

SACH

South Asian Composite Heritage

ISSUE NO. 64 ■ OCTOBER -DECEMBER 2021

Social Movements : Shared Struggle and Solidarity in South Asia

IN the present day world, more than ever, South Asian countries have realized the increasing importance of unity and social movements in the face of rising disparity and inequality. Ironically the more we move on the path of unity, justice and social movement, challenges also increases in the same manner. Despite all this, it is much clearer that at present in this critical juncture of human history in every South Asian country the unity for people's movements for justice, peace and environment protection is indispensable.

South Asia has a long history of social movements. The Chipko Movement of the 1970's - 80's is one of the most impactful and strong people's movement – an attempt to protect the environment and the forests and for justice, that was born out of a spontaneous collective response of the people in remote villages whose life depended on the forests and in turn the community preserved and nourished the forests. It is one of the biggest movements where women played a pivotal role in making the movement a success. The Language Movement of Bangladesh in 1950's for the protection and assertion of linguistic and cultural identity is yet another important historical event, through which not only erstwhile East Bengal now Bangladesh but entire whole world learnt how cultural movements can steer a political one, with patience, courage, integrity, and determination of the concerned people.

Such shared struggles have always inspired human beings in every part of the world and gives them courage to fight for their rights and dignity. Whenever the powerful try to manipulate the reality by every unfair means and citizens feel threatened they rise above all norms and raise their voices against the oppression and injustices.

The *Gwadar Ko Haq Do* (Give Gwadar their Rights) movement is one of the contemporary movements that saw tens of thousands of women, men, and young children marching on the main roads of the city, against their own provincial government in Pakistan. They demanded the better life of the people of Balochistan, removal of check post and action against trawler mafia which has ruined the livelihood of the local fishermen in the coastal city. Similarly the Farmer's Movement of India against its own government to repeal the arbitrary farm laws is another movement that was witnessed by the world. Sometimes spontaneous collective action by few individuals with similar ideas takes shape of a social movement. In 2021 Nepal witnessed such series of social movements where women came together on the streets of Kathmandu to demand an end to violence against women, there was a movement against upper-caste people against caste discrimination and few individuals marched for 20 days demanding fair investigation into the death of Nakunni Dhobi . Such collective actions and movement show that shared struggle of people not only preserves democratic spaces, it further strengthens the belief that one doesn't need to accept the status quo rather she/he can change it.

However all the socio-political movements are not about collective actions on streets only, it can emerge from your living room spaces through sharing and learning, because behind each and every social movement there is an individual's conviction against injustice. Social movements have always been part of human history and have built a strong unity. The shared struggle of people against all odds has always brought justice to humankind.

Solidarity

By **TORIN**, NORTH CAROLINA

We share the same goals
And the same
Hopes
Our skin
Only conceals
What our blood reveals

We are a nation in crisis

But hopefully
The crisis doesn't tear us apart
As most would expect
But rather
It brings us together

One love
One heart
Let's get together and feel alright

Yes
We're on the brink
The brink of finding peace
We can make a change forward
For the best

One love

Courtesy : Hello Poetry

Remembering Chipko Movement: The Women-led Indigenous Struggle

By PALLAVI, INDIA

The Chipko resistance is one of the most meaningful social attempts to right a power asymmetry, born out of a spontaneous rural outburst that spread through Northern India, creating waves in its wake in the 1970s-80s.

SOCIETY is built on power imbalances and wherever there are power imbalances, there will always be conflicts. Social movements are one of the primary channels to express these conflicts and create some sort of structural equilibrium. The *Chipko* resistance is one of the most meaningful social attempts to right a power asymmetry, born out of a spontaneous rural outburst that spread through Northern India, creating waves in its wake in the 1970s-80s. Its distinctive character becomes all the more important when one analyses the pivotal role that women played in making the movement a success.

The real roots of the *Chipko* movement go back to 1730, when Amrita Devi led the movement to resist soldiers from cutting down trees, on the orders of the *Maharaja of Jodhpur*, in her native Khejarli village. In the ensuing violence, 363 members of the Bishnoi tribe were beheaded as they hugged the trees to prevent them from being cut. The news of the massacre made the *Maharaja* pass a decree, disallowing the felling of trees in the area, and left two unforgettable legacies behind—the value of collective protest and the importance of women in local resistance. Using Neil

Smelser's six stages structural strain theory, one can discern the imminent causes of the *Chipko* movement, literally 'to hug' in Hindi, and its growth.

STAGE I: PEOPLE IN SOCIETY EXPERIENCING SOME SORT OF PROBLEM

Villages in Uttarakhand were experiencing severe ecological strain due to the unsustainable extraction of resources by the government. In a continuation of a colonial practice that began in 1821, the government systematically began to close off more and more forest area from the natives. It gave contracts to private companies who ruthlessly withdrew forest goods without a thought to the long term effects, which the locals kept in mind while utilizing forest resources.

Large scale clearing of trees for the building of roads had left the area prone to disastrous landslides which devastated the community. Government programmes for development, such as in education and health, did not exhibit the desired results and the condition of the locals remained poor. There was a clear incompatibility between government interests, which were exploitative

in their profit-oriented drive, and local interests, which depended on forests to survive.

STAGE II: RECOGNITION BY PEOPLE OF THAT SOCIETY THAT THIS PROBLEM EXISTS

Women were particularly vulnerable to government channelled private bleeding of resources due to the unique social circumstances in the area. A significant proportion of households in the area were single-member female ones and the demographic was biased in favour of females. There was also large scale male migration, which meant that the responsibility of running the household fell on the women.

The gendered division of work prohibited them from ploughing farmland, but they actively weeded, planted and harvested it. Collection of forest materials for sale, such as honey, or for subsistence, such as firewood, was also a largely female-driven process, making their very survival indelibly tied to the natural ecosystem. They recognized the relationship between the environment and landslides relatively early on, and in the face of increasing resource scarcity, allied with the men to protect their forests.

STAGE III: AN IDEOLOGY PURPORTING TO BE A SOLUTION FOR THE PROBLEM DEVELOPS AND SPREADS ITS INFLUENCE

For the women, the movement became about conserving as well as challenging a norm. They wanted to protect the environment, preserving its state. Simultaneously, they questioned the status quo, biased in favour of men, and demanded a say in decisions which affected them. Eco-

feminism became an important factor in the development of the movement, emphasizing as it did the relationship between the exploitation of nature and the suppression of women.

STAGE IV: AN EVENT OR EVENTS TRANSPIRE THAT CONVERT THIS NASCENT MOVEMENT INTO A BONA FIDE SOCIAL MOVEMENT

The modern movement was triggered in 1973 in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district and restricted itself to non-violent measures to express dissent. The immediate cause was the allotment of an entire ash tree forest to the *Simon Company* for commercial purposes. The same forests had been petitioned for by the villagers to make their agricultural tools, but had been denied. The allotment to the private company inflamed the furious locals further and on the day allotted for felling, they came out in large numbers to fight for their livelihood and subsistence.

They sang folk songs and clasped the trees, daring officials to fell them. Despite the brutality they faced, they refused to give up and eventually the company retreated without a single tree being felled. In the ensuing debates, the *Forest Department* finally agreed to let the locals use the ash trees, after cancelling its contract with the *Simon Company*. The success of the resistance bred the *Chipko* movement, which became an acclaimed means in the area to safeguard local interests.

Local leaders such as CP Bhatt and Sunderlal Bahuguna began propagating the cause and mobilizing the villagers, yet the large role the women played in the movement is somewhat ignored. A careful analysis reveals that the *Chipko* movement is largely based



on spontaneous demonstrations where these leaders were absent, and there were very few *organized* protests.

Gaura Devi and Sudesha Devi are two popular leaders in a large sea of women overshadowed by their male counterparts who played an equally important role in securing forests rights and protecting the environment. In 1974, the former led the women against local loggers who appeared to fell trees, when the men were negotiating with the government for land compensation. Refusing to be daunted, Gaura Devi referred to the trees as her '*maika*' (mother's home) and invited the loggers to shoot her instead of harming the forests.

Ultimately, the loggers were forced to withdraw from the Reni village in the face of the mass demonstration by the women. Similarly, Sudesha Devi spearheaded the women's drive to protect the Rampur forests from contractors, going as far as to spend nights amongst the trees to shield them from abuse and destruction.

