

MISSING 'VIKAS'
IN THE GUJARAT MODEL

Uday Mehta



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FOREWORD

The events happening in Gujarat from the beginning of this century have had a deep and lasting impact on the national politics. The major attention to events in Gujarat was drawn in the aftermath of the Gujarat carnage in 2002. This carnage was orchestrated on the pretext of Godhra train burning. While it was not the first major violence in India, the intensity of the violence was horrific; the loss of lives and property along with the displacement of lakhs of Muslims was immense. For the first time, all those concerned with controlling the violence were from BJP, Gujarat Home minister, Gujarat Chief Minister, central Government's home minister and Prime minister of India all of them were the swayamsevak of RSS. Narendra Modi, then CM of Gujarat, said two infamous things. One was, 'every action has a reaction', which was proffered to justify the massive violence which unfolded in Gujarat. This was in reference to the burning of Sabarmati train, which was propagated to be done by Muslims. There are different versions of the same. Modi attributed it to Muslims and the carnage which was unleashed was well planned with lists of Muslim households and enterprises ready. The matters went to such a pass that even RSS trained Pracharak Vajpayee, the then Prime Minister, had to remind Modi of his Raj dharma (religiously ordained duty), and he felt so ashamed that he had to say that he will have no face to show to the world as the prime Minister where minorities are being subjected to such treatment. The second statement from Modi was to demonise the Muslim community when he stated that Muslims believe in "Hum Panch: hamare Pachees" (We two ours Twenty five) and on this assumption refugee camps were shut down with the statement that these camps housing Muslims are 'Child production centres'.

As the inquiry commission reports and other observations came out, this violence was the outcome of a well-planned strategy in the direction of 'Laboratory of Hindu Rashtra'. The polarisation, the internal displacement which took place was extreme and the ghettoization of Muslims in areas like Juhapura became intense. Having polarised the society, the liberal space in Gujarat further shrunk. The culture of protest, resistance was already very weak, the violence further led to the suppression of dissent and process of reform in the society. Having achieved the title of "Hindu Hriday Samrat" (Emperor of Hindu Hearts) in the public eyes and has emerged as the Hindu hero, Modi quickly gauged the situation for furthering the BJP and his rule. This was the Language of Vikas (development). Incessantly he threw up the slogan of Vikas, coupled with creating an image through US-based advertisement agency, which was commissioned by him. At the same time, he ensured that corporate people should get all the facilities. This policy was popularised as Gujarat Model of development. This Gujarat model became the buzz word, very popular with

Corporate World and the large sections of middle class. This is what helped him to create a national image of Vikas Purush (Development man). The hollowness of development model was exposed by many economists and social scientists but the clever media management helped sustain the carefully crafted image of Modi.

Modi's political assault coupled with a weak opposition (Congress) wilting under the pressure of Hindutva ideology; ensured the consecutive victories of BJP in Assembly Elections in Gujarat. The party which was struggling to hold power in Gujarat before violence now emerged triumphant in successive elections. The research of scholars of communal violence that where ever communal violence takes place, BJP in medium and long term emerges stronger, was there to be seen in actual practice on the ground of society in Gujarat. Congress failed to build on the dissatisfaction among sections of farmers, diamond workers, Dalits and minorities, giving a full chance to Modi-BJP to rule the roost and deepen the Hindu nationalism in Gujarat society. In turn, Hindu nationalist ideology also started getting legitimacy at all India level, by and by.

In this period Gujarat also saw deepening inroads of Hindu nationalism, among Adivasis. Organization of Shabri Kumbh in Dangs and regular repeated low-intensity violence against Christians in Adivasi areas was aimed to undermine the work of Christian missionaries in the state, a process which ran parallel to the all India efforts of RSS affiliates, Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram and VHP in particular. Having mastered the Vikas Purush image, Modi's language started getting further tempered to attract the poorer sections of society. This gave him the launching pad for all India ambitions. At social level while literature and performing arts got a setback, blind religiosity started infecting the cultural norms. Pandurang Shastri Athwale like other God-men was propagating the norms of Manusmriti and he went on to win the Magsaysay Award, with due appreciation from Hindutva combine.

While the phenomenon of God men came up all over India, more particularly in Gujarat. Here its social and political impact was very palpable. Prof Mehta has done a remarkable study of God men and their social-political role in society and part of that reflects in this work also. Morari Bapu had been a particular favourite of RSS combine. Asaram Bapu had visitors from many parties; one of them praising Asaram to the sky was Modi himself who said Asaram's Ashram is a divine place. Gujarat in more ways than one has been the pioneer of retrograde direction in which now India is being pushed gradually.

With the policies which encouraged the corporate plunder of state, Modi did become the darling of Industrial magnates and they started clamouring for Modi as the next Prime Minister. Within BJP his rise was meticulous as RSS; the real

controller of BJP and Hindutva politics; could see the agenda of Hindu nationalism being fulfilled through Modi. This was a clever move. Modi had already demonstrated by his action during 2002 violence that he is ruthless as far as suppression of minorities is concerned. His credentials as the leader of Hindu nationalism got established firmly through this carnage. The other major aspect of power is the corporate world and Modi had successfully won over this sector by offering them all the goodies. His road to power in the centre was paved by these two pillars, RSS workers and corporate support. This was coupled with strong media blitz and propaganda of *Acche Din* (good days). Modi in his speeches did underline Hindu nationalism as well as Vikas, whatever that means. Promises of sky were in the air in all aspects, black money, and domination in the region of South Asia, corruption free India, employment creation, and fall in the prices of commodities and what have you. Hope was sold through advertising and media influence. As minorities were feeling intimidated and fearful he threw another slogan, *Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas* (taking all together for everybody's development). Riding on opposition fragmentation Modi swept to power with mere 31% of votes giving him over 60% of seats in parliament. His stint in power for last three years has many features.

The Cabinet model is has been replaced with the centralization of powers in the hands of Prime minister. The RSS pracharaks and sympathisers are being installed in all the fields like education, culture, administration and most of the portals of power. Education is being given a Hindutva slant, university autonomy has been done away with, there is a growing intolerance in society, and any dissidence with the ideology of BJP-Modi is being labelled as Anti-Nationalism. What was called as fringe elements of Hindutva are occupying the central space in the society and nation as a whole. While development for all is being propagated, the issues related to identity of Hindus like Ayodhya and holy Cow are being used to the hilt to tighten the hold of Hindutva on the society. The divided opposition has been giving all the opportunity to BJP-RSS on a platter. Modi effect has led to rise in the Shakhnas of RSS all around. While all these phenomenon are stronger in Northern India, Cow-belt, the Southern India is also coming under the sway of Hindu nationalism. Many scholars are calling the whole process as Hindu revolution. The rule of Modi-BJP has also been characterised as fascist by many activist-scholars for its similarity to German Nazism and Italian fascism. Some unmistakably similar features are the supremacist Aryan racism, ultra-nationalism, expansionist muscular policy towards neighbours, targeting of religious minorities, smashing of liberal space and progressive movements.

At the same time, the dissatisfaction among deprived sections of society is rising exponentially. This has got manifested in Patidar movement. Una incidence shows the deep deprivation and dissatisfaction among the Dalits in particular. Both these issues have been dealt with competently in this book. While RSS has unleashed social engineering to co-opt Dalits, time will tell as to in which direction the scales will be tilted. All round social phenomenon is being dominated and is revolving around RSS-Hindutva ideology as expressed through the leadership of Narendra Modi.

Prof Uday Mehta has done a remarkable job in putting together many of this phenomenon in a lucid style with deeper academic content. He has successfully developed his theme while weaving around the contributions of different eminent scholars. It is a timely and valuable work in the direction of understanding the present social and political phenomenon in India. The points delineated in this book can be the foundation for devising the future strategies of social intervention at the level of social movements and also for political alliances in times to come.

Ram Puniyani

Chairman

Centre for Study of Society and Secularism. Mumbai

INTRODUCTION

This small volume largely consists of essays on the socio-economic and cultural backdrop of Gujarat, the rise of Narendra Modi and the BJP in the state and subsequently at the national level since 2014 general election. It also seeks to explore the impact of the neo-liberal policy and measures initiated and accelerated by the BJP, under the leadership of Narendra Modi initially in Gujarat and subsequently at a national level.

My interest in society and polity in Gujarat is also motivated from the fact that I did my graduation in sociology from the Gujarat University way back in 1955 from the Shamal Das College in Bhavnagar located in Saurashtra and was actively involved in left politics, trade union and students' movement during my under graduation. In the nineteen fifties the political, social and cultural scenario was far more optimistic and aspiring in terms of the prospects for radical and left movement in the state.

The first essay in this compilation deals with the historical backdrop and the recent trends in polity and society in Gujarat. Gujarat has witnessed a reformist, revivalist trends in social, cultural and religious spheres of civic society right from the medieval period. Along with the liberal, humanist trend represented by Narsingh Mehta, Akha and Dalpatram, one finds the revivalist current manifested among Dayaram, Govardhanram Tripathy and others. Narmad, who advocated social reform in castist Gujarat society, succumbed to the pressure of the dominant conservative upper caste lobby and retracted from his earlier position.

Unfortunately, Gujarat has no history of any powerful OBC or Dalit movement unlike Maharashtra or Tamil Nadu under the leadership of Phule and Ambedkar and Naiker in South. The Panthers in the Gujarat movement subscribed to the philosophy of non-violence and also extended support to Congress (I).

With regard to tribals, although they form a sizeable section of the Gujarat population, there is hardly any evidence of their independent radical organisation or struggle during pre or post-independence period. Gandhian influence had been very strong and in South Gujarat especially Gandhian leaders, such as Jugatram Dave and subsequently Zinabhai Darji, eminent Congress (I) peasant leader, had acquired powerful hold over tribals. Attempts were also made to effectively involve tribals like peasants in Satyagrah and anti-British struggle on the basis of the programme of non-payment of tax to the British government which essentially served the cause of prosperous peasant proprietors. Similarly, ashrams and residential schools, initiated by Thakkar Bapa under the Gandhian influence succeeded in making deep inroads in tribal

areas. The value system they projected was essentially based on upper caste, Brahminic culture.

Though OBCs constitute as much as 40 percent of the Gujarat population, they are fragmented into clusters of castes and sub-castes which are highly heterogeneous, having no link with each other. The freedom movement hardly made any impact on them. As an overwhelming majority of these communities were small and backward, also recruited from erstwhile nomadic tribals, there was little scope for any political or social movement. Obviously, such factors succeeded in preventing the growth of any organised OBC movement in Gujarat as was the case in South India in the early 20s and 30s under the effective leadership of Periyar and Justice Party, that he founded in the 20s. In North India, also, OBCs as Yadavs, Kurmis and others with their sizeable strength could build up a strong, militant organisation and make a deep dent in the polity and society of North India.

Similarly, even in labour movement, Gandhi's approach to industrial relation deserves serious consideration. Ahmadabad actually became a model of his philosophy of labour - employer relations, based on the principles of class harmony and class reconciliation in place of the Marxist perspective of class conflict and class struggle. The same approach was extended to agricultural and sugar cane workers, in south Gujarat where most of these recruited from the tribal areas were exploited as bonded labour known as "Hali" for decades.

This is also equally applicable to the peasant movement during the pre-independence period. Rich Patidars under the leadership of Vallabhbai Patel dominated peasant movement in Gujarat. It never adopted any radical programme promoting the demands of agricultural labour and poor Kisans and always stood for peaceful agitation. Thus, the Gandhian influence on trade unions, Kisans and Adivasis curbed the growth of any radical organisation or militant struggle in Gujarat.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising to find that the left movement has remained very weak, barring Socialists who emerged as a small challenge to the Congress leadership, especially in Saurashtra where they developed strong influence in some towns such as Mahuva and Savar Kundla. But this proved to be a short-lived phenomenon with the merger of the Socialist Party under Ashok Mehta's leadership in the Congress, this influence also withered away. Communists never posed any serious threat to the Congress or the BJP. In the entire electoral history of Gujarat, Communist party could only twice win assembly seats in the sixties.

In the absence of any politics of socio-economic radical movements as Girish Patel aptly argues, creating almost a political ideological vacuum, the Hindutva forces under the leadership of the BJP, VHP and RSS found an open field for their unhindered propaganda and indoctrination and did succeed in penetrating these communities substantially. Instead of Marx, Ram became a rallying point⁽¹⁾.

Gujarat is also notorious for its anti-labour practices, violation of all labour protective and security legislations. Surat is a classic case, like Bhivandi in Mumbai, small scale units dominate industrial activity in Surat. Workers employed in these small units find it very difficult to organise themselves. Owners of units ignore labour laws, for that matter, all other laws as excise, income tax and others are violated with impunity and workers have little legal protection and security for their jobs.

Gujarat has acquired distinction for brutal exploitation of labour, violation of human rights, atrocities on Dalits, intolerance of dissents and persecution of minorities. Sangh Parivar has also acquired notorious reputation for organised attacks on Christian institutions in Tribal areas.

Thus, the violation of democratic rights on a massive scale and active connivance of the state in evasion of its own laws have created conditions quite conducive for launching the fascist program of the Sangh Parivar. Hence the success of the Sangh Parivar in building up an atmosphere of communal hatred, and its ability to trap sections of the Gujarat society in its spread of canard against minorities and other liberal secular strata of the society have to be viewed in the context of the active involvement of the state apparatus and numerous cultural and social institutions sponsored by the state in such pursuits.

Re-Imagination of the State

Since the last several decades, Gujarat has been gradually used by reactionary politics, allowing political mobilisation only around the idioms of religion and caste. As aptly argued by Aseem Prakash, Congress tried to strategically mix both while the Sangh Pariwar has embarked on its project of re-imagining the state through weaving a matrix of the Hindu religion under the ideology of Hindutva. The re-imagination project entails restructuring the social domain, consolidating all social groups except the minorities for dominating electoral politics contribution to its objective in the material domain, allowing certain caste/class to own and control productive assets and sustain the existing hierarchy in social relationship through control of the state apparatus⁽²⁾.

Nearly 13 percent of Gujarat's population comprises Patidar or Patels. They initially constituted the social and political base for the Swatantra Party and then deserted it in favour of the Congress and towards the end of 1980s switched their loyalties completely to BJP. Patels as a caste were originally cultivators. Their present prosperity has become possible largely because the government land reform program, Green Revolution policies, State subsidy given to agriculture and resources of numerous cooperative societies. The surplus generated through agriculture allowed them to diversify in other trades and shift their economic base to fast growing urban areas, while also keeping a close link with rural areas. Patels and Baniyas benefited tremendously by the state subsidy given to small-scale industries (SSIs) and become a powerful entrepreneurial class. Baniyas constitute only 3 percent of the state population, but dominate in business and industry. Brahmins who occupy top position in educational institutions and dominate the profession of doctors, architects and engineers constitute 4 percent of the state population. Recently, they have also moved into business. Forward castes together constitute 26 percent of population but occupy 75 percent of the middle class and 95 percent of rich class. Rajputs, with small exceptions, stand closer to backward classes in terms of their economic status.

These are the castes that have benefited the most from the institutionalisation of market-led growth. The prime aim of material domain of the re-imagination project, as Prakash suggests, is to preserve the social and economic positions of these castes ⁽³⁾.

It is in the interest of political and economic elites, who mostly come from the upper castes, to preserve the economic order and they seek refuge in a social ideology that legitimises the status quo. The Hindutva ideology in all its manifestations has never questioned caste and class inequality. The Hindutva social order and neo-liberalism both rely on the beliefs that one has to be satisfied with whatever endowment one originally had. The Political manifestation of this logic is BJP and its social forms RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal and numerous other institutional and religious orders. This is probably the reason for the affinity of trading class with right-wing social and political formation.

The Modi Phenomenon

The authoritarian and autocratic thrust in the Gujarat society and polity as brought out in the first essay is much older than the dictatorial style of the functioning under Narendra Modi in Gujarat. Gujarat otherwise also is notorious for its violation of human rights, anti-labour, inhuman practices and brutal exploitation of labour, agricultural workers and small farmers since over

the decades. Intolerance and ruthless suppression of any dissent from the official policy is accepted by all dominant institutions of the civil society, academic as well as literacy and cultural circles as well as established NGOs and political parties as a normal phenomenon since the inception of the Gujarat state in early 1960s. Humiliation and violent suppression of the activists, including Medha Patkar for opposing Sardar Sarovar dam in Gujarat, is widely known and tolerated with tacit approval by all leading intellectuals and writers in Gujarat.

One should also overlook the widely known fact that civil society in Gujarat has acquired a notorious reputation for Dalit atrocities and gender oppression since ages. There are few parallels to such gross injustices and violence against untouchables and women.

While highlighting the factors contributing to the success of Modi, Jafferlot mentions two important aspects, one an extreme personification of power and two managerial style of governance.

In the high-tech campaign, Modi was equated with Gujarat and Gujarat with Modi; It is not surprising that Modi spent over 25,000 dollars a month on an American firm, specialising in the communication of public figures, which has also worked for the Nigerian dictators, Soni Abacha and such others for reshaping his image. ⁽⁴⁾

Admiration and confidence of the leading magnates of the corporate world and some of them even visualised the possibility and concurrence for Modi's devotion to the Prime Minister's position in India. Modi, indeed, believes in a market economy and has accelerated the retreat of the state. He had reduced the state spending on electricity by 9 percent and reformed the Gujarat State Electricity Board. He also amended Industrial Dispute Act to make labour laws more flexible in the state's special economic zones.

Modi's policies are well in tune with the inclinations of the urban middle class which has developed because of the economic reforms.

In concluding observation this essay brings out the low position of Gujarat in terms of human development. The scale has gone down with reference to health and indicators of mortality. As a combined measure of health, education and income, Gujarat's Human Development Index (HDI) measured to 0.360 and ranked fourth among Indian states in 1981. By 1991, its HDI had improved to 0.431 but other states had taken over it and it ranked sixth.

Finally, the worst victims of the so-called development Model of Gujarat are Adivasis and Dalits who have paid a heavy price for development projects.

As during the last over 5 years, the state has arbitrarily collected over 33 lakh hectares of land that has resulted into displacement of over 2.5 million people from their habitat in rural and tribal areas. Out of the total 19,638 villages in Gujarat, over 40 percent of villages have been adversely affected by this development process.

Seventy percent of the persons displaced are Adivasis and the other major section affected by these projects are Dalits. The globalisation has accelerated this process, which otherwise also had started since the initial phase of independence.⁽⁵⁾

As brought out by Utsa Patnaik⁽⁶⁾, people living below poverty line is over 67 percent in Gujarat, as a percentage which is much higher than BIMARU state like Bihar. Second essay is based on the critical appraisal of the BJP's victory in 2014 Lok Sabha Elections and its implications.

The BJP, known from its inception for the urban base, middle class, upper caste orientation was able as the findings of the election results indicate to generate a significant support from backward caste Hindus and Dalits. In 2014, as Suhas Palshikar and K.C. Suri's appraisal of 2014 Lok Sabha Elections bring out Other Backward Classes constituted the largest share within the vote received by the BJP. The Party also received a substantial proportion of the Dalit and Adivasi vote in different parts of the country. Thus, the party's victory points towards a transformation of the BJP. The BJP did get a majority on its own, but one has to keep in mind that its overall vote share was only 31 percent.

Rise of Modi

The National Democratic Alliances (NDA) victory and the BJP's rather unexpected absolute parliamentary majority were not merely celebrated by the party loyalist on the streets, but they were also celebrated more privately and lavishly by India's capitalist classes. As Radhika Desai suggests, the only publicly visible sign of these more exclusive celebrations appeared when the prophylactically named sensx stock market index hit an orgasmic high of 25,364.71 crossing the 25,000 mark for the first time. Never before had India's capitalists stood so solidly behind a single party. Never before had they contributed so massively to it and never before any party in India spent more on its campaign than the ruling US president had on his. While most commentators competed to find superlatives to describe the BJP's Victory - "an

electoral revolution", "turning point", "new phase" for India's polity, Economic and Political Weekly, designated it as "the biggest corporate heist in history".

The Congress loss of votes by 9.25% resulted into loss of nearly 30% of seats in the Lok Sabha (from 206 seats in 2009 to only 44 seats in 2014)

Comparing Modi's election speeches with talk shows of Hitler and Mussolini in the 1930s, Sumanta Banerjee argued that following in the footsteps of these two notorious global personalities, he has managed to project himself as the man for all seasons and all classes. The media hype around Modi was reminiscent of the role of the European press in the 1930s, when it continued to depict Hitler and Mussolini as amicable guys who were expected to defeat the communists, till the Axis Powers reached right on the doorstep of the western capitalist states.

But while recalling the past and identifying the similarities, the same author points out that, one should take a more astute view of the Hindu right in India today. It is not an exact replica of the fascist forces of the past. As the most powerful representative, Narendra Modi is refashioning the strategy and tactics of a populist chauvinist, nationalism (the ideology that was followed by the Axis powers in their respective states in the 1930-40 period and by the Hindu right in India) Within the present order of globalization he has developed a concept of neo-Hindutva to suit the demands of the neo-liberal economy while remaining loyal to the Sangh Pariwar's basic strategy of establishing a Hindu theocratic state of Ram Rajya (a parallel to the contemporary Islamic project of creating a sharia-based political order) Modi is coming up with tactics to accommodate foreign multinationals and the indigenous corporate sector. Under his leadership, the Hindu right is thus attempting a mix between Reliance and Ram Janmbhoomi. It is adopting the neo-liberal order in economy, while retaining its core ideology of Hindutva to establish its hegemony in the socio-cultural scene. (Sumanta Banerjee, "The Resistible Rise of Narendra Modi", the Economic and Political Weekly, May 3, 2014)

Dominant role of the Provincial Propertied Classes

In this essay, an attempt has also been made to explore the shift in support base of the two dominant parties - Indian National Congress and the Bhartiya Janata Party in this election. Radhika Desai explains this shift in a convincing way. According to her explanation, which appears to us quite convincing the key that unlocks this secret is an understanding of the role of the Provincial Propertied Classes (PPCs) and their parties. The PPCs originated in cultivator middle caste whom M.N. Srinivas dubbed as the dominant castes, "Jats or Yadavs in Uttar Pradesh, Marathas in Maharashtra, Patidars in Central Gujarat, Kamas and Reddys in Andhra". Capitalist development transformed them into capitalist

farmers and then, as they acquire the urban and industrial interests into capitalists pure and simple.

Originally the middle castes formed the rural base of the Congress, providing its linkmen and their desertion beginning in the 1960s initiated “the long death of the Congress Party.” It was rooted in the fundamental political contradiction of Nehru’s developmental model, its industrialisation plans relied on taxing the surpluses of precisely the middle caste owner cultivators on whom congress relied to win elections.

If the PPCs desertion caused Congress’s decline, their support for the BJP directly in the states where they joined it and indirectly in others where their PPCs allied with it has underwritten Hindutva’s rise in recent decades (Radhika Desai- A Latter Day Fascism?, Economic and Political Weekly, August 30, 2014, pp 48-58)

We have also examined at length the rise of fascism in Europe in 1920s and thirties in Europe, factors contributing to its emergence and classical Marxist and other theoretical appraisals seeking to explore its underlying causes and the socio-economic and other forces that contributed in strengthening the Sangh Pariwar and Narendra Modi initially in Gujarat and subsequently at a national level.

Since after coming into power, in last over two years, the Modi Government has introduced a series of measures in economic, social, educational and cultural spheres that has seriously disturbed the lives of people from practically all strata of Indian humanity. Acceleration of the neo-liberal reforms of inviting foreign capital in vital areas, as defence and railways under the pretext of Make in India’s deceptive banner, labour reforms imposing harsher conditions and increasing insecurity of labour and threatening trade unions survival, policy for denationalisation of Banks and privatisation of Railway services have already been initiated.

Similarly, setting up new educational institutions under the hegemony of Hindutva forces, eliminating the functioning of the autonomous institutions like the UGC and other educational and Research Institutes of national and international reputations. Appointing RSS or BJP stooges, totally incompetent for the assignments given to them in prime Research cultural, academic institutions as ICHR, ICCCR, National Education Trust and Prime Research Institutes, Sciences and other technological institutes.

Such authoritarian and autocratic steps of the Modi Government have led to serious resistances from all quarters of Indian society, right from research scholars, scientists, social experts, academics to film training institute for artists.

Similarly, there is effective resistance from labour against labour reforms, Bank employees against denationalisation, farmer against land Acquisition Bill.

Third essay focuses on the Neo-liberal reforms accelerated by the Modi government since coming into power. In this context, the defence needs sharper focus as it accounts for overwhelming share of the budgetary allocations in this country. With the third largest standing army in the world, India's defence budget for 2015-16 was Rs. 31 Lakh Crore. The significance of this huge allocation can be realised if one compares this figure with allocations for other equally or probably more relevant sectors as health, human resource development etc. The health sector got only an allocation of Rs. 32,000 Crores, the human resources development (i.e. education) close to Rs. 69,000 crore. MNREGA Rs. 33,37,00 Crore. Thus defence is one of the largest needs of expenditure of the central government amounting to more than one-sixth of the total allocations.

One of the major winners of the recent imports has been the US. It has become the largest source of armament imports in the last few years surpassing Russia and India. The dubious distinction of being termed as the "best customer for American's Defence Industry" (Einhorn, opat)

Emerging Corporate Military Complex

Against the background of the failure to stem, the tide of imports and to develop indigenous technology, the government, experts and think tanks are increasingly turning to their final solutions, for all problems, to the private corporate sectors.

Though the public sector predominates, India's military-industrial complex also includes 140 private armament companies and 5000 Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs) involved in the production of around 450 items. (Master of wars; Editorial, Economic and Political Weekly, vol-XLIX, No. 34, 23/04/2014) some of the key big business houses of the country, such as the Tatas, L&T, Reliance and Mahendra are investing in the sector and have made big plans to get a substantial chunk of the military manufacturing.

While the people of this country, as pointed out by Rahul Varman, are incessantly told that there is no money for basic necessities, such as food, shelter and health care, a colossal amount of money has been spent on creating

and sustaining a huge military production research complex. However, this complex has little to show in terms of accomplishments. While the people are getting even more immisericalised as the nation's strength is being increasingly equated with its military might, justifying the state's spending, even more, resources on it. The military establishment is the focus of attention, whether as part of the 'Make in India' campaign, the vibrant Gujarat Summit or Visit of American President in this country.

Privatisation of the Public Sector

The government is determined to put several public sector banks to death. One could see from the last budget minimum allocations for the public sector banks, the objective is the private takeover of India's banking sector. Modi Government not only starved the banks of capital, but has recapitalized selectively, not only shrinking the market share of the public sector banks, but sending a signal that they are on their way out, to be taken over by others. (Ref -Rahul Verma – Rising Corporate Military Complex in India: A critical Appraisal, Aspects of Indian Economy , May 2015, Research Unit of Political Economy, Mumbai)

Subverting the Land Acquisition Act 2013

Since coming into power in 2014, the Modi government took several measures to dilute the pre-poor provisions of the Land Acquisition Act of 2013. As pointed out by Santosh Varma, there have been bitter debates in academia and protests from agricultural communities on the question of land. As the processes leading to the dispossession of the farmers lands gathered momentum, protests intensified in different parts of the country. They forced the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government at the centre to enact the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (LARR) Act, 2013. Though, this Act, passed by the parliament, was termed pro-people certain issues remained unresolved. For instance, the fear of arbitrary valuation of the market price of land acquired was not resolved.

However, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government has virtually nullified this Act. It passed a LARR ordinance on 29 December 2014. Several amendments diluting the criterion for land acquisition were included in the ordinance, on grounds that the LARR Act, 2013 was complicated and anti-development.

The government's haste in passing the LARR ordinance and the continuous public protests against land acquisitions raised several questions, such as

protests against land acquisitions, especially for private purpose. How would families be affected by loss of land and livelihood.

The 48th round of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) survey (Land and Livelihood survey, 1992) reported that 69.24% of the affected household, were that of the marginal and small farmers. In the NSSOs 7th round (2012) this increased to 92.84%. The survey suggests that there was a massive increase in the proportion of landless, marginal and small farmers household.

The NDA ordinance to amend the LARR Act 2013 to make the process of land acquisition easier should be seen in this context.

Since January 2015, the LARR ordinance has been promulgated three times by the NDA government amidst massive protests from different independent farmer groups, social activists and opposition parties inside and outside the parliament. (Ref-Santosh Verma- Subverting the Land Acquisition Act, 2013, Economic and Political Weekly, September 12, 2015, Vol No -37)

New Bill on Industrial Relations - Labour Reforms

After coming to power, Prime Minister Narendra Modi repeatedly stressed on many forums that economic growth would be the main objective of the new government. But the government at the same time, stressed that there were too many labour laws regulating work (indirectly implying, granting protection to labour) and that ought to be amended. Vasundhara Raje Scindia, CM of Rajasthan took the lead as Sharit Bhowmik points out by announcing that laws relating to labour protection and firing of workers had to become more liberal to generate more employment.

The argument that removing legal protection for labour and allowing industries to shut down at will, is as the same author suggests, not new or even original. The World Bank's World Development Report for 1995, noted.

In many Latin American, South Asia and Middle Eastern countries, Labour Laws establish numerous job security regulations, rendering, hiring decisions practically irreversible and the system of workers representation and dispute resolution is often subject to unpredictable government decision making, adding uncertainty to firm's estimate of futures costs (P. 34)

The recent bill deals with the whole gamut of industrial relations. The attempt apparently seems, "to consolidate and amend the law relating to registrations of Trade Unions, conditions of employment, investigation and settlement of disputes and related matters". (Ref- Sharit Bhowmik, Protecting Employers

against Workers and Trade Unions, New Bill on Industrial Relations, Economic and Political Weekly, July 18, 2015)

This essay examines at length the various provisions of the New Industrial Relation Bill and its implications for trade unions, recruitment, hiring and firing of worker, the scope for third party intervention and host of issues relating to collective bargaining.

Under the pressure of the joint trade union movement and the growing discontent in various sections of the labour, with their repeated calls for Bharat Bandh and industrial closure, the government has not been able to implement this New Industrial Relation Bill.

Our fourth essay in this volume critically examines the root causes of the recent Patidar's revolt and its implications in terms of the neo-liberal model of development adopted by Narendra Modi's government.

The Patidars or Patels, socially and economically dominant community in Gujarat, the consistent supporter and the architect of the Gujarat Model of development, in a massive and unprecedented show of strength on August 25, 2015, close to 5 Lakh from the different corners of the state, came together to demand that either the Other Backward Class (OBC) quota should be extended to them, or the caste based reservation should be abolished altogether.

In order to understand the present outburst of the Patidars, it is imperative to understand the factors that contributed to their rise and dominance in Gujarat Politics and their economic and social dominance.

Patidars, by and large, benefited immensely during the initial phase of development and land reforms measures initiated by the Gujarat government since independence. In our observation of Gujarat in historical backdrop, we have brought out in greater detail how Patidars benefited economically, politically and socially since independence and particularly after the rule of the BJP in Gujarat over the last several decades.

