354445 | 12589 | 0.93 |
| Hooghly | 1444317 | 13525 | 0.94 |
| Ghatal | 1475008 | 13810 | 0.94 |
| Anantnag | 123959 | 937 | 0.76 |
| Srinagar | 185266 | 1566 | 0.85 |
| Kottayam | 903148 | 7191 | 0.80 |
| Chalakudy | 982646 | 7578 | 0.77 |
| Khagaria | 959217 | 7596 | 0.79 |
| Alathur | 1011021 | 7722 | 0.76 |
| Jamnagar | 1003166 | 7799 | 0.78 |
| Salempur | 913267 | 7799 | 0.85 |
| Porbandar | 942107 | 7840 | 0.83 |
| Phulpur | 970354 | 7882 | 0.81 |
| Akbarpur | 1017320 | 7994 | 0.79 |
| Hamirpur | 980739 | 8026 | 0.82 |
| Mayiladuthurai | 1089012 | 8231 | 0.76 |
| Kushi Nagar | 1044820 | 8297 | 0.79 |
| Nalanda | 1022860 | 8426 | 0.82 |
| Badaun | 1072502 | 8606 | 0.80 |
| Cuddalore | 1034477 | 8725 | 0.84 |
| Sagar | 1028442 | 8733 | 0.85 |
| Kheri | 1127910 | 8750 | 0.78 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Barabanki | 1146556 | 8785 | 0.77 |
| Surendranagar | 1068939 | 8787 | 0.82 |
| Akola | 1110574 | 8866 | 0.80 |
| Sitapur | 1055648 | 8873 | 0.84 |
| Ahmedabad East | 1107359 | 9008 | 0.81 |
| Shahjahanpur | 1177120 | 9037 | 0.77 |
| Raver | 1083755 | 9216 | 0.85 |
| Satara | 1106207 | 9227 | 0.83 |
| Supaul | 1101462 | 9343 | 0.85 |
| Dindori | 1128185 | 9446 | 0.84 |
| Ajmer | 1252636 | 9578 | 0.76 |
| Nandyal | 1289302 | 9791 | 0.76 |
| Bangalore South | 1178553 | 9938 | 0.84 |
| Pilibhit | 1176616 | 9973 | 0.85 |
| Churu | 1318444 | 9978 | 0.76 |
| Janjgir-Champa | 1237669 | 9981 | 0.81 |
| Osmanabad | 1194706 | 10024 | 0.84 |
| Ujjain | 1242314 | 10197 | 0.82 |
| Tumkur | 1234563 | 10295 | 0.83 |
| Khajuraho | 1247477 | 10306 | 0.83 |
| Rajgarh | 1249954 | 10375 | 0.83 |
| Joynagar | 1345659 | 10443 | 0.78 |
| Bhandara-Gondiya | 1234407 | 10524 | 0.85 |
| Nainital Udhamsingh Nagar | 1247962 | 10608 | 0.85 |
| Darjeeling | 1256645 | 10625 | 0.85 |
| Purulia | 1340938 | 11304 | 0.84 |
| Bolpur | 1448991 | 12278 | 0.85 |
| Birbhum | 1437105 | 12318 | 0.86 |
| Bangalore Rural | 1609452 | 12454 | 0.77 |
| Ladakh | 125504 | 922 | 0.73 |
| Andaman & Nicobar Islands | 205884 | 1412 | 0.69 |
| Tehri Garhwal | 869793 | 6276 | 0.72 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| New Delhi | 913940 | 6601 | 0.72 |
| Banka | 989181 | 6625 | 0.67 |
| Mainpuri | 969807 | 6711 | 0.69 |
| Kolkata Uttar | 943877 | 6736 | 0.71 |
| Sheohar | 997542 | 7017 | 0.70 |
| Jajpur | 1084923 | 7161 | 0.66 |
| Cuttack | 1052254 | 7236 | 0.69 |
| Azamgarh | 1021857 | 7255 | 0.71 |
| Karauli-Dholpur | 990725 | 7319 | 0.74 |
| Dausa | 1055440 | 7394 | 0.70 |
| Lucknow | 1109029 | 7416 | 0.67 |
| Farrukhabad | 995516 | 7437 | 0.75 |
| Udupi Chikmagalur | 1143502 | 7510 | 0.66 |
| Hazaribagh | 1073390 | 7539 | 0.70 |
| Ramanathapuram | 1058551 | 7595 | 0.72 |
| Damoh | 1156570 | 7656 | 0.66 |
| Buldhana | 1112678 | 7681 | 0.69 |
| Karimnagar | 1139718 | 7979 | 0.70 |
| Kannauj | 1132331 | 8165 | 0.72 |
| Jhunjhunu | 1190430 | 8497 | 0.71 |
| Hathras | 1141726 | 8568 | 0.75 |
| Vidisha | 1241625 | 8619 | 0.69 |
| Kolhapur | 1322161 | 8691 | 0.66 |
| Vijayawada | 1268800 | 8911 | 0.70 |
| Tonk-Sawai Madhopur | 1224484 | 8974 | 0.73 |
| Bellary | 1212902 | 9024 | 0.74 |
| Navsari | 1298985 | 9033 | 0.70 |