After initial successes, the movement developed a gendered split most evident in the example of the Dongri village. The *Horticulture Department* came to an agreement with an all-male council in the village which allowed them to fell trees in the area in exchange for a cement road and secondary school, among other things. They believed that the development of the village was more important than the protection of the trees, which was in complete opposition to what the women believed. The threat to their subsistence prompted the women to go against the men in the village and protest the felling, forcing the company to withdraw. This polarized the movement and the women were subsequently banned from village meetings but they persisted to safeguard their interests and conserve the environment.

The lack of support from the community also gave the Chipko movement a distinctive tinge in fighting against familial oppression. They saw the movement as a means to assert

their freedom, and it also broadened into a movement against alcoholism at one point. The *Chipko* resistance became an umbrella movement to conserve the environment, fight the private sector and government and resist patriarchal norms.

STAGE V: THE SOCIETY (AND ITS GOVERNMENT) IS OPEN TO CHANGE FOR THE MOVEMENT TO BE EFFECTIVE

There were several wins in the protests that took place especially in terms of government acquiesce to popular demands. A notable concession included a fifteen-year governmental ban against felling trees in the Himalayan region till the forest cover was restored. It is believed that the *Forest Conservation Act (1980)* and subsequent creation of the *Environment Ministry* were due to the pressure created by the *Chipko* movement.

STAGE VI: MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES TAKES PLACE AS THE MOVEMENT DEVELOPS FURTHER.

The non-violent means of protest employed received international acclaim and the widespread involvement of women brought Eco-feminism to the foreground in worldwide conservation debates. Mahila Mandals became important local networks to ensure proper usage of forest resources and gave women an additional path to organize and affect decision making about matters that concerned them.

The dwindling of the movement can be attributed to several factors. The polarization between the *Bahuguna* and *Bhatt* camps of conservation and the lack of support from the *Communist Party of India* are among them. The region that birthed the *Chipko* resistance is now ironically littered with *ped kato* (cut the tree) activists. Yet, the importance of the protest cannot be undermined because of its present day decay the importance of non violent social movements and women's participation remain timeless legacies of the *Chipko* movement.

Courtesy: feminisamindia.com

How the Farmers' Protest Affirmed the Potential of India's Grassroots Democracy

By ANMOL WARAICH AND G.S. GORAYA, INDIA

ON January 28, 2021, as the pictures of impending police action at the Ghazipur border flooded our television screens and mainstream media labelled the protesting farmers as 'anti-nationals', it seemed all but certain that the farmers' protests were coming to an anti-climactic end. No one could have foreseen what followed.

After Rakesh Tikait's emotional appeal, the protest became stronger than ever before. Overnight, thousands of farmers reached Delhi's borders and in what can only be called an exemplary model of resilience, the farmers held their ground for the next 10 months, their ultimate victory coming on November 19, 2021.

While there will be much more to unravel and explore – and keep academics and observers of Indian politics busy for decades – this article focuses on some fundamental themes of the farmers' protest which we hope will be useful for understanding the true tenacity and resilience of the movement.

We hope our analysis will throw light on some of the movement's important aspects; specifically, how the farmers were able to mobilise in such significant numbers, sustain the movement over such a prolonged period of time and finally succeed, as well as the implications of this for Indian democracy.

The role of Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) – the umbrella body of hundreds of regional and national farm unions – as the prime representative of the farmers and chief negotiator between them and the government

shows the continuing importance of the decades-old left wing Kisan Unions and their emerging synergy with Tikait's younger Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU).

However, the underlying strength of protest was provided also by the local institutional structures of the villages of North India, especially in Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh. Among them, notably, the Sikh Sangat and the Khap Panchayat made significant contributions.

Many observers are struggling to find an idiom through which to understand and frame the rise and victory of the Kisan Movement. We believe this idiom can be found in the Sikh praxis of '*Deg Teg Fateh*'. '*Deg*' (literally, cauldron) represents the institutional capacity for resource mobilisation essential for leading mass scale, self-sustained peoples' movements. '*Teg*' (literally, sword) represents the organisational capacity to cohesively and strategically act towards justice-driven goals. Together, these two elements will result in victory ('*Fateh*').

These two capacities were developed and strengthened over a long era of *sangat* building by the Sikh Gurus and their role in sustaining the protests was also highlighted numerous times by Tikait. While *langars* kept people going with food and logistics, the village-level Panchayats of Punjab and the Khaps of Haryana and Western UP mobilised thousands of people on one emotional call, showing the resilience of real socio-familial bonds.

The experienced, even grizzled, leadership of the farm unions at all levels, from local units to the SKM, provided a goal-driven structure and coherence to the movement.

In this synergy of traditional social and modern political structures, we observe a new kind of much-needed democratic upsurge which we believe is the most significant outcome of the movement for the present and future of democratic politics in the country at this stage.

In the lead up to and during the movement, the villages of Northern India became microcosms of democratic aspirations, especially when they felt that the laws passed unilaterally by the Union government were imposed without consultation with farmers and other stakeholders; violating a fundamental requirement of democratic legislation.

The annals of Indian history reveal that peasants have risen against such diktats and impositions in the past, no matter who was on the throne.

The fight against such impositions is often framed as one of *dharma*; as a principle of justice, explored by Amartya Sen in his book, *The Idea of Justice*. This principle is entrenched in the ethos of Indian civilisational politics. That unjust laws, even when imposed by otherwise legitimate kings, must be opposed also becomes a question of *dharma*; as righteous duty.

This is something that urban apologists of the present government failed to realise or understand when they repeatedly asked why the farmers were opposing laws made by an elected government, let alone the fact that government's method of passing the laws was itself dubious and set a harmful precedent for a federal democracy. In the reversal of the laws, we thus see the prevention of further weakening of the democratic ethos in India

Interestingly, this bottom-up check on power is recognised by political theorists such as Francis Fukuyama as the natural operation of rule of law in Indian society, cultivated during early Vedic times. The farmers' movement should thus also be given credit for upholding the civilisational ethos of the land and guarding it from its self-proclaimed

guardians.

This natural understanding of the organic democratic ethos of the land also demonstrates the stark difference between the patriotism of the 'sons of the soil' as opposed to the worship of the false idol of pseudo-nationalism. This was also demonstrated repeatedly during the protests and the opposition to it from certain (predictable) sections of the political spectrum.

Many of those protesting were veterans who had fought in multiple wars, some even bearing their medals on their chests. Even as they were being painted as anti-nationals by the bellicose media, many of their sons were, in fact, deployed at India's borders.

It is worth mentioning that the parents of Sepoy Gurtej Singh, who died warding-off Chinese encroachment at Galwan Valley, had also been among the protestors at Singhu border. Another Sepoy, Gajjan Singh, who died in a gunfight with terrorists in Poonch in October, 2021, had carried the Kisan flag during his wedding last year in solidarity with the protesting farmers.

It can be argued that one reason for the weakness of the democratic ethos in India is that Indian society is particularly weak in relation to the state. The nature of the relationship between state and the people is fluid, but if people are backed by strong local institutions and traditions, their bargaining power is strengthened.

While in certain Western societies this intermediary role is performed by civil society itself, in India, it could be argued, a universal civil society which extends across the polity does not exist. Exceptions to this assumption can, perhaps, be seen in places with strong rural social networks, as in our villages, which act as a bulwark against the whims of 'rulers' who seek to ruthlessly atomise society into easily-controlled, isolated individuals

Returning to January 28, we saw how these bonds can resiliently oppose the imposition of state power; we saw a demonstration of the social power of the Khap Panchayat. The Khap Panchayat, much maligned in the mass media for its patriarchal and casteist tendencies, is, in fact, a legacy

Continued to page 14

The Baloch Spring in Gwadar

By MUHAMMAD AKBAR NOTEZAI, PAKISTAN

ON an early December Saturday, the bus terminal at Karachi's Yousuf Goth is busy as usual.

People get on colourful buses heading to Gwadar, Turbat and Panjgur. Nothing has changed here over the years. One still sees the same tea shops, conductors and cleaners. The sights and sounds are familiar to me. The Al-Javed Bus office is located at the same spot where it was back in 2017, when I last took one of their buses to Gwadar.

But Gwadar has changed over the past few years and so has the conversation surrounding the area. Newspapers covering the region no longer only carry picturesque visuals of the seaport. They are finally writing about the massive protests by locals and about the prime minister taking notice of these demonstrations. The conversation on the bus has also changed in the wake of the recently concluded protests.

At 10am, the bus is ready to head off on the 10-hour journey to Gwadar. I am seated in the second row of the bus. I first tried to sit next to a local from Gwadar, but he requested I move back so he can sit next to another local from the region.