However, during this recent, second phase of liberalisation, they have been adversely affected by the economic policy and measures adopted by the Gujarat government.

Patidars or Patels as these are known now, accumulated considerable wealth from agriculture, are also known for their industrious and business ability. In the 1970s and 1980s, many of them diversified into manufacturing and were successful in building Gujarat's small and medium scale industries. In the colonial period and also since the 1980s, many Patels, migrated reaching almost

every corner of the globe. Non-resident Patels are also best known for owning 70 percent of the motels in the United States. In the 1980s and 1990s, young people of this highly aspiring community began looking for work in the professional and white collar sectors. In fact, they prefer those to agriculture or business (frontline, October 2015. P.104)

As brought out by Achyut Yagnik, the discontent among them comes from many areas, shortage of jobs, small number of admissions in professional courses, agrarian issues and a decline in the small and medium scale industries brought out by Modi's Gujarat model of development, which supports big industry.

The biggest aspect in their downfall as suggested by an investment analyst, has been Gujarat's thrust towards big industry. Big industry does not necessarily provide employment. As a matter of fact it has resulted into shrinking of employment opportunities as he further pointed out over the past 20 years, the annual industrial growth has been 22 percent while employment growth has been just 35 percent (Ibid P.106)

We conclude our observation on the Patidars agitation referring to the casual link between the Patel outburst and growing agrarian crisis in Gujarat as well as the entire rural India. As argued by Prof. Ghanshyam Shah, "One-third of the Patidars are small and marginal farmers. As input cost for cultivation has increased over a period, most of those poor farmers do not have resources or access to timely credit for investment. Agriculture is not remunerative enough. The young Patidars are forced to find non-farm occupations in urban areas. And hence, they face great difficulties in trying to meet their expectations" (Ibid). Agriculture is becoming less remunerative as more and more land is getting acquired for industries and people are repeatedly told that the future of India is only through industrial development. Obviously, land owning communities crave better education and secure jobs. They perceive that those whom they considered "lowly" in ritualistic hierarchy are getting jobs and education through reservation. This will only intensify caste-based conflicts (Prof. Ghanshyam Shah, Interview in Frontline, October 2015, P. 108)

Patidars agitation actually is a manifestation of the similar outburst in other provinces as Jats agitation in Haryana, Kapus in Andhra Pradesh and Ahoms in Assam. (Aseem Srivastava, A note from the land of frustrated aspirations, Economic and Political Weekly, July,16 2016)

Dalit Uprising

Dalit uprising in Gujarat deserves special consideration as the movement is strikingly different in terms of the mode of massive organised protest, also in terms of demand, leadership and its future vision.

The July 11, 2016 stripping and thrashing of four Dalit boys at Una village in Saurashtra, by a bunch of self-styled cow protectors or Gau Rakshaks, for skinning a dead cow provoked movement in Gujarat of a scale never seen before in the state.

P. Punia, chairperson, National Commission for Scheduled Castes suggested that Una response has to be viewed in the context of large increase in the number of atrocities against Dalits in recent years. In 2014, as many as 47,000 cases were reported, in 2015 the number went up to 54,000, while in 2013 it was 39,000. The Una incident is part of the entire setting. The Dalit is not as important as a dead cow that is why he noted that there were so many protests all over the country. In case of Rohit Vemula, a brilliant Ph.D. Dalit student from Hyderabad University, who committed suicide on January 18, 2016, it is strongly felt that, inhuman treatment of the Dalit Scholars in the University is a part of larger issue of the NDA government's anti-Dalit mindset (Ref. Frontline September 2, 2016 and Ibid September 2015)

Dalit upsurge in Gujarat has to be viewed in the context of simmering resentment against unprecedented rise in atrocities on Dalits in Gujarat and the immunity enjoyed by the offenders. The conviction rate is as low as 3 percent in Gujarat in cases of atrocities against Dalits. In 2015, Gujarat reported the highest crime rate against Dalits (6,653) followed by Chhattisgarh (3,008 Cases) and Rajasthan (7, 144 Cases) (Ibid)

Recent Dalit movement in Gujarat is unique also in terms of its strikingly different type of leadership and also in terms of its distinct character of demands. As Mevani who has emerged as a leader in this movement pointed out in his interview with "frontline" reporter, "we have to go beyond Una. We have to demand social and economic justice, Land is critical to our emancipation." When one reads Ambedkar and Marx in the context of atrocities, land reforms emerge as the key issues. In India, land determined the caste (Ibid). Hence he demands land for the Dalits and giving up of Dalit traditional occupation of cow skinning.

It may not be Utopia to suggest the Dalit movement in Gujarat could prove a turning point of the Dalit struggle for the emancipation in this country.

Dholera : Mega City Projects Along the Delhi - Mumbai Industrial Corridor

The last essay in this series of a brief perusal of the recent uprising in Gujarat refers to the growing unrest in Dholera, selected as a mega city for projects along the Delhi-Mumbai industrial corridor. Our findings are entirely based on an exhaustive survey conducted by Preeti Sampat and published in Economic and Political Weekly, ("Dholera: The Emperors New City", April 23, 2016)

The central and state governments are actively adopting policies that target urban regions as potential drivers of economic growth. As brought out by Shriya Anand and Neha Sami the government has begun to develop specific types of industrial and economic development policies that have led to the emergence of different urban forms. These include the development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), National Investment And Manufacturing Zones (NIMZs) and new towns in and around existing urban regions that focus on specific types of industrial and economic activities. The most recent and perhaps one of the most ambitious strategies is the push to develop urbanisation which the Indian government has embraced as a key development strategy.

The government of India and its officials see the development of these industrial corridors as means to enables India's ongoing urban transition, while simultaneously purporting economic growth by attracting domestic and international capital to invest in and along these corridors regions. The new industrial towns along these corridors are meant to act as magnets for migrants and job seekers, providing alternative employment locations to older metros like Mumbai or Delhi. (Ref. Scaling Up, Scaling Down - state rescaling along the Delhi - Mumbai industrial corridor - Shriya Anand, Neha Sami - Economic and Political Weekly, April 23, 2016 P. 50)

In mid-2009, the Gujarat government converted 22 villages along the Gulf of Khambhat into the Dholera Special Investment Region (DSIR). DSIR is constituted under the Gujarat Special Investment Region (SIR) Act, 2009. This area also is a residential location of a predominantly agrarian population of 39,300. Dholera will be the first smart city along the Delhi - Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC). This is a massive conversion of agrarian land into a green field city.

As per the findings of the exhaustive in-depth survey conducted by Preeti Sampat selection of Dholera as a smart city project is a striking illustration of focusing on rentier economy as driving force of the novel urbanization infrastructure projects over the past decade in India. This rentier economy brings within its purview in varying combinations, policy, speculative land

markets, private consultants and developers, interests within the state at various levels, and (usually large landowners willing and able to benefit from reintering at least temporarily). The rentier economy hinges crucially on ownership of land, or access to it. As Preeti Sampat notes, there is a need to distinguish rent-driven urbanization infrastructure projects from industrialization and concomitant job creation, despite their conflation in policy rhetoric. The transition to industrialization and jobs that such projects promise to unleash remains ever elusive cover story for rentier-driven dispossession (Ibid, P.59)

Residents of Dholera opposed the complete economic overhaul of the region proposed by the DSIR, but they have not been opposed to the development of the area as such. Rather, they supported the need to strengthen existing agrarian infrastructure and to develop support mechanism. The contrast in Dholera as Preeti brings out is over defining the terms of development and beneficiaries. As resistance grows, contingent alliances across caste, class, community and gender hierarchies coalesce in contrast with interests promoting the DSIR. While not radically egalitarian, these alliances nevertheless, open possibilities for articulation of development from below (Ibid P.63)

Under optimism for this smart city project becomes evident when one comes to know that despite several attempts being made with advertisements and field trips from Dubai, Mumbai and elsewhere, no investors is interested in the areas as there is nothing on the ground. The only “stray buyers” of land around the Dholera SIR are those parking excess money to gain from future appreciation, many already powerful politicians or those who cannot afford to buy plots near Ahmadabad.

The Bhal Bachao Samiti, a committee with representatives of the 22 impacted villages has been formed by local residents to resist the project. Hundred people were detained and 22 arrested in February 2014 while protesting land acquisition.

Not too far from Dholera, the 50,884 hectare Mandal Becharji SIR (MBSIR) in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat was the earliest ‘nodes’ to begin implementation along the DMIC. It faced prompt resistances from the 44 villages coming under it (Shivendekar 2013). When agitation intensified, the then Chief Minister of Gujarat Narendra Modi, Probably fearing electoral repercussions in a sensitive election year, cancelled the modification for 36 MBSIR villages.

Public consultation and prior informed consent for development projects, as people’s reaction to these projects indicates, have assumed significance in view

of widespread resistance to acquisition of infrastructure projects across the country.

Last small essay in this volume focuses on Gandhi and Hindu Nationalism. Gandhi, even after almost over half a century since his demise, sounds so refreshing. The strategy and approach he evolved over a long period of the struggle for national liberation, his commitment and total involvement for the cause of freedom of the nation, his deep concern for the problems and the immense miseries of vast bulk of Indian humanity, especially for rural India, his programme for rural reconstruction, flexible techniques he evolved for pressurizing the British Government, for gaining concession for national independence, his dynamic and humanistic interpretation of the Hindu religion, his simplicity, lifestyle, aversion for power, and overall his total involvement for promoting communal harmony based on the principles of non-violence and tolerance sound equally relevant even at this juncture.

One should bear in mind the striking difference in his understanding of nationalism based on principles of social justice, secularism and equal respect for rights of all Indian citizens, irrespective of caste creed and socio-economic distinctions and sectarian, hierarchical, communal interpretation of nationalism by the Hindu right. Unfortunately the exponent of the ideology which ultimately led to his assassination on the eve of independence, today showering praises for his life and commitment and are not tired of immensely eulogising him while being instrumental in his withering away from the national scenario.

Nevertheless, in this essay we are basically focusing on Gandhi's life, his evolution, and world-view, his commitments and the final phase of his life when he felt disheartened, disillusioned and cheated for the sake of the cause for which he spent his entire life.

Epoch of Gandhi

Dr. A. R. Desai who otherwise is ardent critic of Gandhi and his political philosophy and role in independence movement in his classic work, "Social Background of Indian Nationalism" while acknowledging his profound impact on Indian freedom movement points out that Gandhi was the outstanding leader and Gandhism the ruling ideology of the movement since the 1920s. Gandhi dominated the political scene like a titan. His contribution to the nationalist movement was unique. He was the first national leader who recognised the role of the masses and mass action in the struggle for national liberation in contrast to earlier leaders, who did not comprehend their decisive significance for making the struggle more effective.

While taking over and utilising such methods as the boycott and Swadeshi from the previous phase, Gandhi evolved new and far more effective techniques of struggle to exert pressure on the British government. Satyagraha, Non-cooperation, Civil Disobedience, both individual and on a mass scale, non-payment of taxes, open defiance of laws, deliberate courting of jails, mass demonstrations and marches and hunger strikes were the principal weapons he added to the armoury of the nationalist struggle.

Gandhi was not only a colossus in the field of politics, but was also an outstanding social reformer. He was permeated with profound humanism and was a crusader against injustices in all spheres of social relations. He denounced in words of blazing moral indignation, the barbarous institutions of untouchability, the age-old crime of the Hindu society against its most oppressed section. He passionately struggled for the liquidation of this most inhuman institution and made it even an integral part of this political programme.

Gandhi was a classical type of a nationalist and therefore an anti-communalist par excellence. He considered both Muslim and Hindu communalism as anti-national, and Anti-Human and combated both these with all his unbeatable energy. He finally even offered his life blood as living oblation to the liquidation of communalism in the social relations of the Indian people.

Gandhi's interests were encyclopaedic and extended to all aspects of the life of the Indian nation. They embraced even language and literature. He enriched Gujarati, his own vernacular, popularised Hindi and left a powerful impression on literature in various languages in the country.

Gandhi based the political satyagraha movement on moral and spiritual principle. He thus injected religion into politics which became thereby mystified. The criteria he adopted for determining the principles and programmes of the political movement was that of the strengthening of the spiritual stamina of the Indian people. He frequently talked on "Soul Force", abstract "Truth" and the ethical conversion of the political opponent. (Social Background of Indian Nationalism A.R.Desai, P)

Gandhi respected Tilak for his intelligence and his dedication, but the two men differed profoundly in personality and in their approach to the religion which for both of them was the core of their politics. Both were dedicated to action, and both found in the Bhagavad Gita a basic textbook. But as George Woodcock brings out "their fundamental divergences were mirrored in their differing interpretations of the poem, for Gandhi believed that it must be understood allegorically as a tract on non-violence, Tilak believed it must be

taken literally, as an exhortation to commit violence, if one's cause (Swaraj) or self-government in his case demanded it".

Yet, as the same author points out, though Gandhi felt more sympathy for Gokhale than Tilak, and become his protégé, his ideas and policies reconciled to a great extent the currents within the Indian renaissances which the two older men represented. He was at once universalist and traditionalist, and thus explains his later acceptance as leader by Indians of widely differing viewpoints. He had read western philosophers with attention, he had accepted what he found good in Christianity and Islam, and he respected the ideals on which British institutions appeared to be based. Yet, though he rejected violence, he was an activist willing to resort to extra legal means which Gokhale was not, and his experience in South Africa, combined with his readings of Tolstoy and Ruskin, had led him to despise the materialism and the soulless machine worship that seemed to characterise western civilisation. (George Woodcock, Gandhi P.64)

In concerning himself so closely with untouchability, communal reconciliation and village rehabilitation, Gandhi was, in fact, giving expression though on a restricted scale to the "Constructive Programme" which he had always regarded as the essential complement to the non-violent struggle for liberation from British rule.

Khadi, the hand making of cloth from locally grown materials and the development of other village industries acquired predominant position in his programme for rural reconstruction. His innovation of basic education with the focus on children learning to use their hand, with focus on vocational training and agricultural renovation, reflect his prime preoccupation with rural India and rural reconstruction as a key, indispensable prerequisite for national development.

Gandhi's deep concern for rural reconstruction and communal harmony even today appear absolute pre-requisite for national renovation. It is not surprising that during emergency and subsequently also leaders as Jayprakash Narayan and even Dr. Rammanohar Lohia gave prominence to rural development, with agricultural and allied rural small scale and cottage industries acquiring predominant significance not only for rural reconstruction but national reconstruction.

With India entering and accelerating neo-liberal reforms especially in last over two decades, with total commodification of all agricultural production, linking the fate of Indian farmers within the vertex of global economy driven by industrial tycoons, from the advanced nations, especially from the USA, one is

reminded of the miserable plight of Indian Kisan during pre-independence period, when lakhs of farmers died of hunger, impoverishment, famines and indebtedness, as a result of the policy adopted by the British government for the enrichment and appeasement of its industrial and commercial tycoons.

The growing phenomenon of lakhs of farmers committing suicides in last over three decades reminds one of the significance and relevance of Gandhi's preoccupation with the plight of rural masses and the rural reconstruction as a prerequisite for national development.

The other major problem which remained uppermost in Gandhi's mind was the problem of communal tension. Till the last days of his life he was totally preoccupied with the problem of communal tension. In spite of his poor health he visited and stayed in Noakhali, the place that acquired national attention for serious problem of communal disturbance. He went on indefinite fast for the restoration of peace and communal harmony and succeeded in his effort in this direction. He could never reconcile to the idea of the partition of the country. Partition of the country was a deathblow for him. It amounted to washing away of all efforts, and struggles he undertook for communal reconciliation and communal harmony. Hence, Gandhi during the last phase of his life remained isolated, disillusioned, distressed soul who probably unconsciously prayed for self-annihilation for the cause he failed to fulfil and died like a martyr with Ram as the last word coming from his deathbed. There cannot be any greater tribute for a martyr.

Gandhi lives in memory of not only Indian but global humanity for the life he lived, series of experiments he made for rural and national reconstruction, techniques he evolved for national liberation, precedent he set for a true national leader, for which he acquired the title of Mahatma, which even his enemies are also compelled to pay lip sympathy and his concern and programme, especially of rural and national reconstruction.

Nationalism

As Prof. K. N. Pannikar suggests, the Indian nation which emerged from the anti-colonial struggle was fractured and torn by internal contradictions of religion, caste and class. Yet, anti-colonial nationalism did not compromise with religious fundamentalism which enabled India to emerge as a secular democratic republic, despite partition and the formation of Pakistan. This success, though partial, can be attributed to the secular democratic character of nationalism that anti-colonial struggle advocated and practised.

Rise of Religious Nationalism

As the same author brings out the religious element continued to be an integral part of the political discourse even during the period of struggle for national liberation. As a result, a new narrative of nationalism emerged - the narrative of religious nationalism although the Islamic state of Pakistan was formed in 1947, it took a long time for Hindu communalism to make its presence felt in independent India. The RSS which was formed in 1920s had a fairly chequered career. It not only did not take part in the anti-colonial movement, but choose to collaborate with colonialism. This unpatriotic stand accounts for its initial unpopularity. The assassination of Gandhi by Nathuram Godse, made it a political outcast. Until the imposition of the emergency, the RSS was not able to make much headway. What gave it fillip and helped it to enter into mainstream was the emergency. The emergency was not only an assault on Indian democracy, it also opened the way for the future success of communal forces.

The post-emergency situation greatly helped the Jana Sangh (the earlier incarnation of the BJP) to wriggle out of its political isolation and untouchability. It also earned political legitimacy by being part of a formation created in opposition to emergency. The main beneficiary of this access to state power was the RSS. It was this opportunity to spread its influence to which it had no access earlier, like Dalits, Adivasis and the backward castes that provided the springboard to launch the future offensive.

The waning of the liberal forces and the decline of the left helped it to achieve its objective, namely the capture of state power. Consequently, today the RSS controls almost all apparatuses of the state. Although the BJP is technically the ruling party, the real power is vested with the RSS. Narendra Modi is a figurehead who acts at the behest of the RSS. It appears that a convenient arrangement has been worked out between the political and cultural sectors. The political leaders are given enough space and freedom to practice their right wing ideas and the cultural mafia is let loose to pursue its divisive activities intended to bolster the cause of Hindu Rashtra.

The liberal democratic secular nationalism is under considerable strain today and it is being replaced through state intervention by an alternative discourse of nationalism based on religious identity.

Modi has assigned to the corporate, both national and international, the privilege of presiding over this transformation of India into a religious state.

The combination of corporatism with religious fundamentalism ensured the RSS both material and ideological inspiration (K. N. Pannikar, *Frontline* P. 97-98, vol.33 April 02-15, 2016).

Notes

1. Girish Patel; "Narendra Modi's one day cricket: what and why", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 30 November, PP. 4827-28
2. Assem Prakash; "Re-Imagination of the state and Gujarat's Electoral Verdict" *Economic and Political Weekly*, 19 April, 2003, PP. 1604
3. Ibid;
4. Christophe Jaffrelot; "The Meaning of Modi's Victory" *Economic and Political Weekly*, 12 April 2008, PP. 12-16
5. Lancy Lobbo; "Developmental Terrorism or Developmental Violence" (Unpublished Paper)
6. Utas Patnaik, Trends in Urban Poverty Under Economic Reforms, *Economic and Political Economy*, 23rd January, 2010

RISE & 'RISE' OF MODI

Historical Backdrop and the Recent Trends in Polity and Society

Contrast with Maharashtra

In sharp contrast to Gujarat, Maharashtra for instance witnessed a radically different situation right from the medieval period. During the medieval period, Maharashtra saw the emergence of several eminent saints such as Tukaram, Eknath and others who came from lower castes but exercised profound influence in the religious and social spheres. The Varakari sect, which still has a strong presence in the Maharashtrian society, is the outcome of the impact of the teachings of these medieval saints, especially Tukaram. Apart from this, Sufi saints also exercised significant influence on medieval Maharashtra and one could notice their influence even on Hindu saints such as Eknath and others. As a matter of fact, unlike Gujarat, Maharashtra witnessed a combined impact of Sufi saints and Bhakti traditions in promoting communal and liberal ethos in the society.

OBC and Dalit movements also played significant roles in contesting the hold of the upper castes in Maharashtra during the 19th century. Maharashtra has a rich tradition of the Dalit along with Muslim- Marathi writers. There were also a number of progressive and radical literary figures of great eminence who dominated the Marathi writers. There were also a number of progressive and radical literary figures of great eminence who dominated the Marathi literary scene during the freedom struggle. The state also has a history of a powerful working class movement and heroic leadership subscribing to communist and the socialist ideology. Maharashtra also experienced powerful Dalit and OBC movement as initiated and led by pioneers such as Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar and Mahatma Jyotiba Phule. Dr Ambedkar's sound and scholarly critique of Hinduism is so refreshing even now and he strived till the end to offer strong ideological, cultural and social resistance to the dominance of Hinduism in the Indian society. Similarly, Phule's exposure of Brahmin philosophy and its upper caste including the anti-women bias even in modern context sounds so appealing and quite inspiring to young as well as to all the radical sections of the Indian society.

Similarly, the strong influence of the radical currents in freedom struggle and even in post-independent period cannot be overstressed. Communist current became evident even in 1920's and the Communist Party had a significant influence in trade union and peasant struggle since early period. Socialist influence within the Indian National Congress became quite evident in the 30's. Apart from communist and socialist presence, there were also other small but

militant independent radical parties and groups in Maharashtra that remained strong for a long time in its politics. Even within Congress, radical influence was quite evident as some of its old veteran leaders were influenced by Royist ideology.

Civil Society in Gujarat

Neera Chandhoke ¹⁴ in her excellent appraisal of the civil society with specific reference to Ahmedabad makes us comprehend the vital influence of the civil society structure in promoting the hold of the Hindutva politics in Gujarat. Though appraisal is confined to Ahmedabad, it enables us to gain insight into the process which enabled the Sangh Parivar to strike deeper roots in Gujarat.

The city is known, as the author brings out, for the frequency, the scale and the intensity of communal riots between Hindus and Muslims, even when the rest of the country and the state of Gujarat have not witnessed such riots. Considering the biography of communal riots in the city, the first communal riot occurred in 1941, and another took place on the eve of the partition of the country. In the major riot of 1969, 1,500 people were killed, 90 percent of whom belonged to the Muslim community and property worth Rs.4 crore was destroyed. The next major riot took place in 1985 but minor riots occurred in 1971, 1972, 1973, 1977, 1980 and 1982. After a major riot in 1985, minor riots erupted in 1986, 1987 and 1989. Major riots took place in 1979, 1993, 1999 and 2000. In 2002, as it is now widely known, mobs belonging to the cadres of the Sangh Parivar and a motley collection of followers, administered what is best described as a 'near programme' of the Muslim inhabitants of Ahmedabad. The savage form it assumed in the city compared to other affected districts of Gujarat in terms of aggression against Muslims has hardly any parallel.

Civil society in democratic societies is expected to keep a watch on violations of democratic norms by the states through citizen activism, the making and circulation of informed public opinion, a free media and a multiplicity of social associations.

As the author suggests, one cannot say that no civil society exists in Ahmedabad because at the turn of the 20th century, a number of associations of voluntary organisations in the city had initiated programmes of social reform, welfare and housing, during the struggle against colonialism. These also existed against Indira Gandhi's authoritarian regime and the emergency imposed by her between 1975 and 1977 where the city witnessed frantic political activity in defence of civil and political rights. Yet, it is also equally true that civil society organisations in the city can be held responsible for violent acts against the lower castes and the religious minority, the creation of a segmented and a

divided city in general. It is also pertinent to note that neither Ahmedabad nor Gujarat had witnessed any anti-caste movement that could challenge caste hierarchies, conservatism and pave the way for the consolidation of an egalitarian spirit in the city and the state.

Nevertheless, social and cultural conservatism cannot be held synonymous with blood lust. Thus, as Chandhoke suggests, there is a qualitative difference between the consolidation of hard communal prejudices in a society and outbursts of inhuman communal violence. The translation of communal sentiments into violence demands a trigger and the construction of this trigger involves an entire host of distinct processes.

One cannot overstress the fact that Ahmedabad was the site of Gandhi's experiments with truth and non-violence. But these, it seems, were half-heartedly internalised in the collective psyche. In 1919, reports of Gandhiji's detention by the colonial government swept the city with anger, the mob burned down the jails, telegraph office and finally the collector's office. The Gandhian lesson of non-violence, it appeared, was soon forgotten. But Gandhians during this period did register their protest against violence by organising a march through the streets and to restore normal situation. Unfortunately, no Gandhian had organised a similar march through the streets during the most violent communal riots that had become a recurrent feature of the city. In 2008, when Muslims fleeing against the murderous mobs sought to seek shelter in the Sabarmati Ashram; established by Gandhi as a project in inter-caste and inter-communal harmony, reportedly the Ashram inmates closed its doors in order to protect its property. The Jain community in the city is committed to the doctrine of non-violence, but this tradition has hardly acquired any root in the civil society. The community kept silence even in the face of tremendous brutality wreaked against the Muslim community.

Civil society in Ahmedabad thus has totally failed to realise its own project of bringing people together in a shared project.

The residential structure in the city also distinctly brings out the limitations of the civil society in Ahmedabad and the potential for hostility among different sections of the city. As a matter of fact, there is a close correspondence between these sections of the city between the unequal balance of power as articulated in the structure of manufacture, trade, commerce and labour and residential patterns of the main communities – the Hindus, the Jains and the Muslims – since the post-Mughal period. In 2002, Mahdavia (cited in Chandhoke, 2008) highlighted the segmental division of city structure in terms of levels of living, quality of housing and availability of basic services. The process of exclusion starts from the segmented city structure which was earlier segmented on the

basis of class but now on the basis of religion. But segmented neighbourhood patterns on the basis of religion are not new to the city. For example, The 'puras' that once formed the seat of Mughal officers, declined after the fall of the Mughal empire. But, the 'puras' founded by the Hindu merchants extended the economic life of the main city into the suburbs. Within the walled city, residential, commercial and religious spaces were closely juxtaposed to each other. However, the residential pattern of the city was characterised by two kinds of housing clusters for the Hindus and the Muslims. The Hindus lived in clusters known as the 'pol' and the Muslims in 'mohallas'. The word 'pol' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'pratoli' which means entrance to an enclosed area. This entrance or gate was generally known by the name of the community that inhabited the closed area. The 'pols' and 'mohallas' marked the clustering of the city population predominantly on religious lines, but the 'pols' themselves were organised largely on the basis of caste. Till the late 19th century, owners of the 'pol' would sell land within the area to the people of their own caste, in 1872. There were 356 'pols' in Ahmedabad and some of them exist till today. Within the 'pols' were situated a quadrangle, a temple, a well and common toilets. To some extent, residential property in the 'pol' was held in common. The residents of the 'pol' maintained the area by collecting funds through fines, sale of house property and gifts.

In 1714, violence between Hindus and Muslims accelerated the move towards separate living. Communal violence was precipitated by the festival of Holi, which while earmarking the advent of spring involves the throwing of colour on each other. Najaf Haidar has narrated the origin of what is possibly the first communal riot in Ahmedabad. Though the riot was contained by the Muslim administration in two days, it seems to have intensified not only the trend of separate living but also the construction of barricades in distinct clusters for purpose of defence. The 'pol' normally had one entrance, and this was cordoned off and locked. Hence, while the 'pol' and the 'mohalla' bred intense interaction within the community, within the walled city, these spatial forms pre-empted social interaction with the members of the other community and thus generated distrust.

It is interesting to note that by the end of 1960's Ahmedabad had been established. The first Ahmedabad was the walled city in which the upper castes, Dalits and Muslims lived in their own clusters. The second Ahmedabad grew around the textile mills in the eastern periphery of the city in the early part of the 20th century. In these villages-turned industrial townships lived mainly Dalit and Muslim textile workers who together formed two-thirds of the working population; Separated from the first two Ahmedabad was the third new city that grew across the river Sabarmati. But here too, residential segregation was

reproduced in a new form. In the western part of the city, housing societies bought land, sub-divided it and developed residential accommodation for individuals and families. But once housing societies were formed by caste and religious groups, it was relatively easy for them to cater to their own community and exclude people from other communities, and even other castes. In short, the exclusion of housing clusters in the old city were specially reproduced in the new city, with most housing societies determining who should or should not live there. Unlike classical theories of capitalism as so aptly brought out by Neera Chandhoke according to which 'land becomes a mere commodity in capitalist societies' in Ahmedabad land was closely connected to religious and caste hierarchy.

Though the ghettoization process began in 1969, some Hindus and Muslims still continued to live in mixed neighbourhoods, though in discrete housing clusters separated by fence or a street. By the 1980's, the ghettoization process intensified and by the 1990s only a few mixed were systematically targeted in the violence of 2002. The victims of violence were herded into poorly funded and grossly inadequate relief camps mainly set up by Muslim religious organisations.

The Trigger Rise of the Sangh Parivar

Ahmedabad, as could be seen from our earlier perusal, has been constituted as a divided city: "the divide is articulated in the form of separate housing, fragmented politics, segmented workplace and trade union politics."

Yet, as suggested by Neera, this is not the whole story. The fact that different communities in Ahmedabad reached out to each other only partially, at the most, explain the failure of the civil society to realise its historical mandate. This constitutive dimension still does not explain the periodic bloodletting that has taken place in Ahmedabad. The translation of prejudice, discrimination and hatred into the acts of violence that target populations and seek destruction of property and livelihoods, requires a trigger. In Ahmedabad, this trigger was provided by the cadres of the religious right. "These cadres tapped social and cultural prejudices, excavated bigoted sentiment, made people remember historical wrongs, enunciated an ideology of Hindu supremacy, crafted a strategy to ensure the domination of Hindus, mobilised people and identified appropriate moments for the inauguration of a riot and the infliction of violence". In large parts of India, social groups have been able to live with each other amid a high degree of intolerance and even social discrimination without breaking out in violence. Violence needs agents and purveyors of bloodshed. The Sangh Parivar in Ahmedabad, as well as in Gujarat, proved an ideal agent to transform the prejudices and animosities into a devastating communal carnage. Civil society, as argued by Neera Chandhoke, needs as a precondition 'a state

that maintains a balance between communities and classes'. When the state adopts a partisan agenda, the potential of civil society to battle an undemocratic force is completely truncated.

Predominant Influence of Religious Sects, Gurus and God Men and Media

As we have indicated in our appraisal earlier, almost all over the country there is significant change in manifestation of religiosity, nature of institutionalisation of religions, the mode of preaching or religious practices, religious leaders and their style of functioning. In Gujarat, this could be seen on an extensive scale. As Ghanshyam Shah suggests, traditionally loose and informal organisations of sects centred around one guru or family are slowly getting reoriented to institutional structures, opening to greater participation of devotees in day-to-day functioning. An organisational network with a line of command, and coordination among various units and office-bearers for recruitment, training and execution of various activities.

