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Editorial

Quest in Education team wishes you an expansive and fulfilling, happy and harmonious new year. In the first issue of the new year, we bring to you historically rooted articles of contemporary relevance.

Dr. Disary Ray logically argues in her article that education is a public service. Access to quality education must be seen as a fundamental right of every child. The National Education Policy 2020 prescribes comprehensive and structural changes in the education system

Dr. Shushwi Ke, in her insightful article on Higher Education in the context of Neo-liberal Paradigm shows the shift from treating education as a public good to education as a market good to be commercially transacted and its impact on the students facing multiple marginalities.

Prof. Veena Devasthali's review article of *Thumb Printed: Champaran Indigo Peasants Speak to Gandhi*, brings to the fore how Gandhiji played tremendous role in enabling the indigo peasants in Champaran to raise their voices fearlessly and in their own words. Champaran satyagraha was a landmark in the journey that transformed 'Mohan' into 'Mahatma'.

Dr. Pradnya Anil Bhosekar, in her book review has aptly captured the essence of *Kabir Vimarsh* by Dr. Hubnath Pandey (2021) published by Mumbai Hindi Academy, Mumbai.

Prof. Dr. Vibhuti Patel pays tributes to the stalwarts- Prof. Zarina Bhatta (Women's Studies), Ms. Chandita Mukherjee (Development Media), Prof. Maria Mies (Ecofeminism) and Dr. Harshada Rathod (Higher Education)

We request the scholars and experts to send their original research based articles, case studies and book reviews on contemporary challenges faced by the education sector.

Prof. Vibhuti Patel
Editor

A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

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The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020 replaces the National Policy on Education, 1986. The policy is an all-inclusive outline for elementary education to higher education as well as vocational training in both rural and urban India. The vision National Education Policy 2020 envisions an India-centric education system that contributes directly to transforming India, which is Bharat into a vibrant knowledge super power by providing high-quality education to all, regardless of discrimination on the basis of religion, gender, caste, or creed.

Key Words: National Education Policy (2020), Higher Education, Pedagogy

Introduction:

The first education policy was introduced in 1968 when Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister of India. The second National Education Policy was formulated in 1986 and revised in 1992. More than 30 years have passed since the last policy. During this time, great changes have taken place in our country, society, economy and the world at large. A new education policy is clearly needed. As scholars pointed out decades ago, education is the key to justice in a poor and populous country like India. Higher education is both the most powerful conservative force and the most effective change maker. The state has continued to play an active and influential role in the field of education including technical and professional fields through adoption of various measures such as massive increase in investment in higher education in the 11th Five Year Plan (2007-2012). Such national education policies have had a positive and lasting impact on the country's higher education system. The Policy envisages that the homogeneous curriculum and pedagogy of our institutions must build up among the students' reverence towards the Fundamental Duties and conscious awareness of one's roles and responsibilities in a changing world. The rationale of the National Education Policy, 2020 is to instill among the Indians, innate pride, in being Indian and love for the country in spirit, intellect, and deeds, as well as to broaden knowledge, skills, and values that support conscientious pledge to human rights and sustainable development. The

goal of this study is to explore the broad objectives and key features of this policy.

Revamping School education

The new education policy emphasizes the importance of early childhood education and its continuing benefits throughout life. The emphasis would be on practical learning or conceptual understanding rather than rote learning and learning-for-exams. This practice will ensure capability to think critically while taking decisions.

The "10 + 2" structure will be replaced with "5+3+3+4" model. This will be implemented in the following manner:

- **Foundational Stage:** This stage is additionally divided into two parts: 3 years of pre-school or anganwadi, and classes 1 and 2 in primary school. This will include children aged 3 to 8 years. The focus of studies will be given to activity-based learning.
- **Preparatory Stage:** This stage will include children aged 8 to 11 years and who are studying in classes 3 to 5. It will step by step introduce subjects such as speaking, reading, writing, physical education, languages, art, science and mathematics. The fundamental aim of the new education policy will be achieving Foundational Literacy and Numeracy by all students by Grade 3. From grades 1 to 5, the emphasis has been put on basic literacy and numeracy, with a robust system of adaptive assessment and access to high-quality teaching materials.
- **Middle Stage:** This stage will cover children between ages 11 and 14 who are studying in classes 6 to 8. It will introduce students to the more abstract concepts in subjects of mathematics, sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities.
 - **Secondary Stage:** This stage will encompass children belonging to classes 9 to 12, thereby covering the ages of 14 to 19 years. It is again subdivided into two parts: classes 9 and 10 covering the former phase while classes 11 and 12 covering the subsequent phase. These four-year studies are designed to provide multidisciplinary research in which the same topic is studied from the viewpoint of more than one discipline. This will assist in developing among the students' knowledge as well as the ability to think critically.
 - Instead of an annual exam, students will only take three exams in grades 2, 5 and 8. Board exams will be continued to be held for classes 10 and 12 but will be re-modelled. To simplify them, these examinations would be conducted twice a year, and students will be given maximum two attempts. The examination would be both objective and descriptive.