His friend, who finally takes the other seat, is wearing dark glasses that he doesn't take off at all. Both the friends naturally start talking about the protests and Maulana Hidayatur Rehman, the local Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) leader who became the face of the protests. While the following of the Maulana has seen a remarkable growth, some are still clearly suspicious of this meteoric rise.

"Had Mullah [Maulana Hidayatur Rehman] really been a leader, he would not have called off the protests in Gwadar after

[Chief Minister Quddus] Bizenjo's guarantees that he would meet the protesters' demands," says the friend in the dark glasses. But the thirty-something man, who is clearly a sceptic, goes on to acknowledge that Maulana Hidayat has made the locals in Gwadar see that they can stand up for their rights and challenge the administration.

While the local in the glasses is talking, the bus cleaner walks by. He peels a banana and hands it to the bus driver to eat. The local discreetly looks at the cleaner from his glasses and lowers his voice. He moves closer to his friend. "Mullah has got the army's support," he declares. "That is why he called off the protests." Their conversation abruptly ends, when the bus driver starts to blast music through his phone connected to bluetooth speakers. We are soon in the presence of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's voice: "Dil-i-umeed torra hai kisi ne/ Sahara de ke chhorra hai kisi ne [Someone has broken a hopeful heart/ Someone has given support and then taken it back]."

Nusrat Sahib is interrupted by a phone call on the driver's phone. But even when the music stops, the friend of the passenger in the dark glasses does not appear interested in continuing their conversation. Maybe he does not agree with his friend's take. Or maybe he simply does not wish to discuss it on a bus that is likely to be full of the Maulana's supporters.

Undoubtedly, Maulana Hidayatur Rehman has emerged as an unparalleled leader in Gwadar. And things already feel different after the protests that he headed. For one, passengers are not frisked at different checkpoints throughout the journey, as was the norm in the past. One of the protesters' demands

was the elimination of ‘unnecessary’ check-posts on major roads. More and more of these check-posts had appeared as CPEC-related ‘development’ started making locals feel like outsiders at their own homes. Besides accepting other demands, the government also agreed to remove all unnecessary check-posts. I am not the only one pleasantly surprised at the lack of check-posts. Clearly, the

Gwadar we are headed to is a different Gwadar. How could it not be? Thousands were chanting “Gwadar ko haq do [Give Gwadar its rights],” just a few weeks ago.

TRAWLERS IN THE SEA

The Gwadar Fish Harbour, situated adjacent to the main port area, is full of action on Sunday morning when we reach. Boats, big and small, are parked in the harbour. They have many flags, mostly for aesthetic purposes. Some are red, some are green and others black. And then there are many boats with Pakistani flags. There is a lot of foot traffic. Buyers keep pouring in — men and women, and children with their parents — and fishermen compete for their attention and business. This fish market scene seems like everything is business as usual. But not too long ago, these fishermen were among the thousands who had gathered for the protests, and refused to budge for over a month. Chief among the demands of the protesters, who had come together under the Gwadar Ko Huqooq Do Tehreek [Give Rights to Gwadar Movement] and the leadership of Maulana Hidayat, was the demand to end illegal trawlers. Trawlers from neighbouring areas such as Sindh and even other countries come to fish in these waters, severely impacting the catch of local fishermen.

Earlier in December, Prime Minister Imran Khan had finally “taken notice” of the “very legitimate demands of the hardworking fishermen of Gwadar,” in a tweet. He had also promised strong action would be taken against illegal fishing by trawlers. But the issue is not limited to illegal trawlers alone. The government has given Chinese trawlers licences to fish in the waters off the coast. Locals, most of whom operate small boats, are unable to compete with larger, more advanced Chinese boats. Javed Baloch, one such fisherman, still

seems to be in a revolutionary mode, weeks after the protest was called off. He proudly wears a Che Guevara-inspired beret cap with a red star.

Like hundreds of other fishermen of Gwadar, Javed goes to the sea every evening. He rides in his motorboat, which he could afford only after working with a group of fishermen in Iran for three years. Javed and a fellow fisherman stay in the sea for a few hours, waiting for the sun to set so they can fish in the dark. After his last successful excursion, Javed speaks to me on Sunday morning. “We have caught fish worth over 15,000 rupees today,” he excitedly shares. “And it has been like this for over two weeks,” he adds, pointing out how their catch has increased threefold following strict action against illegal trawlers after the protests.

But this, he believes, is a temporary relief. “We have heard that the trawlers have gone to fish in the Kund Malir area [near Lasbela, towards Karachi],” he says. “These can come back at any time, depriving us of our livelihoods once again.” His fears are based on an understanding of the region and its history. Fishermen from Sindh and foreign trawlers from countries such as Korea, Japan and China have been fishing in Gwadar’s largely pristine waters for many decades now.

OLD PROBLEMS, NEW SOLUTIONS

KB Firaq, a Gwadar-based poet, columnist and human rights activist is known as an encyclopaedia on Gwadar’s fishermen community. Fittingly, I meet him at his library where he is surrounded by books and other encyclopaedias. He tells me that, according to his research, illegal trawling has been happening in the area since the 1990s.

“At the time, I was a school-going boy,” he says. He says that Gwadar has a lot of fish stock, which is why trawlers from Sindh and outside the country come to the area. But this long-existing issue cannot be solved overnight. Officials from the fisheries departments from Quetta and Gwadar share that stopping the practice of illegal trawling in Balochistan is not in their hands. One of the reasons for this is the lack of resources, admits a senior fisheries official in Quetta. According to him, their

fisheries department has got only four patrolling boats to stop the practice of illegal trawling in all of Balochistan.

The gravity of the situation becomes apparent to me when, during my brief reporting stint, fishermen start telling me that illegal trawlers have already started to make their way back to the waters of Balochistan. But the power of protest also becomes apparent when I visit Pasni, a tehsil of the Gwadar district, where fishermen are protesting again.

One of the protesters' demands, which was accepted, was that their freedom to go to sea must be ensured. Still, the fishermen in Pasni have been directed to obtain tokens to fish in the sea. "We are not going to the US," says Inayat Baloch, one of the fishermen who are protesting at the Pasni Fish Harbour. "Then why are we being asked for tokens to fish in our own sea?" The illegal trawlers should be receiving this treatment, not the locals, the fishermen lament. Maulana Hidayatur Rehman manages to be a part of even this small protest. Inayat calls the Maulana from his phone, and puts the call on loudspeaker for the two dozen fishermen to hear. The Maulana charges up the protesters, roaring in Balochi. "Are you all tired [of protesting]?" he asks. "No!" they respond. He repeats the same question. "Are you all tired?" "No, not at all," they all shout in unison. Within an hour, officials from the district administration and the Navy come to speak with the fishermen. Soon, the officials tell the fishermen that they are exempt from showing tokens to fish in the sea.

This is the power of demonstrations. And this is the power of the Maulana, a man whose presence can be felt across Gwadar.

THE RISE OF MAULANA HIDAYAT

Surbandan, locally known as Sur in Gwadar, is a tiny town at a distance of 25 kilometres from the main Gwadar town. Sur is inhabited mostly by fishermen. On a Monday, the blue sea around the town is calm. The sky is blue and the wind is blowing. We are driving on the G.T. Road, and the sea is flowing next to us. Soon, we take a turn and stop at the Jama Makki Masjid.

I'm taken to a parrot green-coloured

room. This is the room for Maulana Hidayatur Rehman's guests. The Maulana and his brothers, who are also fishermen, live in a house next door. The JI leader is not at home, I am told. He is in Gwadar. But his presence is all around me. Maulana is the talk of the town. Everyone I meet in the Gwadar district speaks of him and how he has stood up for their rights. Women and children play me songs on their mobiles dedicated to the Maulana. "A leader is the one who does not fear. And we have found a leader in Maulana," says Mehboob Baloch, a local fisherman in Surbandan. No conversation about Maulana can be had here without others chiming in. As Mehboob speaks to me, others join in with a chant I have heard many times by now: "We are all Maulana!" Maulana is an unlikely leader according to many locals and politicians. He does not come from money. And even though he was present everywhere, his voice hardly mattered in the past. These descriptions seem to be in stark contrast with the situation today, where the Maulana is present across Gwadar, even when he is not physically in the vicinity.

Born in Surbandan village, Maulana received his primary education in his hometown. He then went to Karachi, where half of his maternal family lives, to complete his education. He received a Masters degree in Islamiat from Karachi. Maulana Hidayat returned to become a small leader in his town. He understood the woes of his people and was not afraid of raising his voice for them. The Maulana first started making waves a few months ago, when he led a five-day-long demonstration in Surbandan asking for better treatment of local fishermen.