| Chevella | 1290950 | 9244 | 0.72 |
| Jaipur Rural | 1267342 | 9351 | 0.74 |
| Uluberia | 1301700 | 9399 | 0.72 |
| Mandsour | 1361236 | 9431 | 0.69 |
| Barpeta | 1448815 | 9734 | 0.67 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| North West Delhi | 1392752 | 10210 | 0.73 |
| Tamluk | 1435966 | 10533 | 0.73 |
| Nowgong | 1482718 | 10757 | 0.73 |
| Bardhaman Purba | 1428526 | 10760 | 0.75 |
| Bangalore North | 1547827 | 11632 | 0.75 |
| Sikkim | 349467 | 2279 | 0.65 |
| Shillong | 779770 | 4420 | 0.57 |
| Mandi | 936073 | 5298 | 0.57 |
| Idukki | 913980 | 5317 | 0.58 |
| Ernakulam | 961875 | 5378 | 0.56 |
| Madhubani | 958085 | 5623 | 0.59 |
| Hyderabad | 872219 | 5653 | 0.65 |
| Attingal | 999203 | 5685 | 0.57 |
| Mavelikkara | 965281 | 5754 | 0.60 |
| Kollam | 962105 | 6018 | 0.63 |
| Alappuzha | 1082624 | 6104 | 0.56 |
| Kanniyakumari | 1042246 | 6131 | 0.59 |
| Bhubaneswar | 999059 | 6156 | 0.62 |
| Solapur | 1078323 | 6191 | 0.57 |
| Ponnani | 1011034 | 6231 | 0.62 |
| Etah | 993330 | 6277 | 0.63 |
| Sangrur | 1099398 | 6490 | 0.59 |
| Wardha | 1066060 | 6510 | 0.61 |
| Nagina | 1002928 | 6528 | 0.65 |
| Karimganj | 1053517 | 6555 | 0.62 |
| Latur | 1169978 | 6564 | 0.56 |
| Pataliputra | 1071173 | 6576 | 0.61 |
| Rampur | 1054344 | 6577 | 0.62 |
| Sangli | 1183373 | 6585 | 0.56 |
| Amroha | 1162565 | 6617 | 0.57 |
| Palakkad | 1021585 | 6665 | 0.65 |
| Firozabad | 1069190 | 6676 | 0.62 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ghazipur | 1098756 | 6871 | 0.63 |
| Nashik | 1114252 | 6980 | 0.63 |
| Hatkanangle | 1245103 | 7108 | 0.57 |
| Puri | 1128403 | 7217 | 0.64 |
| Sambhal | 1176239 | 7230 | 0.61 |
| Haveri | 1259267 | 7412 | 0.59 |
| Balasore | 1150435 | 7436 | 0.65 |
| Udhampur | 1172555 | 7568 | 0.65 |
| Kurnool | 1174342 | 7669 | 0.65 |
| Gorakhpur | 1176947 | 7688 | 0.65 |
| Sikar | 1319153 | 7816 | 0.59 |
| Baramati | 1296860 | 7868 | 0.61 |
| Ambala | 1308292 | 7943 | 0.61 |
| Chikkballapur | 1378938 | 8025 | 0.58 |
| Maldaha Uttar | 1346667 | 8039 | 0.60 |
| Gautam Buddha Nagar | 1384581 | 8371 | 0.60 |
| Kanthi | 1415560 | 8687 | 0.61 |
| West Delhi | 1432664 | 8937 | 0.62 |
| Dewas | 1387719 | 9025 | 0.65 |
| Basirhat | 1424233 | 9106 | 0.64 |
| Ranaghat | 1474898 | 9137 | 0.62 |
| Gauhati | 1753291 | 10466 | 0.60 |
| Arunachal West | 356420 | 1889 | 0.53 |
| Mizoram | 497112 | 2509 | 0.50 |
| Kanpur | 838937 | 4057 | 0.48 |
| Thiruvananthapuram | 1005600 | 4580 | 0.46 |
| Bhind | 956057 | 4630 | 0.48 |
| Baghpat | 1039853 | 5041 | 0.48 |
| Lalganj | 955508 | 5060 | 0.53 |
| Patna Sahib | 977209 | 5076 | 0.52 |
| Khadoor Sahib | 1040902 | 5130 | 0.49 |
| Chandni Chowk | 975257 | 5133 | 0.53 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Amravati | 1107063 | 5322 | 0.48 |
| Ghosi | 1135457 | 5324 | 0.47 |
| Shirdi | 1023968 | 5394 | 0.53 |
| Nalgonda | 1170143 | 5560 | 0.48 |
| Etawah | 1022205 | 5610 | 0.55 |
| Bharatpur | 1141159 | 5638 | 0.49 |
| Bulandshahr | 1117910 | 5719 | 0.51 |
| Mathura | 1096931 | 5800 | 0.53 |
| Jamshedpur | 1138413 | 5813 | 0.51 |
| Agra | 1139506 | 5817 | 0.51 |
| Shirur | 1287066 | 6051 | 0.47 |
| Jagatsinghpur | 1223133 | 6057 | 0.50 |
| Sabarkantha | 1212251 | 6103 | 0.50 |