- The policy emphasizes the importance of mother tongue and regional languages. The language of instruction up to class 5 must be one of these languages. Sanskrit and foreign languages were also emphasized. The policy also states that language will not be imposed on students and NEP's language policy being advisory in nature; it is up to the states, institutions, and schools to decide how to implement it. Special measures are taken in the training and recruitment of language teachers.
- This policy aims at reducing the curriculum load of students and allowing them to be more inter-disciplinary and multi-lingual. There will not remain any clear cut demarcation between arts and sciences. For instance, students will have the alternative to study fashion studies with physics, bakery with chemistry and so on.
- Report cards will be comprehensive, offering information about the student's skills. Artificial intelligence" based software will be used to evaluate the progress of the students and help the students to take decisions related to their future.
- Coding (the process or activity of writing computer programs) will be introduced from class 6 and experiential learning will be adopted.
- The Midday Meal Scheme (Healthy and freshly prepared lunches provided to children in government and government-supported schools in India) that presently includes only lunch will include breakfasts as well.

Significant changes in Higher education

The new education policy proposes a 4-year multi-disciplinary bachelor's degree in an undergraduate programme with multiple exit options. These will include professional and vocational areas and will be implemented as follows:

- A certificate after finishing 1 year of study
- A diploma after finishing 2 years of study
- A Bachelor's degree after successful completion of a 3-year programme
- A 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's degree
- MPhil (Masters of Philosophy) courses are to be discontinued as per the new policy.
- A Higher Education Council of India (HECI) will regulate higher education. The aim will be to increase gross enrolment ratio.
- National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) will regulate higher education, including teacher education, while excluding medical and legal education.

- The existing National Council for Teacher Education, All India Council for Technical Education and the University Grants Commission will be replaced by Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) and Higher Education Grants Council will be responsible for funding and financing of universities and colleges.
- NEP-2020 has brought home the idea of Common University Entrance Test for admission to undergraduate, postgraduate, research programmes in 45 central universities across India. The National Testing Agency have the added accountability of conducting entrance examinations for admissions to 45 Central universities across the country, in addition to the Joint Entrance Examination and National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate).
- The policy proposes that higher education institutes like the IITs make changes with regard to the diversity of learning
- The fees of both private and public universities will be regulated.

Teacher education and recruitment

The most important factor for the success of higher education institutions is the quality and dedication of its teachers. Each institution must have adequate faculty to ensure that all program, subject and subject requirements are met and that the student-teacher ratio is favourable (no more than 30:1). All institutions develop plans for continuing professional development of faculty and determine the process for its implementation. The plan should include contributions to field/discipline development, teaching competence, research, and practice. NEP 2020 proposes a number of policy changes related to teachers and teacher education. To become a teacher, by 2030 one will need a four-year Bachelor of Education degree as a minimum requirement. The teacher recruitment process will also be strengthened and made more transparent. The National Council for Teacher Education plans to develop a National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education by 2021 and a National Professional Standards for Teachers by 2022. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all students at all school levels are taught by passionate, motivated, qualified, professionally trained and well-resourced teachers.

The rise in GDP for the Education Sector

Since independence, the Constitution has stated free and compulsory education up to the age of 14. This means that all citizens enjoy the right to free and compulsory education. However, as of 2009, 59 years after the enactment of the constitution, the country has not achieved its goals. As a result, the government introduced a new law called Right to Education RTE-2010, which came into effect on April 1,

2010. It's been 12 years since then, but we have achieved staggering growth. NEP-2020 is also expected to allocate 6% of GDP to the education sector. The Act makes education a fundamental right under article 21a of the Indian Constitution and makes education free and mandatory for all children between the ages of 6 and 14 thereby setting minimum standards for primary school. Nevertheless, we find that the number of women is higher than that of men as far as school dropout rates are concerned. According to the 2011 Indian Census, the male literacy rate is 80.9% and the female literacy rate is 64.6%. Education is one of the ways to achieve women empowerment. Higher education will be the key to increasing female labour force participation which is abysmally low in India. India has made great strides in enhancing women's participation in higher education. Women accounted for as little as 10% of enrolments at the time of independence but the number was as high as 48.9% in 2018-19. The percentage of female teachers has also increased in the last 6 years by 4.35% to 42.2% of the total teaching population.