This protest was on the mind of Maasi Zainab, a Baloch woman with no formal education who had been making waves by being at the forefront of protests in Gwadar. Zainab sent Maulana a voice note over WhatsApp during protests at Gwadar's Eastbay Expressway, where fishermen were not being allowed to go to sea. Soon Maulana, who was nowhere near the protest site, was on the road heading to the protest. Led by fishermen of the Mullah Band area, he sat in front of three senior security officials and spoke bravely and

courageously. In a video that went viral in September, he can be seen telling the officials that Gwadar first belongs to them. He is charged up, speaking bluntly, without a hint of doubt or fear in his voice. This was only the beginning.

AN UNWAVERING VOICE

Having failed to meet the Maulana in Surbandan, I return to Gwadar and check into Gwadar's Sadaf Hotel, where I am set to finally meet the Maulana. I receive a message that Maulana, who is still busy in Gwadar town, will visit me after maghrib prayers. The Maulana arrives accompanied by eight young men. He is wearing a white pakol cap, white clothes and a white chador. He is shorter than he appears in videos and pictures, but he walks tall. He says salaam to me and shakes my hand lightly. Mine is only the first of many handshakes for the Maulana. As we enter the hotel's restaurants, the entire staff stands up to shake his hand. Finally we sit down and start our conversation. "What have Gwadaris seen in an old Maulana after 18 years?" I ask him, referring to the many years he has actively remained in politics without having the same kind of following he enjoys today.

His answer is simple, and one that has been given to me many times by now to explain Maulana Hidayat's rise and following. In an environment where everybody is afraid to speak, people want someone to be their voice. "I felt it and spoke, which is why people have been responding to my call [to join the movement], irrespective of their background," he says. "I have become their spokesman to speak out fearlessly." The Maulana proudly says that, with a single call, he can get thousands, including women and children, to gather. "They have seen a ray of hope in despair and helplessness," he tells me.

The Maulana's sceptics see him as a right wing political opportunist who has been using issues such as illegal trawling, and problems with electricity, water and check-posts, to pave the way for his own 'right wing agenda' under the banner of JI. This, they argue, is why he is being given space in the port town where China has heavily invested.

One of the Maulana's first demands was putting a ban on 'wine' [alcohol] stores in

Gwadar, which, according to his critics, has got nothing to do with public issues. I ask the Maulana about these criticisms, and he smiles. "Everyone wants to say that the 'mullahs' are against wine," he says. "I put the demand forward because it is a public issue, not a private one."

He says that mothers and sisters have now been sleeping peacefully knowing that their sons are not drinking. "Due to alcohol consumption, mothers and sisters have become psychological patients as their sons used to come home drunk," he shares. "It had become the source of incidents in Gwadar."

Many say the leader has a good sense of humour. He continues talking about the issue with a cup of green tea in his hand. He is always in control of the conversation. He answers questions he wants to, and evades the ones he would rather not comment on. For example, when asked about apprehensions of people who say that the Maulana is 'backed' by some institution, and that no one can stage such a large protest in Balochistan unless they are 'allowed' to, he refuses to give a straight answer. Maulana Hidayat's priorities are the locals, and making sure they are not treated like outsiders in their own land. He is sceptical of the development taking place in the name of CPEC in the region. "Where is CPEC in Balochistan?" he asks. "I have only seen check-posts all around in the name of CPEC, not CPEC itself."

The Maulana has clearly had these conversations before. After the interview, he is in no hurry to leave. He has found out that I had visited his hometown, Surbandan. He asks me why I did not have tea at his home. One can clearly see the appeal of having a leader who is so inviting, passionate about his people and accessible on one phone call. It is no wonder thousands came out at his call. While the government has accepted all the demands, how they are implemented remains to be seen. Nonetheless, many in Gwadar appear confident in the fact that in Maulana Hidayat they have found a voice that will speak up whenever he needs to. If he calls on his supporters to step out again, they surely will.

Courtesy : dawn.com

Countering Everyday Patriarchal Violence Through Empathy and Sisterhood

By RAVNEET PARAM, INDIA

WRITING about the trajectory of mass social movements is important. The anecdotes of standing firm against oppression, against a common enemy rejuvenate and inspire our will to fight. Stories of taking to the streets, getting *lathi* charged, getting drenched because of water cannons become represent the experiences of being part of a movement. The importance of documenting narratives of social movements lies in the fact that it reaffirms one's belief that fights can be won. It gives the strength to the vision that democratic spaces can be reclaimed and one doesn't have to kill their dreams of living in a just and empathetic world.

Our history is replete with examples of collective struggles which eventually not only preserved democratic spaces but also expanded them further. It gave us the space to think that one doesn't need to hopelessly accept the status quo, that it can be successfully dismantled. When women sang songs of resistance at Shahin Bagh in Delhi against an exclusionary bill, it restored our faith in the magnanimity of collective struggles. Farmers at Singhu Border in Delhi taught us the need of a collective fight to safeguard democracy. However, not all fights are fought in the streets. Some are fought in the living rooms- while cooking, reading, conversing together. A brief conversation with your friend can teach you the importance of comradeship, the importance of standing with each other against an unjust world.

"Didi kabhishadi mat karna" (Didi, never get married). Durga's voice reverberated in

my house during our morning ritual of chatting over a cup of piping hot tea. Durga, one of the thousands or probably lakhs of immigrants from Bihar, helps me with household chores. Mine is the first house she comes to in the morning, primarily because I have to leave early for work, but now also because we share our day's first cup of tea together.

Durga bore four children, now aged between 2 to 11, has a husband who lost his job during the pandemic and is unable to find work now. Her husband (she never really bothered to mention his name and I, for some reason, never asked too) is violent, all the more now as men's pandemic-induced frustration was mostly taken out on their wives. Loss of livelihood, compounded with uncertainties of bleak looking future, amplified cases of domestic violence. A study done by University of California, Davis suggests that the pandemic led to an increase in cases of intimate partner violence. India saw a 100% jump in women seeking shelter during the pandemic.

CONTEXTUALIZING PATRIARCHAL VIOLENCE AND A FEMINIST VISION OF SOLIDARITY IN THE EVERYDAY

More often than not, an image of a survivor of any form of violence, in popular imagination, is that of a battered woman, with no hope, no means of sustenance. A rape survivor for example is often referred as a *Zinda Laash* (a living corpse). In a parliamentary session¹ the then Leader of Opposition Late Sushma Swaraj used this analogy as if there is

nothing more to the identity of survivor of the worst form of violence. While, I do not intend to deny cases where survivors of violence, in fact, do not have means of sustenance or are so dependent on their abusers that finding a way out becomes a difficult task, however such analogies and imagery takeaway the agency of women-like Durga, and several other survivors of domestic violence- who refuse to see themselves just as *victims* of patriarchal oppression. There is an acknowledgment of the presence of violence but with an assertion at the same time, an assertion to counter the very violence. A shift in vocabulary, in cases of gender-based violence, while referring to a person, upon whom violence has been inflicted- not as a victim but a survivor, has attempted at recuperating agency² from the shackles of patriarchal imagination, which reduces a survivor's identity to their experience of violence.

Violence doesn't only mean rape, or getting beaten up by your abusive partner. The meaning of violence also needs to be unpacked. Violence is also emotional which may not leave any scars on your body but deprives you of your subjecthood. It asks to give up your dreams. It means prioritizing everyone's happiness over your own. We all have seen women in our families who left their jobs because *then who would look after the children*, as if there is nothing else to a woman's identity than being a caregiver. It can also include the inability to say no to bearing more children, or as mundane as the unaffordability of sleep because of gendered expectations to look after household chores. It could also mean not having the space to voice one's desires or being deprived of that last piece of chicken curry which you yourself cooked because the husband wasn't considerate of your fondness of chicken. It can mean working while you are menstruating, with an excruciating back ache, while the husband lies in bed, smoking a cigarette. What I am trying to say is that violence cannot be restricted just to the body. Its expanse spills over, encompassing emotions and desires.

LOCATING SISTERHOOD WITHIN THE EVERYDAY

The feminist movement/scholarship

fought against the popular imagery of a survivor of patriarchal violence so as to envision a world where they can move beyond the markers of violence. Durga, like other survivors of domestic violence that I worked with at my last job, do not see themselves as victims at all. She probably does not even bother about being called a survivor either. Nonetheless, it is not my story to tell, it is hers.