Oral, visual and printed media with modern sophisticated methods are being used for discourses and propagation of religious preachings. Apart from this, there is a plethora of religious journals, pamphlets and booklets with regional newspapers giving extensive coverage to news related to religious activities. An often repeated and reinforced sentiment is that the present-day unhappiness in life is due to lack of devotion to religion. Though competition among various sects prevails, but a common message usually imported is pride in Hindu religious traditions and importance of Hindu as custodian of Indian culture vis-à-vis the Muslims and Christians as aliens.

Traditional bhajan-kirtan sessions, recital of collective prayers and rituals have continued to be the pursuit of middle-aged and retired persons. In the past, especially among upper castes, Shaivites would hesitate to visit a Krishna temple, or devotees of Krishna would not ordinarily celebrate Ram Navami (Ram's birthday); such sectarian attitudes have now declined.

Social and religious reforms now are seen to be making conscious and well-organized efforts for building unity across sects within Hinduism. They condemn casteism and even untouchability as deformation and misinterpretation of the Hindu scriptures. Sachchidanand, one such 'radical' saint, stands for rejuvenation of Hinduism and nationalism. He has a sizeable audience from urban middle class, particularly professionals, freelance writers, journalists, teachers, etc. Colleges and universities invite him for lectures and he has been acclaimed as Narmad for his social reform and literary work. Pandurang Athavale, the architect of the Swadhyaya movement, which is largely popular among traditionally low castes such as fishermen, Kolis, Vagharies,

tribals and Dalits, is also against the caste system. Swadhyaya lays stress on building up an 'intimate community' based on the equality and dignity of the individual. The deprived groups are made aware of the rich religious cultural legacy of our society, which is invariably reduced to Vedic heritage, euphemistically called Hindu culture. Swadhyaya combines religious activities with social reform and economic activities. Though, as Shah argues, Athavale does not talk about Rashta state and politics, his notion of traditional heritage seems to provide breeding ground for Hindu Rashtra ideology. He also received invitation from one university for convocation address.

Morari Babu is one of the most popular Kathakars, for recital of Ramayana. He began public narration of Ramkatha in 1966 and has presented over 600 sessions, each one running upto eight to ten days. He advocates that the Ramayana was not meant for any particular Varna. It was meant for Manav, all human beings, irrespective of sect or religion. It is a matter of faith for the devotees to listen to the Ramayana with devotion and follow its teachings. He says that the story of the Ramayana is well known, what is needed is to bring out its relevance in modern life. Without claiming to be a social reformer he asserts that Ram Rajya can only be established when the Dalits get equal status with others. Morari Babu's kathas attract a cross-section of society in several thousands, even at times in lakhs, both in urban and rural areas. Social and political elite too attend the kathas and compete with each other to get blessings from Morari Babu. The rich patronise these programmes. Collections from the kathas, which often run into several lakhs of rupees, are used for charitable activities such a relief to drought, flood and fire victims, construction of temples, hospitals and school buildings. One of the leading universities of the state also organised Ramkatha programme for collection of funds and the then vice – chancellor who enjoyed an international reputation for his scholarship attended the function as a *bhakta*, ie. devotee. Such programmes not only legitimise what Morari Babu preaches but also add to his status.

Unity among the Hindus is the main concern of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) also. The theme is repeatedly found in *Vishwa Hindu Samachar*, the organ of VHP, used to be edited by late K.K.Shastry, an ex-president of Gujarat Sahitya Parishad who received the title of Vidya Vachaspati i.e. a pre-eminent learned person. The journal used to often exhort that all Hindus should unite against Vidharmis (people of other religions, obviously a reference to Muslims). Outmoded feudal values still prevail in our village which have kept the caste pollution intact and has thus resulted in friction within the Hindu fold – Savarna Hindus should now become alert and not widen the gap between the castes and compromise with Dalits, and should not continue to remain selfish. The orthodox schools of Hinduism, as Shah argues, either remain indifferent to

such views or passively agree with them as an inevitable necessity in modern times if the religion is to survive. This, however, hardly alters their practices. Atrocities against the Dalits by upper-caste Hindus have not declined in any way. Thus contradictions prevail, but overt caste differences in the matter of rituals and customs decline. Casteism is being delegitimized even by those who adhere to it in their day-to-day interpersonal relationships.

Unlike orthodox believers, as the same author suggests, the reformers emphasise the political dimension of religion. They are the champions of nationalism, albeit Hindu nationalism and dominance of the majority in political and cultural spheres. For the protection, assertion and development of Hindu nationalism, the issue of unity among Hindus is emphasised time and again. Though the orthodox and reformers do not see eye to eye on the matter of caste purity and maintenance of the caste system, both share a common platform on the issue of Hindu nationalism. The VHP, RSS, Hindu Milan Mandir or Bharat Seva Sangh, which more or less function as frontier organisation of the BJP, neither consider religion a personal matter nor believe in dissociating religion from politics. Though these groups plead for Hindu unity and oppose differences on the basis of caste, they do not harp on the issue of caste, or untouchability, fearing that this would alienate the upper caste. Instead, they have, of late, intensified philanthropic and welfare activities among the low-caste Hindus and tribals to win them over. A number of spiritual leaders of different Hindu sects as well as Jain Munis have also joined the fray by expressing solidarity with Hindus and exhorting them to unite against the 'danger' facing Hinduism. They say that we attained geographical independence but not religious, spiritual and intellectual freedom. 'The present awakening for Hindutva is an inevitable consequence of a larger change – for rejuvenation of Hindu culture, the voters should vote for the BJP candidates', said Morari Bapu on the eve of the 1991 elections. Issuing an appeal to those who love their religion and love their nation, Bapu asked them to vote for those who are supporting the following issues of national importance: (1) construction of Ram Janambhoomi temple; (2) deletion of Act 370 which separates Kashmir from the rest of the country; and (3) ban on cow slaughter. Vote for only patriots – let martyrdom of those innocent Ram kar sevaks not go astray, he said. Such political overtones equating religion with nationalism became sharp during and before the elections. The anti BJP political parties and activists found themselves lost, unable to cope with the propaganda of the BJP and other Hindu organisations. In fact, even these parties share the notion of Hindu nationalism, though they do not subscribe to its fanatic face.

We have so far made an attempt to examine multiple socio-economic and political factors coupled with the extensive use of religious institutions and the

role of modern Gurus and God-men, in consolidating and extending the hold of the Sangh Parivar and especially its political organ BJP in Gujarat in the last several decades. We have also attempted to bring out how the absence of parallel left, progressive or any radical movement in terms of any strong political alternative as in some other parts of the country facilitated the rise and stronghold of the BJP and its associates in Gujarat. Apart from this, the conservative and weak leadership of the Congress in the earlier phase led by leaders such as Madhav Singh Solanki, upper class dominated BJP by forming KHAM, a rival front composed of Kshatriya, Harijan, Adivasi and Muslims without any mobilisation or movement of OBC and other weaker sections in the Gujarat society contributed to the rise and consolidation of the BJP in Gujarat.

Unfortunately when Congress (I) could come into power largely based on personal charisma of Indira Gandhi and her populist programme of Garibi Hatao, it destroyed the grass roots of the Congress organization and arbitrarily nominated leaders peeked up as per the whims and fancies of the high command. With the result that Congress (I) under the leadership of Solanki could not provide any effective alternative to BJP or Janata Dal as it had no grass root organised support among the masses in Gujarat.

The emergence of Modi and 2002 carnage has proved again a turning point in BJP's retaining its dominance in the Gujarat society and polity. As a matter of fact, although Sangh Parivar's first organised attempt to establish the Hindu Rashtra seems to be successful in Gujarat, but in a paradoxical manner, Modi substituting the party organisation and also doing away with the influence of the RSS and its powerful associate like VHP has posed a new challenge. Thus, the emergence of the Modi phenomenon in Gujarat deserves special consideration.

Attempts have been made to explain the Modi phenomenon and factors that could explain its success in Gujarat. It is possible for us to examine all such endeavours. Keeping in mind the time and resources at our disposal, we confine our appraisal to some of the significant studies of the factors contributing to the success of the Modi phenomenon as being evident not only in 2002 elections but also in subsequent assembly and Lok Sabha elections in 2007 and 2009 respectively, in Gujarat.

Christophe Jaffrelot's appraisal of the meaning and implications of Modi's victory in 2007 assembly elections go a long way in explaining his unprecedented success in Gujarat. As he suggests, Narendra Modi represented a new kind of politics by playing on Gujarati nationalism and pride, by sustaining an anti-Muslim image and by building up a personality cult that appealed to both the urban middle class and the 'Gujarati' voter.

Modi initially projected himself as 'Vikas Purush' by focusing on the development issues and good governance by publicising his economic achievements. He obviously wanted to avoid any reference to 2002 carnage. It was only when Sonia Gandhi in her election campaign addressed him as a killer of mothers, wives and daughters of Gujarat, and also a barbarian, he shifted his focus and accused the Congress government on being a silent witness to acts of terror which claimed 5,614 lives in four years, whereas in Gujarat there was only one such death, and Sonia as a protector of merchants of death, Modi further communalized the campaign by taking pride in Sohrabuddin's encounter taking place on Gujarat soil. This opportunity of shifting focus on communal agenda also enabled Modi to draw the support of RSS and other associates of the Sangh Parivar who otherwise has become lukewarm, and VHP leaders such as Pravin Togadia had openly started abusing Modi, his personality cult and not being of help to Hindus in any way in Gujarat.

The Modi Phenomenon

The authoritarian and autocratic thrust in the Gujarat society and polity is much older than the dictatorial style of the functioning of Narendra Modi in Gujarat. Gujarat otherwise also is notorious for its violation of human rights, anti-labour, inhuman practices and brutal exploitation of labour, agricultural workers and small farmers since over the decades. Intolerance and ruthless suppression of any dissent from the official policy is accepted by all dominant institutions of the civil society, academic as well as literary, cultural circles as well as established NGOs and political parties as a normal phenomenon since the inception of the Gujarat state in the early 1960s. Humiliation and violent suppression of the activists including Medha Patkar for opposing Sardar Sarovar dam in Gujarat is widely known and tolerated with tacit approval by all leading intellectuals and writers in Gujarat.

One should not overlook the widely-known fact that civil society in Gujarat has acquired a notorious reputation for Dalit atrocities and gender oppression since ages. There are few parallels to such gross injustices and violence against untouchables and women. Gujarat could only be compared with Uttar Pradesh, Bihar or Haryana in this respect. Gujarat, especially Saurashtra, which forms important part of the state, also gained prominence for women committing suicide as also for female infanticide. Gujarat is also one of the leading states where sex determination tests are conducted extensively despite a legal ban on such tests.

While highlighting the factors contributing to the success of Modi, Jaffrelot mentions two important aspects; one- an extreme personification of power and two- managerial style of governance.

In this high-tech campaign, Modi is equated with Gujarat and Gujarat with Modi. It is not surprising that Modi spent over 25,000 dollars a month on an American firm to specialise in the communication of a Public figure, which has also worked for the Nigerian dictator Soni Abacha and such others, for reshaping his image. In his campaign, he is projected as the only full-time CM in the country. Similarly, even well-established media carried Modi's biographical detail, about his childhood, his courage, his devotion to his parents, hardships and sufferings he underwent almost on a daily basis.

Apart from this, the use of internet, mobile phone and SMS on a massive scale was another distinctive feature of his campaign. Another aspect the same authors highlighted is his managerial style of functioning. Modi as a corporate CEO. It is no wonder that this image of Modi has gone far and wide and his corporate style of functioning. Mukesh Ambani along with his brother Anil Ambani and even K.M. Birla have showered admiration for Modi for his grand vision, amazing clarity, determination as a great leader and a brilliant Chief Executive Officer of Gujarat.

It also should be noted that while the central leadership of the Congress, especially Sonia Gandhi, continued to be critical of Modi for 2002 communal carnage and atrocities on minorities, Gujarat Congress leaders hardly mention this in their campaign. As a matter of fact, most of the Congress leaders, as well as people who voted for them silently, extended support to Modi government during the 2002 carnage. They appeared to be not even soft secularist but sharing communal hatred along with BJP followers.

Admiration and confidences of the leading magnets of the corporate world and some of them even visualising the possibility and concurrence for Modi's devotion to the Prime Minister's position in India has a solid basis. Modi, indeed, believes in a market economy and has accelerated the retreat of the state. He has reduced the state spending on electricity by 9 percent and reformed the Gujarat state Electricity Board. He has also amended Industrial Dispute Act to make labour laws more flexible in the state's special economic zones.

Modi's policies, as suggested, are well in tune with the inclinations of the urban middle class which has developed because of the economic reforms. The social sector has strong reservations about the state's intervention in the economy. ⁽¹²⁾

This fact also becomes evident from the voting pattern in 2007 assembly elections. The following tables as provided by Jaffrelot also highlight this fact:

Table 1

Voting Pattern of Different Socio-Economic Groups (in 90)

Socio-economic Groups	BJP	Congress
Rich	62	28
Intermediary	50	35
Low	43	40
Poor	36	49
Very Poor	36	50

Sources: Indian Express, November 15, 2007. p.4

This group is also critical of the traditional political personnel who are viewed as not only ineffective but also corrupt – a liability which it seems is not affecting Modi. Such a political culture explains the rising anti-parliamentarianism of the urban middle class and its growing lack of interest in elections. The turnout is very low indeed in urban middle-class residential areas. The alternative style of governance that this milieu is longing for borrows its main features from the corporate sector, the political system must deliver the same way and no one really cares if it goes along with a close of authoritarianism. This hidden face of political culture also lies in communalism.

The break-up in the following table also becomes evident in voting pattern by caste and religious community.

Table 2

Voting Patterns of Castes and Religious Communities

Castes and Religious Communities	BJP	Congress
Upper Castes		
Brahmins	64	20
Rajputs	50	37

Intermediate Caste		
Patidar	66	20
OBC's		
Koli	30	48
Mer	47	38
Other cultivating OBC's	46	35
Scheduled caste	30	56
Muslims	13	74

Source: As in Table 1.

Modi's Departure from BJP Politics

Jaffrelot further writes that Narendra Modi embodies a new style of politics in India. Generally speaking, the Sangh Parivar leaders are not supposed to develop such personality cult because organisation comes first for them. Also, the RSS had to prevail in all strategic moves, right from the selection of the candidates for elections to policy of the party. Modi, although a staunch follower of Hindutva, tried to free himself from the RSS influence. He did not submit the list of candidates for the assembly election to Sangh high command and he was strongly criticised for his style of functioning and the policies adopted which some of the Parivar leaders openly criticised and stated that Parivar has not at all benefitted from his rule. Even, the secretary general of the Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) accused Modi of killing 1,00,000 cows and stated that Modi is not a protector of Hindu rather their destroyer (Indian Express, Ahmedabad edition, December 11, 2007)

This critique of Modi's style of functioning is also a manifestation of the Sangh Parivar's reservation about the BJP's style of functioning even at central level. BJP appears to be becoming less dependent on RSS for its functioning and finally winning the election.

Jaffrelot concludes his observation on Modi's electoral victory in Gujarat assembly elections with remarks that Gujarat election results throw up new interrogation regarding not only Gujarat but the rest of India too. What kind of treatment will the Muslims meet in the state and what kind of justice and reconciliation will now be possible?. These questions acquire a new meaning in

Gujarat, one of the most modern states, reinventing politics along lines of what the new middle class wants.¹⁶

Rise of Modi in the BJP

While analysing the electoral outcome of the Lok Sabha elections of 2009 in Gujarat, Nikita Sud ¹⁷ observes that there have been electoral ups and downs faced by the party over the years.

While referring to Narendra Modi's rise in the BJP, Sud refers to Modi's initial work in ABVP and his long association with RSS. He was appointed general secretary of the Gujarat unit of the BJP in 1987. He came into close contact with L.K. Advani on being made the chief organiser of the 1990 Ratha Yatra from Somnath to Ayodhya to popularise the cause of Ram Janambhoomi in Ayodhya. When the party faced rebellion in 1995, Modi was accused of skewing state politics and shifted to Delhi as the party's national secretary. In 1998, he was promoted to the post of general secretary (organisation). He held the post till 2001 when the chief ministership of Gujarat beckoned. All this without ever having fought an election till then. The hovering presence of the RSS in Modi's career is clear from the site of his first electoral contest in 2001, Rajkot, the city which refused to campaign for him in the light of the unceremonious way in which he had replaced their leader and fellow Rajkotian Keshubhai Patel, the RSS more than made up and ensured his election but by an unspectacular margin of 14,000 votes

A man who entered politics through the organisational and strategic backdoor gained some notice on being made chief minister of the important state. The event that catapulted him into national and international spotlight however was the mass violence of 2002. The chief minister made incendiary speeches not befitting the leader of a state while members of his cabinet monitored and directed the course of the violence in their constituencies.

The man described by India's Supreme Court as a 'modern-day Nero' has been able to behave with impunity, ignoring accusations presiding over the most horrific carnage of religious minorities in post-independence India. The reason he has been able to do so, apart from his own personality described by party colleagues and rivals alike as 'autocratic' and 'egotistical', is that he believes he has the mandate to rule. While the English language media and liberals he derisively describes as 'pseudo-secularists' may be critical, Modi appears secure in the support of 'five crore of people of Gujarat'. Gujarat obviously implies Hindu Gujaratis.

While contemporary Gujarat's politics and the continuing popularity of a man as Sud suggests, who has been trashed by the media, national and international tribunals alike is a puzzle to many, it can be ventured that Modi is a product of his time. His political success is a combination of the following: (a) the economics of neo-liberal reform and the accompanying growth spurt that preceded his takeover of power. Despite his tall claims, Modi has created Gujarat's growth story. After all, the state has welcomed liberalization and facilitated the market with infrastructure and flexible rules well before 2001, (b) The politics of Hindutva mobilization that dates to the mid-1980s in Gujarat, initiated as a counter to democratic upsurge of the Kshatriya-Harijan-Adivasi-Muslim (KHAM) and a proposed reservation policy for OBCs the politics of Hindu religious as opposed to the Ram Janambhoomi movement from the late 1980s. Gujarati's multiple Yatra in the wake of the destruction of the Babri Masjid produced a large number of Kar Sevaks for this event and indeed have been a portent of the BJP's rising electoral fortunes in other parts of the country. Modi, the much touted Hindu Hriday Samrat, has ridden the high of this Hindutva wave, wrenching every ounce of capital from it in 2002 and through of that event. (c) The global tide of spin: the prominence of politicians from Tony Blair to Modi can be attributed to a modern-day convergence of politics, entertainment and advertising. Here, symbols and style become as important as the policy message. Modi has been able to claim authorship of Gujarat's growth and Hindutva trajectory before a believing electorate and a national party desperate for idols in the post-Vajpayee, Advani-Ram Janambhoomi age. That the contributions of history, political economy, the larger government apparatus and the state party unit have been left out of this tale is a testament to the power of the spin machine propping up the 'number one Chief Minister of India' as much as it is to statecraft.

Gujarat: A Skewed Development Model

While examining the outcome of the 2009 Lok Sabha elections in Gujarat, Nikita Sud argues that the BJP reached its vote share pinnacle of 20.40 per cent in the Lok Sabha elections of 1991 and almost repeated the feat with 49.90 per cent in the assembly elections of 2002. The Ram Janambhoomi movement and the violence of 2002 are clearly the context for this. The party has lost seats as well as vote share in the assembly and parliament post-2002. It may have added one Lok Sabha seat to its 2004 tally of 14 in 2009, but this still is its lowest score since 1989. The much hyped 'five crore Gujaratis' never offered a universal mandate to the BJP and they are beginning to withdraw this even further. The same author explains this setback in first, Gujarat has followed a skewed development model and the disparities this has brought are more apparent today than ever before. In 1983-84, the primary sector employed 63.80 percent

of the workforce and contributed to 38-70 percent of the Net State Domestic Product (NSDP). Due to policy focus on the secondary and tertiary sectors in the post-liberalisation era, the share of the primary sector in the NSDP had fallen to 17.30 percent by 2004-05, but it continued to employ a significant 46 percent of the workforce. Gujarat faces not just widening inter-sectoral disparities, but also inter-regional ones. In 1993-94, the coefficient of variation in the incidence of poverty in the geographical sub-regions of Gujarat was 0.225 in rural areas and 0.157 in cities and towns. By 1994-2000, this has risen to 0.258 for rural Gujarat and 0.245 for urban areas.

Also, Gujarat's record of human development is poor, in sharp contrast to its growth rate. As a combined measure of health and education is 0.360 and ranked fourth among Indian states in 1981. By 1991, its HDI had improved to 0.431, but other states had taken over and it ranked sixth. In 2001, HDI stood at 0.479 and Gujarat still stood behind Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Haryana. Taking infant mortality as a measure of health and therefore human development, Gujarat's infant mortality rate (IMR) remained unchanged at 64 deaths per thousand between 1991-93 and 1996-98. This is far from Kerala where IMR in 1996-98 was 15. IMR was 62 in 2008, the same as Bihar. It was 54 percent by 2005. While there is improvement over previous years they fall into perspective, when one notes that in 2005, Gujarat ranked 25th among Indian states and union territories in terms of IMR.

Sud concludes her observation with the remark that 2009 elections suggest that things are not looking up for the BJP even in Gujarat. This however does not mean that the only significant political formation – the Congress – has much reason to celebrate. Through the 1990's the BJP accent had been amply aided by an opposition party in disarray. Years of factionalism, destitution of the grassroots, machinery, erratic ideological stances and a weak and ever-changing leadership have greatly undermined a once strong Gujarat Congress. In recent years, it has welcomed disgruntled ex-BJP members, lost chunks of its own membership to the BJP and flirted with ideas ranging from 'soft Hindutva' to secularism. Congressmen (and they overwhelmingly are men) have tried out political tactics as far apart as re-enacting Gandhi's Dandi March in 2005 to mobilize youth, to abetting the 2002 violence aimed primarily at Muslims after all, along with BJP MLA Madhu Srivastava, one of those involved in the infamous Best Bakery case, is Congress Corporator from Baroda Chandrakant Bhatta Srivastava.

Finally, Sud argues that the BJP has had a long innings in Gujarat. Its politics of Hindutva, however, has run out of steam. Spin too will not be able to take it far. The people of Gujarat seem to be open to political change. It is quite clear that this change will not come from the current pattern of ossified and divisive

politics. If the two main parties continue along the same old rut, they will open the field for third parties. Change, other than of new actors and or because of churning in the big two, can only be good thing for Gujarat.

We shall refer to two more reticent appraisals which seek to explain Modi's victory in Gujarat in the 2007 assembly elections.

Shrinking Liberal Space.

G.P. Deshpande in his brief appraisal brilliantly brings out the success of Moditva in Gujarat in terms of the shrinking of the liberal space in the state. In his election campaign, Narendra Modi focused on the celebration of the anti-political in the highly urbanised state of Gujarat. Eight of its 182 constituencies are urban or semi-urban. Depoliticization of this area has been a resounding success. Modi has achieved that. The Modi slogan this time was 'I am not corrupt nor is anyone else under my dispensation'. Thus, the slogan that an entire state was corruption-free is believed to be a measure of Modi's charisma. There is also a comfortable and anti-political belief that these politicians under Modi are kept out of the largesse. The western Indian middle class is almost pathologically against the political class of the anti-political.

The only political thing that Modi's BJP did was to offer a heady blend of the pride of being Hindu and that is why among other things Modi's extraordinary mastery of the Gujarati language was a major factor.

Deshpande traces the root cause for the success of Modi and BJP in recent election in collective failure or in finding a strategy for combating Hindu chauvinism as communism cannot be fought only on a regional and religious basis. He concludes his critique with the observation that Moditva prospers in liberal space shrinking in every community.¹⁸

Lastly, we refer to observation of Tridib Suhrud¹⁹ who attributes Modi's victory in 2007 assembly elections to his success in convincing his electorate that he is the true bearer of Gujarati identity. But he argues that this identity does not even acknowledge the values of Mahatma Gandhi, identity for which ethics is negotiable and that reveals in Modi's hyper-masculine politics.

Gandhi left Sabarmati Ashram in 1930 and never returned and Gujarat is no more the land of Gandhi anymore. Gandhi's insistence on caste-less existence perturbed the Gujarati middle class then as it does now. It is a conviction that one could be a Sanatani Hindu only when one is simultaneously a good Christian, a devout Muslim and a faithful Parsi, went against our narrow, sectarian way of being religious.

Our speculative tendencies, Suhrud argues, are very profitably employed in the bullish stock market. In this scheme, the poor are forgotten and are being looked upon only as a source of cheap labour supply.

Also Suhrud remarks that the other phenomenon is the loss of certain kind of speech. Gujarat has created unanimity of opinions around key issues that is unprecedented in any society. Be it Narmada, be it what we call development, be it over-capacity to turn against ourselves in frenzied violence with unnerving regularity, we have attained a unity in our self-perception that produced speech of another kind.

While referring to Modi's projection of the Gujarati Asmita Suhrud argues that the 'Asmita' we speak of is not rooted in either the Gujarati language or creative expression. Most Gujarati writers express dismay that we do not read serious literatures, at least not even in our own language. The Gujarati film industry has died and so has the Gujarati Theatre, with the exception of some commercial theatre groups in Mumbai. Even the best apologist for Gujarat today would admit that studies/writings about Gujarat in Gujarati in the field of social science are non-existent. We speak less and less about ourselves in our tongue. In this Asmita, the west as a source of consumption and opportunity plays a role. Ahmedabad is dotted with buildings that bear the name 'New York' and believe it or not we also have a very unaesthetic and stunted 'Statue of Liberty' in the main shopping artery of Ahmedabad. And yet, we wish to create an identity that is aggressively exclusive and not inclusive. Instead of a dialogue with those who challenge us, we would prefer their annihilation.

Thus, to conclude, it becomes evident from the above appraisals that the Modi phenomenon and the BJP's successive victories in last two assembly and one Lok Sabha elections could also largely be attributed among several other factors to the absence of any effective alternative to Modi and to his party in Gujarat. Congress, neither in terms of its policies, nor even in leadership, organisation or any effective strategy could provide any alternative to the BJP. One would even hesitate to use the term 'alternative' for such weak political formation. Apart from this, as we tried to bring out in the beginning of this appraisal, Gujarat is one such state which historically has not witnessed any strong effective or even cohesive anti-caste or tribal movement that could challenge the hold of the conservative, commercial and feudal domination. The far-reaching influence of the Hindutva forces in all cultural, social, political, economic, educational and religious spheres is evident since over several decades. The Sangh Parivar has successfully extended its influence among all sections such as tribal, rural and especially urban of the state population. This is far more evident particularly among upper castes and even in the middle classes in Gujarat. Hindutva influence is strong in literary, cultural as well as academic circles. As we brought

out earlier, in terms of material benefits also, higher castes such as Bania, Brahmin, Rajput and especially Patidar, have benefited in terms of expanding opportunities in industrial, commercial, agricultural and other areas by financial, technical assistance and similar other concessions. It is also equally true of the administrative, judicial, academic and cultural spheres that have been monopolised by them.

Thus, all subjective, as well as objective factors, have facilitated the growth and domination of the Sangh Parivar and the BJP in Gujarat.

Modi success in Gujarat has to be viewed in this context. These factors, although enable us to understand socio-political and economic scenario in Gujarat but as several critics have argued that one has to keep in view some distinct features that have played far more crucial role in achieving the victory of Modi in the last two assembly and recent Lok Sabha elections.

The Modi phenomenon has to be viewed in the context of the acceleration and the outcome of the globalisation process in the state. The actual figure of the flow of the foreign capital in Gujarat may be a disputable issue but the state has created every possible condition in terms of its flexible labour laws, availability of cheap land, cheap labour, tax exemption, financial assistance, simpler procedures, infrastructure and such other facilities, which may not be easily available in other states. Gujarat has acquired notorious distinction for its anti-labour, anti-Dalit, anti-tribal, anti-farmer policies, along with opportunities for tax evasion of industrial, commercial tycoons, nexus with bureaucracy, mafias and politicians that certainly work in attracting Indian as well as foreign corporate who take advantage of such golden opportunity for exploitation, oppression and extraction of maximum surplus from their ventures. These factors also largely account for the distinct image of Modi's and BJP's success in Gujarat.

NRI's in Gujarat Politics

Apart from the above, the crucial role of the NRI's in propping up Modi's image and also in promoting the Hindutva agenda cannot be overstressed. The influence of the NRI's in Gujarat politics is not a recent phenomenon, migration of people from the upper castes, especially of the Patidars, earlier to South Africa and subsequently to the UK and in the last few decades to the USA in large numbers and their influence not only on the polity but also economic, social and religious arena too, has been experiencing identity crisis and this phenomenon has become far more pronounced in recent past. Upper caste as well as middle caste/class migrants settled otherwise comfortably in countries like the USA and the UK. The inability to adjust with the western

culture and value system based on individualistic aspirations and the kind of freedom they exhibit in selecting their career, as independence permitted not only in choice of career but choice of life partner to their lifestyle etc., and also its impact on family and social life and even status as second –class citizens, along with sharp competition and economic insecurities experienced in these countries as a result of the growing economic crisis and problems magnified by flimsy solutions offered by the monopoly finance capitalism, which ultimately leads to further gravity of the situation that could be seen in the USA in the last decades, earlier crisis in IT sector in the 90's . Subsequently, in stock market, crisis in the initial phase of the present deep economic crisis probably grave in terms of its consequences and the absence of any viable solutions in the short run.

The overall outcome of this grave situation is increasing insecurity alienation, anarchy in family, marital relationship and other related problems which probably drive our NRI's to find solutions in terms of going back to their roots, falling back on their traditional institutional set-up, reverting back to their religious moorings or seeking securities in religious conglomerations, social and cultural get-togethers of the caste mates, reviving the traditional customs, rituals and ceremonies, restoring their religious, civilizational heritage and magnifying their achievement in terms of their old Vedic, cultural or religious legacies.

The state in India also has been making conscious attempt to restore and boost traditional religious festivals and glorifying our religious and cultural legacy with distinct pronounced Hindu bias at a national level. Gujarat with its dominance of the Sangh Parivar and with its extensive hold of the traditional as well as new religious sects in all aspects of life, also indulges in this revivalism and restoration of the old religious festivals, rituals and ceremonies in a very pompous way.