Provisions related to online and digital education:

- Educational Technological Farm will be formed to promote digital education. In order to ensure the preparation of indispensable means of quality education it will carry out the work of collaboration for digital infrastructure, reading materials, and capacity building of teachers and students.

Other significant changes

- An intern is equivalent to apprenticeship, possibly unpaid, in an organization to gain work experience or to meet qualification requirements. These internship programs are primarily aimed at student employability and help develop students' research skills. Students are assigned a scientific supervisor for a period of time, preferably from another university, to conduct a time-limited internship project.
- Vocational exposure will be imparted in grades 6-8. Children from grade 9 to her grade 12 have access to traditional academic courses as well as vocational courses, which students can combine.
- Extensive use of technology in teaching and learning, elimination of language barriers, improved access for *Divyang* (children with disabilities) students, and education planning and management.

Full equity and inclusivity as the basis for all educational decisions to ensure that all students succeed in the education system.

- Aiming to stop the brain drain, NEP-2020 opens doors to foreign universities for Indian campuses. But the question is whether they will offer or comply with national reservation policies and accommodate economically disadvantaged students. The question is whether Indian students will be motivated and encouraged to stay in India and pursue higher education.
- The policy proposes new language institutions such as the Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation and the National Institute/ Institutes for Pali, Persian and Prakrit.

Conclusion:

Education is a public service. Access to quality education must be seen as a fundamental right of every child. The National Education Policy 2020 prescribes comprehensive and structural changes in the education system. It focuses on fair and inclusive education, which reflects the idea that no child should be left out of educational opportunities based on their socio-economic background. It has addressed the concerns of socially and economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs), including women and transgender people, tribal communities, and minorities. This policy aims to fill gaps in social categories related to access, participation and learning outcomes in schooling. Social workers and counsellors will help ensure retention and mental health of all children, parental participation and mobilization of the local community and volunteers will be leveraged to ensure the Policy goals related to foundational literacy and numeracy are met.

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Education must be of a new type for the sake of the creation of a new world. Every one of us has good inherent in the soul. It needs to be drawn out by the teachers, and only those teachers can perform this sacred function whose own character is unsullied, who are always ready to learn and to grow from perfection to perfection.

Useful manual labour, intelligently performed is the means *par excellence* for developing the intellect. A balanced intellect presupposes a harmonious growth of body, mind and soul. An intellect that is developed through the medium of socially useful labour will be an instrument for service and will not easily be led astray or fall into devious paths.

Craft, Art, Health and education should all be integrated into one scheme. *Nai Talim* is a beautiful blend of all the four and covers the whole education of the individual from the time of conception to the moment of death. Instead of regarding craft & industry as different from education, I will regard the former as the medium for the latter.

Our system of (Basic) education leads to the development of the mind, body and soul. The ordinary system cares only for the mind. The teachers earn what they take. It stands for the art of living. Therefore, both the teacher and the pupil have to produce in the very act of teaching and learning. It enriches life from the commencement. It makes the nation independent of the search for employment.

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

HIGHER EDUCATION AND NEO-LIBERAL PARADIGM

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University constitutes a distinctive place among the diverse range of higher education institutions. Taking into consideration of internationalisation of higher education in the pretext of globalisation and economic liberalisation privatisation has been the key policy initiative under the political economic project what is popularly known as Neoliberalism. As a result, participation of private players and corporates in the domain of education in general and higher education in particular has tremendously increased. Neoliberalism has coincided with neo-conservatism. It has led to not only in the increase of private universities but public universities have also begun privatising some of their programmes, introduced more self-financed courses, hiked fee for the substitution of public funding. Such development in last few decades is raising questions with regard to not only equal opportunity and concern with regard to equity but also the educational, foundational values of university which are getting compromised under the pretext of neoliberalism which is based on the ideals of 'perfect market'. Moreover, Covid 19 recently has left people in a state of uncertainty and humanities are facing many existential questions globally. During such contested time it is pertinent to revisit the ideals of university for the quest of truth and imagining what has not been imagined with the help of its community of scholars.