However, I do want to locate brief moments of sisterhood (even though the term is fraught with multiple critiques, justifiably so. I, however, cannot deny its radical potential while also being cognizant of distinctly clear hierarchies of caste/class as well as employer/employee between Durga and I), when Durga comes, rushing through the front door and into the kitchen, makes tea and gives an anecdotal review of everything that happened the previous night at home.

Feminism cannot exist without sisterhood- a form of political solidarity between women based on shared understanding of oppression and radical struggle against sexism. Bell hooks mentions that political solidarity can't be forged unless there is recognition of differences between women coming from different backgrounds in terms of race, class etc. A political solidarity would entail a shared political struggle and radical politic against sexist oppression.

However, sisterhood as a political slogan cannot be invoked by concealing differences amongst women. When Durga suggests me to not marry while I approvingly nod, it is a recognition of systemic oppression which mark both of our lives. The reason why I referred to this form of sisterhood brief is because my privileged location gives me the choice to *not* marry, a choice Durga did not have. This is precisely the kind of difference which needs to be recognized to achieve a political solidarity, a sisterhood based on a fight against mutual, yet uneven oppression.

However, these differences melt away (may be for me because of my privilege) while Durga and I share our stories from our respective worlds- I, of umpteen heart breaks, and she of the drudgery of a household. Both of us, despite of our differences- can

understand a common language- of love, of violence in intimate partner relationships, of expectations and, of a desire to live a life alone as individuals and not as wives/daughters/ mothers.

It is this commonality which marks our relationship, which also strengthens the vision of a feminist solidarity, feminist sisterhood of envisioning a violence free world. The space that she and I have constitutes empathy, a pre-requisite to fight against systematic oppression. It is the recognition of each of our struggles' which gives us the tools to have a mutual understanding. It is a space where we can pour hearts out, without a fear of judgment, a safe space of sorts, which has the flexibility to mold itself the way we want it to be.

Those brief moments, I feel, have the radical potential to subvert hierarchies as they are based on empathy and a desire to listen to each other intently, so as to give each other a cathartic space to battle an unjust world. These abridged rendezvous may not receive a mention in the larger scheme of things, but they play a fundamental role in women's lives

for these are the spaces where they feel free, feel connected to each other.

A mutual recognition of each other's struggle is also an acknowledgment of one's experiences as legitimate, something which may seem mundane but is also ignored precisely because of their mundanity. A small tear, a nod or a sigh are forms of mutual recognition of patriarchal violence as well as of sisterhood. The expanse of the living room, then, provides a radical space to vent, to recognize and to subvert dominant structures.

(Footnotes)

1. Late Sushma Swaraj, referred to the victim of the Delhi gang rape in 2012, as a *zinda laash* (comatose).

2. Agency as a conceptual category has been fraught with many contestations. Every school of thought defines agency differently. An agential subject position would entail having the liberty to choose for oneself, whether it's the kind of clothes one wants to wear, or the kind life decisions one wants to take. An agential subject would be the one who has hitherto been marginalized and after recognizing one's position, not as the other, but a self in their own right, recuperates themselves from the position of an oppressed.

How the Farmers' Protest...

Continued from page 7

institution which preserves the oldest expressions of the republican/democratic ethos of the Indian civilisation. Although it still has to reform in some areas, the protest has given it a new outlook as a mobilising force against injustice in a democracy.

In our times, the Panchayat continues to remain the most useful institution for operationalising bottom-up democracy, demonstrated by both the Khaps of Haryana and Western UP and the village panchayats of Punjab. This model can perhaps be adapted for urban and other forms of politics, including new urban and post-urban politics in the age of cyber-politics as well. The 73rd (related to Gram Sabhas) and 74th (related to Urban Local Bodies) constitutional amendments also aspired to put just such a democracy in action.

Additionally, Tikait's concerted efforts to highlight the message of religious harmony also strengthened the other crucial aspect of *dharma*: its inherent tolerance and acceptance of the various routes to the divine.

Further, that the government and the farmers reached a consensus will have a long-term effect and should be recognised as an important moment in India's democratic history, bearing lessons for the world. International indices on democracy have not looked good for India in recent years but this decision of the government will perhaps help in reversing these trends, showing that the voice of the people – even though they must shout at the doors of the national capital to make it heard – does finally matter. We can only hope future regimes and civil society actors will learn from the movement

Courtesy: thewire.in

A Year of Social Movements

By ANKIT KHADGI, NEPAL

THE year 2021 has been memorable (both in a good and bad way) for most of us.

During the first three months of the year, a sense of normalcy prevailed as Covid-19 cases had started declining. Businesses and markets started resuming their operations like before. But in April, the country was again hit by another deadly pandemic wave, resulting in loss of lives, jobs, and social security.

But even if times were tough, a few social activists, and common people were actively engaged in social activism, raising pertinent social issues of caste, impunity, and safe spaces in public spheres.

To acknowledge their dedication, working even in unprecedented times like these, the Post lists down a few social movements that took place this year and how they have shaped public discourses around significant social issues.

WOMEN'S MARCH OF 2021

It's common to see Nepali women coming together and occupying public spaces, especially in March (the month when International Women's Day is celebrated). But a month before, in February this year, women from all walks of life came together in the streets of Kathmandu and other cities to demand an end to violence against women.

In Kathmandu, on February 12, a massive rally, 'Women's March', was organised by activists and artists. In the rally, participants chanted slogans of equality, gave speeches against the prevailing sexist social structure, and even recited feminist poems poetry, hoping they could grab the attention of authorities, who have always been indifferent to women's safety.

"Although it was mostly Kathmandu-centric, for the first time I saw so many women

from diverse backgrounds coming together for the same cause: equal rights for women and insurance of their safety," says Sapana Sanjeevani, one of the participants at the protest, who also recited poems during the rally.

Sanjeevani, a poet and artist, believes that the Women's March was a significant social event. Even if it was just for a day, it reflected the solidarity people have in breaking the patriarchal notions of society.

"Despite all of our differences, we all came together without carrying any political agenda. Unlike other protests and rallies, which are mostly fuelled by political aspirations, we all were there as we wanted to be heard and let people know that women are not going to remain silent any longer," says Sanjeevani.

On March 23, a current student of St Mary's, one of Nepal's prestigious academic institutions, came forward to share her experiences as a student at the school.

In a detailed post on Reddit, the student exposed the school's toxic environment and how misogyny was normalised within its premises.

"You can't call it an empowering school with all this misogyny and sexualisation of minors. You can't say this school respects and accepts people of all backgrounds and beliefs at all," the student wrote.

After the anonymous post started getting circulated on social media, many former and present students also came forward and shared their horrific experiences of mental and physical harassment, which they had to endure for years while studying at the social institution.

An investigation was also carried out by the Post, where it found many anecdotal evidences on the school's tolerance of misbehaviour towards its students.

While holding accountability for the institution's wrongdoings couldn't happen in other schools, the St Mary's incident did contribute to a big change and opened discourses around a safe school environment among both students and parents, says a former student of St Mary's, who also raised her voice against the school, and spoke with the Post on the condition of anonymity.

"I think the incident ignited discussions around safe schooling environments at a greater level than before. It made many of us—especially our parents—aware of being considerate enough while choosing schools for their children and the need to prioritise the well-being of their kids rather than just looking at the name of the institution," she said. "We never had such discussions before, but thanks to the incident, people are at least talking about safe spaces, good touch, and bad touch, and other several important things related to the safety of children."

THE RISE IN THE MOVEMENT AGAINST CASTE-BASED DISCRIMINATION

In June, an upper-caste landlord's refusal to rent her house to Rupa Sunar, a media professional, created a public outcry, and many took to the streets to protest against caste-based discrimination.

Although many claim that caste-based discrimination no longer exists in Nepali society, the ground reality is darker and different for marginalised people—especially the Dalit community. Caste-based discrimination still plagues our social fabric, due to which Dalit people face atrocities and discrimination daily.

They are harassed, beaten, and even murdered, and they have to get killed for the wider society to acknowledge that caste-based discrimination exists even now.

However, this year, the country saw a huge public outcry and discourses around casteism because of Rupa Sunar.

In June, Sunar, a media professional, filed a case against a so-called upper-caste woman who had refused to rent her house to Sunar because of her caste.

While Sunar wasn't the first person to use her legal rights to seek justice for the caste-based discrimination she had faced, her decision to seek justice started a discourse on a

national level about the perennial casteism Dalit people have been facing since time immemorial, believes Shusma Barali, journalist and activist.

"In Nepali society, there's this common belief that caste discrimination is a thing of the past. It doesn't happen anymore. If any person tries to bring up this issue, they are shunned down completely and labelled as people who are trying to jeopardise social harmony," says Barali.