| Nanded | 1123236 | 6114 | 0.54 |
| Aligarh | 1156916 | 6268 | 0.54 |
| Hardwar | 1264749 | 6281 | 0.50 |
| Meerut | 1210097 | 6316 | 0.52 |
| Bharuch | 1143404 | 6321 | 0.55 |
| Howrah | 1215956 | 6337 | 0.52 |
| Bhadrak | 1217218 | 6536 | 0.54 |
| Kendrapara | 1229878 | 6588 | 0.54 |
| Shimoga | 1275417 | 6862 | 0.54 |
| Mathurapur | 1395043 | 6910 | 0.50 |
| Dakshina Kannada | 1337659 | 7380 | 0.55 |
| Ghaziabad | 1516961 | 7495 | 0.49 |
| Krishnanagar | 1358935 | 7508 | 0.55 |
| Bangaon | 1400228 | 7530 | 0.54 |
| Dhubri | 1676027 | 8978 | 0.54 |
| Bareilly | 1064518 | 3824 | 0.36 |
| Kannur | 1050014 | 3828 | 0.36 |
| Amethi | 938513 | 3940 | 0.42 |
| Varanasi | 1056439 | 4037 | 0.38 |
| Hingoli | 1153274 | 4242 | 0.37 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Thrissur | 1037616 | 4253 | 0.41 |
| Bilaspur | 1205069 | 4365 | 0.36 |
| Chitradurga | 1241582 | 4368 | 0.35 |
| Ranchi | 1231060 | 4381 | 0.36 |
| Bijnor | 1096359 | 4404 | 0.40 |
| Kasaragod | 1095634 | 4417 | 0.40 |
| Malappuram | 1030138 | 4480 | 0.43 |
| Parbhani | 1248232 | 4550 | 0.36 |
| Nagpur | 1181473 | 4578 | 0.39 |
| East Delhi | 1252901 | 4920 | 0.39 |
| Aurangabad | 1193292 | 4929 | 0.41 |
| Faridabad | 1322309 | 4986 | 0.38 |
| Muzaffarnagar | 1154961 | 5110 | 0.44 |
| South Delhi | 1208958 | 5264 | 0.44 |
| Gwalior | 1190753 | 5343 | 0.45 |
| Mysore | 1312695 | 5346 | 0.41 |
| Alwar | 1260289 | 5385 | 0.43 |
| Gurgaon | 1441120 | 5389 | 0.37 |
| Bhopal | 1402524 | 5430 | 0.39 |
| Karnal | 1295259 | 5463 | 0.42 |
| Sidhi | 1277078 | 5627 | 0.44 |
| Moradabad | 1276449 | 5757 | 0.45 |
| Guntur | 1345468 | 6006 | 0.45 |
| Jaipur | 1449882 | 6522 | 0.45 |
| Inner Manipur | 756687 | 2614 | 0.35 |
| Outer Manipur | 855254 | 2775 | 0.32 |
| Rewa | 1010360 | 2891 | 0.29 |
| Hisar | 1176912 | 2957 | 0.25 |
| Davanagere | 1191488 | 3098 | 0.26 |
| Kurukshetra | 1227004 | 3198 | 0.26 |
| Belgaum | 1201996 | 3233 | 0.27 |
| Pathanamthitta | 1023201 | 3352 | 0.33 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Vadakara | 1062204 | 3415 | 0.32 |
| Kozhikode | 1072720 | 3473 | 0.32 |
| Dharwad | 1209993 | 3512 | 0.29 |
| Mandya | 1375684 | 3526 | 0.26 |
| Kairana | 1120505 | 3542 | 0.32 |
| Madha | 1212653 | 3666 | 0.30 |
| Yavatmal-Washim | 1170254 | 3966 | 0.34 |
| Ahmadnagar | 1199725 | 4072 | 0.34 |
| Jabalpur | 1259471 | 4102 | 0.33 |
| Balaghat | 1367776 | 4242 | 0.31 |
| Durg | 1387725 | 4271 | 0.31 |
| Saharanpur | 1227462 | 4284 | 0.35 |
| Raipur | 1391958 | 4292 | 0.31 |
| Sirsa | 1365147 | 4339 | 0.32 |
| Dhanbad | 1248471 | 4346 | 0.35 |
| North East Delhi | 1456886 | 4589 | 0.31 |
| Indore | 1624063 | 5045 | 0.31 |
| Lakshadweep | 46909 | 100 | 0.21 |
| Bidar | 1115219 | 1948 | 0.17 |
| Nizamabad | 1060737 | 2031 | 0.19 |
| Bhiwani Mahendragarh | 1159074 | 2041 | 0.18 |
| Nagaland | 1004293 | 2064 | 0.21 |
| Morena | 1135192 | 2098 | 0.18 |
| Wayanad | 1090042 | 2155 | 0.20 |
| Jaunpur | 1038229 | 2441 | 0.24 |
| Sonipat | 1127068 | 2464 | 0.22 |
| Dhule | 1082563 | 2475 | 0.23 |
| Beed | 1349899 | 2500 | 0.19 |
| Jammu | 1476177 | 2618 | 0.18 |
| Satna | 1111012 | 2644 | 0.24 |
| Rohtak | 1217570 | 3001 | 0.25 |