Key Words: Higher Education, University, Neoliberalism, Covid 19

Introduction

In post independent India the role of higher education in national development was accorded high priority. The importance of higher education was realised in terms of promoting economic growth besides creating an enabling environment for achieving equality of opportunity along with social justice and collective well-being to all. In fact higher education was linked with country's aspirations for self-reliance. Indeed, higher education in general and university education in particular not just contribute in economic, human and social development but was also recognised very significant for a fully expressed citizenship with focus on

cultivating critical thinking. Consequently, the role of state was recognised very important in achieving the goals of newly independent nation to take it on path of development and modern nation along with obliterating the age-old historical distortions in terms of socio-economic inequalities and to move towards more equitable, inclusive, democratic and just society. Therefore, independent India visualised education as a public good and knowledge production and dissemination as a public responsibility supported by welfare state. There was general consensus about the positive externalities which higher education generates along with the equity consideration, therefore, state funding was taken into consideration and public sector led strategy of development was adopted. As a result of initial efforts taken by the state enrolment in higher education institutions increased by ten times (from 0.2 to 2.0 million) in the first two decades of planned development. Although GER remained low at 4.2 per cent. 1970s and 1980s period have been period of different trajectory in higher education. On the one hand demand for higher education across the country was increasing but at the same time state funding was declining. Private colleges increased during this phase although it was supported by public fund. ‘Private colleges that were legally private but publicly financed dominated the higher education landscape till 1980s.’ (Chattopadhyay et al, 2022). However, 1980s onwards privatisation of public institutions and promotion of private institutions became common features of higher education development in India. Till this period by and large public funding was characterising the expansion of higher education however 1980s onwards private self-financing institutions particularly in the areas of technical and professional field has been the major characteristics. Post 1980s market influence have been central in the expansion of this sector. Between the 2002 and 2019, around 305 private universities were established in India. Private universities in many states were established and proliferated as many state governments legislated to establish private universities in 2000 since a bill on private universities could not be passed in the national parliament during this time. With this increase in private universities and colleges GER also increased which led India enter into the phase of massification of higher education. Moreover, the growth of enrolment has been more in professional courses such as engineering, medicine, management, law and other vocational courses. National Education Policy 2020 which is the first education policy of the 21st century has also recognised the contribution of higher education in terms of promoting human as well as societal well- being. It also promotes universalization of higher education by setting the aim of increasing the GER in higher education including vocational education from 26.3 percent (2018) to 50 percent by 2035. However, NEP 2020 does recognise the fact that “the purpose of quality higher education is, therefore, more than the creation of greater opportunities for individual employment.” (NEP, 2020, GoI)

Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism as a political- economic model based on radical transformation of the state and economy. It is set of policies and practices which took practical shape during Margaret Thatcher in Britain and Ronald Reagan in US in the 1970s and 1980s which further culminated globally under Structural-Adjustment programme of IMF and World Bank. Andrew Gamble describes Thatcherism as an ideology committed to both ‘the free economy and the strong state’. (Cahill & Konings, 2017). The idea of ‘free market’ not only redefined the relationship between state, society and economy from the existing idea of ‘welfare- state’ to ‘market-led’ but large corporations as an integral feature of this market led development. In-fact David Harvey sees neo-liberalism as a project of socio-economic transformation, whose primary agent is ‘the state’ and state functions more as a ‘facilitator’ in securing private property rights and to guarantee proper functioning of the market. Indeed, neoliberal model embodied widespread privatization of state-owned enterprises, industry deregulation and dismantling trade unions. Consequently, a general shift began to take place from the social-democratic and progressive liberal politics to policies and institutions that were most concerned to promote market mechanisms which is friendly with business and pro-capital. Moreover, it further began to restructure social institutions with its own methods and terminologies. The ‘neo’ or ‘new’ about neoliberalism lies in the idea of reviving the earlier version of economic liberalism under the condition of shrinking profit by corporate elites. For them market is ‘perfect’, moreover, acts like ‘God’ and market exchange captures the true and essential human nature and maintains social order. Social sphere is seen simply as an extension of the economic fundamentals and therefore reduced to basic economic idea of demand and supply and laws of self-interest that govern the operation of markets. Under the very famous phrase of “There is no alternative” (TINA) Thatcher was with the view of not only to transform the economy but also people’s way of thinking and the whole economic culture. The central value she attached to this politico-economic agenda of neoliberalism was ‘competition’—competition between nations, regions, firms and of course between individuals. Competition is central because it separates the sheep from the goats, the man from the boys, the fit from the unfit and allocates all resources whether physical, natural, human, financial under the value of efficiency. Thus, the values of competition, efficiency became new slogans of this changed politico-economic discourse. TINA is based on promotion of individualism, personal responsibility and self-improvement. *Homo economicus* where competition, quantification, self-interest, rational consumer becomes the universal and fundamental trait of humans. Therefore, individual action and position earned in the competitive market determines the position of individual in newly defined social order. Consequently, social and moral ties that binds individuals to societies, groups, and social