"But caste-based discrimination is a lived reality for Dalits. And thanks to Sunar, the challenges we have been facing for years got highlighted so quickly as many people started talking about it this year because she took a stand," said Barali to Post through a phone call.

For Barali, who has been actively involved in the Dalit movement in Nepal, the particular incident involving Sunar proved monumental. The incident, she says, prompted conversations among people from all walks of life about the discrimination faced by the Dalit community and highlighted the community's strength and resilience.

"Rupa's experiences are similar to mine and many other Dalit people. I salute the courage she displayed as she fought for her rights and questioned the social structures that have never treated us equally," shared Barali.

RUBY KHAN VS STATE: AN ARDUOUS BATTLE FOR JUSTICE

In October, Ruby Khan and 13 other people marched to Kathmandu from Nepalgunj to demand a fair investigation into the death of Nakunni Dhobi and the disappearance of Nirmala Kurmi.

Walking from Nepalgunj to Kathmandu for 20 days, Ruby Khan, a human rights activist, and 13 other people hoped they would get justice in the capital.

For years, Khan, 34, along with other people, had been knocking on every door they knew of in their hometown, Banke, to demand a fair investigation into the death of Nakunni Dhobi and the disappearance of Nirmala Kurmi. In August, they had even staged a 19-day protest in front of the District Administration Office, Banke, but the authorities refused to pay heed to their calls

Continued to page 19

The Great Language Movement of Bangladesh: Some Reflections

By TAJ HASHMI, INDIA

THE “Language Movement” of erstwhile East Bengal/East Pakistan and Bangladesh today was more than a language movement, it was a cultural-political movement for Bangladesh. No wonder, even after the Pakistan Constitution of 1956 had guaranteed Bengali as one of the two state languages along with Urdu, East Bengalis continued to mourn the deaths of half-a-dozen martyrs, who got killed by Bengali policemen at the order of a Bengali magistrate under a Bengali Chief Minister (Nurul Amin) of East Bengal on 21st February 1952. In 1956, the province became East Pakistan after the merger of all the four provinces in the western wing of the country as “West Pakistan”.

The Language Movement is a very important historical event, not only for East Bengal but also for the whole world to learn as to how cultural movements can steer a political one, with a long-term programme with patience, courage, integrity, and determination of the people concerned. The Language Movement, in short, is a glorious example of people’s determination. The leaders of the movement, who besides the politicians were teachers, writers, poets, journalists, and last but not least, students, who organized millions of youths for 20 years (1952-1971) in the most unique way by walking bare-footed early in the morning every 21st February on streets towards the Shaheed Minar (Martyrs Memorials) in Dhaka (and to the thousands of replicas across the country) and to the Azimpur graveyard in Dhaka where the martyrs lie buried.

It was simply a wonderful way of arousing patriotism and the sense of belonging

to the Bengali Nation (which most East Bengalis never thought of as a requirement until the late 1960s, and finally in 1971) by organizing a political movement in the form of a cultural one, apparently to mourn the unjust killing of students and celebrate 21st February as a day of remembrance.

However, there is a flipside of the movement. Had West Pakistanis and their local agents in East Bengal been respectful to Bengalis, their culture and their entity as fellow Pakistanis, there would not have been any Shaheed Day celebration as Bengalis celebrate it since 1953. Observing or celebrating the victory for the Bengali language in 1956, and eventually, independence in 1971, began as a protest against West Pakistani hegemony, and step-brotherly treatment of Bengalis. What Sukarno could achieve in Indonesia, Jinnah failed to do so in Pakistan, miserably. The tone of his two speeches made in Dhaka as the Governor-General of Pakistan in March 1948 struck the “first nail” into the coffin of united Pakistan through protests, and eventually defiance of the authorities in February 1952.

Sukarno’s quiet diplomacy, patriotism, and pragmatism won the day. He picked up a minority but widely used language as the national/state language of Indonesia. In hindsight, it seems to be the right decision. Himself being a Javanese – who were almost 70% of the population – Sukarno and his colleagues introduced minority Sumatrans’ mother tongue Malay (spoken in Malaya and Singapore as well) known as “Bazaar Malay” as the state language of Indonesia, which Sukarno and his countrymen called Bahasa Indonesia or the Language of Indonesia. They

did not want to impose the majority language on the non-Javanese minority for the sake of national unity in a country which is far more diverse than Pakistan. The Javanese people adopted Malay (Bahasa Indonesia) without any resistance. Then again, the situation and demography in the two countries have been very different. Nevertheless, Sukarno's persuasion to the whole nation in a respectful tone and manner was very different from Jinnah's arrogance and dictatorial tone, that "Urdu and Urdu alone shall be the state language of Pakistan". In fact, Pakistan started losing its case to remain united as one nation on 21st February 1952.

The Language Movement is a historical landmark across the world. Its significance lies in the unique way the movement got its own momentum and new sets of leaders, year after year, throughout what emerged as Bangladesh in 1971. No wonder, Kofi Anan — as the Secretary-General of the United Nations — whole-heartedly supported the proposal made by two Bangladeshi-Canadians, the late Rafiqul Islam and Abdus Salam of Vancouver, to declare 21st February as the International Mother-Language Day. What an innocuous movement, apparently to make Bengali as one of the state languages of Pakistan, achieved at home and got international recognition as a symbol of love and respect for every language and culture in the world is something very unique in world history.

There cannot be any doubt that but for the thousands of Shaheed Minars raised at thousands of educational institutions in every town and settlements across the country East Bengalis never ever forget about their distinct national identity, which never died off while they were patriotic Pakistanis. Interestingly, most Bengalis from East Bengal/East Pakistan were willing to die for Pakistan, and many in fact gallantly defended Pakistan and died doing so during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965.

Bangladeshis, in general, are unaware that the movement for Bengali as a state language was a positive movement for due recognition of East Bengalis as equal citizens in the state of Pakistan because they knew

they had played the most significant, if not the decisive, role in the creation of Pakistan. Thanks to the sheer neglect of history in Bangladesh today — it is not a compulsory subject beyond grade eight at the high school, let alone at college/university level for arts, science, business, medicine, and engineering students, unlike the developed world — many young and educated Bangladeshis do not know what actually happened on 21st February of 1952. Unfortunately, many of them confuse the day with 25th March of 1971, the day Pakistani military started their genocidal war against Bangladesh.

As the Language Movement was a positive movement for due recognition of Bengalis as equal citizens of Pakistan, so was it not against any language, let alone Urdu and English. Sadly, thanks to the collective ignorance of Bangladeshis and their opportunist and dishonest leaders, the Language Movement has virtually become a symbol of discarding English as an essential second language of instruction in Bangladesh. The ill-informed leaders and academics believe or at least pretend so, that the Bangladeshi students do not need to learn English or any other language to become good citizens, knowledgeable, and professionally useful people. Many of them cite examples of Japan, China, and Korea, where students do all their study — from elementary schools to universities — in their mother tongue. So, the hypocritical and lame argument goes, there is no need for learning any other language, including English, for the Bangladeshi students. First of all, those who favour the abolition of English as an essential subject for education in Bangladesh — mainly people from the upper echelons — never ever send their children to Bengali-medium schools and universities. They send their children to expensive English-medium institutions at home and abroad. This is definitely hypocritical and conspiratorial to serve the vested interests of the rich and powerful because they know English-educated students are much better equipped than their Bengali-medium counterparts to get better opportunities in life.

What Bangladeshi "experts" and others who advocate pure Bengali-medium (nothing

but Bengali) institutions of learning, in some cases, are not aware that other than Bengali language and literature, there are hardly any standard books and reading material in Bengali for any subject at college/university-level education. It might sound like a conspiracy theory, Bangladeshi ruling elites and their associates purposely promote three distinct mediums/systems of instruction – English, Bengali, and Madrasa – to produce three distinct classes of graduates: a) employable; b) under-employable; and c) unemployable. This is definitely what the leaders and martyrs of the Language Movement never thought of that one day their progeny would discard English or any other language in the name of protecting and promoting Bengali as a symbol of national pride and unity. It is time to educate the hyper-patriotic elements in society that no Afro-Asian language, other than Japanese, Mandarin, and Korean, is good enough for higher education in any discipline. As of today, one who wants to get higher

education in any discipline will have to learn at least one European or one of the above three Asian languages. Even Turkish, Farsi, Arabic, Thai, Indonesian/Malay, Hindi, and Urdu are poor substitutes in this regard. Unfortunately, for ardent Bengali lovers, there is no way out of the situation, yet!