Religious Resurgence

In this context, it is also equally imperative to bear in mind the increasing influence of the religious cults initiated by modern gurus and God men in India as well as abroad. Some of the cults like that of Bhagavan Rajneesh and Chinmayanand were quite popular in this country but subsequently spread their influence extensively in other countries such as the USA, the UK and other western nations. Some cults such as ISKCON and Mahesh Yogi's Transcendental Meditation attracted wide publicity and much larger following abroad and then developed deeper roots in this country. But NRI's, especially from Gujarat, follow their traditional cults such as Swaminarayan or sects of Jainism, also Chinmayanand, particularly in the USA and the UK, Temple – building activities have acquired such wide popularity especially in the USA that

scores of huge, impressive temples are found in several parts of the country and they draw large audience and following. In Gujarat, the role of some of the new gurus such as Asaram, Morari Bapu and others in sustaining and extending the influence of the BJP and especially of Narendra Modi cannot be underestimated. It is not surprising that Asaram's ashrams with all their nefarious, illegal, perverse practices and involvement in physical assaults on their erstwhile followers, and death of two kids and extensive protest of people in Ahmedabad and filing of criminal cases against Bapu and his notorious son Narayan Swami, could get away from punishment because of their proximity with Chief Minister Modi and his bureaucracy. Asaram openly boasts about his hold over two to three crore vote bank in Narendra Modi and support for various activities and programme of the Sangh Parivar from these eminent gurus and God men. One finds mushroom growth of such gurus all over the state. As a matter of fact, it is impossible to keep track of them as in a single town there would be scores of such old and new gurus. If one thinks of conducting their census it would be a huge task and preparing their directory may take enormous time and resources. By and large, this is a post-independent phenomenon and their proliferation and popularity must have occurred only around the last three decades.

Apart from the factors which help us in understanding the Sangh Parivar in winning political power in successive elections in Gujarat, one also should keep in view the BJP's influence in Gujarat and several other regions of the country, in terms of deeper roots of the Hindu nationalism in India that could be traced right with the inception of the Indian National Congress and during the course of the freedom struggle.

Even in Nehru's cabinet, the presence of Hindutva influence was very much evident. Our first President Rajendra Prasad's pro-Hindu bias and his open indulgence in religious rituals and practices hardly need much elaboration. Thus, the thrust of the Hindu or majoritarian influence in our politics and practices of the state is an old phenomenon whose root could be easily traced in social and political movement during the pre-independence period. This influence becomes more pronounced and its blatant exhibition we could probably trace to post-1980's decades. Such bias and practices of the national and provincial situation in Gujarat are far more favourable compared to other parts of the country.

However, when one keeps in mind Modi's popularity and his deviation from the Sangh Parivar practices of subordination of the individual leader, even very powerful to the dictates of the organisation, it needs little deeper understanding of his evolution and role in Gujarat polity.

Narendra Modi, it seems to us exhibits various contradictory elements in projection of his personality, programme and practices of the state. Since coming into power in 2005 throughout the earlier phase, he projects himself as a blatant, ruthless, advocate and crusader for a Hindu cause who would not hesitate to take recourse to any means for suppressing and eliminating the voice and even elementary rights of the minorities, and particularly of Muslims. It is ghastly and open indulgence of the Sangh Parivar in their drive for annihilation of Muslims in the state. In 2007 elections, he projects himself as a 'Vikas Purush' at the initial stage and then in response to Sonia Gandhi's critique of his role as a butcher of minorities he took again blatant anti-Muslim postures, justifying all legal and illegal acts of his government. Thus going back to his Hindutva platform and not only defense but taking pride in his all illegal acts of the state apparatus involving encounters and other barbarian anti-Muslim crimes, enabled him to win over the other wings of the Sangh Parivar, from RSS to the Bajrang Dal and VHP to covertly extend support in his electoral campaign. For Modi, to switch over is easy as this is the basic thrust of his rule over the state. The success comes easy as the main opposition party also extends silence at times even vocal support to his anti-Muslim tirade.

But apart from his blatant communal policy as well as strategy, Modi's success in Gujarat has to be located in other equally important factors which have provided a quite enduring support of its rule in the state.

The globalisation process initiated in 1991 and further accelerated from early 90's has also facilitated Modi's dominance in Gujarat. Besides there are also additional factors which have further strengthened and consolidated his hold over the state. NRI's strong influence and their advocacy of this process along with the rise of the development and have developed vested interest in further acceleration of this process (which is acknowledged almost universally as an anti-poor and also inhuman) and have extended vociferous support to this model and to Modi as the main architect and ruthless executor. The most vocal support extended by the corporate world and its leading magnets Ambani brothers and Birla and even Tata is an evidence of Modi's willingness to be used as a blatant exponent of his lobby. His invitation to Tata for Nano project and the kind of favour extended to him in terms of almost free 1,100 acre of land, and almost free loan of Rs.9,570 crores at only 0.001 interest rate, installation of free solid waste disposal plant and solid affluent treatment plant, also free power connection and daily supply of free 14,000 cubic meter water supply. Despite such enormous concessions Tata has not given any assurance for employment of local labour. Even the land offered to Tata is a disputable property and local farmers have challenged the government ownership of land.

The most surprising and shocking part of this car project is the extensive praise and euphoria all over Gujarat, the kind of extensive publicity and support extended by media and the new elites in the state. This also is a clear indication of the tremendous manipulation of public opinion and ability of the upper classes and dominant castes to project their aspirations as needs of the entire toiling humanity of the state. Modi's role in such projection cannot be underestimated. In this sense, Gujarat is an exceptional state where such perfect manipulation could be carried on for over such a long period.

Modi's all tall proclamation of elimination of bureaucracy, bypassing of middle channels between him and the people, transparency in administration have by and large subserved the interest of the new elites, corporate world and merchant and contractor's lobby at the cost of poor in urban and rural areas.

Modi also identifies himself with Gujarat and his claim as an architect and defender of Gujarati 'Asmita', only full-time Chief Minister at the service of the state and the extensive publicity he gets in electronic, print regional as well as national media enables him to consolidate his image in the state.

Notes

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- 2) Ibid. P 4824
- 3) Irfan Engineer, Surat Riots, Centre for study of Society and Secularism, 1993, PP 2-3
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- 9) Shinoda OPCN., PP 223

- 10) Archana Ravindra and R. Dholakiya, "Non-tax Revenues and Subsidies in Gujarat Issues and Evidences" in Indira Hirway, S.P. Kashyap and Amita Shah, Dynamics of Development in Gujarat, CFDA, Ahmadabad, 2002, PP. 145-50
- 11) Ibid.,
- 12) Christophe Jaffrelot, "The Meaning of Modi's Victory", Economic and Political Weekly, 12 April 2008, PP. 12-16
- 13) Lancy Lobbo, "Developmental Terrorism or Developmental Violence", (Unpublished papers, the percentage of the people living below poverty line as brought by Usta Patnaik is over 67 percent in Gujarat, the Percentage which is much higher than the BIMARU state like Bihar) Utsa Patnaik, Economic and Political Weekly, 23 January 2010.

BJP'S VICTORY IN 2014 LOK SABHA ELECTIONS

Turning Point of Indian Polity

A clear majority for the BJP in the Lok Sabha and its spread practically all over the country in the last general elections exhibits a sharp departure in electoral history of this country over a long period. As so aptly brought out by Suhas Palshikar and Suri, the BJP's success was made possible among other factors, due to its electoral strategy of reinventing social engineering in what may be termed as its second transformation. As a result, it secured significant support among the Other Backward Classes as well as Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe voters to gain a winning edge. Besides this, its promise of development and its projection of Modi as a strong and decisive leader attracted support among the lower and middle classes. This will have far-reaching implications to the structure of party competition in the coming years and shape post-Congress policy. (*Suhas Palshikar, K.C.Suri, "India's 2014 Lok Sabha Elections: Critical Shifts in the Long Term, Caution in the short Term – National Election Study 2014, Economic Political Weekly, Sept. 27, 2014"*)

The BJP, known from its inception for its urban base, middle class, upper caste orientation was able to generate significant support from backward caste, Hindus and Dalits. In 2014 Other Backward Classes constituted the largest share within the vote received by the BJP. The party also received a substantial proportion of the Dalit and Adivasi vote in different parts of the country. Thus, the party's victory points towards a transformation of the BJP. While electoral politics in India has witnessed inroads of newer sections into the political arena, this becomes strikingly evident during the 1990's. This process has been aptly described as the 'second democratic upsurge' by Yogendra Yadav. Wherein the weaker sections women, Dalits, Adivasis and OBCs became not only crucial electors but began to claim share in power. This social churning produced new political formations and forced the older ones to adapt to the new social arena. The BJP has shown its readiness to adapt to this new socio-political scenario.

While the BJP did get a majority on its own, one cannot overlook the fact, that its overall vote share was only 31 percent. We should bear in mind that in India's electoral history the lowest vote share of a party securing majority in Lok Sabha was 41 percent Congress in 1967 and the Janata Party in 1977. Thus, the BJP's majority in the Lok Sabha is still based on a marginal electoral base

Rise of Modi

The National Democratic Alliance's (NDA) Victory and the BJP's rather unexpected absolute parliamentary majority were not merely celebrated by the

party loyalist on the streets but they were also celebrated, more privately and lavishly by India's capitalist classes. As Radhika Desai suggests, the only publicly visible sign of these more exclusive celebrations appeared when the prophylactically named Sensex stock market index hit an orgasmic high of 25,364.71 crossing the 25,000 mark for the first time. No more good fortune was being celebrated; it was an achievement. Never before had India's Capitalists stood so solidly behind a single party. Never before had they contributed so massively to it and never before had any party in India spent more on its campaign than the ruling US president had on his.

While lax control on campaign spending and a thriving black economy permitted the astronomical contributions, their effectiveness was multiplied by the RSS. Organisational muscle in the most high-powered electoral campaign India has witnessed, Modi covered 3,00,000 kilometres by air, held nearly 6,000 meetings and massive road shows and generally saturated the media and social media. If this was not enough, hi-tech 10-foot high holograms of Modi giving dozens of speeches were projected to as many as a 100 locations simultaneously. While most commentators competed to find superlatives to describe the BJP's victory – “an electoral revolution”, a ‘turning point’, ‘new phase’ for India's polity, Economic & Political Weekly designated it as ‘The biggest corporate heist in history’.

The heist has generated much more than the robbers could have dreamed. It boosted the BJP's vote by a stunning 12.2% compared to 2009 while driving down Congress's vote by 9.25%. When even these unprecedented movements left the BJP's vote share at a mere 31%, the magic of the first past the post electoral system came to the rescue. It translated this meagre vote share into a majority of seats (282 out of 543 or 52% of Total seats)

The Congress' loss of votes resulted into a loss of nearly 30% of seats in the Lok Sabha (from 206 seats in 2009 to only 44 seats in 2014)

The campaign was heavily weighted in the BJP's favour. The other parties had no matching. Money power fuelled by corporate money and Sangh cadres' enthusiasm, the campaign used communal messages literally above all in Uttar Pradesh, which the Sangh Parivar had identified as the make-or-break state.

Comparing Modi's election speeches with talk shows of Hitler and Mussolini in the 1930s, Sumanta Banerjee argued that following in the footsteps of those two notorious global personalities, he has managed to project himself as the man for all seasons and all classes. He used the harangue of Hindutva when wooing votes in the cow-belts (where he berates against the enemies of gau-mata) The rhetoric of economic development (Gujarat model) when addressing the

corporate sector, the discourse of governance to assure the middle class voters of efficiency in administration, the militant bombast of defending the nation to draw support from the armed forces and their top brass, and invokes his childhood memories as a Chaiwala to solicit votes from the poor. Like his German and Italian predecessors, he also uses his foot-soldiers - The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) – Bajrang Dal goons – to bulldoze into submission those who oppose him.

But there is a method in this contradiction in Modi's strategy and tactics, by which he had built up an image that has elevated him from a villain (of the 2002 Gujarat genocide) to a hero (of economic development) in the popular psyche. The mainstream media bankrolled by the corporate sector are fostering his electoral potentialities picking upon only those aspects of his party's agenda that suit them (like promise of industrial growth) while ignoring the other controversial aspects (like his promise to build a temple on the disputed site of Babri Masjid, abrogate Article 370, and impose a uniform civil code). The media hype around Modi is reminiscent of the role of the European press in the 1930s, when it continued to depict Hitler and Mussolini as amicable guys who were expected to defeat the communist, till the Axis powers reached right on the doorstep of the western capitalist states.

But while recalling the past and identifying the similarities, the same author points out that, one should take a more astute view of the Hindu right in India today. It is not an exact replica of the fascist forces of the past. As its most powerful representative, Narendra Modi is refashioning the strategy and tactics of a populist chauvinist nationalism (the ideology that was followed by the Axis powers in their respective states in the 1930-40 period - and by the Hindu right in India) within the present order of globalisation. He has developed a concept of neo-Hindutva to suit the demands of the neo-liberal economy while remaining loyal to the Sangh Parivar's basic strategy of establishing a Hindu theocratic state of Ram Rajya (a parallel to the contemporary Islamic project of creating a Sharia-based political order). Modi is coming up with tactics to accommodate foreign multinationals and the indigenous corporate sector. Under his leadership, the Hindu right is thus attempting a mix between Reliance and Ram Janmabhoomi. It is adopting the neoliberal order in economy while retaining its core ideology of Hindutva to establish its hegemony in the socio-cultural scene (*Sumanta Banerjee, "The Resistable Rise of Narendra Modi", Economic and Political Weekly, May 3, 2014*)

Dominant Role of the Provincial Propertied Classes

There are various explanations for the dramatic victory of the BJP in 2014 Lok Sabha elections. However, we find that the causal factors as brought out by

Radhika Desai for more satisfactory appraisal. As she suggests the key that unlocks this secret is an understanding of the role of the Provincial Propertied Classes (PPCs) and their parties, the PPCs. The PPCs originated in cultivator middle caste whom M.N.Srinivas dubbed as the 'dominant castes' Jats or Yadavs in Uttar Pradesh, Marathas in Maharashtra, Patidars in Central Gujarat, Kammas and Reddys in Andhra. Capitalist development transformed them into capitalist farmers and then, as they acquired the urban and industrial interests, into capitalists pure and simple. Their parties, the PPCs are often called "regional parties" and the label, had it been confined to them, would indeed have been very appropriate given that each middle caste does dominate a particular region. As it happens, however, it is used to refer to all parties with a less-than-national support base irrespective of their social character such as parties of scheduled castes. Since the latter often bitterly opposed to the PPCs thanks to a history of exploitative worker relations, the regional parties end up being of little analytical use. PPCs is therefore a more accurate term.

Originally the middle castes formed the rural base of the Congress, providing its link men, and their desertion beginning in the 1960s initiated "The long death of the Congress Party". It was rooted in the fundamental political contradiction of Nehru's developmental model – its industrialisation plans relied on taxing the surpluses of precisely the middle caste owner cultivators on whom Congress relied to win elections.

The definite early sign of the middle caste desertion came in the 1967 elections. Congress parliamentary majority dropped precipitously and it lost eight states to PPCs. Many early PPCs state governments proved unstable and short lived, however, the decline of Congress and the rise and consolidation of PPCs in most states was drawn out over decades, with reversals as well as advances.

While middle castes deserted to form their own parties, there was a smaller exodus of upper-caste groups from Congress into right parties – Hindu Mahasabha and Ram Rajya Parishad as well as the Swatantra and Congress (O) – were displaced and the right came to be consolidated under the party of Hindutva, the Bhartiya Jana Sangh (BJS) until 1980 and then the BJP. Only the regional Hindu chauvinist Shiv Sena in Maharashtra now pluralizes the right.

If the PPCs desertion caused Congress's decline, their support for the BJP direct in the states where they joined and indirectly in others where their PPCs allied with it – has underwritten Hindutva's rise in recent decades. This is critically important factor that made Hindutva's rise possible. Upper caste support for the BJP would be politically important but it is electorally inadequate. It has been because of PPC support, indirect as well as direct that

BJP has been able to break out of its original confinement in the upper caste urban party bourgeoisie of the Hindi heartland.

This development as Radhika argues has dispatched a key illusion about the PPCs that their provenance in the middle castes with their history of anti-brahminism made these parties resistant to Hindutva. However, anti-brahminism of the past had its own material basis and the new material reality is that the PPCs are the chief manifestation of the expansion of the capitalist class in India. So, ironically perhaps, Hindutva today is the ideology that unifies the expanded and more diverse capitalist class, bridging the historically deep divides between the twice-born upper castes and the middle caste and those among its regions and languages.

In most parts of the country, on the right of the political spectrum we see a consolidation of the power of the propertied in one of the two forms. Either the BJP has directly absorbed the PPCs into itself to become quite simply, the party of the propertied as in Gujarat or it forms coalition governments with one or more PPCs as in many other states. By 1998, this advance in winning the support of the PPC directly or indirectly had brought the BJP led NDA power at the centre and since then, having proved that it can come to power and complete a full term, the BJP has become the preferred party of the capitalist class.

On the other hand, desertion of the upper and middle caste propertied has left Congress with an electoral base composed overwhelmingly of lower socio-economic groups - the Scheduled Castes, the lower and poorer middle castes without substantial property, Scheduled Tribes and minorities. Rather than settling down to giving authentic political articulation to these group interests, it has sought to keep them loyal with a minimum of welfarist measures and use such electability as this can muster to try to regain its position as the party of the capitalist class and the upper and middle propertied class and caste generally. Given the regional Quarantine of the left, such a politically schizophrenic Congress has lost India's poor and marginalised with no authentic political representation, only populist promises, and their repeated betrayal, in most of the country. (*Radhika Desai :- A Letter – Day Fascism? Economic & Political Weekly, August 30, 2014*)

BJP under Modi's Leadership in Power -- Threat of Fascist Take Over

In this context it is quite relevant to refer to some broad characteristics of the fascist state. Marxist as well as non-Marxist scholars have noted some important features of the fascist state as observed since the rise of fascism in Europe after first world war.

- 1) Fascism in power, distinctive form of the modern state - extreme centralization of political power and as a logical corollary, its exceptional degree of autonomy from other major power actors and forces.
- 2) The two undisputed examples of fascism in power Italy and Germany with their antecedent movements – plethora of such movements in Europe during the interwar period constitute the primary empirical data.
- 3) Fascism is a strong form of authoritarian nationalism. Fascism is always an authoritarian nationalism but the reverse does not hold good.

Common features of style and organisations

- i) Charismatic leadership central to all fascism
- ii) There is the exaltation of youth and the youthfulness of fascist leaders.
- iii) Violence is glorified and militarization of political behaviour and relationships
- iv) Political meetings are carefully choreographed to arouse maximum emotions through evocative symbols
- v) Muscularity is stressed.

As Nicos Poulantzas noted a fascist state is, like a Bonapartist one or military dictatorship, an exceptional form of capitalist state, what distinguishes it from the other two is that it is able to supplement state power with its own autonomous political force – such as the fascist or Nazi movements or the RSS – in the service of bourgeois interests. Whether the Modi government crosses the bounds of constitutionality or the norms of bourgeois rule – which in India, with its everyday police brutality, Judicial malfeasance and executive and legislative corruption, are admittedly rather wide in any case – to become an exceptional state and whether it supports as supplementary state force, with Sangh Parivar's goons and does so in ways that assert their autonomy from a capitalist backers remains to be seen. (*Ibid Radhika Desai*)

Fascism in Europe

As Eric Hobsbawm pointed out fascism in Inter-war Europe was part of wider resurgence of right forces that included traditional conservatives, an anti-liberal corporatist right and the religious right. Such resurgence is unmistakable today as part of the general sense of crisis everywhere except Latin America. Europe is now home to avowedly neo-Nazi forces whose mass base expanded thanks to the installation of unelected governments to follow the dictates of the European Commission and the European Central Bank not to mention the garden variety

authoritarian governments pursuing austerity. Elsewhere, as in Thailand or Egypt, we witnessed the remarkable spectacle of social movements demanding the curtailment of democracy in favour of military rule.

Fascism, it should be noted, emerged in Europe in the era of monopoly capital and state regulation and today's neo-liberal capitalism is *prima facie* practically its opposite: based on free markets and a minimal state. In reality, however, free market rhetoric has promoted giant corporations and even expanded their political roles such that they increasingly invade the sphere of the public authorities. While, for decades, neo-liberal policy was successful in securing new sources of accumulation for a moribund capitalism in this fashion, amid an interminable stagnation in the advanced industrial world, it is clear that, it can no longer do so. So in its austerity phase, neo-liberalism is charged with its most uphill task yet; legitimising a capitalism it can no longer revive. (*Ibid Radhika Desai*)

In this context it is imperative to refer to Jairus Banaji's critique of the traditional left theory for the rise and success of fascism in global context. As he suggests, much of the left still subscribes to the view that fascism is primarily a product of the manipulations of capital or big business. There are several things wrong with this view. It ignores the political culture of fascism and fails to explain how and why fascist movements attract a mass following. It embodies a crude instrumentalism that conflates the financing of fascist movements by sections of business with the dynamics of fascism itself. It also views fascism in overtly pathological terms, as abnormality, thus breaking the more interesting and challenging links between fascism and 'normality'. Finally, it contains a catastrophist vision: it sees fascism as a kind of cataclysm, like some volcanic eruption or earthquake, a seismic shift in the political landscape. So far as the situation in India, the growth of fascism has been a gradual, step-by-step process where the fascist elements penetrate all sectors of society and emerge having built up the groundwork. So, if we in India have anything to contribute to a theory of fascism, parts of the contribution lies in disproving the catastrophist elements. This still leaves the other two perspectives, which Jairus calls 'instrumentalist' and 'pathological' respectively. Both are dangerously wrong and part of the reason why the left has failed to establish a culture of successful political resistance to fascism.

Critique of the Left View

In contrast to this traditional left view, Jairus refers to another group of theories of fascism emanated from a left outside the Comintern, one by Wilhelm Reich who was a practising psychoanalyst in Berlin in the early thirties. Reich must have come across literally hundreds of active supporters of Nazism. He was a

committed socialist who fled Germany when it became impossible to live there, and died ironically, in a US jail in 1957.

Arthur Rosenberg, a historian was a communist deputy in the Reichstag in the mid-twenties, wrote a brilliant essay on fascism in 1934, called 'Fascism as a Mass Movement' Reich's book was called 'The Mass Psychology of Fascism' and first published in 1933. These two works provide quite a different view of fascism. The question Banaji raises is what allows for the construction of a mass base by radical rightwing parties? To answer these questions it is not enough to say, fascism necessarily presupposes a worldwide economic crisis or fascism is a product of economic crisis.

German society in large parts had been 'fascinated'; the preparatory groundwork was ready for some charismatic leader or party to come along and 'retotalize / incarnate' those legacies to create the kind of political catastrophe that was created in the 1950s. The groundwork had been intensively prepared, through uncoordinated and dispersed fashion for instance, the Volkisch Action groups that were active in the twenties that organized programs and spread hatred against the Jews; by the numerous organizations of demobilized veterans who experienced Germany's defeat in the war as a terrible national humiliation a blow to the pride of all Germans. There were within the top ranks of the German army which had suffered defeat, many who were implacably opposed to democracy, to the November revolution and its overthrow of the monarchy. There were numerous radical right-wing organisations prior to the Nazi party that prepared the ground for the success of the Nazis.

Rosenberg's essay was actually an appraisal, which indicated that fascism largely reiterated ideas that were widespread in European society well before the First World War. He saw the conservative elites of 19th century Europe adjusting to the era of Parliamentary democracy and mass politics with an aggressive nationalism divested of its liberal overtones, canvassing support for strong states wedded to expansion abroad and containment of the labour movement at home and unashamedly willing to use anti-Semitism as a way of preventing middle-class voters from moving to the left (Weiss, conservatism in Europe 1770-1945, p-89). The more traditionalist elements in Europe's ruling elites succeeded in defeating the liberalism of 1848 with a populist conservatism that could garner parliamentary majorities with xenophobic appeals and patriotic agencies.

Fascism – Indian context – Jairus Banaji's Appraisal

What replaced the discredited liberalism of the 19th century were new ideologies of the Right and it is against the background of those ideologies (fascism,

militarism, imperialism and the cult of authority) that we need to situate the emergence of fascism in Europe. Banaji in this context suggests that fascism has to be constructed culturally at three levels. The first among these, the level that Rosenberg's work points out to, is nationalism. The Rational core of every fascist ideology is nationalism. Fascist movements deify the nation, so that fascism can even be seen as projecting itself as a sort of 'secular religion' and does this all the more effectively in so far as the vocabulary (artifacts, myths, rituals, symbols) of that deification is borrowed from religion itself. So when people ask themselves how we fight fascism, one way of fighting it is by confronting nationalism and beginning to build an opposition to it.

The second level of deconstructing fascism and offering elements of a framework is cultures of authoritarianism and repression, be it social repression, family repression, or sexual repression. For instance, the emergence of the feminist movement in 1960s and 70s.

The third and final level has to do with fascist use of what Sartre (following Riesman) calls, other direction, and with violence as common praxis, that is, organised action or the 'common action' of organised groups. Rosenberg realised that the peculiarity of fascism is not in its ideology which was widespread by the turn of the century, but in its use of the 'storm trooper tactic'. A form of genocide or ethnic cleansing is implicit in the programme of every fascist movement, as it is in that of those, whose longest serving Sarsanghchalak even glorified 'German race pride' and the extermination of the Jews.

Organised groups (criminal organisations) fabricate religious mythologies to spur campaigns of genocide. Mobilisation of violence in the savage campaigns of hate propaganda directed against Muslims in India, genocide becomes 'virtual', 'totalizing' propaganda creates an enemy whose extermination it posits as possible justifies or advocates openly.

Scapegoating, racism and virtual genocide from the third level; all of these require detailed, intricate, elaborate organisation and point to fascism as the concerted action of organised groups working on serialities.

Thus Banaji suggests a framework consisting of these three levels. Nationalism as the rational core of fascist ideology, with the 'Nation' conceived as some living entity afflicted by democracy, infected by minorities, in desperate need of renewal or rebirths, the level of male violence and male authority of repressive family cultures that indoctrinate women and youth in a passive and service attitude towards the 'Fuhrer figure' (Reich) and root out of children everything that contributes to their humanity to a sense of who they are as individuals (the

capacity to think critically, to resist domination, to have friendships of their choice). In India, apart from gender repression, we have caste repression, the oppression of minorities, the appalling indifference towards children. Thus as culture we are replete with examples of subterranean repressive cultures in our society. Finally, organised brutality or violence as (common) praxis -- the fabrication of religious and racial mythologies and campaign of genocide as concerted praxis of organised groups acting on / conditioning serialities, "other directions".

Effective resistance to fascism implies as Jairus Banaji argues, the articulation of a powerful, anti-authoritarian policies that encourages individuals to think critically, fosters relationships based on reciprocity, promotes a social and political culture which values freedom sufficiently to resist and undermine the hypnotic spells of nationalism, hierarchy and serial domination (*Jairus Banaji, 'The Political Culture of Fascism' from 'Religion Politics and culture' volume brought out by Vikas Adhyayan Kendra, Mumbai - 2006*)

Jairus Banaji's critique of the traditional left appraisal of linking fascism exclusively with the economic debacle and the national bourgeois thrust for global expansion and building up their financial empire, deserve serious consideration. Similarly, left neglect of other vital cultural and social factors that contribute significantly for the rise and success of fascism is a serious flaw and this lacuna puts a serious hurdle in the effective resistance to struggle against fascism.

While appreciating the merits of his appraisal of the rise and decisive influence of the fascist elements in Indian society one can't overlook the serious flaws of such interpretation for the rise and the success of the RSS and its political outfit BJP in capturing power in Delhi – Banaji for instance, focuses on nationalism as a major factor contributing in success of the BJP's expansion and finally capturing power at an all-India level. While holding nationalism as a major culprit for the success of the Sangh Parivar in this country, he implies deification of the motherland advocated by some early nationalist as Bankimchandra and particularly by Savarkar, Golwalkar and other leaders promoting the cause of Hinduism, as they understood this category since thirties of the last century.

It is rather surprising and shocking to comprehend how nationalism in this country could be reduced to the cult of deification or worship of the motherland even in pre-independence period. There was a sizable section mainly consisting of terrorists in Bengal widely known as Anushilan group that stood for worship of motherland as nation. Apart from that various Hindu cults and sects subscribed to this notion. But nationalism right from its inception in

this country and several other colonial countries stood for the struggle of the emancipation of the country from the foreign or imperialist control. Nationalism in most of the countries which were either politically or economically under the control of the imperialist nations stood for liberation from other control. In other words, it implied struggle for the freedom of the country from the imperial power. In this sense all revolutionaries who stood for the liberation of the downtrodden also subscribed to the struggle for national emancipation. For the further understanding of this position, we shall briefly refer to nationalism as evolved globally since over last two centuries i.e. from 18th century as rise of nationalism is historically linked up with the emergence and success of the bourgeois revolution, against the feudal power and state.

Nationalism -- Definition of the Term

The definition of nationalism has varied from time to time and from place to place. The attempt to bring together all of nationalism's manifestations appears to be an impossible task. As Rosa Luxemburg pointed out, the terms, 'nation state' and 'nationalism' are in themselves empty husks into which all historical epochs and class relations pour their special material content.

One attempt to classify types of nationalism distinguishes four main patterns, each of which has been especially characteristic of some parts of the world, which have appeared in more or less chronological order. As per this order, there are four major categories as:

- 1) The nationalism of people with a long experience of concurrent development of state power and national consciousness with citizenship determining nationality (Western Europe)
- 2) The nationalism of countries without a political experience of long duration but with a common language and a common self-image (Italy and Germany).
- 3) The nationalism of countries such as those of South Eastern Europe without a common political experience of long duration and often without an ethnically homogeneous territory in which the religion of historical association is usually an important determinant of national consciousness, and
- 4) The nationalism of anti-colonialism and of the drive for 'modernity' generally associated with the third world but manifests also in southeastern Europe (*Stoianovich 1974, 450*)

In Marxist theory, it has been by and large assumed that the interests of class predominate, and that the form of economic organisation exercises a determining influence on the course of events. As a consequence perhaps, little

attention has been paid to a movement which is basically political and cultural. Social classes should be analysed afresh when the environment is different from that of nineteenth-century Europe. And the part played by nationalist motives in the social upheavals of the twentieth century has to be brought into focus and related to other movements. Sun Yat-Sen's dictum that nationalism is one of the three great movements of the last century along with democracy and socialism deserves serious consideration.

In this context, it is not surprising to find the great revolutionary leaders of the twentieth century Fidel Castro, Fanon and even Mao Tse-Tung were first nationalist before they became committed socialists. (Horace B Davis – *Toward a Marxist Theory of Nationalism*, pp 3,4,5,89 Monthly Review Press, 1978)

Thus condemning nationalism as a broad unison category as what apparently Jairus Banaji appears to subscribe, seems little strange to us. While condemning nationalism, Jairus Banaji advocates for globalisation and its great potentialities for the well-being of the human race.

K.N. Panikkar on Globalisation:

As Prof. K.N. Panikkar while referring to globalisation aptly points out, words often disguise what they really mean, particularly when they form part of an ideological effort in pursuit of hegemony. Globalisation is such a word which is a euphemism for domination. It suggests something entirely different from what it actually attempts to achieve. When post-colonial societies without 'post-coloniality' are being re-integrated into a global order, it could only ensure the subordination of the economically weaker countries. Therefore, for countries like India, globalisation only heralds subjection. It might for America, Japan and Germany hold forth exciting possibilities.