institutions historically also gets transformed and people were to be reconceptualised less as socially connected citizens of a nation state or morally situated members of a culture and more as self-interested competitors, self-actualised entrepreneurs and rational consumers in a dynamic and ever-changing global marketplace. Thus, under neoliberal configuration the idea of social membership and citizenship gets squeezed towards individual efficiency and consequently state protected rights and safeguards gets suspended.

In this market determined “self-in-society” people are expected to develop useful, market relevant skills, initiatives, analysis of risk and consumerist choices not by their reliance on social relationship, obligations, expectations based on state, society or culture but as per the demand and expectations of market. As per the neo-liberalist reformers the above cited relationship, obligations function as obstacle in the optimal functioning of society. The idea of “greater good” for society at large is based on self-interested activities of actors working independently and unknowingly to create a spontaneous and balanced social order. These actors were seen as “disciplined” and “responsibilised” through the steering, motivation, and redirection provided by the “messages of the market”. This “greater good” would also be brought into being by fully informed and empowered consumer. Here the “buying power” of consumer who can buy the products which are in their interests becomes important than citizen. In this discourse the public identity of ‘citizen rights’ is replaced by discourses of ‘consumer rights’, ‘choice’ and personal responsibility. In their version individual will be able to enjoy freedom and liberty when they have choices which was not being realised under welfarist state. Indeed, the theoretically it is coming from ‘Public Choice Theory’.

Changing Meaning of Education

As per the neoliberals the policies and practices, institutions, professions not just have to be pro-business, economically competitive and efficient but has to be aligned with the “realities of the market”. Neoliberalist reformers believe that Keynesian and socialist system in order to expand equality of opportunity to all made public over dependent on state, over-socialised them and slowed down the profit incentive that was necessary for people to innovate. They are with the view that during socialist or Keynesian economies schools and universities embedded in national contexts with the help of knowledge workers like professors and teachers established and maintained a collective “monopoly of competence” to “capture” particular knowledge or education domains. It created an environment of insular and bloated bureaucratic education system that made both the production and dissemination of knowledge inflexible, inefficient, and ultimately ineffective. “Failure of education was like the failures of all public institutions and public realm

in general” (Ward. C. 2012). As a result, educational institutions at all levels were unable to respond to the changing skill and knowledge needs of corporations. It is in this context globally public institutions and universities too are under reforms and are expected to take new roles.

They also believe that universities by and large failed to “pull their own weight” or maximise their economic impact in the new, often technology driven, global knowledge economy. In their view schools and universities around the globe had failed to provide students with the skills and “entrepreneurial values” necessary to compete in an increasingly economically interconnected world. Now under the new structure of education and society based on the corporatist interest in alliance with state knowledge has to recognise new role and has to contribute in the growth and expansion of regional, national, and international economies. It is in this context both production of knowledge and dissemination has to be redefined. Although, universities with their focus on unity of teaching and research along with emphasis on ‘basic, foundational knowledge’ underlying with ‘plurality of epistemic knowledge’ did produce directly or indirectly economically viable products however as per neoliberals such initiatives fell far short of what was expected from them given the large amount of public funding. They think that the state monopoly has not just created a system of entitlement which produced complacent, uncompetitive, demotivated, lazy teachers and underachieving students but also parents.