Last but not least, as Malaysian statesman Mahathir Mohamed once said (to paraphrase): “English language is no longer a symbol of British imperialism. Today, it is an essential tool of learning, as essential as the computer”. By the way, Malaysia and Sri Lanka, who once introduced Malay, Sinhalese, and Tamil as the only mediums of instruction at college/university level, eventually reverted to English, out of sheer pragmatic reasons. Bangladesh must learn from the Malaysian and Sri Lankan examples, if it wants Bangladeshi graduates to become competitive at home and globally in the realms of knowledge and employment opportunities.

Courtesy: countercurrents.org

A Year of Social Movements

Continued from page 16

for justice.

That’s when Khan and other protestors decided to take the long and arduous journey to Kathmandu and make the authorities hear their voices and demands, as they couldn’t tolerate the injustice the families of Dhobi and Kurmi had to face, says Khan.

“From my childhood, I had decided that I would dedicate my life to fighting against atrocities women are subjected to. I was always disheartened to see how we are treated in our society and the discrimination and violence we have to face. That’s why it was important for me to actively involve myself in activism and fight against injustices we have been forced to endure,” says Khan, former general secretary of the Banke chapter of the National Womens’ Rights Forum.

Although the government formed an investigation committee, the protestors are not satisfied with the investigation, as they believe

the police haven’t taken all of the perpetrators into custody.

“We will keep on fighting as we want justice at any cost,” says Khan. “As women, we have gone through a lot, and we want to put an end to our sufferings”.

Although it’s uncertain if their demands will be met or not, Mohna Ansari, advocate and former member of the National Human Rights Commission, believes that the courage shown by Ruby Khan and other protestors is praiseworthy as it has the power to influence more similar voices, who have been standing against impunity.

“I think it’s important to acknowledge that this is one of the few kinds of protests that has been solely led by women who don’t have enough access to social and economic resources. That’s why I believe this movement will encourage more people to stand against inequalities and discrimination they are forced to face,” says Ansari.

Courtesy: The Kathmandu Post

POETRY'S DREAM WORK

By CHRISTOPHER CAUDWELL

....Continued from previous issue



OUR demarcation of “psychological types” necessarily calls to mind Jung’s classic work on the same subject. How far does our division correspond with his?

Jung’s earliest division was into extraverted and introverted types. On the whole our division corresponds with his – extraversion involves valuation of externality, of perception, of the object, whether in action or consciousness; and introversion is valuation of internality, of feeling, of the subject, either in consciousness or action.

Of course this does not mean that the introvert is essentially sympathetic; on the contrary it is his feeling, not that of others, which he values. It is the extravert who is sympathetic, but with the weakness of a shallow feeling.

Jung found this division insufficient and therefore he distinguished four functions, irrespective of valuation of the object or the subject. Of these functions two are rational – feeling and thinking, and two are irrational – sensing and intuiting. A type has one main function and an auxiliary function which must be of a different character, e.g. a rational function can only be assisted by an irrational function, and vice versa. All four functions exist in all psyches, and therefore individuation – the development of one function at the expense of the other – means that the functions not used sink into the unconscious. Thus a thinker feeling sinks into

the unconscious and becomes correspondingly barbaric and crude. Here it exerts a compensatory influence, and may eventually gain in power until, at first sporadically and then completely, it becomes the main function, and there is an enantiodromia, a kind of conversion or complete reversal of personality, as when the cold, Christian-hating Saul becomes the ardent apostle Paul, or when the dry mathematical person becomes a raving maniac.

Now Jung’s rich experience and subtle mind gives this classification great value and importance. It is confused. However, owing to Jung’s epistemological confusion as to the meaning of consciousness. I regard Jung’s cleavage between feeling and thinking as that between theory and practice. The thinking extravert is the theoretical extravert, the man of thought; the feeling extravert is the practical extravert, the man of action. The feeling introvert, however, is the theoretical introvert, and the thinking introvert is the practical introvert. Of course both the theory and practice of introvert and extravert is conditioned by their different valuations of object subject – hence the apparent reversal, of the functions in theory and practice; and hence Jung’s initial mistake, afterwards corrected, in believing introversion and extraversion to be all-sufficient for the determination of psychological types. Our analysis of the two-sidedness of phantasy (which is matched by a similar two-sidedness of practice) explains how this reversal of functions occurs.

What are we to make of “sensing” and “intuiting”? According to Jung, “sensing” is appreciation of external phenomena by an act

of unconscious apprehension, and "intuition" is appreciation of internal phenomena. by an act of conscious apprehension.

It seems to me that Jung has got himself into an epistemological confusion here. His types are real, but their mechanism is wrongly grasped. Sensing is not just irrational feeling, but the relation between them is the same as between poetry and the novel. Sensing is conscious but poetic, it is generalised feeling; this-sidedness reduced to the common instinctive ego. Feeling is conscious but concrete; it is individualised sensing, sensing given the status of particular differentiated egos. Sensing is thus more primitive than feeling. In the same way intuiting is not irrational thinking, but the relation between them is the same as between mathematics and biology. Intuiting is conscious but mathematical; it is generalised thinking, other-sidedness reduced to the abstract commonness of quantity. Thinking is conscious but concrete; it is particularised intuiting, intuiting given the content of spheres of quality. Intuiting is thus more primitive than feeling.

It has already been explained why poetry and mathematics emerged in the history of our race before the story and the evolutionary sciences. In the same way sensing and intuiting are the earliest forms of thought – the reasoning of the leaders, prophets, poets and lawgivers of primitive society.

Thus in general we agree with the importance of Jung's distinction between extraversion in which the object is valued, and introversion in which the subject is valued. We also agree with his warning that any one type may be introverted in relation to some spheres of activity

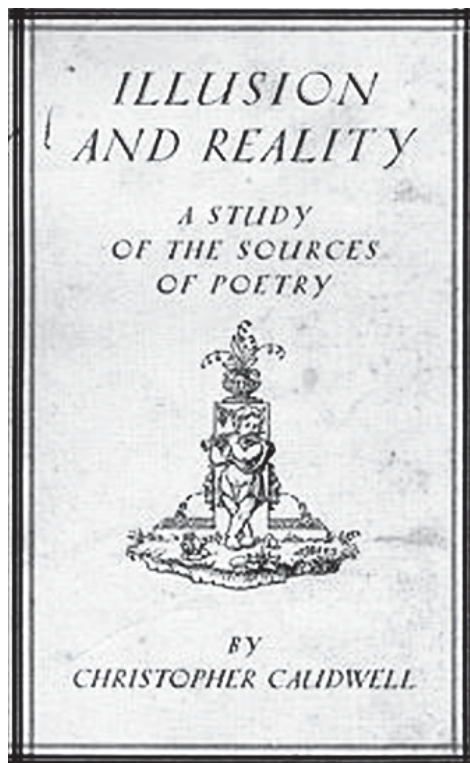
and extraverted in relation to others, and that this may change in the course of his life. Hence a type has a fluidity and individuality even in his attitude to life. To take Spearman's conception of two factors in intelligence – g, a general fund applicable to all fields, and s, a special capacity, limited to one field – not only may g vary in its "attitude" as well as its quantity, but the various s-factors too may vary in attitude and quantity.

Our analysis differs from Jung in three respects:

(1) He does not allow for the difference between a theoretical and a practical approach to life, and the existence of some fields in which a man is theoretical, others in which he is practical, and others where he shows a balanced unity. The more a man is purely theoretical in some fields, the more he is likely to be purely practical in others, and because of their divorce, both theory and practice will show a special crude primitiveness which may make them seem of different quality from what are when they appear as an active whole. The thinking and intuiting extraverts and the feeling and sensing

introverts are men predominantly theoretical precisely because their living behaviour exhibits a valuation of the object which is contrary to their phantastic valuation, and in the same way the feeling and sensing extraverts and the thinking and intuiting intraverts have a predominantly practical approach to life.

(2) He regards sensing and intuiting as in some way unconscious forms of feeling and thinking, although he uses the word irrational. But the "intuition" on which mathematical reasoning is based cannot be regarded



as irrational. Of course the word “intuition” begs the question, and it is not suggested that the view of mathematics represented by Poincaré’s school was right and Peano and Russell’s logistic theory wrong. Intuition is not used in a Platonic sense. It is simply applied to the abstract generalising approach characteristic of logic and a more primitive society, and so far from being irrational it is rational in that it leads (as in Platonism, scholasticism and Buddhist philosophy) to a glorification of the reason as against practice.