THE STATE FARMING CORPORATION OF KERALA LIMITED
( A GOVERNMENT OF KERALA UNDERTAKING)
An ISO : 9001 Certified Company
Vettithitta.P.O, Alimukku (via), Punalur-689 696
CIN : U01115KL1972SGC002418

Committed to Quality and Customer satisfaction
Maintaining International Quality Standards

**MAIN PRODUCTS**

1. 60% Centrifuged latex having ISO 9001 Certification
2. Skim Crepe and
3. Estate Brown Crepe

Produced from the Raw Rubber obtained from our own Estates

SFCK is also producing High yielding polybag Rubber Plants of
RRII-105, RRII-414, RRII-430

**OUR NEW PRODUCTS**

1. Vermi Compost  -  100% Organic Fertiliser.
2. Vermi Wash     –  100% Organic Fertiliser.
3. Farm Honey     –  Naturally produced in our Estates without any preservatives.

For commercial Enquiries :- Web: www.sfckerala.com/e-mail:sfckpnlr@gmail.com

Phone : 04752222245/51/52
Fax    : 0475/2222532

K.K.ASHARAF
CHAIRMAN

S.K.SURESH
MANAGING DIRECTOR

474

addicted to

# life

**Say No to Drinks**
**Say No to Drugs**

Join hands with Government of Kerala and Excise Department
to spread awareness of the harmful effects of
Liquor and Drug consumption

Issued in Public Interest by
KERALA STATE BEVERAGES ( M&M ) CORPORATION LIMITED

# INDIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

The Indian Council of Social Science Research, (ICSSR) an autonomous organization established by the Government of India, promotes research and publications in Social Science.

## Social Science in Perspective

*(Quarterly Journal of C.Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library)*
Place on record its obligation to ICSSR for financial support and academic recognition.

# C. ACHUTHA MENON FOUNDATION PUBLICATIONS

1.  *Achutha Menon Souvenir* (Mal) (1993).

2.  K.V. Surendranath (ed.) (1993): *For An Indian Model: Essays in Homage to C. Achutha Menon*, Trivandrum.

3.  K.V. Surendranath (ed.) (2002): *Diary Notings of C. Achutha Menon* (Mal.), Current Books, Thrissur.

4.  *Selected Works of C. Achutha Menon* (Mal.) (2002): Manorama Publications, Kottayam.

5.  *C. Achutha Menon Smrithi Chitrangal* (Mal) (2004): Pappiyon, Kozhikode.

6.  K.V. Surendranath (2006): *Man, Vision and Environment* (Mal), Gautha Books, Trivandrum.

7.  K.V. Surendranath (2006): *Lokathinte Mukalthattilude* (Mal), Gautha Books, Trivandrum.

8.  *K.V. Surendranath Souvenir* (2006): Sahithya Keralam, Special Edition, C.Achutha Menon Foundation.