Therefore, what is needed is “New Public Management” along the lines of a competitive business enterprise. Bringing economic rationality, consumer choice and the disciplining of the market and accompanying new managerialistic forms of administration to bear on knowledge production and dissemination which will further create a competitive “entrepreneurial culture” throughout all levels of education. Here knowledge workers will be flexible, agile and quick. In a way schools and universities help them in making responsible consumer by constructing self-reliant, fully informed, and entrepreneurially minded students and knowledge workers who does not need what Margaret Thatcher famously referred “nanny state” to care for them but are capable of using their self-acquired knowledge and skills to adapt new and changing situations and to take advantage of the opportunities in the continually evolving global economy.

Therefore, education need to be reconceptualised less as a public right or direct state responsibility and more as a private investment in order to capitalise their educational credentials. Therefore, education should not be obtained through welfare-style governmental grants or entitlements but in the marketplace where consumer choice and a “user pays” system would encourage students to be

responsible by using their own or borrowed funds to purchase the best product available in the market. As a result of choices made by students as a consumer the education system itself will be further rationalised, optimised and finally turned into a true market.

In this redefinition of education, the role of state has shifted from being a purveyor of collective well-being, equality and general social welfare to an information conduit who is responsible for making entrepreneurs and consumers informed of their options in the marketplace. The role of state is to facilitate the market, to meet its economic goals. In return market efficiencies and economic fundamentals would determine the types of skills and knowledge that are needed while simultaneously creating the competitive pressures necessary to force educational institutions and teachers and professors or what is popularly known as knowledge workers to become more flexible and to produce the best product possible for the lowest cost possible.

Indeed, one of the fundamental features of neoliberal as a political economic project has been emphasis on privatisation. And Thatcher government's justification for privatisation was that public ownership was inefficient and private capital is inherently superior as it is subjected to the competition of market discipline.

As a result, desired outcomes of such neoliberalist reformers are the creation of "quasi-market" for education and other public goods. Steven C. Ward argues that "since the privatization of education would need to move more slowly than in other parts of the public sector, quasi market incentives could be put in place first to mimic the market and "acclimatize clients" before full privatization."

Universities as a Contested Space

Neo-liberalism has got aligned with neo-conservatism or what Michael W. Apple calls *conservative restoration* under the leadership of authoritarian populism and fraction of the upwardly mobile new middle class which has unconditional support for creating space for 'reform' as per the demands of market and global requirement. India has too witnessed such reforms since 1991 officially. This reform has valued fault in the individual if one is poorly educated and not in the society.

Since 2000 number of private universities came into existence in India not only in the field of professional education but also on the name of providing liberal education and existing public universities becoming the battlefield for ideological

contestation and loyalty towards certain beliefs. This development is redefining the relationship between university and society and university education taking a new meaning.

Undoubtedly, both private and public universities serve society in their own way, by providing professionals, expertise, ideas of different kind. However, increased privatisation since post economic liberalisation and universities coming under the control of corporates has taken a new dimension. This form of privatisation is based not only on profit but also on values like individualism, quantification, efficiency, ranking, and promotion of audit culture. The principles of managerialism in running the governance of universities is getting momentum. Because of increased privatisation the relation between corporates and university are getting strengthened consequently pressure to produce knowledge having utilitarian value is given highest priority.

It is in this changing context not only educational ideals are being compromised but spaces of critical questions are also getting side-lined. New ideas or intellectual space of university allow scientific and social progress which comes through nonconformity, ability to support critical thinking, challenging prevailing orthodoxy, and enabling students to think critically and differently and moreover to become self-critical to bring social change. University should be a space of intellectual enthusiasm. Therefore, university must also raise questions that society does not want to ask and generate new ideas that help invent the future, at times even “pushing” society towards it as higher in higher education lies in the value to the public at large for common good.

University has to fulfil the society’s everchanging demands but university does not have to lose its intellectual insight. Moreover, whether its private or public must serve the public purpose and trust. It has to make a balance between philosophical, foundational impulse and society popular demands and beliefs. It should result in cooperation and not the destruction of weaker by the stronger. Keeping the future of society in mind state and society will have to realise in the ideals of university.