That globalisation became a programme only in the 90's and not in the 50's and 60's is of some significance. It actually emerged from the ashes of a bipolar world. The collapse of the socialist block paved the way for the capitalist forces to launch a new era of conquest. They had no opposition, only themselves to contend with -- the best and easy way is to share the spoils and hence the universal outlook of contemporary capital.

Resistance to this movement of capital would be normally expected from countries like India which has since independence, adopted self-reliance as the cornerstone of its economic policy. What is happening now is the reverse, which requires some explanation. The Nehruvian perspective of development with an elaborate permit license system was galling to the self-seeking bourgeoisie and middle class pining for an existence defined by the values of

consumerism. They envisioned emancipation in liberalisation and possibilities for their uninhibited growth in globalisation. It was eloquently articulated by an advocate of structural adjustment and vice-chairman of a multinational corporation when he described liberalisation as "Second Freedom". The new freedom is limited to the bourgeoisie and inconsequential, except in adverse terms, to the majority of Indians.

Cultural Implications:

Culture seems to be an arena in which multinational organisations are particularly active. It is reminiscent of the Bible preceding trade during the first stage of colonialism. The powerful cultural onslaught the third world countries are experiencing today is an attempt to establish cultural imperialism as a precursor to an embracing domination. Through the imposition of the culture of capitalism, the third world countries are trained to prepare the ground for, in Theodore Adorno's phrase, an 'administered world' to which corporate capital would have easy access. The cultural imperialism thus provides the groundwork for exploiting the market potential of third world countries. Not that alone, the cultural products of the advanced capitalist block are themselves a driving force behind the contemporary cultural invasion. The culture industry is fast expanding in the capitalist west, from pornography to pizza. In recent times there is a shift in investment in North America in favour of the culture industry, the immense potential of which is being realised by corporate giants. James Petras, who has done in-depth studies of the culture industry, has calculated that one out of the five of the richest American derives his/her wealth from mass media, television, newspaper, fast foods, soft drinks, clothes and innumerable other cultural artefacts which are proving to be attractive fields for capital. To be profitable they have to find new outlets too. The cultural onslaught is intended to pave the way for these cultural products to conquer new territories. The current cultural invasion has two definite dimensions, hegemonisation on the one hand, and instrumentality on the other. The cognition of either of these dimensions alone does not comprehend the total reality. Globalisation achieves much more than cultural imperialism: it foregrounds culture as an instrument of imperialism. In other words, culture acts both as a sword and a mask.

For quite some time as Prof. Panikkar suggests, there has been massive investment by several global agencies in the study of various forms of cultures. There are innumerable projects probing the popular cultural forms, imparting to them meanings unfamiliar to the people. It is reminiscent of the construction of Indian culture by orientalism which has in the final analysis served the interests of colonialism. Similarly, the efforts of the deconstructionist and post-modernists to deconstructionalise and dehistoricize culture are directly contributing to the hegemony of cultural imperialism. By dissociating cultures

from their sources of origin, the new constructions snap its umbilical cord and thus create a space for the global forces to operate. The appropriation of indigenous culture and its commodification are two sides of the same coin. The dances of the tribals, the harvest songs of the peasants, the martial arts of rural folks, and innumerable other art forms, are placed out of context, enacted in studies and presented as exotic and primitive practices. The ensuing cultural fossilisation would be difficult to stem. The cultural homogenization occurring today would also be detrimental to cultural resistance against dominant classes within society. (*Prof. K. N. Panikkar – Globalisation, Culture and Communalism Selected Reading on Religion, Politics and culture, Vikas Adhyayan Kendra, Mumbai 2004*)

Similarly, the assumption that globalisation implies an advanced stage of technological innovations and integration along with dissolution of national states is also quite inappropriate and dangerous. As brought out by Ellen Meiksins, the conventional view of globalisation seems to be based on the assumption that the natural tendency of capitalist development and specifically its internationalisation, is to submerge the nation-state, even if the process is admittedly still far from over. The internationalisation of capital, in other words, is apparently in an inverse relation to the development of the nation-state, the more internationalisation, the less nation-state. On the contrary, historical record suggests something different. The internationalisation of capital has been accompanied by the proliferation of capital's original political form when capitalism was born; the world was very far from being a world of nation-states. Today, it is just that and while new multinational institutions have certainly emerged, they have not so much displaced the nation-state as given it new roles – in fact, in some cases, new instruments and powers.

In fact, globalisation itself is a phenomenon of national economies and national states. It is impossible to make sense of it without taking account of competition among national economies and national states carrying out policies to promote international competitiveness to maintain or restore profitability to domestic capital, to promote the free movement of capital while confining labour within national boundaries and subjecting it to disciplines enforced by the state, to create and sustain global markets not to mention national policies deliberately designed to forfeit national sovereignty. It needs to be added, too, that globalisation has in large part taken the form of regionalization.

To say all this is certainly not to deny that the relations between capital and nation-state take many different forms. The relations among advanced capitalist economies and among their nation state are obviously very different from the relations between them and weaker nation states.

The other side of the new imperialism is a new kind of militarism. This one doesn't generally have territorial ambitions, and generally, leaves nation-states in place. Its objective is not hegemony over specific colonies with identifiable geographic boundaries but boundless hegemony over the global economy. So instead of absorbing or annexing territory, this imperialist militarism typically uses massive displays of violence to assert the dominance of global capital – which really means exercising the military power of specific nation-states to assert the dominance of capital based in a few nation-states or one in particular, the United States, enforcing its freedom to navigate the global economy without hindrance (*Ellen Meiksins Wood – Unhappy families : Global Capitalism in a world of Nation-States Monthly Review Vol. 51. 3 July/August 1999*)

Ernest Mandel on Fascist State:

There is also enough evidence to justify the contention that the fascist state operates in favour of big business or monopoly finance capital. In this context Ernest Mandel's observations are quite significant. As he points out, it is striking how feebly most bourgeois scholars tackle the problem of the "primacy of politics" or "primacy of economics" which plays an important role in the debate over the theory of fascism. With laborious pedantry, they try to interpret this or that action of the Hitler regime, asking such questions as was it to the advantage of big capital? Was it contrary to the expressed wishes of the capitalists? They do not ask the more fundamental question – whether the imminent laws of development of the capitalist mode of production were realised or negated by that regime. It is essential to determine whether Hitler's dictatorship tended to maintain or destroy, consolidated or undermined, the social institutions of private property in the means of production and the subordination of workers who are forced to sell their labour power under the domination of capital. In this respect, the historical balance seems clear to us.

Further, as he argues, the attempt to comprehend fascism as a product of specific characteristics of particular people or races or of a particular historical past is scarcely more valid methodologically. One rises from individual psychology to national psychology without in fact explaining anything more than those factors which in the most general sense, permit something like fascism to appear. Neither the historical backwardness of Italy nor the Prussian military tradition of Germany and certainly not the need for discipline or the "fear of freedom" can adequately explain the precipitous rise and fall of fascism during the period between 1920 and 1945. Often these arguments are clearly contradictory: while Italy was industrially a relatively backward country, Germany was the most highly industrialised nation on the European continent. If the "inclination of discipline" was a basic feature of the 'German National Character' (traceable to the late abolition of serfdom in Russia), then what of

Italy, among the most 'undisciplined' nations of Europe and wholly lacking in a military tradition? As secondary factors and causes, these elements have undoubtedly played a role in conferring on fascism in each particular case a specific national character corresponding to the historical particularity of monopoly capitalism and of the petty bourgeoisie in each particular country. But just to the extent that one grasps fascism as a universal phenomenon that knows no geographical boundaries and struck roots in all imperialist lands -- and can strike roots again tomorrow -- attempts at explanation that chiefly emphasise this or that national peculiarity are wholly inadequate.

The detailed investigation of particular interest groups and of the mutually feuding sectors of big capital as special bearers of fascism received particular impetus from the publication of the transcripts and supporting materials of the Nuremberg trials. Much of this material has confirmed what was previously known by intuition or theoretical deductions that heavy industry was more interested in Hitler's seizure of power and rearmament than light industry that the Aryanization of Jewish capital played no significant role in the German economy. That the I.G. Farben Trust was able to play a particularly aggressive and influential role in a series of economic and financial decisions of the Hitler regime and so on.

But it really isn't necessary to dig through a mountain of documents to recognise that in the specific situation of German capitalism in 1934, manufacturers of canons, tanks and explosives would profit more from rearmament than would producers of underwear, toys and pocketknives.

Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that profits from all industrial and commercial enterprises rose from 6.6 billion (thousand million) marks in 1933 to 15 billion marks in 1938. But while sales of the Bremen Woolen Mills stagnated and sales of AEG (Allgemeine Elektrizital Gesellschaft -- General Electric Company) increased only 55 percent, those of Siemens, Phillip Holzmann, inc, increased six times and those of the German weapons and Munitions works rose ten-fold. From these figures, there clearly emerges a collective economic interest of the capitalist class -- one which is far from being a conceptual construction. While at the same time, within the framework of these collective interests, special interests arise and assert themselves repeatedly and the proportion that capitalist's private property always develops and grows from the expropriation of many small (and some large) property owners was not written in the epoch of Hitler, but rather was asserted on the entire history of this mode of production. (*Ernest Mandel, Introduction to the struggle Against Fascism in Germany – Leon Trotsky Pathfinder Press, New York, 1972*)

Corporate Sector

In contrast to Germany of the post-war years in twenties and early thirties, the Indian situation economically and politically is strikingly different. In this sense there is no point in comparing Modi with Hitler or the Indian situation with the German socio-political or even economic scenario. Nevertheless the possibility of the fascist style of governance, brutal suppression of any kind of dissent, invasion of Hindutva forces in all economic, social, cultural and political spheres, brutal attack on minorities, suppression of dissent in any form, open support for all policies promoting corporate sector, drastic reduction or withdrawal of subsidies provided for the poor and marginal strata in urban and specifically rural areas, inroads of the RSS and its stooges in administration, to social, culturally educational and research institutes and host of measures adopted by the Modi government after coming into power clearly betrays its authoritarian and autocratic pro-Hindutva mode of operation in no uncertain terms. In this context it would be interesting to examine the rise of Modi in Gujarat and the response of the corporate sector to his adventurous and brutal policy against minorities and oppressed strata of society.

Rise of Modi:

Much is made of Modi's rise from humble origins. As Radhika Desai points out, Modi was a typical Sangh recruit; an aspiring lower middle class, upper or middle caste boy. For him, the RSS's Hindu supremacist, pseudo-philosophy and hierarchy was reassuring, intellectually broadening and a step-up in life, a path out of the social and geographical background of small town gentle poverty and the class and caste barriers it poses for social mobility.

Modi remained within the RSS's disciplinarian confines, complete with its ban on marriage, an abandoned wife of an early marriage (now a retired teacher living in his native Vadnagar) was acknowledged only in his 2014 nomination papers having been kept hidden from his previous nomination papers and other official documents until then. He served as a pracharak or organiser and over time, emerged as the man who mediated the RSS-BJP relationship in Gujarat. He also played a leading part in organising the crescendo of fanatical and violent mobilisations that revived the BJP's electoral fortunes from their low point in the mid 1980s, coming to enjoy familiarity with the top leadership of the party and particularly ingratiating himself with Advani.

In 2001 the Gujarat BJP's difficulties absorbing the middle castes were compounded by dissatisfaction with its government's handling of the Kutch earthquake and allegations of corruption. Local elections and state assembly by-elections were being lost. Modi had been long lobbying for the Chief Minister's

post and when the incumbent resigned, ostensibly for health reasons, Modi was the RSS's choice for the position despite his lack of either legislative or governmental experience.

Modi became Chief Minister on 7th October 2001 -- the day the war on Afghanistan began. On 13 December terrorists attacked the Indian Parliament. International and Indian Islamophobia were now combining to reach a fanatical pitch. A few months later, the genocide of Muslims in Gujarat followed.

So far, thanks to a severely compromised police force and judicial system in the state, the suspicious deaths of several key figures, including a member of Modi's cabinet and the lamentable failure of the Supreme Court's own Special Investigation Team to interrogate Modi, only one member of Modi's cabinet has been convicted of complicity in one of the major massacres. So although Modi has escaped prosecution so far, thousands of victims still seek justice. Moreover, evidence of his government's complicity in the events appeared sufficiently persuasive, for major western governments, including those of the US and the UK, to deny Modi visas. While these bars were hastily lifted after Modi's stunning election victories, some unease remains.

Though Modi claims Gujarat a riot-free state since 2002, communal riots have occurred with depressing regularity and continue to claim many lives. A repressive ideological and cultural climate, especially towards Muslims and towards critics generally, is maintained in the state in part by series of fake encounters between police and alleged 'terrorists' out to kill Modi; they also bolster Modi's personality cult. By never showing remorse for the events of 2002 and instead justifying the carnage as a measured 'reaction' to a never – specified action of Muslims, Modi has made himself a lightning rod for the condemnation of critics which has remained largely ineffective but which wins him the adoration of fanatics. He has also devised a strategy for deflection of the criticism into further favourable attention on himself.

The corporate leaders who today have played kingmakers to Modi, one should not overlook the fact that they had reacted to the 2002 events with revulsion. The Tatas, Azim Premji, the Godrej belong to minority religious communities and like most Indians, Indian capitalists are not averse to taking pride and credit for India's secular credentials.

At a Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) event in New Delhi organised at Modi's behest, corporate leaders condemned Modi to his face. Modi listened and then lashed out at their "pseudo-secularism" and for maligning Gujarat. This formed the basis of the first prong of the two-pronged strategy that he

now devised to turn condemnation of him and his government into an asset, Gujarat Asmita -- Gujarat pride or sense of self.

From here on, criticisms or condemnations of him and his government would be faulted for insulting all Gujaratis. After the CII meeting, businessmen close to him, set up a rival organisation, the Resurgent Group of Gujarat (RGG) and threatened to leave the CII for insulting Gujaratis.

The RGG demanded that the Gujarat Chapter of the CII resign for failing to protect the interests of the state. Faced with an open revolt from a crucial state and its powerful business community, Tarun Das (President of CII) had good reason to worry: more than 100 companies from Gujarat were threatening to leave the CII, which would cripple the organisation's presence in western India.

The Vajpayee Government in New Delhi also backed Modi up and had begun to limit the CII's access to its ministers, jeopardising the group's core mission as a lobbying organisation Das capitulated.

Tough love having achieved its purpose, Modi turned on the charm and the freebies. Now capitalists began receiving unstinting regulatory cooperation and extravagant give-aways from the Gujarat government. This was the alleged 'development' of the 'Gujarat Model' -- the other prong in Modi's post-2002 strategy.

The hype about Gujarat's allegedly exceptional growth record has already been exposed and its deplorable human development indices brought to light and even in relation to growth, the Gujarat model is based on nothing remotely resembling a development strategy, only a fawning subservience to corporations amounting to a more or less complete handover of control over the pace and pattern of development to private capital. (*Radhika Desai, Ibid*)

Since coming to power, in almost two years, the Modi government has introduced a series of measures in economic, social, educational and cultural spheres that has seriously disturbed the lives of people from practically all strata of Indian humanity. Acceleration of the neo-liberal reforms of inviting foreign capital in vital areas as defence and railways under the pretext of "Make in India" deceptive banner, labour reforms imposing harsher conditions and increasing insecurity of labour and threatening trade unions survival, policy for denationalisation of Banks and privatisation of Railway Services have been already initiated.

Similarly, setting up new educational institutions under the hegemony of Hindutva forces, eliminating or curtailing the functioning of the autonomous

institution like the UGC and other educational and Research Institutes of national and international reputations. Appointing RSS or BJP stooges, totally incompetent for the assignments given to them in prime research, cultural, academic institutions as ICHR, ICCR, National Education Trust and Prime Research Institutes and Science and Technological other institutes.

Such authoritarian and autocratic steps of the Modi government have led to serious resistance from all quarters of Indian society, right from research scholars, scientists, social experts, academics to film stars and film training Institute for film artists.

Similarly there is powerful resistance from labour against labour reforms, Bank employees against denationalisation, farmers against Land Acquisition Bill.

In subsequent chapters we will attempt to examine these issues more exhaustively

NEW LIBERAL REFORMS UNDER MODI'S REGIME

In this essay we shall first consider the financial allocations for the defence establishment for the year 2015-16 in the context of the slogan 'Make in India' loudly proclaimed by the new regime since coming into power in 2014. Defence provisions needs sharper focus as it accounts for overwhelming share of the budgetary allocations in this country.

Budget outlays for Military Acquisitions and production in India for the year 2015-16

With the third largest standing army in the world, India's defence budget for 2015-16 was Rs. 3.1 lakh crore. The significance of this huge allocation can be realised if one compares this figure with allocations for other equally or probably more relevant sectors as health, human resource development etc. The health sector got only an allocation of Rs. 32,000 Crores, the human resources development (i.e. education) close to Rs. 69,000 Crore, MNREGA Rs. 3,37,0,00 crore. Thus defence is one of the largest heads of expenditure of the central government, amounting to more than one-sixth of the total allocations.

Over time a massive military research and production complex in the government sector has been created in the country. As pointed out by Rahul Varman, it consists of 41 ordnance factories, 8 Defence Public Sector Units (DPSUs) and 52 Defence Research and Development Organisations (DRDO) labs. The ordnance factories and DPSUs together employ more than 2 lakh personnel and have annual revenues close to Rs. 50,000 crore, while DRDO employs 5,000 Scientists and about 25,000 supporting personnel with an annual budget of more than Rs. 15,000 crore.

What are the actual achievements of this giant complex? Take the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) 'Tejas', which began as a proposed replacement for the ageing fleet of MIG 21s in the early 1980s. It is still far from being delivered to the IAF, perhaps by several years, in spite of some Rs. 17,000 Crore having been already spent on its developments. By the time all the promised 170 aircrafts are yet to be delivered to the IAF and Navy in 2021-22, it is reported that the price tag would go up to Rs. 55,000 crore in present terms. Reports suggest that 'Tejas' has a 60 percent indigenous content and the project has been able to licence some critical technologies. However, there have been areas of spectacular technological failure, most glaring of which is the Kaveri engine itself, on which Rs. 2,800 crore has been spent. Late last year, DRDO decided to recommend to the ministry of winding up of the Kaveri engine programme, ending the project of equipping Tejas with a homegrown power system

(TNN Tejas Project to cost Rs. 55,000 crore, Times of India 13/2/2014)

India as it is now widely known, is the largest military market in the world, accounting for nearly 10 percent of the \$63 billion international armament markets in 2013. In contrast, the US imports only 10 percent and China 30 percent, while India acquires over 70 percent of the total requirements by imports.

India's imports rose from around \$ 3 billion in 2016 to \$5.9 billion in 2013 and \$6.7 billion in 2014 projected figure for 2015 was \$ 8.16 billion. The increase in India's imports has been spectacular.

One of the major winners of the recent military imports has been the US. It has become the largest source of armament imports in the last few years surpassing Russia and India has the dubious distinction of being termed as the 'Best customer for America's Defence Industry' (Einhorn, opcit). In 2009 India imported only \$200 million in military equipment from the US; by 2013 that figure had jumped to \$ 2 billion and is expected to reach \$ 3.3 billion in 2015.

Indigenisation

In 2013, the UPA government in its concerted efforts towards indigenisation proposed additional changes in the policy regime, preference for indigenous procurement has been made a part of DPP through an amendment that provided for a preferred order of categorisation, with global sourcing being a choice of last resort.

The first option is 'buy from India' followed by 'buy and make in India'. Under the second category, private and public sector firms can tie up with foreign vendors and produce the equipment required by the armed forces within the country. It needs to be noted that for the purpose of indigenous sourcing, most of the dividing lines between public and private sector have been removed and for all practical purposes, the policy regime supported to be the same for the two sectors as long as it is being sourced from vendor within the country.

Despite such a state proclaimed policy of indigenisation, the actual thrust is on foreign tie-ups. Historically, India had close military ties with the erstwhile USSR and now Russia due to the two countries' strategic relations and India's past experiences during the wars with Pakistan, as well as the deadlock with the US due to India's nuclear experiments. But in recent years, there have been concerted attempts to forge close ties with the US and Israel in armament acquisitions and this is a part of the present policy package. As a result, in recent

years the US has become the most important source for import of armaments and Israel too has emerged as a large supplier.

Emerging Corporate Military Complex in India

Against the background of the failure to stem, the tide of imports and to develop indigenous technology, the government experts and think tanks are increasingly turning to their final solutions for all problems – the private corporate sectors.

Though the public sector predominates, India's military-industrial complex also includes 140 private armament companies and 5000 small and medium enterprise (SMES) involved in production of around 450 items. ("Masters of Wars", Editorial, Economy and Political Weekly EPW Vol – XLIX, No. 34, 23/04/2014). Some of the key big business houses of the country, such as the Tatas, L&T, Reliance and Mahindra are investing in the sector and have made big plans to get a substantial chunk of the military pie. Recently, the government cleared 19 proposals from several large Indian corporate houses including the Tatas, Mahindra, Reliance, Punj Loyd and Bharat Forge – for military manufacturing. However, as yet total military-related orders (including exports) for the Indian private sector were below \$ 2 billion 2014 – less than 6 percent of India's total defence spending. What we see at present are preparations by the corporate houses for rapid scaling up.

While the people of this country, as pointed out by Rahul Varman, are incessantly told that there is no money for basic necessities, such as food, shelter, and health care, a colossal amount of money has been spent on creating and sustaining a huge military production research complex. However this complex has little to show in terms of accomplishments. While the people are getting even more immiserated, the nation's strength is being increasingly equated with its military might, justifying the state's spending even more resources on it. The military establishment is the focus of attention whether as part of the 'Make in India' campaign, the Vibrant Gujarat summit, or recent visit of President Obama.

1. Whatever has been built up in terms of the indigenous capabilities, whether in space nuclear or missile establishments due to specific geopolitical or historical reasons or even other aspects of military production and research has been at an enormous cost to the exchequer in an impoverished country like India. Much of this is now ready to be palmed off to the Indian private corporate sector which has little to show in terms of building its own competence.

2. More significantly, much of this will come under the influence and control of the international corporate military establishment, as most of the Indian big business has only plans to ride piggyback over the former's capabilities and strengths.

3. What the corporate sector most desperately needs is assured and continuous demand in current times of ever deepening global economic crisis.

4. And finally the logic of war does not stop at the border but is extended within the country as well. This is bonus for the ruling disposition in one more ways as the security concerns take a centre stage, the dissenting voices can be silenced with so much more impunity. Witness the recent case of a Greenpeace activist being stopped from going to the UK to depose to the British MPs on Essars human rights violations in India in the name of national interest even though the fact that Essar Energy is a UK registered corporation. Thus while foreign corporations are welcome to supply and invest in Indian military and other key sectors, the citizens of the country are not welcome to dissent when these corporations violate their rights either within or outside the country.

Thus, military procurement has become an ever more closed loop system created in the name of security and nationhood that has little to do with the larger population of the country and their needs. For instance, the bauxite or iron mines are opened up in Jharkhand, Orissa and Chhattisgarh by grabbing people's lands and homes against their will, inspite of their great resistance, UAYs and increasingly sophisticated weapons are used to quell their resistance. The corporate sector is the beneficiary both of mining the ore and of the demand for weapons, demand which is independent of the vagaries of the market system. (Rahul Varman – Rising Corporate Military Complex in India: A Critical Appraisal Aspects of Indian Economy – 61, May 2015 Research Unit for Political Economy, Mumbai)

Privatisation of the Public Sector

The Government is determined to put several public sector banks to death. Surprisingly this accusation has not been levelled by a trade union leaders or a political opponent of the Government. As a matter of fact, this plan has been spelt out and recommended, in precisely these words, by the current Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) to the Government, shortly before he assumed that post.

One could see from the last Budget that the Government is seriously implementing this plan, the objective is the private takeover of India's banking sector.

Paucity of Funds as an alibi for Privatisation

According to the Third Based Accord (Base III) which lays down voluntary global banking standards which the Indian Government treats as obligatory – India's public sector banks require vast sums in order to maintain the stipulated ratio between their core capital and the loans they have advanced. Not only have bad loans (i.e. loans which they will have to buy and large write off) eroded banks capital, but they will require additional capital to expand their lending.

The finance minister in his 2014-15 Budget speech, estimated the sum required by 2018 at Rs. 2,40,000 crore. This means that the Government would have to make provisions for additional budgetary funds, if it wished to maintain its stake at its present percentage (its stake in different public sector banks ranges from 65 to 80 percent today)

The Government invested capital into the banks till 2013-14, Rs. 58,600 crore between 2011 and 2014, including Rs. 14,000 crore in 2013-14 alone but this was far short of base III requirements. However, in its 2014-15 budgets, the Modi Government reduced the allocation to Rs. 11,200 crore it further slashed this meager provision also to only Rs. 6,990 crore.

By Contrast, since the government did its selective recapitalization, Modi announced that it was downgrading the credit rating of two public sector banks, Central Bank of India and Indian Overseas Bank to below investment grade. This would make it more difficult for them to raise funds from the market too. With neither Government nor markets as a source of capital these banks have little option but to merge with stronger banks.

It is true that the public sector banks have been saddled with huge 'non-performing assets' (NPAs) bad debts. Nevertheless, these bad debts have been accumulated for three reasons. One because public sector banks unlike private sector banks have so far been compelled to meet some small portion of the credit needs of poor far - flung borrowers - peasants and petty household enterprises. These sections are sometimes unable to repay their loans, because of crop failure, collapse of crop prices, loss of market due to the fall in their customers purchasing power, failure of larger firms to clear dues to them and similar other factors beyond their control. Banks generally have been quick to classify such borrowings as NPAs, act against them and blame them for the entire problem of NPAs.

The second type of NPA is consumer loans for the purchase of flats and cars, which shot-up during the boom and in some cases turned sour with the downturn.

Even more intense was government pressure on public sector banks to lend to the third category of NPAs, the corporate sector. These were concentrated in sectors such as 'infrastructure'. To a large extent, the economy growth model is based on such private investment using public funds. The best known case was of Kingfisher Airlines, which excelled in flying capital out of the country. The entire boom of 2003-11 would have been impossible without the public sector banks footing the bill for private investment. Outstanding bank credit to infrastructure grew more than 100 times during the boom (from Rs. 724 crore in 1999-2000 to Rs. 78,605 crore in 2012-13, a compound annual growth rate of 43.4 percent over 13 years.)

It was the corporate sector that accounted for the bulk of bad debt, bad debt made up a bigger share of their total borrowings than in the case of small borrowers, but they have been treated quite leniently by the bank, which 'restructure' corporate debt in various ways (reschedule payments, reduce interest rates, swap debt for equity, forgive debt, index interest payments to earning etc.) leniency they don't show to small borrowers.

NPAs caused substantially by the private corporate sector are now being advanced as a reason for the Government to privatise the public sector banks.

In March 2014, Arvind Subramanian, now chief economic adviser, in his regular column of the Business Standard, condemned the nationalisation of the private banks, in 1969 as one of the two worst economic policy mistakes, that continue to haunt India "milestone round the Indian economy." Undoing this legacy may well turn out to be one of the most critical tasks for the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) current governor, Raghuram Rajan. Hence, the explicit objective is not to improve the performance of the public sector, but to denationalise it.

Subramanian asserts that the award of new banking licence for private sector banks, would not suffice: the share of public sector banks in total banking (measured as a share of assets or deposits) has stubbornly persisted around 75 percent. So going forward the fact of more private banks is no guarantee of reducing the role of public sector banks. He spelt out an indirect way of privatising them.

What can be done more directly to reduce the role of public sector banks? Because such banks are important levers of political control and influence and because bank unions remain powerful, explicit privatisation seems off the table. But there is an indirect way of privatising them, or at least beginning the process of privatisation, which the RBI should seize. And the opportunities could present themselves soon.

As growth declined it exposed the fragility of some of the public banks in the form of rising non-performing loans, the RBI should be brutal in its assessment of the erring on the side of declaring some banks as unviable commercial institutions. The government will want to bail out the failing banks through fresh capital inclusions. But here is where the RBI should stand firm, urging the government to let them go, on the grounds that a fragile economy can afford neither the fiscal costs of bailouts nor the efficiency costs of bad banks continuing to be prolonged on life support. The worse the economy, the more the bargaining chips Dr. Rajan will have. And he should use them to resolve the bad public banks in part by transferring their good parts to the private sector.

The past two decade have taught us that private banks cannot really grow unless and until public sector banks are shrunk. That shrinking may have to be achieved by allowing the bad public sector banks to fail because politics will never allow good public sector banks to be privatised. It was famously said that in science, progress is made one funeral at a time. Unfortunately, that may be the only realistic way of reforming Indian banking too. (Arvind Subramanian, "Indian banking – reform by death", Business Standard, 7/03/2014)

Subramanian Recommendations: "As growth declines and exposes the fragility of some of the public banks in the form of rising non-performing banks, the RBI should be brutal in its assessment of them, erring on the side of declaring some banks as unviable commercial institutions"

Action in May 2014, the RBI appointed Nayak Committee, we referred earlier, began its report by declaring ominously: "The Financial position of public sector banks is fragile, partly masked by regulatory forbearance. The implication is clear that only the RBI's leniency allowed them to survive. Such a statement appears calculated to spread fear and panic among the public about these banks. Whereas in fact, as long as the earlier Government backing for the public sector banks continued, such fears were baseless. It was then, only the Government itself that could generate such fear by making it clear that it would no longer support them."

The Modi Government not only starved the banks of capital, but has recapitalised selectively, not only shrinking the market share of half the public sector banks, but sending a signal that they are on their way out, to be taken over by others.

Subverting the Land Acquisition Act 2013

Since coming into power in 2014, the Modi Government took several measures to dilute the pro-poor provisions of the Land Acquisition Act of 2013. As

pointed out by Santosh Varma, there have been bitter debates in academia and protests from agricultural communities on the question of land. As the processes leading to the dispossession of the farmer's lands gathered momentum, protests intensified in different parts of the country. They forced the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government at the centre to enact the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (LARR) Act, 2013. Though, this act, passed by the parliament, was termed pro people, certain issues remained unresolved. For instance, the fear of arbitrary valuation of the market price of land acquired was not resolved.

However, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government has virtually nullified this act. It passed a LARR ordinance on 29 December 2014. Several amendments diluting the criterion for land acquisition were included in the ordinance, on grounds that the LARR Act, 2013 was complicated and anti – development.

The government's haste in passing the LARR ordinance and the continuous public protests against land acquisitions raised several questions. Such as protests against land acquisitions especially for private purpose. How would families be affected by loss of land and livelihood.

The 48th round of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) survey (Land and Livelihood survey, 1992) reported that 69.24% of the households were that of the landless, and marginal and small farmers. In the NSSO's 7th round (2012) this increased to 92.84%. The survey suggests that there was a massive increase in the proportion of landless, marginal and small farmers households. It also points out that landholdings have fragmented even more.