(3) Jung has no adequate definition of consciousness and unconsciousness except a reduction of “psychic energy” which makes the unconscious contents sink below the threshold. For this crude and unhelpful theory we have substituted the conception of the desocialisation of conscious contents, either ego-attached or environment-attached, due to the tension of concrete living, which causes them to become unconscious and correspondingly archaic and infantile.

If real external reality conflicts with my consciousness in life, I can actively and really change it. If I starve, I can get food; am too cold, I can put on clothes. Scientific phantasy is born from this kind of active change or practice, and though it is introversion, it is extraverted introversion – introversion with a view to changing outer reality. This change is its value, purpose and mode of generation. The experience in life which contradicts existing scientific consciousness and demands its change is always an experience in changing objective reality. Science develops as an abstract system of knowing Nature by its guidance of man’s attempts to change Nature.

But if my social ego conflicts with my consciousness in life, I can actively and really change myself. I can want different things – satisfy my instincts in other ways open to me in existing life – by art-works for example. I then have an interest in objects which is introverted – it is extraversion with a view to changing my own ego. This change of the ego is the value, purpose and mode of generation of art-works. The experience in life

which contradicts any existing ego and demands its change is always an experience encountered in satisfying my wants, that is, in changing myself. Art develops as a concrete group of objects, a mock world, whereby man changes himself and in doing so comes to know himself. The method of art is the method of science turned inside out. One knows to do; the other does to feel. One changes himself in order to change outer reality; the other changes outer reality in order to change himself. Both are necessary to each other, for the limits of outer and inner change are both set by necessity. Operating with existing consciousness, men change reality to new forms. Operating with existing forms, men change consciousness. The first is science in creative practice, the second art in creative practice. Reverse the rôles and we have science in creative theory, and art in creative theory.

Without this understanding of the relation of theory to practice, Jung moves without realising it from one definition of introversion to another.

Thinking and intuiting in introversion, i.e. in theory, are practical functions – functions orienting thought round the outer world. In practice, in extraversion, they are world-changing actions, actions changing perceptual reality. Feeling and sensing in introversion, in theory, are theoretical functions – functions orienting thought round the ego. In practice, in extraversion, they are self-changing, i.e. self-satisfying or self-expressing actions, actions satisfying the ego. This complex relation is precisely what makes the complexity of types, for no man lives in the same way, no one has precisely the same relation between phantasy and action. Hence Jung’s thinking and intuiting extraverts are men of “theory,” scientific men, just as his thinking and intuiting introverts are men of action, mysteriously practical men. His extraverted sensing and feeling men are practical men, appetitive or sensual, and his feeling and sensing introverts are theoretical men, mystics, prophets or poets.

Jung's confusion regarding the "compensatory" rôle of the unconscious springs from the same source. To say a function becomes unconscious is to say that it becomes desocialised. Jung's functions "sinking into the unconscious" through repression or repulsion by the conscious contents are nothing but man finding parts of the social ego or social reality in himself at war with each other. His consciousness of himself realised in his life experience conflicts with his consciousness of the outer world. We have already seen that he can adjust himself in phantasy in two ways – by orienting the consciousness of the outer world round his ego, or by orienting the ego round the outer world.

If the outer world is major to him (the thinking intuiting extravert) he will desocialise and adjust his ego round external realities so that it becomes subjectively distorted; so that his whole impression and valuation of it is false. In other words the feeling side or the sensing side will become an unconscious and archaic function; it will become desocialised and hence full of instinct. As it emerges in objective action, the ego will to us seem inflated and full of feeling. But precisely because it emerges in action in this wild instinctive way, the subjective content of the ego will be slight. The maniac does not feel profoundly; but he acts like a man in an overpowering passion, because he lacks that consciousness of self which moderates, complicates and subtilises man's response to reality. He makes an "all or nothing" response. Jung's compensatory unconscious is really the extravert's adjustment of life to reality in phantasy by a desocialisation of the ego and an unconsciousness of subjective feeling, matched in action by a more passionate behaviour, a folie de grandeur or wild inflation of the ego.

The correct response of this type is scientific – changing the environment and injecting a greater measure of environmental reality into consciousness as a result. The first route is the route of illusion, of madness, of

an unsocial and unconscious ego leading to a false conscious perception of the environment and therefore a destructive behaviour; the second is the route of science, of reality, of a manipulation of the ego to produce a truer conscious perception of the environment and therefore a more useful behaviour. A movement of extraversion and introversion is involved in both cases.

But here the maxim "Physician, heal thyself" does not apply. The scientist's contribution to society as a result of his special tension is a deeper consciousness of environmental reality, and what he requires from it to heal his own one-sidedness is just what he cannot give but the artist can – subjective consciousness and inner reality.

In the same way with the feeling or sensing introvert, a conflict between consciousness and reality necessarily takes the form of a distortion of conscious perception owing to the overvaluing of the ego. This leads to the psychasthenic neurotic having a greater consciousness of emotion and a fictitious independence of his environment, which, because of the denial of the objective term, leads to a slavery to his environment in the form of "difficult circumstances." Nature, not his ego, becomes primitive and uncontrollable because it becomes unconscious.

This type of introvert is driven to artistic production – to change himself not by lowering his consciousness of outer reality but by injecting his ego's experience into the social consciousness. But this creative task in relation to society may lead to a one-sidedness of personality which can only be corrected by the healing consciousness of outer reality drawn from science.

The maladapted introvert attempts to free himself from his conflict with "nature" by cutting himself off from the object; but his unconsciousness of the object makes him its blind slave. The maladapted extrovert attempts to cut himself off from the subject; but his unconsciousness of himself makes him the blind slave of his own instincts. Thus they prove in their own persons that freedom is

the consciousness of necessity. In theory they deny the ego or the world, only to prove it in a wild barbaric way in practice – and this cleavage in them between theory and practice is precisely wherein their madness consists. Thus art points the road to the hysteric's cure; science to the neurotics. Science and art in relation to the consciousness are therapeutic – science for the introvert, art for the extravert. In relation to practical life they are reality-changing, science changing the world and art changing men.

Apart from these weaknesses, Jung's study is a profound encyclopaedia of the human psyche as a part of reality, a study of how man realises or fails to realise his freedom in concrete living. It represents the deepest study of the psyche possible to world-view which has not risen above the conception of an individual living in civil society.

Science and art are the most abstract and generalised forms of a way of phantastic adaptation via society which cannot be separated from the reality of action, both of which are generated in the act of changing nature and so oneself, that is, in the act of living. Science and art are nothing if they do not give to each of us an immediate guide to our personal lives in all their aspects – both a morality and an understanding, an impulsion and an instrument which is not merely general but guides each of us in every one of our concrete relations, which is a compass to every act whereby we change nature and ourselves. Our life is lived wrongly if this theory, which guides and impels our every act, does not suck from every act new theory and grow as a

developing thing. Human activity is activity through objects. To separate science and art from "practical, critical-revolutionary activity" is to separate them from life. And this is what modern civilisation increasingly tends to do.

Modern culture has known well enough how to tear itself apart. It strove at first in its rise to cut itself off from the subject, to throw itself completely into the object. Hence the wild cyclothymic energy of the Elizabethan era of bourgeoisdom. Now it has passed to the other pole, from hysteria to psychasthenia, and, attempting to cut itself off from the object which it can no longer control, becomes the blind slave of necessity. This is the oscillation from mechanical material to idealism and thence to the helpless eclecticism of positivism, which, by attempting to cut itself off from both subject and object and so dominate them both, is the slave of both, a helpless victim of mere appearance.

Positivism leads to *surréalisme* in poetry. The dream-work of poetry is abandoned, and men float into air, cut loose both from subject and object – unconscious of both, and therefore the blind slave of both. "Free" association is compulsive dream. Poetry ceases to contain a dream-work; it becomes dream; the poet passes into a benign stupor. Benign, for Aragon has told us that the poet cannot rest on this position or return to an earlier one, but can only recover by winning into a world where subject and object again become social and therefore conscious, and the poet's relation to life again becomes free, revolutionary and laborious.

to be continued...

Courtesy : Illusion and Reality

Your support and contribution will help ISD spread its message of Peace.
For queries regarding donation and support write to us at notowar.isd@gmail.com

Your stories are valuable to us. Share them so that others can also read.
Mail us at notowar.isd@gmail.com

INSTITUTE *for* SOCIAL DEMOCRACY, New Delhi, India

E-MAIL : notowar.isd@gmail.com / WEBSITE : www.isd.net.in