In order to fulfil the task of university it requires a curriculum which promote forms of critical and illuminating knowledge what Habermass has conceptualised as ‘emancipatory knowledge’ which allow students to reappraise existing social norms and reflect critically on the dominant social, political and economic institutions of contemporary society. Pedagogically it requires participatory rather than instructional teaching methods to cultivate critical and creative mind. Education should equip men and women to engage with reality in a critical and creative manner and help in transforming the world in a more democratic, inclusive

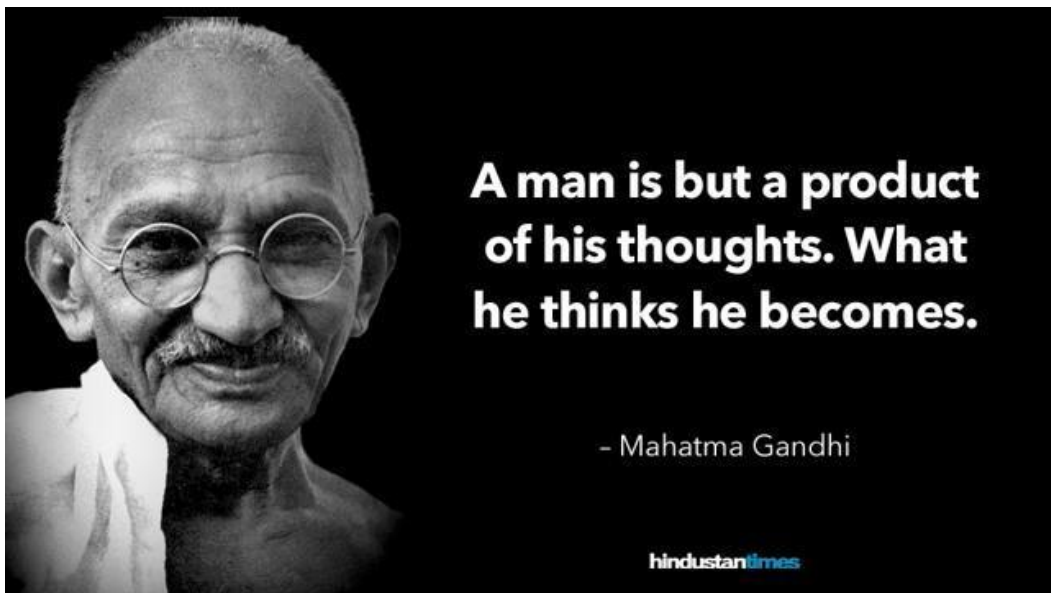
system to become what Paulo Freire says ‘the practice of freedom’. It is possible when education is interrogated with open and critical inquiry mind with dialogic intent rather than corporate power or ideological beliefs.

This task has become important in the background of recent surge of global pandemic Covid-19. Global pandemic left humanity in a confused and uncertain situation. Nikolas Rose Professor of Sociology at Kings College London has rightly pointed out that “Covid-related mental distress must be addressed by tackling its social roots”. The experience of people during pandemic has been described by Kleinman Das and Lock as “social suffering”: the embodied consequences of the experience of multiple disadvantages grounded in structural social inequality. This suffering is also embedded in socio-economic, political structures which limits the individual to realize their potential It is in this background there is a need to attach the greater value of “knowledge for knowledge ‘s sake” as universities tasks besides producing professionals is also to broaden the mind, to overcome the narrowness and show vision and possibilities that lie ahead. Only disinterested pursuit of knowledge can lead towards the quest of human existence. Here comes the very idea of university.

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CHAMPARAN SATYAGRAHA AND MAHATMA GANDHI

Dr. Veena Devasthali,
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Thumb Printed : Champaran Indigo Peasants Speak to Gandhi, Volume I, Edited by Shahid Amin, Tridip Suhrud and Megha Todi, jointly published by National Archives of India, New Delhi and Navjivan Trust, Ahmedabad, 2022 (1xv + 307, Rs. 500/-)

Introduction :

Champaran *satyagraha* is one major milestone in the history of colonial India. The towering personality associated with the struggle of the indigo peasants of Champaran district of Bihar was Mahatma Gandhi. He had already made waves in India on account of his campaigns in South Africa. After his return from South Africa in 1915 the first active involvement of Mahatma Gandhi in India was the struggle of the indigo peasants of Champaran district in Bihar against the indigo planters and the factories. The struggle of the indigo peasants was going on for several decades (nearly a century) prior to Gandhiji's arrival in Champaran. But after his arrival the events proceeded at a very fast pace leading first to the appointment of The Champaran Agrarian Enquiry Committee and subsequently passing of the Champaran Agrarian Bill, 1917.