The NDA ordinance to amend the LARR Act 2013 to make the process of land acquisition easier should be seen in this context. It did so without consideration for the affected families and their livelihoods.

The LARR Act, 2013 defined different purposes for which land could be acquired, namely, "public purposes", "Public-Private Partnership" (PPP) purposes and "Private Purposes". The act stressed on the growing need of land for industrialisation and urbanisation among other requirements. It also emphasised PPPs and to the need for land acquisition on a large scale for activities of private companies (Singh 2012). There are however, several examples in the distant past when government had acquired land under the emergency clause for the private companies in India. There were several enactments for land acquisition for private purposes under the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) Act 2005. These varied from centres to states (GOI

2010). The LARR Act categorically highlighted the consent clause according to which the land acquisition for PPP projects would take place with the consent of 70% of the affected families and the land acquisition for the private companies would take place only with the consent of 80% of the affected families. The Act prohibited acquisition of lands which were irrigated and multi-crop. Acquisition of such land was allowed only under exceptional circumstances but the act emphasised that an equivalent piece of land had to be developed for agricultural activities to enhance the food security in the country.

The LAAR Act, 2013 was viewed as a rights based Act; it was seen as more 'competent' 'consultative' and 'participatory'. It also addressed the major drawbacks of 1894 Act: 'The consent clause' talked of reinstating the question of housing, livelihood based rights and the Act also decreed proper compensation, rehabilitation and resettlement of communities whose land was taken for commercial purposes. The introduction of Social Impact Assessment (SIA) sharing of capital gains over the period of the first 10 years with the communities whose land was being acquired and the measure restricting acquisition to not more than 5% of the land in multi-crop districts and 10% of the land in single crop districts provided security to the affected communities. There were rehabilitation and resettlement measures. The act also mentioned that acquisition of more than 100 acres in rural areas and 50 acres in urban areas by private negotiation should take place through proper administrative channels. These measures of the LARR Act drew criticism from the industry, big corporate houses and from some sections of the academia. The legislation was criticised for including complex procedures and fixing of arbitrary prices of land. There were also fears of unending litigations. There were also fears that interruptions in land acquisition would hamper the demand for land and several industrial projects would come to a halt (Kumar and Kumar 2013)

The formation of the new government at the centre in May 2014 led to speculation about the probable amendments in the LARR Act, 2013 due to corporate lobbying against the Act. The industry and corporate houses continuously pressurised the government to come with new land acquisition legislation. Finally, the government came up with an LARR ordinance modifying the LARR Act, 2013 – and providing the private sector a major benefit. Section 40 of the Act, the 'urgency clause' which allowed compulsory acquisition by the government was widened. The urgency clause initially was limited to defence and natural calamities but under section 10 A of the ordinance, it was expanded to include rural infrastructure, affordable housing, industrial corridors, infrastructure development and housing for the poor. The LARR Act, 2013 required SIA, determination of public purpose; 'consent clause' and 'public hearing' for every kind of land acquisition. The LARR

ordinance abolished all these. The state could act as 'eminent domain' using the sovereign powers enjoyed under the old colonial Act of 1894 to acquire land arbitrarily. Besides, 13 new areas which were excluded from the 2013 Act were added to ordinance, some of these were atomic energy, railway, electricity, national highways and metro rail. If the land was acquired for these purposes, the affected families were to be provided the same compensation and rehabilitation as stipulated in the LARR Act 2013.

Recent Developments

Since January 2015, the LARR ordinance has been promulgated three times by the NDA government amidst massive protests from different independent farmer groups, social activists and opposition parties inside and outside the parliament (Santosh Verma, Subverting the Land Acquisition Act, 2013 Economic and Political Weekly, Sept. 12, 2015. Vol. No. 37)

Now Bill on Industrial Relations

Labour Reforms

Soon after the victory of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the 2014 elections, there was euphoria in the industry. After coming to power, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi repeatedly stressed on many forums that economic growth would be the main objective of the new government. This would boost industry and in turn generate more employment. But the government at the same time, stressed out that there were too many labour laws regulating work (indirectly implying, granting protection to labour) and that ought to be amended. Vasundhara Raje Scindia, as Sharit Bhowmik points out, took the lead by announcing that laws relating to labour protection and firing of workers had to become more liberal to generate more employment. The state legislative assembly resolved in July 2014 that laws such as The Factories Act, Industrial Disputes Act (ID Act) and Contract Labour (regulation and abolition) Act should be amended to release employers from their stranglehold and increase investment in industry, creating more jobs.

The argument that removing legal protection for labour and allowing industries to shut down at will is, as the same author suggests, not new or even original. The World Bank's World Development Report for 1995, noted.

In many Latin American, South Asian and Middle Eastern Countries, Labour laws establish onerous job security regulations, rendering hiring decisions practically irreversible; and the system of workers representations and dispute

resolution is often subject to unpredictable government decision making, adding uncertainty to firms' estimate of future labour costs (P.34)

It implied that laws providing much protection would discourage foreign investment because even though it may be easier to employ comparatively low-cost labour, retrenching workers would be almost impossible. This appears to be a perverted logic. It implies that reducing job security and not regulating wages would lead to an increase in employment and benefit the country. What neither the World Bank nor Indian enthusiasts for an unregulated labour market are unable to explain is why industrialised European countries (Germany, Norway, Sweden, France) have laws for protecting labour that are more stringent and more effective than ours and yet remain high-employment countries. In fact, it can be argued that high growth with equity is possible only under conditions of decent work. (Heymann and Earle 2010)

Rajasthan has been the first case where a state has successfully reduced job security. This seems to have been a test case because the Central Government in the past few months announced a spate of changes affecting labour, which are more or less on the Rajasthan model. The labour code on Industrial Relations Bill is the latest proposed by the government. It amalgamates the ID Act and Trade Union Act (TU Act) into a single bill.

Code on Industrial Relations

The bill deals with the whole gamut of industrial relations. The attempt apparently seems, “to consolidate and amend the law relating to registrations of Trade Unions, conditions of employment, investigation and settlement of disputes and related matters. The second chapter deals with bipartite forums. The bill (Section 3 and 4) lays down two such forums – the Works committee (WC) and the Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC). The former is a part of the ID Act; and the new bill retains the original form, though not in content. It states that all industries with 100 or more workers must have WCs which have equal representation for labour and management.”

However, dispute seems to be around the scope of these committees. The ID Act has laid down the functions of WCs in considerable detail. They would deal with specific problems in the workplace, including lighting, hygiene, canteen facilities, and annual holidays and so on. It is very clear that WCs cannot discuss issues that are the prerogative of collective bargaining. For example they cannot discuss issues relating to wages, bonus, industrial disputes and so on. The bill however states that it shall be the duty of the works committee to promote measures for securing and preserving amity and good relations between employer and workers. If the main purpose of the WC is to maintain harmony

and resolve differences between management and the labour, it is likely that trade unions may become redundant.

The other body is the CRC. This committee must be formed in any industry having 20 or more workers. This is a welcome move for industries, especially the smaller ones, this committee also comprises of workers and managers with equal representation. On closer scrutiny of the working of this committee one finds that in case of a worker not satisfied by the ruling, he or she can appeal to the employer, who must dispose off the case in a month. This sounds quite strange because most grievances will be directed against the employer. This bill proposes that the employer be both defendant and also a judge. There is no mention in case of dispute the case being referred to an independent authority.

Registration of Trade Unions

The bill mentions that a trade union can be registered if its membership includes 10% of the workers in an industry. A positive aspect in this provision is that in the unorganised sector where there is no employer-employee relationship the 10% requirement shall not apply. This would imply that the self-employed such as street vendors, home-based workers domestic workers, and rag pickers can have their own registered trade unions.

Strikes, Lockouts and Penalties

The chapter on strikes and lockouts (Chapter 5) starts with the presumption that they are illegal. Though the bill treats strikes and lockouts on the same plane, they cannot be termed equal because workers suffer in both cases if they are illegal. An illegal strike implies that the workers involved would lose their wages. In an illegal lockout as well, workers do not get paid. In this case, the employer gets penalised, but that does not help the workers who have been without wages.

Penalising Illegal Strikes

The ID Act prescribes a punishment of Rs. 50 a day for the employer if a lockout is illegal. This paltry sum could encourage employers to declare lockouts to pressurise or blackmail workers and their unions and plead guilty to an illegal lockout. The penalties for illegal strikes and lockouts are the same but in both cases the burden is more on the workers.

The punishment for an illegal strike is the same but sub section 14 states that all workers who participate in an illegal strike will get the same punishment. This means that if 500 workers participate in a strike that is declared illegal each will have to pay the fine (which shall not be less than Rs. 20000 but which may be

extended to Rs. 50000) or face a month's imprisonment whereas only one employer will pay penalties if the lockout is declared illegal.

Sub section 17 states that the same nature of penalty will be imposed on any person who lends monetary support to an illegal strike.

Penalties on Trade Unions

The anti workers/ Union approach of the bill can be seen in section 103, subsection 7. This relates to non-submission of returns by trade unions, it reads-

“If default is made on the part of any registered trade union in giving any notice or sending any statement or other document as required by or under any provisions of this code, every office bearer or other person bound by the rules of the trade union to give or send the same, or if there is no such office bearer or person, every member of the executive of the trade union, shall be punishable with fine which shall be not less than rupees Ten Thousand but may be expanded to rupees Fifty Thousand. The continuing default would attract an additional penalty of rupees Hundred per day so long as the default continues.”

The next subsection (5) mentions that if any to false entry is made in the returns submitted by a trade union or a rule is altered, the person will be fined Rs. 5000.

The offences are not very significant but the penalties imposed are disproportionately high.

As Sharit suggests, in its present form, if the bill does become a law it will be a major setback for workers. The penalties for trade unions and workers are so high that it would deter them from raising issues against employers or putting up any form of resistance that could be declared illegal. (Sharit K. Bhaumik, Protecting Employers against Workers and Trade Unions. New Bill on Industrial Relations, Economic and Political Weekly, July 18, 2015)

Surge in Indirect Tax Collections

Surge in Union Government through sharp rise in indirect tax collection is another unfortunate feature since Modi government came into power. As Dennis Rajkumar and R. Krishnaswamy point out, the sharp rise in the collection of major indirect taxes and their respective buoyancies indicates a distinct shift in taxation strategy that has become more consumption centric. No doubt, the bulk of consumption spending is concentrated in the hands of the top few high income percentile groups. However, those who consume, irrespective of the income group they belong to, would have to give up some portion of their income as tax if this consumption tax policy prevails. The

proportion of income spent on consumption by low- income groups is far higher than that by high-income groups. As a result, increase in consumptions based taxes do jeopardise vertical equity. The tax policy increasingly relies on indirect taxes, which are broadly regressive in their incidence, as opposed to direct taxes which can attain some degree of progressivity. Such a taxation strategy will have a significant impact on the macro economy, particularly on the larger questions of inequalities in income and asset distribution, which are already widening (Dennis Raj Kumar, R. Krishnaswamy, 'Surge in Union Government Revenues' Economic and Political Weekly, December 12. 2015)

While this new government is imposing greater burden through its taxation policy on large majority of the toiling strata of Indian Society, it is utterly indifferent to its legal obligations, particularly where rights-based laws are concerned. The Modi Government has been continuously and blatantly violating the requirements laid down by the Supreme Court regarding aganwadi centres, The Right to Education Act and The National Food Security Act. This is evident in its budgetary under provision and also a cut-down of the financial outlays necessary to ensure the proper functioning of these programmes.

Drastic reduction in the financial allocations under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and its shoddy execution is a striking case of anti-poor anti-farmer policy of this government.

PATIDARS REVOLT IN GUJARAT

Dangerous implications of the Gujarat Model

The Patidars as Patels, socially and economically dominant community in Gujarat, the consistent supporter and the architect of the Gujarat model of development, in a massive and unprecedented show of strength on August 25, 2015 close to five lakhs, from different corners of the state, came together to demand that either the Other Backward Class (OBC) Quota should be extended to them or the caste based reservation should be abolished altogether.

The protest gained momentum in other parts of the state with huge demonstrations in Surat in Southern Gujarat, Morbi in the West and in other parts of northern Gujarat.

It is widely acknowledged by socio-economic analysts that the protest was anti-reservation in their case. The Patel community, it seems, were threatened by the socio-economic improvement of other communities. The agitation is a clear signal against the hollowness of the Gujarat model and its hype on the miracle.

Amrish Patel, one of the foremost speakers of the agitation argues that there are lakhs of Patels who are economically backward. Our demand is not caste-based. We want a Quota for the OBC, economically backward class. He pointed out that the community was perceived as being wealthy; it had a large percentage that was struggling because of the agrarian crisis and lack of employment in the corporate and industrial sectors.

The August 25 Kranti Rally, led by 21-year-old Hardik Patel, convenor of the Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti (PAAS), who was practically unknown before it, started on a peaceful note. But the gathering took an ugly turn when Hardik Patel was arrested for the threat he posed to law and order. Angry crowds burnt buses and vandalised public property.

Ketal Patel, who owns an automobile dealership in Ahmadabad seemed to be conversant with the undertone of the agitation, explained the root cause of the agitation as, 'admission to professional colleges have been going on and many of our young people have achieved reasonably good marks in the examination. Yet they don't get seats because of the reserved quota. Youngsters from the OBC and other castes who have poorer results are walking into professional colleges. I believe a member of Hardik Patel's family suffered this discrimination and that prompted him to start the agitation but we have been discussing this situation for many months now. That is why it was easy to get so

many people to come. We have also been asking for jobs in the government. There are over 7,000 vacancies across departments.'

Mona Mehta, an assistant professor of political science at the Institute of Technology Gandhinagar, said "Why are they (Patels) suddenly seeking government jobs and reservation in education? This community has never looked at this sector in the past. There is a sort of desperation to achieve economic mobility, in keeping with rising aspirations, which the economy is not able to fulfil. It is in this context that the stability of government jobs appears attractive to many Patidar Youths."

This kind of mobilisation could not have taken place overnight. Mona Mehta suggested that it was the culmination of weeks of planning.

Aakar Patel, a well-known expert on such issues also explained such big mobilisation in terms of the Patidar being a very united community in a state with a pretty modern economy but where identity is still caste-based even in the cities. "The idea of 6 villages and 5 villages Patidar clans run strong. Secondly, they have had a long history of political mobilisation under the congress. And lately, they have totally dominated politics in the last 20 years and so have a good idea of how to gather numbers."

Literally translated, Patidar means who owns a strip of land. Patidars were tenants and tillers of land in the erstwhile princely states in what is now Gujarat. After independence, the community benefited from land reforms and became owners of vast tracts of prime agricultural land. During this period, they took on the anglicised 'Patel' as their last name. It is estimated that Patels constitute 15 percent of Gujarat's population. Patels are divided into two main sub-castes, Leava and Kadva Patels. The community is spread across the state, with a higher concentration in northern Gujarat and Saurashtra. There are also Muslim Patels, who are mainly from the trading community. Patels are known to be a closely-knit community and often help out less fortunate members of the community.

In the 1970s and 1980s many of them diversified into manufacturing and were successful in building Gujarat's small and medium scale industries. In the colonial period and once again in the 1980s, many Patels migrated reaching almost every corner of the world. Non-resident Patels are best known for owning 70 percent of the motels in the United States. In the 1980s and 1990s young people of this highly aspirational community began looking for work in the professional and white collar sectors. It seems that Patidars now prefer white collar jobs to agriculture.

Prof. Ghanshyam Shah an eminent political scientist, widely known for his work on social movements, agrarian transformation, caste and untouchability was interviewed by Ajay Ashirwad on behalf of 'Front Line' in the context of the Patels agitation in Gujarat. His appraisal of the recent Patidars mass movement deserves special consideration.

In response to such massive mobilization of the Patidars and the question raised in terms of the Gujarat model of development and its implications on identity question, he pointed out that though Gujarat has been projected within and outside as a land of business people and Gujarati's are the most enterprising people and the state has a 'cultural base' with fertile land, the fact remains that business communities constitute less than 12 percent of the population, fifteen percent of the people are Adivasis, more than 15 percent constitute fishing communities including Kolis and Kharvas not to speak of pastoral and other peasants and artisan communities and Dalits. Conflicts between some of the communities around economic and social issues have been prevalent in electoral politics as is the case in other states.

His critique of the Gujarat model of development also deserves serious consideration. He sums it up as a model to provide generous subsidies, infrastructure facilities, including land at throw away prices and all administrative/political support in a "very efficient" manner to industries for inflating the GNP (Gross National Product) even at the cost of the environment. But not even one-tenth of that efficiency has been harnessed for human development in general and for the victims of 'development' projects in particular. This model is based on hype and it uses modern and traditional techniques, idioms and symbols to create hopes for better jobs, more income and urban lifestyles.

The government admitted in the assembly that on account of capital intensive investment, industrial employment in Gujarat has gone down; employment per factory has significantly declined, from 99 workers in 1960-61 to 59.44 % in 2005. No effort has been made in the subsequent years to arrest the declining trend in employment; whereas the average invested capital per factory has increased more than 2.5 times in less than a decade. Moreover, most of the jobs that have been created are in the informal sector with casual or contractual employment without any social security. Wages in Gujarat are lower than in several other industrially developed states.

Around 22 percent of the owners of small scale industries like diamond polishing, machine tools, casting and ceramics are Patidars. A number of these industries consist of ancillary units, which provide support to large industries whose production has slowed down in the recent times. Saurashtra Patidars

control diamond polishing units in Surat and in many parts of their native towns now. Because of the international recession, the diamond industry is in crisis. Workers have been retrenched or getting lower wages than before. The number of sick micro, small and medium units has increased from 20,615 in 2012-13 to 49,063 in 2014-15. According to the RBI (Reserve Bank of India) outstanding loans of MSMEs (micro, small and medium industries) in Gujarat trebled in two years from Rs. 836 cr in 2012-13 to Rs. 2,601 cr in 2014-15. The unrest among Patidars and many other social groups stemmed from such economic dimensions of the Gujarat model.

With regard to locating the widespread distress among the Patidars in the state, Prof. Shah points out that one-third of the Patidars are small and marginal farmers. As input cost for cultivation has increased over a period, most of these poor farmers do not have resources or access to timely credit for investment in agriculture and is not remunerative enough. The young Patidars are forced to find non-farming occupations in urban areas. And here, they face great difficulties in trying to meet their expectations. This lot is the spine of the Patidar agitation.

With regard to the future of this agitation, Prof. Shah opined that it is too early to predict about the future of this agitation. It has no leadership. So far it has been spontaneous, with various persons and groups venting their anger through the issue of reservation which is not new. Their socialisation and world views are such that they are not ready to tolerate the "others" earlier, Muslims were 'others', now 'others' are OBC, Dalits and Adivasis who get benefits.

With regard to its implications for the Hindutva movement, he is of the view that "Hindutva ideologues always wished away conflicting socio-economic interest between upper castes and the traditionally deprived people. They have used various strategies to forge unity among them as they say we are all Hindus. But with this formula, they have successfully used OBCs, Dalits and Adivasis as footloose political workers against Muslims in Gujarat"

The Patidar agitation shows the traditional casteist mindset surfacing in politics with much more vigour. The RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) will now push for a reservation policy that is based on economic parameters, which in reality would consolidate the power of the dominant castes. He does not think Bahujans will succumb to this proposal.

In his concluding observation with regard to the recent upsurge located in the demand for reservation coming from landowning communities he underlined the root cause in terms of Agriculture becoming less remunerative with more and more land getting acquired for industries, and people being repeatedly told

that the future of India is only through industrial development. Obviously, landowning communities crave better education and secure jobs. They perceive that those whom they considered "lowly" in ritualistic hierarchy are getting jobs and education through reservation. This will only intensify caste-based conflicts.

(The above narrative is largely based on the findings and interviews conducted by the investigators team's findings on the Patidars agitation in Gujarat)

Critical observations of Prof. Ghanshyam Shah and others about socio-economic and political factors that led to such sudden upsurge of the Patidars in Gujarat within a period of last one year, provide deep insight and help us in understanding this agitation. But we also strongly feel that unless we keep in view the decisive shift in Indian government's economic policy and a series of measures adopted by the state since nineties that we characterize as neo-liberal reforms in Indian economy and polity and its impact particularly on agrarian structure and Indian rural society, we may not be able to grasp its dangerous implications in terms of its socio-economic and political dimensions. Gradual but decisive shift in Indian government's policy towards a rural society and agriculture deserve serious considerations.

Our contention would become sufficiently explicit if we keep in view the thrust of the Indian state policy and approach towards reconstruction of Indian society initially through only deinstitutionalization and revitalization of the Indian agriculture and Indian rural society.

On the eve of independence architects of Indian planning as well as the entire stream of the nationalist leadership unanimously were convinced that rural reconstruction is a prerequisite for socio-economic development of this country. Hence the major thrust of the first five-year plan was on agrarian reforms and rural reconstruction through adoption of services of measure such as land reform, initiation of a series of measures as the community development projects, democratic decentralization through Panchayati Raj, technological reform through introduction of advanced methods of cultivation, irrigation credit cooperatives, sizeable allocation of resources and provisions in five year plans and building up institutions and infrastructure by way of constructions of roads, highways and other mean of communication. As a result of these measures, the state in this country succeeded in creating not only new institutional structure and technological innovation but a substantial class of rich farmers or Kukals who benefited from these institutional and technological reforms accelerated through green revolution in sixties and seventies in this country. Hence rich farmers and their movement led by eminent leader like Sharad Joshi in Maharashtra, T. Mahendra Singh Tikait in UP and their

counterparts in South could exercise decisive influence on the state policy and terms of the trade between agriculture and industry.

Hence leaders like Sharad Joshi and others, while leading farmers' agitations in different parts of the country in eighties argued that agriculture and rural society in India is neglected and urban and industrial magnets only have benefited through Indian Planning at the cost of rural. India, which he called 'Bharat', it was stated that this is a gross misrepresentation of Indian reality. This could be seen from the fact that on irrigation alone, over Rs. 12,000 crores was spent during the sixth five-year plan, where the returns are negligible. Similarly on agriculture and allied activities, over Rs. 14,000 crore were spent during the sixth plan. Apart from this, billions of rupees were spent on providing infrastructure in the form of roads, electricity, transport facilities, educational and health amenities, cottage industries and a host of other development activities. The total outstanding loans in agricultural sector were to the tune of Rs. 15410 crore in 1983. The lion's share of total state subsidies has also gone to agriculture. As a matter of fact, through a series of measures beginning with the community development programme, consolidation of land holdings, irrigation facilities, Panchayati Raj, tax exemptions, subsidized inputs, higher procurement prices, education and health services, construction of roads, cheaper credit transport facilities, supply of power, multiclass associations like progressive farmers associations, Nyaya Panchayats and others, the Indian government sought to strengthen the peasants proprietors lobby and thereby buttressed the ever-growing, insatiable, aspirations of the rich farmers lobby in the country. These measures have succeeded in achieving limited growth of agricultural productivity compared to the stagnancy during the British period.

Neo-Liberal Era and Agrarian Crisis

Since 1990s under Late Prime Minister Narasimha Rao regime, the government opted for neo-liberal policy reforms under the pressure of the International Monetary and Financial Institutions as the World Bank, World Trade Organization for the release of the financial assistance to survive the financial and trade crisis of late eighties. The new economic policy implies growth through promoting financialization, monetization and increasing reliance on insurance and service sector at the cost of negligence of manufacturing and agricultural sectors.

As Utsa Patnaik argues, Neo-liberalism entails a strongly expenditure deflating policy package at the macroeconomic level and India has been no exception. This proportion may sound strange since India has seen 6 to 7 percent annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates. The overall growth rate can be misleading however as it tells us nothing about the sectoral composition of

growth or its distributional effects. It is perfectly possible for the material productive sectors to stagnate or decline while services, including financial services are booming and this has been the case with India's growth in 1990s. More rapid structural shifts in the sectoral constitution to GDP have taken place than in any previous period; the manufacturing sectors' share in GDP has stagnated in the last 15 years while its contribution to employment has declined while the share of agricultural and allied activities in GDP has fallen sharply, the population dependent on these sectors has declined little and faces falling per head real incomes

Agriculture is always a 'soft' target for the misguided expenditure deflating policies which continues to be urged by the Breton Woods Institutions (BWI) no matter how unemployment and hungers might be. The impact of deflationary policies has been especially severe in rural areas which has been already subject to declining public investment, witnessed sharp reduction in public planned development expenditure. In rural development expenditure (RDE), Utsa Patnaik refers to the five plan heads of a) agriculture b) rural development c) irrigation and flood control d) special area programmes e) village and small scale industry. All these expenditures are vital for maintaining rural productivity and employment. The employment generation programmes had assumed special importance for the drought year 1987 onwards. During the pre-reform seventh plan period 3.8 percent of Net National Product (NNP) was spent annually on RDE, with well documented positive effects in raising non-farm employment and real wages. From 1991, as contradictory fund guided policies started, the share of RDE was cut sharply to below 2.6 percent of NNP by 1995-96 and fell further to 1.9 percent by 2000-01. Using implicit GDP deflators, one finds an absolute fall in real expenditure per head of rural population.

This harsh contradictory fiscal policy has had nothing to do with any objective resource constraint indeed with strong income shifts towards the already well-to-do tax receipts have been buoyant and the tax-GDP ratio has been rising but has simply reflected the government acceptance of the deflationary dogmas of financial interests and in particular of the BWI, which advise expenditure reduction no matter how high unemployment might thereby greatly worsen the problems of unemployment and income loss, since the expenditure cuts have multiple effects in reducing incomes and employment further.

Total capital formation in agriculture continues to stagnate in real terms, since sharply reducing public investment is not being compensated by rising private investment. The cutback of public investment and in RDE has led to a halving of the crop output growth rate in the 1990s and a collapse of employment growth. Both food grains and all crop growth rates nearly halved in the 1990s

compared to the pre-reform 1980s and fell below the population growth rate leading to declining per capita output for the first time. Since the mid-1960s agricultural crisis, which however had been short-lived, whereas per head agricultural output continues to fall even after a decade.

Falling agricultural growth has led to fast growth of unemployment combined with a fall in number of days employed. The work participation rate has declined and open unemployment has been growing over 5 percent annually.

Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that annual food grain availability per head of total population, has fallen steeply from 177 kg in the early 1990s to only 153 Kg by 2003-04 with over four fifth of fall coming after 1998. This level prevailed 50 years ago, in the early 1950s and is lower than the 157-kg average during 1937-41 forty years of successful efforts to raise availability has been wiped out in a mere dozen year of economic reforms. The average Indian family is absorbing 115 kg less per year of food grains than in 1991s.

(reference Utsa Patnaik, 'Neoliberalism and Rural Poverty in India', Economic and Political Weekly, RB, P.P. 31-32-33-34, July 28, 2007).

The sharp growth of inequity and the depression of the living standard of the vast majority most clearly evidenced in the depression of food consumption. Calorie consumption per head has fallen between 1993-94 and 2004-05 by 106 Calories or nearly 5 percent in rural areas and by 51 calories or 25 percent in urban areas.

Increase In Agricultural Workforce Despite Falling Incomes

Over the last few decades the net sown area has remained virtually the same, while the number of holdings has steadily gone up; thus, the average size of the holding has halved since the 1960s falling from 2.63 hectare in 1961-62 to 1.37 hectare in 1991-92. Despite the retrogression in agriculture, percent of the workforce in agriculture has continued to grow even during this period, rising from 191 million in 1993-94 to 257 million in 2004-05.

Much of the growth of employment multifarious partly economic activities barely yielding a subsistence, reflects the desperation of the unemployed to eke out a living (e.g. in petty retail) and this in effect merely redistributes a small portion of the value generated in the agricultural and industrial sectors.

In case of Gujarat, overwhelming majority of the Patidars being small or marginal cultivators, have suffered like their counterparts in other parts of the country as a result of the deepening agrarian crisis after the acceleration of the neo-liberal reform policy and measures by the Indian government since late

nineties. Gujarat has been in the forefront with the intensity with which it has accelerated the process of neo-liberal reforms in last few decades, which has resulted in, as we have indicated in our historical backdrop chapters in uprootment of vast majority of the rural and tribal population under liberal allocation of land to industrialist like Adani and Tata's and others for their projects.

As pointed out by Aseem Shrivastava " for all the hoopla made about the imperative for economic growth in order to generate jobs, the data reveals that most of the growth has been Job-destroying (millions have been laid over the year since 1991), just like it has been in China and much of the rest of the world. Given rapidly automating technology the outlook for the future, both short and long-term, is equally bleak (ILO 2016)

The drying up of jobs in the mainstream corporate led economy means that there is sudden greater demand, for government positions and for caste-based reservations. For such jobs Aseem when he met Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on the eve of the assembly elections in November 2015, told him that, on an average some 2-3 lakh people apply for 2,000 positions in the Bihar government (He took some satisfaction as Aseem suggests in the fact that in Gujarat the ratio of applicants to jobs is two to three times higher)

In Uttar Pradesh stories have been recorded of the struggle for government jobs for sweepers wherein many college graduates have been known to apply. Again, the ratio of applicants to the number of jobs was in the range of 100:1. Local Dalits were so disconcerted by this fact that they asked for reservation of sweeper jobs for themselves.

There is an incentive for every caste no matter how high up in the traditional hierarchy to get classified as 'backward', in order to secure preference in reservations. The Jat agitation in Haryana has already taken many lives. The same is true of the Patidar Andolan in Gujarat, Kapas in Andhra Pradesh, Marathas in Maharashtra, Gujjar's in Rajasthan and Ahoms in Assam are all also asking for the same thing; Quota for their community. (Aseem Shrivastava, "A-Men-India A Note from the Land of Frustrated Aspirants", Economic and Political Weekly, July 16, 2016)

Rise and relative decline in the status of the Patidars in Gujarat in the past, over a decade could be attributed to the shift in the government economic policy and the role of the state from the earlier phase of the Nehruvian model of development focusing on independent growth of the national economy, policy and society vis-à-vis American or Russian hegemony to surrender to the international monetary institutions as a result of the failure of the earlier model

of relatively self-reliance and self-sustenance under the pressure of the severe economic crisis experienced by the Indian economy in late seventies. Patidars grievances are genuine to the extent that they were the backbone of the earlier Gujarat model of growth where the so called achievements of the economy were at the heavy cost, sufferings, pauperization and displacements of the overwhelming majority of the Kisans, Dalits, Adivasis from their habitat and destruction of natural, mineral and other resources and the extensive damage done to the soil, forest and other natural resources and huge environmental pollution and uprootment of the overwhelming majority of the toiling strata from their original habitat. They were the ring leaders of the movements launched against the reservation proposed by the erstwhile Madhav Singh Solanki government in the eighties. They were the prime force of 2002 Gujarat unprecedented carnage. Now also like their counterparts Marathas in Maharashtra hold dominant position in ruling stratum in Gujarat. Anandiben Patel who was the chief Minister of the state was a Patidar and was in any case not averse to their interest. But the destruction of their source of livelihood and accumulation of capital, agriculture and small scale or middle range industries and trade were adversely affected by the state under Modi, ruthlessly and with great haste rushing to adopt neo-liberal policy and reforms in Gujarat. Thus, they are probably victims of the policy they pursued during the earlier two or three decades. Reversal of this policy would imply joining hands with other vast majority of the oppressed and toiling strata, coming from Dalit, Adivasis and other lower groups who form overwhelming majority of the Gujarat society.