9.  V. Sundaresan (ed.) (2007): *K. Damodaran Smrithi Chithrangal* (Mal), Goutha Books, Trivandrum.

10. Sureshkumar R.K. and P. Sureshkumar (eds.) (2006): *Governance and Development*, APH, New Dehi.

11. Suresh Kumar R.K. and P. Sureshkumar (2008): *Development, Politics and Society: Left Politics in Kerala - A Disinterested Perspective*, APH, New Delhi

12. K. Raman Pillai (2010)*: Facets of Indian Politics,* APH, New Delhi

478

13. K. Raman Pillai (ed.) (2010): *Land Reforms*, APH, New Delhi.

14. Raman Pillai K., R.K. Sureshkumar & P. Sukumaran Nair (eds.) (2013): *Electoral Reforms*, Kalpaz, New Delhi.

15. V. Sundaresan (ed.) (2013) : *C. Achutha Menon Smrithi Chithrangal* (Mal), C.Achutha Menon Foundation, Thiruvananthapuram.

16. V. Sundaresan (ed.) (2013) : *Kavisanghamam* (Mal), C.Achutha Menon Foundation, Thiruvanantahpuram

17. K. Raman Pillai (Chief ed.) : *C.Achutha Menon Birth Centenary Souvenir* (Mal.) (2013), C.Achutha Menon Foundation, Thiruvananthapuram.

18. Vivekanandan B., R.K. Suresh Kumar & P. Sukumaran Nair (eds.) (2014) : *India Today: Issues Before the Nation - A Festschrift in Honour of Prof. (Dr.) K. Raman Pillai.*, Gyan, New Delhi.

19. Suresh Kumar R.K. and P. Suresh Kumar (2014): *Vikasanam Rashtreeyam Samooham : Keralathile Edathupaksha Rashtreeyam Oru Abhiveekshanam* (Mal), C. Achutha Menon Foundation, Thiruvananthapuram.

20. Suresh Kumar R.K. (2014): *Manavikathayude Prakasagopuramayi Oraal.* (Mal), C. Achutha Menon Foundation, Thiruvananthapuram.

21. Raman Pillai K., R.K. Suresh Kumar & P.Sukumaran Nair (eds.) (2016) : *Panchayati Raj Experience in India*, Kalpaz, New Delhi.

22. R.K.Suresh Kumar & P.Suresh Kumar (eds.) (2016) : *Mattoru Keralam Sadhyamanu (Mal)*, Prabhat, Thiruvananthapuram.

# C. ACHUTHA MENON FOUNDATION (STUDY CENTRE AND LIBRARY)

C. Achutha Menon Foundation (Study Centre and Library)
was registered in 1992 under the Travancore - Cochin Literary
Scientific and Charitable Societies Registration Act 1955

### The aims and objects of the Foundation are

- To promote and assist basic and scientific studies in disciplines such as sociology, economics, philosophy, historiography and political science relevant to the problems confronting the Nation.

- To engage in the extension of basic and scientific knowledge concerning various spheres of social life.

- To organize study classes, debates and discussion on the above mentioned matters.

- To facilitate continuing exchange of ideas among scholars of different disciplines.

- To organize and maintain libraries

- To institute research centres and organize research studies.

- To publish books, periodicals, commentaries, reports, or research papers on studies relating to social life.

- To initiate activities that would bring about democratic decentralization so that the masses actively participate in the developmental activities and democratic processes in the country.

- To formulate and implement projects and activities in aid of the weaker sections and individuals suffering from privation.

- To co-operate and interact with national and international organizations and institutions in furtherance of the above.

Statement about Ownership and Other Particulars About
**SOCIAL SCIENCE IN PERSPECTIVE**
**FORM - IV**
(See Rule 8)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Place of Publication | : | C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Thiruvananthapuram |
| 2. | Periodicity of Publication | : | Quarterly |
| 3. | Printer's Name | : | Dr. R.K.Suresh Kumar |
| | Nationality | : | Indian |
| | Address | : | C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram 695 012 |
| 4. | Publisher's Name | : | Dr. R.K. Suresh Kumar |
| | Nationality | : | Indian |
| | Address | : | C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram 695 012 |
| 5. | Editor's Name | : | Dr. R.K. Suresh Kumar |
| | Nationality | : | Indian |
| | Address | : | C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram 695 012 |
| 6. | Name and Address of individuals who own the news paper and partners or shareholders holding more than one percent of the total capital. | : | C. Achutha Menon Study Centre & Library, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram 695 012 |

I, Dr. R.K. Suresh kumar, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sd/-

Dated : 25-09-2009 **Dr. R.K. Suresh Kumar**
Publisher