DALIT UPRISING IN GUJARAT

The July 11th striping and thrashing of four Dalit boys at Una village in Saurashtra, Gujarat by a bunch of self-styled cow protectors or gau rakshaks, for skinning a dead cow provoked a movement in Gujarat of a scale never seen before in the state. Dalits in Gujarat, who accounts for about 8 percent of the state's population have been long used to discrimination, segregation and not infrequently even violence. Una incident probably served as a tipping point to bring out old resentments at routine injustices.

At least seven suicide attempts followed the Una beating and one of these turned fatal. Deep resentment and anger was evident in their dumping of cow carcasses outside government offices.

350 kilometer, ten-day march from Ahmadabad to Una, called the Azadi Kooch (March for Freedom) was something totally unprecedented in protest march for any other section of Gujarat society, was like the checking the memory of the Dandi March organized by Mahatma Gandhi, his first initiation of massive Satyagraha protest event, unprecedented in Indian history of freedom struggle. The march for the first time witnessed all Dalit organisations united under the umbrella group Una Dalit Atyachar Ladit Samiti walking from Ahmadabad to Una. It started on 5th August culminating at Una on Independence Day. It conveyed a plain message that Dalits would not undertake work as collecting and skinning cows for paltry sums, clean toilets or do manual scavenging. They should not any longer feel inferior to the so-called upper castes. The march, led by the committed duo Jignesh Mevani and Subodh Parmar, attracted hundreds of followers on the way.

On August 5, some 15,000 Dalits gathered in Ahmadabad to start the march. It was a historical turnout.

The current movement is being built by the youth of the community. The resentment and anger has been simmering for some time. Mevani suggested that, 'through march we want to reach the rural areas where the problems are harsh and where the most downtrodden live. We want to show them we are not doing this for political gains but for the community'.

The demands of the movement have focused on alternative livelihood options, reservation for Dalits, allotment of land for Dalit families and a strong legal framework to fight atrocities and increase the conviction rate in crimes against Dalits. It also demands a total end to manual scavenging.

According to activists involved in organising the rally notwithstanding the massive turnout in Ahmadabad, the real show of strength has come from the villages, where there are always between 70 and 100 people attending the meetings. The Dalit population averages 7 to 8 percent in Gujarat which means if there are 1000 people in village and 70 to 80 Dalits show up, it is a good representation. Subodh Parmar further suggested we have realised it is critical to work at the rural level, as it is here that we are stuck. It is the 21st century, people are going to the moon but we are still fighting battles over drawing water from someone else's well.

The slogans of the march were simple but quite significant. Mevani has coined a phrase 'Gai Ki doom aap rakho; hume hamari zameen do' (you may keep the cow's tail, give us our land) Bipin Solanki, one of the elderly farm labourer from Dhanduka ventilated his grievance by pointing out that the time has come to make changes. "The politicians will not do anything. Hopefully, Jignesh and his team can do it"

Two notable things emerged in the weeks as a consequence to the Una incident. Young Dalit people have displayed remarkable solidarity and a degree of assertion not seen before in Gujarat. The other thing was the use of social media. Distrustful of the mainstream media, Dalit protestors have taken to social media to spread word about their movement. Much of the anger display now is the result of simmering resentments at the upsurge in atrocities against Dalit and the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators conviction rate is as low as 3 percent in Gujarat in case of atrocities against Dalits. In 2015 Gujarat reported the highest crime rate against Dalits (6,605 cases), followed by Chhattisgarh and the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reports that there were 1,130 cases of crimes against the Scheduled Castes (SCs) in 2014 in Gujarat. Activists point out that this means at least three cases of atrocities a day.

Speaking to Frontline about the implications of the Una uprising, Mevani indicated that they shall have to go beyond Una and demand social and economic justice "Land is crucial for Dalit's emancipation. When one reads Ambedkar and Marx in the context of atrocities, land reforms emerge as the key issue. In India, land determines the caste.

He holds the view that lower caste men like the ones assaulted at Una would not have to skin dead cows for a living if they had their rightful land. This campaign is not made up of rhetoric. It has to be about the current problems and solutions. We have to break the caste system and the Brahmanical hold. Commenting on how the demands of the Patels had been accommodated, he suggested that the Dalit movement would be taken to a more advanced stage if

its demands were not heeded, they plan to stage rail rokos and other non-violent forms of protest.

The Patidars had benefited from land reforms in the pre-independence period and evolved into a highly successful farming community. And later also an entrepreneurial one. Dalits might have gone the same way. Mevani holds that the caste system is so deep-rooted in Gujarat that nothing was done for Dalits even though they were the potential vote bank.

Mevani, as per the findings of the Frontline team owes allegiance to the Aam Adami Party, a 30 year old law graduate who worked as a journalist and later with the Jan Sangh Manch under the late lawyer and activist Mukul Sinha. It was after he toured Saurashtra with the activists Bharat Zala in 2013, when the region was witnessing a spurt of farmer's suicides that he realised that it was time to act. Ever since he has been fighting for Dalit land rights (Based on the Report of the Frontline by Anupama Katkari in Frontline, September, 2016)

Dalit Uprising in Gujarat Its Deeper Impact and Implications

Dalit uprising in Gujarat has been unique in terms of its strategy, programme mode of protest, its leadership, its approach and also in terms of its long-term implications. Before we consider its wider and deeper implications one could easily notice its prompt powerful impact on national political scenario and a deep setback to the strategy of the ruling party in its programme for the Dalit mobilization through its well-conceived programme of the Dhamma Chetna Yatra. Under the leadership of the 87 years old Buddhist monk and former MP Dhamma Virigo. The Veteran Monk is also the leader of the Akhil Bharatiya Bhikkhu Maha Sangh, a national level organisation of Buddhist monks with considerable influence among Dalit Communities.

The principal participants of the Dhamma Chetana Yatra were a group of Buddhist monks who proposed to spread awareness about Buddhist teachings and simultaneously be involved in a campaign to explain how the Prime Minister and his supporter were true followers of the teachings. BJP units naturally were actively involved in organising receptions and meetings for the yatra which Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh flagged off at Sarnath on April 24, 2016. It was a meticulously planned six-month long yatra which was to conclude in October in Lucknow. Modi was expected to be chief guest of the concluding event. A mid-yatra point was also scheduled in Agra for July 31 and gathering was to be addressed by Amit Shah.

By July 24, however, there was unrest among the principal yatris themselves on account of developments in Gujarat. The yatra reached Aligarh on July 24 and

the local BJP unit was all geared up to give infrastructural and other support as the monks got ready to address a gathering of Dalits. But the interactions between the Dalits who had gathered and the yatri impelled a group of yatri, Buddhist monks to ask the local BJP leaders to leave the meeting. As they left they were jeered by Dalits of the area.

Subsequently in all subsequent meetings directions were given to local BJP units to keep away from the spiritual gatherings. Much bigger embarrassment awaited the BJP in Agra. In the early stages of planning the Agra gatherings was billed as a rally at the sprawling ground at Kothi Mina Bazaar for which at least 50,000 Dalits were to be mobilised. But as D-Day approached it became clear that the mobilisation would be nowhere near that figure. Amit Shah promptly backed out of the rally and the venue was shifted indoors to a Sarasvati Shishu Mandir.

It is no wonder, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who otherwise was utterly indifferent to the plight and persecution of the Dalits all over the country, was compelled to break his silence and had to be apologetic about the Gujarat Una event and had to raise protest against atrocities of the Dalits and stated 'shoot me, not my Dalit Brothers' and condemning Gau Rakshaks, as mercenaries. (Based on the Report in the Frontline, September 1916)

Dalit upsurge in Gujarat deserves special consideration for number of reasons. It is unique in terms of its leadership, it is strikingly different in terms of its mobilisation, it is amazing in terms of its insight in comprehending the root causes of the Dalit oppression and also its aspirations of Dalit liberation. Its leadership is not only quite young but also quite surprising in terms of its understanding of the Dalit's path of emancipation and non-sectarian flexible and radical approach towards not only Dalit's dilemma but also in terms of its new joint platform consisting of other sections of Indian society as liberal, secular, other left and radical elements jointly raising demand for a new social just egalitarian order that could take care of the problem of the overwhelming majority of toilers irrespective of caste, creed and class in this country. It seeks to evolve a model of struggle for the resolution of the basic economic, social, cultural problems of the Dalits and also strive to work out a strategy that could pave way for the resolution of the increasing and deepening problems for survival faced by overwhelming majority of the population in this country.

UNREST IN INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR

Dholera a Smart City Project - Grave Implications

The Central and State governments are actively initiating policies that target urban regions as potential driver of economic growth. The government has focused on the development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), National Investment and Manufacture Zones (NIMZs) and new towns in and around existing urban regions that focus on specific types of industrial and economic activities. One of the most ambitious strategies is to develop industrial corridors between major Indian cities, as a predominant development strategy, as noted by Shriya Anand and Neha Sami, there are several examples of industrial corridors in other parts of the world, including East Asia and the United States that were leveraged and developed to take advantage of high-density development and the clustering of businesses and labour. The Tokyo-Osaka corridor, upon which the Delhi - Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) has been modelled, is among the oldest, and was instrumental in Japan's transition to an industrial economy (Macomber and Murhram 2014).

The Government of India and its officials see the development of these industrial Corridors as a means to enable India's ongoing urban transition, along with presumption of attracting domestic and international capital to invest in and along these corridor regions. The new industrial towns along these corridors are meant to act as magnets for migrants and job seekers, providing alternative employment locations to older metros like Mumbai or Delhi (Reference - Shriya Anand, Neha Sami Scaling Up, Scaling Down, State Rescaling along the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, Economic and Political Weekly, Review of Urban Affairs, April 23, 2016 P50)

Dholera: - In mid-2009, the Gujarat government converted 22 villages along the Gulf of Kham bat into the Dholera Special Investment Region (DSIR), Dholera will be the first smart city along the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC). This massive conversion of agrarian land into a Greenfield city is a new venture in the footsteps of the application of neo-liberal policy of reform under the Modi regime.

As so aptly brought out by Preeti Sampat on the basis of her exhaustive survey conducted in Dholera in 2015, that a growing 'rentier economy' is driving a liberalisation infrastructure project over the past decade in India, ostensibly in the name of economic growth. "This rentier economy brings within its purview in varying combinations, policy, speculative land markets, real estate and other urban infrastructure investments by global and domestic investors, private consultants by global and developers, interests within the state at various levels

and (usually large) landowners willing and all to benefit from rentiering (at least temporarily). The rentier economy hinges crucially on ownership of land or access to it. There is a need to distinguish rent driven urbanisation infrastructure projects from industrialisation and concomitant job-creation, despite their conflation in policy rhetoric. The transition to industrialisation and jobs that such projects promise to unleash remains ever elusive a cover story for rentier-driven dispossession". (Preeti Sampat, Dholera, The Emperor's New City. Economic and Political Weekly, April 23, 2016 P. 59)

The Gujarat Special Investment Region (SIR) Act was enacted to institute 'investment regions' and 'investment areas' feeding growth along the DMIC. It enables the use of either the central land acquisition law or the Gujarat Town Planning and Urban Development Act (GTPUDA) 1976 for land consolidation. The town planning law has been historically used for the conversion of rural-agrarian land for the expansion of the existing cities. Through the SIR Act its scope has been widened to cover greenfield cities. Typically, such cities are to be instituted as public-private partnership between the state government and private investors and developers, such partnership is conceived from the planning stages of Dholera.

The development plan for the Dholera SIR was developed by the UK based global consultancy firm Halcrow for the Government of Gujarat in 2010 (Dalta 2015), subsequently sanctioned and made operational by 2012. The global infrastructure giant AECOM was then awarded a \$30 Million five years' extendable contract by the DMIC Development Corporation in mid-2015 for full programme management services in Dholera. The Dholera SIR Authority is in charge of implementing the project phase-wise over 30 years in their development phases of 10 years each. The authority plans to initially develop trunk infrastructure such as roads, water, sewage and power supply systems in an 'activation zone' of 22.54 km of land it already possesses. The proposed land use in the Dholera Smart city project includes residential, industrial, tourism, commercial, information technology, recreation sports and entertainment zones.

Under the provisions of the town planning law, land for Dholera SIR is to be consolidated via a pooling mechanism: 50% of the land of each owner in the Dholera area is to be 'deducted' at market price from the owners, the rest returned to the original owners as 'developed' plots in redesigned zones under the new plan criteria. A betterment charge will be levied on the original owners for the provision of new infrastructure facilities, deducted from the compensation award for 50% of the land. In addition, each affected family is promised one job per family in the Dholera SIR. While the town planning law contains provisions for the participation of local's bodies and residents in the

determination of compensation and award, it makes no provisions for ascertaining consent to land pooling for the projects.

The land pooling mechanism is promised on the principle that the development authority in charge of undertaking planned urban development temporarily brings together a group of landowners for planning a region's development. As there is no acquisition or transfer of ownership, the case for compensation does not arise except for the proportion of the land 'deducted' for basic infrastructure provision. The rest of the land remains with the original land owners and the benefit of development in terms of the increment in land value after 'development' accrues to the owners, rather than to the development agency. The original owner continues to enjoy access to the land without being 'displaced' (Blatancy 2008).

Setting aside the merits or demerits of this approach to brownfield expansion, the incorporation of the town planning law into the SIR Act in Gujarat for a greenfield industrial city poses a particular set of issues that the language of pooling and benefit obscures.

First, the extent of land required for a new city implies the loss of a far greater extent of land than in the course of expansion of an existing city. Second, with the re-zoning of land according to the new development plan, owners do not retain their agricultural plots, and must relocate. Third, with the development of a new city (or the expansion of the existing city) even if village settlements are protected with buffer zones, conditions will invariably develop to prevent the old rural settlements from continuing in the same form. This will force the original inhabitants to move in search of livelihoods or as they are priced out, for more conducive living options, fourth with the disruption of the agrarian economy and the re-zoning and subdivision of plots, agricultural livelihoods face severe temporal and physical dislocations and only large farmers with the holding power to wait the years for development of the re-zoned plots and with enough surplus land may retain their hold on cultivation and allied agricultural activities. Fifth, agrarian livelihoods and resources experience a severe downward pressure with the growth of industry, tourism, construction and other related economic activities. Sixth, with immediate attractive returns, the push is towards greater commodification of land and income from rent, as opposed to existing productive agricultural activity, raising issues of food security and sovereignty. Finally, developing and returning 50% land to the original owners will presumably take a few years. In the intervening years, the livelihood and food security options available for local residents significantly dependent on land are unclear.

Land Relations and Dissent

The 22 villages in the Dholera SIR area provide quite appropriate insight into the prevailing land relations in this area. The majority community in the area are Koli Patels (61.8% of the population) who own a majority of marginal to medium size landholdings. Darbars are the other significant group comprising around 10.6% of the village population. The rest consists of groups like Bharwards, Scheduled Castes, Muslims and very insignificant members of the scheduled tribes. Sizeable section consists of milch Cattle owning villagers who are also members of flourishing milk cooperatives in the area. As per the official estimate, dry land farming is the source of livelihood for 79.3% of the local population, while 51.5% sustain on livestock rearing and 24.8% on farm labour.

Almost 35.1% of the population consists of non-literate, 44.4% with primary education, 14.6% with secondary education, only 30% higher secondary and 2.9% with college education. Sizeable section of residents in affected villages argued that agricultural work does not require specialised skills unlike jobs in urbanised and industrial set up. The offer of one job per affected family would not compensate others in a family rendered without work. Residents expressed anxiety that after losing land and commons to the Dholera SIR would leave them without any source of livelihood and future security.

It is also quite pertinent to bear in mind that these 22 villages also fall within the Narmada River Canal Command and have been waiting for over a decade for Canal Water.

Villagers while opposing the complete economic overhaul of the region as proposed under the DSIR are in favour of development, if it strengthens the prevailing agrarian infrastructure and develop other support mechanisms for the welfare of the community. The contest in Dholera as Preeti Sampat aptly suggests, is over defining the terms of development and its beneficiaries.

While discussing the prospects of the future of Dholera as a smart city project one should also bear in mind that at the moment, there is little actual private investment on the ground in Dholera. A highly placed corporate source brokering land deals in the region as brought out by the survey, reveals on request of anonymity that while several attempts have been made with advertisements and field trips for investors from Dubai, Mumbai and elsewhere, no investor is interested in the area as there is nothing on the ground. The only 'stray buyers' of land around the Dholera SIR are those parking excess money to gain from future appreciation, many allegedly powerful politicians or those who cannot afford to buy plots near Ahmadabad. Representatives of two prominent real estate developers interviewed in this survey, Bakery Group and Parshwanth

Construction also expressed unwillingness to invest in Dholera due to lack of demand.

Resistance

The Bhal Bachao Samiti, a committee with representatives of the 22 impacted villages, has been formed by local residents to resist the project with each village reportedly constituting a subcommittee. Hundreds of people were detained and 22 arrested in February 2014, when protesting land acquisition (Indian Express 2013; JAAG 2014). Local residents have also filed a writ petition in the Gujarat High Court challenging the takeover of their productive agricultural land by the state under the GJPUDA. A recent high court order has stayed proceedings for land pooling as the matter is under consideration in the court (Gujarat Khedut Samaj v Gujarat State 1915)

Wider Ferment of Opposition

This opposition to the Dholera Smart City Project is actually located in the much wider ferment over land in Gujarat and across the country. Not far from Dholera, the 50,884 hectare Mandal, Becharaji SIR (MBSIR) in the Saurashtra Region of Gujarat was one of the first "nodes" to begin implementation along the DMIC. It faced immediate resistance from the 44 villages coming under it (Shivdekar 2013). When agitations intensified, the then Chief Minister of Gujarat Narendra Modi probably fearing electoral repercussions in a sensitive election year cancelled the notification for 36 MBSIR villages. The resistance to MBSIR was largely successful in forcing the state to withdraw in the face of electoral contingencies a tendency witnessed in other states as well (Bedi 2013; Sampat 2015)

In the tense landscape of widespread resistance to land acquisition over infrastructure projects across the country; the pressing need for prior consultation and public consent for development have assumed a much greater significance. In 2015, as widely known, this resulted in the failure of the ordinance and the amendment bill proposed to the centre in 2013 and acquisition law by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government.

The refusal of residents in the Dholera SIR region to accept their dispossession by urbanisation infrastructure should prove an eye-opener for these rentiers driven assumption of accumulation. The rentier economy, with its exclusive focus on elite circuits of money and rent along with lack of productive linkage with industrialisation and its sheer anticipated future, is a precarious model of growth. Left unfettered, it will destroy, as so aptly brought out by Preeti Sampat, existing productive agrarian relations and dispossess agrarian

population with little option for sustainable livelihoods or food security. (Preeti Sampat, "Dholera -The Emperor's New City "Economic and Political Weekly", April 23, 2016 PP. 59-66)

GANDHI AND HINDU NATIONALISM

Since over Seventy Years of his demise, Gandhi continues to decisively influence Indian minds and non-violence as a strategy and philosophy for social transformation. This country has a large number of followers who at least theoretically accept its significance as a weapon of weaker sections in their struggle for social emancipation. Relevance of Gandhi in the context of recent debate of nationalism acquires greater significance if one keeps in view the perception of nationalism in the context of the prolonged struggle for national independence.

Epoch of Gandhi

Dr. A.R. Desai who was otherwise ardent of Gandhi, his political philosophy and his role in independence movement, in his classic work on “Social Background of Indian Nationalism” while acknowledging his profound impact on Indian Freedom Movement, points out that Gandhi was the outstanding leader and Gandhism the ruling ideology of the movement since 1920s. Gandhi dominated the political scene like a titan. His contribution to the nationalist movement was unique. He was the First national leader who recognised the role of the masses and mass action in the struggle for national liberation in contrast to earlier leaders who did not comprehend their decisive significance for making that struggle more effective.

Gandhi evolved a programme of struggle which would mobilise the masses in the nationalist movement and such that various sections of the people- workers, peasants, capitalists, students, lawyers and other professional classes. Above all workers could actively participate in it. He, thereby, made for the first time, the Indian nationalist movement a multi-class and mass nationalist movement in spite of its limitations due to his ideology. Under his leadership, the Indian people became heroic, patriotic and fighters for national emancipation. They enmasse courted in jails and bravely faced firings and brutal lathi charges of the imperialist police and military. Gandhi, in spite of his compromising stand, instilled into them undying hatred for the satanic British Government and an unquestionable; thirst for Swaraj.

He provided the peasantry with the programme of the non-payment of land tax to the government thereby threatening to paralyse the financial basis of the latter. He exhorted the students to boycott the educational institutions, the source of supply of its administrative personnel. He called on the lawyers to desert the courts so that the judicial machinery of the state would be deadlocked. He called on the women to picket liquor and foreign cloth shops which they did in their thousands and in the process courted imprisonment. He

asked the people as a whole to deliberately infringe the “Lawless laws” framed by the Government. Millions of Indians at his call marched in demonstrations and assembled at illegal rallies under the hailstorm of bullets and lathi charges.

It was a stirring spectacle, that taps of thousands of women who for centuries were chained to the narrow domestic life and whom an authoritarian social system had assigned the position of harlots at home, stepping out in the streets and marching with their male fellow patriots in illegal political demonstrations.

While taking over and utilising such methods as the boycott and Swadeshi from the previous phase, Gandhi evolved new and far more effective techniques of struggle to exert pressure on the British Government. Satyagraha, Non-cooperation, Civil Disobedience, both individual and on a mass scale, non-payment of taxes, open defiance of laws, deliberate courting of jails, mass demonstrations and marches and hunger strikes were the principal weapons he added to the armoury of the nationalist struggle.

Gandhi was not only a Colossus in the field of politics but also an outstanding social reformer. He was permeated with profound humanism and was a crusader against injustice in all spheres of social relations. He denounced in words of blazing moral indignation, the barbarous institution of untouchability, the age-long crime of the Hindu society against its most oppressed section. He passionately struggled for the liquidation of this most inhuman institution and made it even an integral part of his political programme.

Gandhi was a classical type of nationalist and therefore an anti-communalist par excellence. He considered both Muslim and Hindu communalism as anti-national anti-human and combated both these with all his undefeatable energy. He finally even offered his life blood as living oblation to the liquidation of communalism in the social relations of the Indian people.

Gandhi's interests were encyclopedic and extended to all aspects of the life of the Indian nation. They embraced even language and literature. He enriched Gujarati, his own vernacular, popularised Hindi and left a powerful impression on literature in various languages in the country.

With a view to implement this many sided national programmes, Gandhi himself evolved and inspired others to evolve numerous control of training cadres of self-sacrificing professional workers. He also established a network of institutions, social, political, economic and educational, where those workers would carry out various programmes elaborated by him on the basis of the principles of what is popularly known as Gandhism.

Gandhi based the political Satyagraha movement on moral and spiritual principles. He thus injected religion into politics which became thereby mystified. The criterion he adopted for determining the principles and programmes of the political movement was that of the strengthening of the spiritual stamina of the Indian people. He frequently talked of "Soul Force", abstract "Truth" and the ethical conversion of the political opponent. (Dr. A R Desai 'Social Background of the worldview in the context of Indian nationalism pp 346-349)

Gandhi's worldview.

Gandhi owed much of his influence to his image as a holy man. As George Woodcock suggests, Gandhi claimed to be a Hindu but he also said on occasion that he was a Christian, a Buddhist and a Jew as well and Hymns from all religions were sung at the prayer meetings which were regular features of his non-violent campaigns as well as of his daily life in the ashram he shared with the disciples. As a Hindu, in fact, he was very unorthodox, and much of his life he spent trying to eliminate the built-in abuses of Hinduism such as the caste rules and child marriage. He was not a practising mystic; he never claimed, though he longed for inward religious experience, yet much in his career remains unexplained. If we forget his insistence that religion and politics were bound inextricably in the common search for truth. To me, he said, Truth is God and there is no way to find Truth except the way of non-violence.

Unlike the Marxists, he refused to accept any kind of determinist view of history. Man, in his view, was a free spirit and nothing could compel him to do what he himself did not will. Unorthodox though he might be, Gandhi fitted into the traditional pattern of the Sannyasin who practised non-attachment in the search for Truth. He was the Karma Yogi, the man who perfects and purifies himself through action. Yogic disciplines of all kinds are held in India to confer power over destiny and Gandhi believed that positive action, love and non-violence could intangibly influence men and therefore events.

With Truth as the goal and at the same time as the principle of action (for in Gandhian terms and are emergent from means and hence virtually indistinguishable from them) there was no place in Gandhi's idea of revolution for conspiratorial methods of guerilla activities. Everything must be done openly, since the aim of Satyagraha is not only to confront but to convert the enemy, to win him rather than harm him. The effect of this kind of open revolutionary politics, as practised by Gandhi was to draw this liberation movement into close identity with the masses of people in all classes and communities. At the same time, the peculiar stress of nonviolent action

demanded the development among the small core of “volunteers” or militant activists of a discipline as rigorous as that of any guerilla movement.

Family background – Religious Backdrop

For proper appreciation of Gandhi’s humanism, liberal values, insistence on non-violence as a basic creed and love for Truth, it is imperative to keep in view his family background and early religious influence.

Gandhi’s father Karamchand Gandhi was the Prime Minister (Dewan) of Porbandar Town located in Kathiwar district of Gujarat. The Gandhis were merchants by caste, and Baniyas by sub-caste, their name signified “grocer” but for generation the leading members of the family had flourished in the petty politics of Kathiawar, serving as high officials in various of its larger states. In their religious connections they mirrored the unusual mixture of creeds and cultures. Jain, Hindu and Muslim, to be found in this remote corner of India—the assembled relics of long past sea voyages by Arab traders and flights into exile of those who feared the Mughal rulers of Delhi.

Both Karamchand and his wife Putlibai were devout followers of the cult of Vishnu but Putlibai came of a small sect known as the Pranamis, which mingled with Hindu and Muslim beliefs to such an extent that in its temples, devoid of idols, the Koran and the sacred books of the Vaishnavities were given equal honour. Peace and goodwill between members of all cults was one of the tenets of the Pranamis, as was simplicity of living, which involved strict vegetarianism, the avoidance of alcohol and tobacco and periodic fasts. Thus in the earliest days of his life, appeared the influences that would ultimately lead Gandhi to seek his Truth, in all religions and to find in the denial of the body the disciplines he needed to strengthen the will.

As well as the Pranamis there were the Jains, who were numerous and restricted in Kathiawar and who associated freely with the local Vaishnavites. Many of the friends of Karamchand Gandhi and some of his spiritual advisers, were Jains and in their company Gandhi heard for the first time as a child of the concept of ‘ahimsa’ which the Jains claimed had been originated two thousand five hundred years ago by their founder Mahavir. In fact, the doctrine of ‘ahimsa’ is common to Buddhism and Hinduism as well as Jainism, and it may well have developed before the three religions drew apart. Himsa means harm, ahimsa is the not doing of harm to other beings. Certainly, whoever originated the concept, it was the Jains who most thoroughly developed it. Mahavir interpreted ahimsa’s renunciation of violence and embracing not only human beings and animals but also earth, water, fire and wind which he regarded as living beings and which he exhorted his followers to disturb as little as possible.

Yet it was without much conscious awareness that Gandhi absorbed these vital early influences. He paid so little attention to them, in fact, that he did not even learn in the original the great scripture which his mother knew and loved, the Bhagavad Gita, it was in England and in English many years later, that he discovered the poem and recognized the appropriateness to his own outlook of its injunctions to live in action without regard for action's fruits.

Satyagraha

Gandhi developed the theory and practice of Satyagraha as so aptly brought out by in his biography of Gandhi by George Wood Cock in South Africa between 1904 and 1914. His position was rather like that of an actor who is at first uncertain of his talents; he developed them on a small provincial stage but his eyes are always on the great theatre of the metropolis. In the same way, South Africa gave Gandhi the limited field in which he could overcome his initial nervousness and developed his sense that India was the stage on which a mass scale Satyagraha would produce its most dramatic and revolutionary results.

Emergence on Indian scene

Only twice between 1893 and 1914 did Gandhi revisit India. On the first occasion, in 1896 he intended to return to South Africa with his family after he had revisited Kathiawar where characteristically he became involved in inspecting latrines during a plague scare and had lectured in the principal Indian cities on the plight of Indians in South Africa. On this occasion he did not become involved in Indian affairs but he did meet the two rival Congress leaders, Gokhale and Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Gokhale was a moderate, who derived his liberal ideas from the tradition of Hinduism modified by Western liberalism which had been founded in the early nineteenth century by Ram Mohun Roy and his followers in the reform movement known as Brahmo Samaj. Tilak, on the other hand was a Hindu extremist, filled with the fire of Maratha traditions, who had emerged into prominence in 1891 when he led the traditionalists in resistance, to legislation establishing a legal age of consent for Indian marriages.

Gokhale and Tilak

These two men represented the main opposing trends that were emerging in Indian native politics as Congress evolved from the open forum of Hume's Vision to an organisation dedicated to voicing the demands of educated Indians, who increasingly came to regard home rule as the lowest possible demand. The main questions were – 1. The extent and pace of severance from British rule and 2. The means to be adopted in gaining whatever degree of autonomy was

desired. Gokhale favoured gradualist, legal action; Tilak became the leader of the physical activist group and if he did not explicitly advocate terrorism, some of his disciples favoured and eventually practised it.

Tilak was inclined, in reaction from the anglicising tendencies of Indian liberals, to accept Hindu society as it was and to argue that the loss of any part of the structure, however repugnant, could only harm the whole. Gokhale, on the other hand, was as sensitive as the Brahmo Samajists two generations before to the flaws in Indian society which Western ideas had revealed with X-ray sharpness. He admired the social gospel which Vivekananda and Ramakrishna order had endeavoured to inject into Hinduism and in 1888 he founded the Servants of India, a society dedicated to social work, including famine relief, the uplift of untouchables and the organisation of the urban workers into trade unions.

Gandhi respected Tilak for his intelligence and his dedication but the two men differed profoundly in personality and in their approach to the religion which for both of them was the core of their politics. Both were dedicated to action and both found in the Bhagwad Gita, a basic textbook. Their fundamental divergences were mirrored in their differing interpretations of the poem, for Gandhi believed that it must be understood allegorically as a tract on non-violence, where Tilak believed it must be taken literally, as an extortion to commit violence, if one's cause (Swaraj) or Self-government in his case demanded it.

Yet, though Gandhi felt more sympathy for Gokhale than for Tilak and became his protégé, his ideas and policies reconciled to a great extent the currents within the Indian renaissance which the two older men represented. He was at once universalist and traditionalist, and this explains his latter acceptance as leader by Indians of widely differing viewpoints. He had read Western philosophers with attention, he had accepted what he found good in Christianity and Islam, he respected the ideals on which British institutions appeared to be based. Yet, though he rejected violence, he was an activist willing to resort to extra-legal means, which Gokhale was not and his experience in South Africa combined with his readings of Tolstoy and Ruskin, had led him to despise the materialism and the soulless machine worship that seemed to characterise Western civilisation.

Nostalgia towards India

As he reacted against the duplicity of South African politicians and responded to inner calls to simplicity in his own life by Brahmacharya and communal living, Gandhi began to look back nostalgically towards India and its native way

of life- the life he had once been eager to shed. As he thought out his strategy of non-violence, he tended to forget the influence of Tolstoy and to see it in Indian terms as a form of traditional Ahimsa. This feeling that there was something specifically Asian about Satyagraha, he maintained to the end of his life. Two Paths are open before India today, he said in 1921, whether to introduce the western principle of, "Might is Right" or to uphold the eastern principle that truth alone conquers, that truth knows no mishap, that the strong and the weak have a right alike to secure Justice.

Earlier vision

The important point, as he repeatedly emphasised is not the evil of British rule, it is the evil of modern civilisation which has become entirely material. It is not the British people who rule India rather modern civilisation does through its railways, telegraph, telephone, etc. Indians must unlearn all they have learnt from the West in material terms; give up machinery, modern transport, extra modern medicine, give up wearing machine made cloth whether it comes from European or Indian mills. They must reconstruct the traditional culture of India's 7,00,000 villages, where majority of its people live.

Gandhi was later to modify this vision in a number of ways, he came to see need for the British to deport. He acknowledged that simple machines might have their uses without causing corruption of manners but when he returned to India in 1914 it was with the insight firmly in his mind that the India of the future must be based on a revival of the villages and its traditions of craftsmanship. The wearing of Khadi or handspun cloth was to become in his mind and later in the minds of all Indians – the mark of a man who sought India's freedom, while the spinning wheel (which he had not even seen when he wrote Hind Swaraj) would become the very symbol of his philosophy and eventually be incorporated in its flag, the symbol of modern India.

Major preoccupation of the last phase

Into the closest plane fit his most urgent preoccupations during the two last decades of his life. In the 1930s his main concern was for the untouchables, whom he called the Harijans or children of God. Gandhi did not entirely abandon the caste system, since he believed that originally it was not a system of privilege but a way of arranging duties. The hierarchical aspect of caste, which placed the Brahmin at the head and the untouchables beneath contempt was in his views a late excrement, to stir the conscience of Hindus he staged during the 1930s two great fasts, and in 1933 went on a pilgrimage of 12,000 miles in the hope that he could close by persuasion the atrocious rift between the twice-born and those whose very presence was supposed to pollute them. He

transformed his own ashram at Sabarmati into a centre for training untouchables and edited a paper called Harijan, to which he contributed most of his later writings.

If the removal of the worst features of the caste system occupied Gandhi during the 1930s, in the next decade events forced him to give most of his attention to another of his cherished doctrines the brotherhood of all men. He believed that religion was a private matter, that each man made his own approach to God and that the attempt to create a religious state was as unacceptable as any other way of differentiation between men who had found various ways of describing their spiritual aspirations and experiences. The inter-communal massacres at the time of Gandhi's last years and his attempt to solve it by an unhappy pilgrimage through the regions troubled by religious strife was eventually to bring him to his death at the hands of a religious fanatic.

Reconstruction of Rural India

To the vision of a society without social or religious discrimination which these preoccupations suggest, one must add another distinctive concern of Gandhi's last two decades, his practical efforts to rehabilitate the Indian Village. In 1934 he created the All-Indian Village Industries Association to widen the economic basis of rural life and in 1936 he settled down in the remote village of Shegaon, not far from Vinoba Bhave's ashram of Wardha in the Deccan. He changed its name eventually to Sewagram, the village of Service and there he began a series of practical experiments in ways of reviving agriculture, industry, education and other features of the rural culture of India.

In concerning himself so closely with untouchability, communal reconciliation and village rehabilitation, Gandhi was, in fact, giving expression on a limited scale to the "Constructive Programme" which he had always regarded as the essential complement to the non-violent struggle for liberation from British rule. The aim of the programme the second phase of Gandhi's social vision was to achieve the collective purification without which liberation from the British would not make India free. Hindus and Muslims, as well as the British, had shared in the devastation of the village culture of traditional India and together they must dedicate themselves to the measures necessary for its reconstruction.

The constructive programme in its most elaborated form consisted of eighteen items which together would bring about a thorough reformation of Indian society at its basic level in the rural areas. Communal reconciliation and the removal of untouchability headed the list and prohibition following immediately afterwards, indicated the puritanical character of the Gandhian society, it might not expect religious uniformity but it would impose rules of moral behaviour.

Khadi- the hand making of cloth from locally grown materials and the development of other village industries, came next in the order of importance since Gandhi realised that no rural culture could survive without a sound decentralised economic base. Education, in his view must be associated with the development of handicraft for children who should learn first how to use their hands and only then should they receive a literacy education. This basic education must as far as possible be self-supporting by selling the products of work done during vocational training. In this way children could learn one of the essential rules of the Gandhian life that every man must perform bread labour in field of workshop to meet his material needs. One aspect of both kinds of education would be the fostering of a loss of one's Vernacular and of the national common language which Gandhi believed should be Hindi.

Indian Villages, at least within historical memory have been unhealthy places, ill-attained, muddy in the monsoons, dusty in the dry season and infected with mosquitoes that break in stagnant ponds and with flies that carry many diseases owing to the lack of the most elementary ideas of sanitation. Gandhi attached importance to the introduction of well-paved lanes and good drainage and especially of well-kept latrines. He advocated education in hygiene and the introduction of nature cure clinics which with cleanliness and proper diet would obviate the need for modern medicine.

Service of backward tribes and uplift of women stood fairly high among its items of the constructive programme. He did not regard Indian aboriginals as noble savages. He believed that man had reached the golden age in a village world where he combined good farming with a level of craftsmanship that afforded a sufficient but not a luxurious life. Like the peasants themselves, he distrusted the normal hunter as much as the city sophisticate and his real desire was to turn the tribes of India into self-supporting farmers.

Women as the most exploited class

Women, he regarded as next to untouchables, the most exploited class of India. He held that men and women were complementary - equal in status but different in function and he demanded the abolition of purdah, child marriage and the other customs that discriminated against women. Women were among his most devoted disciples and towards the end of his life he placed progressively greater confidence in them and made them his closest companions. He believed very strongly that once women were liberated from male exploitation they would develop a high degree of sexual restraint and that they would solve India's population problem without the introduction of birth control which he abhorred as an encouragement to indulgence that would destroy the self-control essential to a non-violent society.

Disillusionment with the Congress

He played his part, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly, in the negotiation which after the advent of the postwar Labour Government in Britain, led to the final liberation of India. Largely through his influence, the British had grown weary of their empire. But his opinions counted for comparatively little in the final shaping of India's future. Since he believed in the brotherhood of all Indians and the possibility of completely secular state with equality for all religious groups he was completely opposed to partition of the sub-continent but his power of conversation failed with Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League, who refused to accept anything less than a separate state of Pakistan. When Congress agreed to partition, Gandhi felt a deep sense of betrayal and remarked that thirty-two years of work have come to an inglorious end. He was thinking of the years since his return in 1915 that he had devoted to the regeneration of an India - as he had known it- was now being destroyed.

There were other developments that troubled Gandhi in the months that led to independence. He realised that Congress, as it moved towards power was shedding the non-violence that had once seemed expedient to its leaders and that the India it planned had little in common with the peaceful village society he had envisioned. He was aware of the onset of that sickness of political corruptions of which Congress has never been able to cure itself; he called on the leaders to avoid -

“the ungainly skirmish for power” and to turn the organisation into a body of servants of the nation engaged in constructive work, mostly in villages, to achieve social, moral and economic freedom. His voice went unheard.

The idea of sacrifice final destruction

Since he realised that his moral power was declining as political power became a reality in India, he turned more and more towards the idea of sacrifice that in his mind had always accompanied the thought of moral power. For many years he had been increasingly fascinated by the fate of Christ. In Rome, in 1931, he had gone to the Sistine Chapel and had wept before the crucifix there. Later, on the bare walls of his room at Sewagram the only decoration was a picture of Christ and at his prayer meetings, ‘Lead, Kindly light’ was replaced as the favourite Christian Hymn by ‘when I survey the wondrous Cross’ in which Isaac Watts portrayed the fusion of Christ's sorrow and love into a sacrifice that calls on men to offer themselves completely.

The idea of perishing for a cause for other man, for a village even, occurs more frequently in his writings as time goes on. He had always held that Satyagraha

implied the willingness to accept not only suffering but also death for the sake of a principle. Just as one must learn the art of dying in the training of non-violence. He had shown his willingness to die and had used it as a powerful weapon in his fasts, which succeeded because he was so sincerely intent on death if he failed to convert his opponent. Increasingly, as his life shortened, he became convinced that someday, sooner rather than later, his death would be demanded of him by the old enemy violence. (Extracts from Gandhi- by George Woodcock published in Fontana 1972 Great Britain).

Recent debate on nationalism

Nationalism during the phase of liberation struggle of the Gandhian era is in sharp contrast to religious Nationalism of the Sangh Parivar.

As so aptly brought out by Prof. K.N. Panikkar in his essay on "Nationalism," "Then and Now" published in "Frontline", April 15, 2015, issue of Journals. A defining feature of anti-colonial nationalism both in its ideological articulation and political practice was secularism. It recognised the multicultural and multi-religious character of Indian society and stood for non-discrimination on the basis of caste, creed or religion. The universalist and humanist traditions, as expressed in the Hindu religious scriptures and the readings of 19th Century reformers and mutually developed among the people through religious-social interaction led to the notion of secular-liberal democracy. Liberalism was its political creed.

Throughout the national liberalism struggle, its perspectives and practices were informed by the principles of liberalism except among the revolutionary nationalists and the communists.

Even while fighting the British, the Indian nationalists remained great admirers of British liberalism as it provided a space for dissent and discussion. Both before and after independence, attempts were made to institutionalise a political system based on fundamental civic rights like freedom of speech and expression. It promoted a sense of cosmopolitanism which served as a check on nationalism going overboard. The Indian constitution, of which B.R. Ambedkar was the main architect, was conceived as an instrument embodying the democratic-secular-liberal principles. The Constitution, in fact, contains the essence of Indian nationalism.

Weakness of nationalism

In a highly stratified society like that of India, the idea is never real. There were far too many fissures in society which impinged upon the political project of

national liberation. The most glaring of them was the non-inclusiveness of the marginalised. The notion that nationalism was the expression of an overarching contradiction between the people of India and colonialism may well be right. But the 'people' is an aggregate category which consists of an array of social and political groups with conflicting interests. When the interest of any group is seen to be compromised, nationalism suffers a setback.

Although the nation suffered from setback, cognizance of social differentiation, no solution was found to resolve the internal contradictions. As a result, the marginalised sections of society like the Adivasis, Dalits, minorities and women, were not adequately incorporated into the mainstream anti-colonial nationalism. Gandhi tried to overcome this through various strategies like persuasion, demonstration and outright disapproval and by launching a constructive programme. But their grievances could not be resolved within the limits of nationalist politics because its focus was on the binary contradiction between people and colonialism. The internal contradictions were not overlooked but were subordinated to the demands of primary contradictions.

Those who focused on internal contradictions – caste, class and gender and sought to recover the rights of the oppressed and the marginalised in society opted out of the nationalist mainstream. The critical attitude of "Periyar" E.V. Ramaswamy and B.R. Ambedkar towards the national movement was mainly guided by this perspective. Raising the question of limitations of anti-colonial nationalism, Periyar rhetorically, and famously asked "Is the Brahmins rule Swarajya for the Pariah? Is the cat's rule Swarajya for the rat? Is the Landlord's rule Swarajya for the peasant? Is the owner's rule Swarajya for the worker?"

Unfortunately, these questions still remain relevant. Nevertheless, it foregrounded the all-important question as to whose interest nationalism represented.

The question of the minorities.

The question of the place of minorities also generated strain within the movement. The string of the national movement was not of an uninterrupted joyous journey to the secular goal. On the contrary, the progress of the national movement was offset by the simultaneous growth of religious communitarian consciousness among both Hindus and Muslims. The roots of this separateness can be traced to the community based religious reform movements in the 19th century the early movement like the Brahmo Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj were universalist in their outlook. But the later movements, like the Arya Samaj titled towards revivalism. Their penchant for cultural defence against

colonialism earned them a social base. They played a powerful role, particularly in North India, in generating religious solidarity among Hindus.

Simultaneously, the Wahabi and Aligarh movements helped the formation of Muslim religious consciousness. Based on this foundation, a religious view of the nation gained ground with religious association, like the Muslim League in 1905 and the Hindu Mahasabha in 1914. However, the national movement tried to distance itself from religious identity but it did not entirely succeed in making the dissociation real. An undercurrent of religious identity persisted throughout the national movement, among both Muslims and Hindus. Was it a result of the inability to demarcate the cultural from religious? Indian nationalism placed rather unwarranted faith in cultural synthesis, whereas cultural differences based on religion continued to be powerful. That colonialism contributed to the widening of the gulf is a different matter.

Anti-Colonial nationalist distinct from Religious Nationalism

The Indian nation which emerged from the anti-colonial struggle was a fractured one, torn by internal contradictions of religion, caste and class. Yet, anti-colonial nationalism did not compromise with religious fundamentalism which enabled India to emerge as a secular democratic republic, despite partition and the formation of Pakistan. This success though partial can be attributed to the secular democratic character of nationalism that the anti-colonial struggle advocated and practised.

Rise of Religious Nationalism

At the same time, the religious element became an integral part of the political discourse. As a result, a new narrative of nationalism emerged – the narrative of religious nationalism although the Islamic State of Pakistan was formed in 1947, it took a long time for Hindu communalism to make its presence felt in independent India. The RSS which was formed in 1925, had a fairly chequered career. It not only did not take part in the anti-colonial movement, but choose to collaborate with colonialism. This unpatriotic stand accounts for its initial unpopularity. The assassination of Gandhi by Nathuram Godse made it a political outcast. Until the imposition of the Emergency, the RSS was not able to make much headway. What gave it a fillip and helped it to enter into mainstream was the emergency. The Emergency was not only an assault on Indian democracy, it also opened the way for the future success of communal forces.

The post-emergency situation greatly helped the Jana Sangha (the earlier incarnation of the B.J.P.) to wrangle out of its political isolation and

untouchability. It also earned political legitimacy by being part of a formation created in opposition to the Emergency. The main beneficiary of this access to state power was the RSS. It was this opportunity to spread its influence to which it had no access earlier like Dalits, Adivasi's and the backward castes that provided the springboard to launch the future offensive.

The waning of the liberal forces and the decline of the left helped it to achieve its objective, namely the capture of state power. Consequently, today the RSS controls almost all apparatuses of the state. Although the BJP is technically the ruling party, the real power is vested with the RSS. Narendra Modi is a figurehead who acts at the behest of the RSS. It appears that a convenient arrangement has been worked out between the political and cultural sectors. The political leaders are given enough space and freedom to practice their right wing ideas and the cultural mafia is let loose to pursue its divisive activities intended to bolster the cause of Hindu Rashtra.

The liberal democratic secular nationalism is under considerable strain today and it is being replaced through state intervention by an alternative discourse of nationalism based on religious identity.

Modi has assigned to the corporate, both national and international, the privilege of presiding over this transformation of India into a religious State.

The combination of corporatism with religious fundamentalism ensured the RSS both material and ideological inspiration. – (K.N. Pannikar, Nationalism, Then and Now, Frontline April,15,2016).

At this crucial juncture in India, one is reminded by the apprehension expressed by Rabindranath Tagore that nationalism could become a great menace even in this country.

CONCLUSIONS

Keeping in view the historical, socio-economic backdrop of the Gujarat model of development which essentially is a distinct form of neo-liberal model of development initiated and accelerated in last couple of decades in this country, we shall attempt to understand the relevance and the dangerous implications of the recent massive outburst in industrial corridor in Dholera, unrest among the Patidars and the Dalit revolt in the state. Without keeping in view the distinct features and the dangerous implications of the so-called Gujarat model of development it would not be easy to understand the underlying causes and grave consequences of the recent unrest in the state.

It is imperative to keep in view the distinct features of the neo-liberal model of development and its dangerous implications for the state.

Prabhat Patnaik while making an exhaustive appraisal of the neo-liberal model of development suggests that central to economic liberalisation is the opening up of the economy to the vortex of globalised capital flows. Any economic opening to global financial flow is vulnerable to sudden capital flight, which forces the state to ensure that it retains, at all times, the confidence of international financier. It is constrained, therefore, to pursue policies that finance capital demands, such as fiscal responsibility, tax concessions to the rich and the corporate and eschewing direct state activism for promoting the level of activity and people's welfare. The state does not retreat as is often claimed; it intervenes by way of providing incentives to globalised capital, with which the domestic corporate-financial oligarchy gets closely integrated; in fact the so-called retreat itself becomes an euphemism for the promotion of corporate interests.

This has an obvious implication for democracy. No matter which political formation comes to power, it pursues the same economic policies as long as the economy remains within the vortex of global capital flows, not because these policies are optimal in any sense but because not pursuing them would bring financial crisis and hence transitional suffering even for the poor. This makes the electoral choice between alternative political demotions a meaningless exercise, at least as far as people's economic destinies are concerned.

There are, however, three economic characteristics of a liberalised regime, all of which have manifested themselves in India and which shape its overall dynamics.

The first is the withdrawal of support of the state from traditional petty production including peasant agriculture. The anti-colonial struggle in India had

taken off in the 1930s with the support of the peasantry that had seen acute distress because of the great depression and it had held out the promise, that such distress would never again visit the peasantry in independent India. The dirigiste regime, seeing itself as a legatee of the anti-colonial struggle had accordingly adopted an array of policies for protecting and promoting not just peasant agriculture but traditional petty production in general, that is, not just the peasantry but craftsmen, fishermen, handloom weavers and other such producers. Not that all sections among them were equal beneficiaries of such measures, but notwithstanding internal differentiation within this segment (within peasant agriculture, for instance), the encroachment by corporate capital from outside upon this segment, was kept in check, as was the vulnerability of this segment toward market price fluctuations.

In agriculture, not only was there tariff protection and quantitative restriction for insulating the sector from price fluctuations but also 'remunerative prices' and public procurement, including for a number of cash crops where commodity boards were entrusted with the task of market intervention. There was a substantial step up in public investment, research and development in public sector organisations which were responsible for the high-yielding variety seeds subsidised inputs including credit (the provision of which was an objective of bank nationalisation) and a network of public extension services. Similar measures were instituted for other traditional petty production sectors. All these not only directly aided traditional petty production but also ensured that big corporate capital whether domestic or foreign had no direct access to this sector and hence could not subjugate it.

Liberalisation changed this. The neo-liberal state, with a changed focus towards the exclusive promotion of the interest of globalised capital, marked a departure from the earlier bourgeois state which appeared so to stand above society and to intervene benevolently in favour of all classes including the traditional petty producers and even on occasions, the working class.

The state under neo-liberalism withdraws substantially from its earlier role of protecting and promoting the interests of traditional petty producers, which is evident in the case of agriculture with the drying up of institutional credit, a rise in input prices including that of credit, a dismantling of the public extension network, a removal of the marketing function of commodity boards, trade liberalization that makes domestic prices mirror world price fluctuations, a cutback in public investment and the direct access of corporate capital and agribusiness to the peasantry. Procurement, on the verge of being abandoned some years ago, got a fresh lease of life because of the inflationary upsurge that began around that time. But its continuation remains uncertain, even according to this year's budget speech.

The reduced profitability of agriculture, the state of peasant suicides, and the broader agrarian crisis, reflected in the fact of peasants abandoning agriculture to flock to cities in search of non-existent jobs and also in the fact that the number of labourer in agriculture now exceeds that of cultivators for the first time in the country's history are all consequences of the state's withdrawal from its role of defending and promoting petty production. This has meant leaving traditional petty production to encroachment and subjugation by corporate capital and agribusiness indeed being compliant in the process (which facilitates what Marx had called "Primitive accumulation of capital")

It is noteworthy that between 1990-91 and 2013-14 (a peak year) per capita food grain output in the country remained virtually stagnant. What is even more striking is that per capita food grain availability actually declined over this period.

This decline also manifests itself in the data on calorie intake. The percentage of the urban population accessing less than 2,100 calories per person per day, which is the official benchmark for designing poverty, declined marginally from 60 in 1973-74 to 57 in 1993-94 it increased to 65 in 2011-12. Likewise, the percentage of rural population unable to get 2,200 calorie per person per day, which the benchmark for defining poverty had stood at 56.4 in 1973-74 and also 58.5 in 1993-94; it increased to 68 in 2011-12.

Two questions are immediately raised by these figures. The first relates to the sharp contrast between the apparently impressive GDP growth rate in the period of liberalisation and the growing mass hunger. It is obvious that GDP growth is an entirely inappropriate index of the performance of a regime.

In India, during the period of liberalisation, the working population has actually become distinctly worse off by the most elemental standard of judging welfare, viz., hunger, notwithstanding impressive GDP growth rate. (Reference "Economic Liberalization and the Working Poor" Prabhat Patnaik, Economic and Political Weekly, July 16 (016 PP. 47-49)

In the case of Gujarat also, its record of human development is quite poor in sharp contrast to its growth rate. As a combined measure of health, education and income, Gujarat's human development index (HDI) measured to 0.360 and ranked fourth among Indian state in 1981. By 2001, HDI stood at 0.479 and it still stood behind Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Haryana.

As we have brought out in our earlier chapter on historical backdrop, the state has an arbitrarily collected over 33 lakh hectares of land that has resulted in displacement of over 2.5 million people from their habitat in rural and tribal

areas in over last sixty years more than 40 percent of villages have been adversely affected by this so-called 'Gujarat Model' of development.

Seventy percent of the persons displaced are Adivasis and another major section affected by these projects are Dalits.

Patidars by and large benefited immensely during the initial phase of development and land reforms measure initiated by the Gujarat government since independence. In our observation on Gujarat historical backdrop, we have brought out in greater detail how Patidars benefited economically, politically and socially since independence and particularly with the rule of the BJP in Gujarat over the last several decades.

However, during this recent, second phase of liberalisation, they have been adversely affected by the economic policy and measures adopted by the Gujarat government.

Patidars or Patels, as there are known now, accumulated considerable wealth from agriculture, are also known for their industriousness and business ability. In the 1970s and 1980s many of them diversified into manufacturing and were successful in building Gujarat's small and medium scale industries. In the colonial period and also since 1980s, many Patels migrated reaching almost every corner of the globe. Non-resident Patels are also best known for owning 70 percent of the motels in the United States. In the 1980s and 1990s, young people of this high aspirant community began looking for work in the professional and white-collar sectors. In fact, they prefer these jobs to agriculture or business. (frontline, October 2015, P 104)

As brought out by Achyut Yagnik, the discontent among them comes from many areas, shortage of jobs, a small number of admissions in professional courses, agrarian issues, and a decline in the small and medium scale industries brought about by Modi's Gujarat model of development which supports big industry.

The biggest aspect in their downfall as suggested by an investment analyst has been Gujarat's thrust towards big industry. Big industry does not necessarily provide employment. As a matter of fact, it has resulted into shrinking of employment opportunities as he further pointed out over the past 20 years, the annual industrial growth has been 22 percent while employment growth has been just 35 percent (Ibid., P 106)

We conclude our observation on the Patidars agitation referring to the causal link between the Patel outburst and growing agrarian crisis in Gujarat as well as

the entire rural India. As argued by Prof. Ghanshyam Shah, "one-third of the Patidars are small and marginal farmers. As input cost for cultivation has increased over a period, most of these poor farmers do not have resources or access to timely credit for investment. Agriculture is not remunerative enough. The young Patidars are forced to find non-farm occupations in urban areas. Here, they face great difficulties in trying to meet their expectation. Agriculture is becoming less remunerative. More and more land is getting acquired for industries and people are repeatedly told that the future of India only through industrial development. Obviously, land owning communities crave better education and secure jobs. They perceive that those whom they considered "lowly" in ritualistic hierarchy are getting jobs and education through reservation. This will only intensify caste-based conflicts (Prof. Ghanshyam Interview in frontline, October 2015, P. 108)

Patidars agitation actually is a manifestation of the similar outburst in other provinces as Jats agitation in Haryana, Kapus in Andhra Pradesh and Ahoms in Assam (Aseem Srivastava, A note from the land of frustrated Aspirants, Economic and Political Weekly, July 16, 2016)

Dholera: Mega City Projects along the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor

The Central and State governments are actively adopting policies that target urban regions as potential drivers of economic growth. As pointed out by Shriya Anand, Neha Sami, the government has begun to develop specific types of industrial and economic development policies that have led to the emergence of different urban forms. These include the development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), national investment and manufacturing zones (NIMZs) and new towns in and around existing urban regions that focus on specific types of industrial and economic activities. The most recent and perhaps one of the most ambitious strategies is the push to develop urbanisation which the Indian government has embarked upon as a key development strategy.

The government of India and its officials see the development of these industrial corridors as a means to enable India's ongoing urban transition, while simultaneously purporting economic growth by attracting domestic and international capital to invest in and along these corridor regions. The new industrial towns along these corridors are meant to act as magnets for migrants and job seekers, providing alternative employment locations to older metros like Mumbai or Delhi. (Ref. Scaling Up, Scaling Down - state rescaling along the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial corridor: - Shriya Anand, Neha Sami - Economic and Political Weekly, April 23, 2016 P. 50)

In mid-2009, the Gujarat government converted 22 villages along the Gulf of Khambhat into the Dholera Special Investment Region (DSIR). The 920 km DSIR is constituted under the Gujarat Special Investment Region (SIR) Act, 2009. This area is also a residential location of a predominantly agrarian population of 39,300. Dholera will be the first smart city along the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC). This is a massive conversion of agrarian land into a Greenfield city.

As per the findings of the exhaustive in-depth survey conducted by Preeti Sampat selection of Dholera as a Smart City project is a striking illustration of focusing on rentier economy as driving force of the novel urbanisation infrastructure projects over the past decade in India. This rentier economy brings within its purview, in varying combinations, policy, speculative land markets, real estate and other urban infrastructure investment by global and domestic investors, private consultants and developers, interests within the state at various levels and (usually large landowners willing and able to benefit from re-entering at least temporarily). The rentier economy hinges crucially on ownership of land or access to it. As Preeti Sampat notes, there is a need to distinguish rent-driven urbanisation infrastructure projects from industrialisation and concomitant job creation, despite their conflation in policy rhetoric. The transition to industrialisation and jobs that such projects promise to unleash remains ever elusive cover story for rentier-driven dispossession. (Dholera: The Emperors New City - Preeti Sampat, Economic and Political Weekly, April 23, 2016 P.59)

Residents of Dholera opposed the complete economic overhaul of the region proposed by the DSIR but they have not been opposed to development of the area as such. Rather, they supported the need to strengthen existing agrarian infrastructure and to develop other support mechanisms. The contest in Dholera as Preeti brings out is over defining the terms of development and its beneficiaries. As resistance grows, contingent alliances across caste, class, community and gender hierarchies coalesce, in contrast with interests promoting the DSIR. While not radically egalitarian, these alliance nevertheless open possibilities for articulation of development from below (Ibid 63)

Under optimism for this smart city project becomes evident when one comes to know that despite several attempts being made with advertisements and field-trips from Dubai, Mumbai and elsewhere, no investor is interested in the areas as there is nothing on the ground. The only 'stray buyers' of land around the Dholera SIR are those parking excess money to gain from future appreciation, many already powerful politicians or those who cannot afford to buy plots near Ahmadabad.

The Bhal Bachao Samiti, a committee with representatives of the 22 impacted villages, has been formed by local residents to resist the projects. A Hundred peoples were detained and 22 arrested in February 2014 while protesting land acquisition (Indian Expression, 2013)

Not too far from Dholera, the 50,884 hectare Mandal. Becharji SIR (MBSIR) in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat was the earliest 'nodes' to begin implementation along the DMIC. It faced prompt resistance from the 44 villages coming under it. (Shivendekar, 2013) when agitations intensified the then Chief Minister of Gujarat Narendra Modi, probably fearing electoral repercussions in a sensitive election year, cancelled the notification for 36 MBSIR villages.

Public consultation and prior informed consent for development projects have assumed greater significance in view of widespread resistance to acquisition over infrastructure projects across the country's Dalit uprising.

The July 11, 2016 stripping and thrashing of four Dalit boys at Una village in Saurashtra by a bunch of self-styled cow protectors or Gau Rakshaks for skinning a dead cow provoked movement in Gujarat of a scale never seen before in the state.

The movement is strikingly different in terms of the mode of massive organised protest, in terms of demands, leadership and its future vision.

P. Punia, Chairperson, National commission for Scheduled Castes suggested that Una response has to be viewed in the context of large increase in the number of atrocities against Dalits in recent years. In 2014, as many as 47,000 cases were reported, in 2015 the number went up to 54,000 while in 2013 it was 39,000. The Una incident is part of the entire setting. The Dalit is not even as important as a dead Cow that is why, he noted that there were so many protests all over the country, in case of Rohit Vemula, a brilliant Ph.D. Dalit student from Hyderabad University who committed suicide on January 18, 2016 he strongly felt that inhuman treatment of the Dalit scholars in the University is part of a larger issue of the NDA government's anti-Dalit mindset (Ref. Frontline Sept. 2, 2016 and Ibid Sept. 2016)

Dalit upsurge in Gujarat has to be viewed in the context of simmering resentments against unprecedented rise in atrocities on Dalits in Gujarat and the immunity enjoyed by the offenders "The conviction rate is as low as 3 percent in Gujarat in cases of atrocities against Dalits. In 2015, Gujarat reported the highest crime rate against Dalits (6,655 cases), followed by Chhattisgarh (3,008 cases) and Rajasthan (7,144 cases)" (Ibid.)

Recent Dalit Movement in Gujarat is unique also in terms of its strikingly different type of leadership and also in terms of its distinct character of demands. As Mevani pointed out in his interview with frontline reporter, 'we have to go beyond Una, we have to demand social and economic justice. Land is critical to our emancipation. When one reads Ambedkar and Marx in the context of atrocities, land reforms emerge as the key issue. In India, land determined the caste' (Ibid.) Hence he demands land for the Dalits and giving up of Dalit traditional occupation of cow skinning.

It may not be utopia to suggest that the Dalit movement in Gujarat could prove a turning point of the Dalits struggle for the emancipation in this country.