The most novel feature of Gandhiji's *satyagraha* was the recording of the testimonies of the thousands of indigo peasants of Champaran district. This strategy was extremely well thought out and executed by Mahatma Gandhi with the help of the equally committed team of lawyers and other workers. This recording was done in a very methodical way. Detailed instructions were given by Mahatma Gandhi himself to those who were actively engaged in the recording of these testimonies (Appendix XIII). After the testimonies were recorded and thoroughly cross-examined, the thumb imprint of the concerned peasant was put on the testimony and it was counter signed by the lawyer who recorded the testimony.

Shahid Amin first came across the original testimonies in the National Archives of India in 2009. It was 10 years later that he along with Tridip Suhrud and Megha Todi started work on this project. It is through the painstaking compilation of the three editors with the support of National Archives, New Delhi and Navjivan Trust, Ahmedabad that the story of the immense suffering of the indigo peasants is available in their own words. Apart from 378 original testimonies (165 principal

testators and 213 supportive, collaborative) from 50 villages the volume comprises two essays titled – ‘The Small Voice of History’ by Shahid Amin and ‘Reproducing Voices, Inhabiting Champaran’ by Tridip Suhrud and Megha Todi. The volume also contains 18 Appendices and a detailed chronology of the Champaran episode. The extensive explanatory notes and the footnotes compiled by Shahid Amin, Tridip Suhrud and Megha Todi add to the richness of the contribution of the two essays. The details provided in these notes enable the reader to understand the then prevailing agrarian system. This is the first of the nine volumes that are proposed to be published

The Small Voice of History :

The journey of the testimonies traced by Shahid Amin in his introductory essay is very interesting. It was an accidental discovery. In August 1955, Shridhar Vasudev Sohoni, the Commissioner of Tirhut division ‘*chanced upon a worm eaten bundle of papers*’ (p. xiv). It was the collection of testimonies which was initiated by Mahatma Gandhi with the able assistance of Rajendra Prasad who then was the President of India. Rajendra Prasad was delighted to hear about this discovery and ordered copies to be made of these testimonies. It was K. K. Datta who conveyed to the Indian Historical Records Commission about its discovery in 1958. Thereafter through Mritunjay Prasad, son of Rajendra Prasad eight folio volumes along with the index were handed over to the National Archives, New Delhi in 1973 – i.e. 56 years after they were originally recorded in 1917.

This essay by Shahid Amin gives a very comprehensive perspective on the testimonies of the Champaran struggle. He elaborately describes the story of the onerous conditions under which the indigo peasants toiled for the *nilhe* (plantation owners) of Champaran. He explains how the indigo cultivation ruthlessly interfered with the freedom of decision making of the farmers. The farmers had no right over the selection of crops or the allocation of land for different crops. This interference extended to other occupations as well. He describes how *chamars* also lost customary rights to the hides and skins of the dead animals in the villages. They in turn could no longer supply footwear to the villagers. A new power relation had come into existence with the entry of the indigo planters. Shahid Amin very clearly brings out the marathon way in which Gandhiji carried out the Champaran campaign since he arrived there in April 1917. His keen desire to make inquiries about the indigo situation in Champaran led to a very novel method viz recording the stories of the suffering of the indigo peasants in their own words. He prepared a very detailed note on the method of recording the testimonies for the recorders / transcribers. Shahid Amin states, ‘*what Gandhi had in mind was – a collation for immediate use, for his personal understanding of the situation, and as historical document*’ (p. xv). In the recording of the testimonies he was assisted by an equally committed Babu Rajendra Prasad and a team of lawyers from Champaran district.

This was an open public gathering of the evidence most often in the presence of the local officials. In a very short period of two months Gandhiji had completed the gigantic task of recording the testimonies of the thousands of peasants. He narrates that '*this very Gandhian mode of eliciting the information was a*

radical move that encouraged the peasants to speak about their lived experiences' (p. xviii). How the dominance of the factories extended far beyond the immediate control over the agriculture is brought out by a few testimonies discussed by him in the essay. The essay also brings out the linguistic aspect of the testimonies. The difficulties encountered in translating and transcribing the voices of the peasants have been clearly illustrated in the essay.

Recording Voices, Inhabiting Champaran :

The essay by Tridip Suhrud and Megha Todi have put the background to the exploitation of the indigo peasants, their unrest and agitation in the proper context. Almost right from the beginning since its establishment in 1600, East India Company was interested in indigo trade. By 1660 it was a dominant concern of the Company. Though in the beginning indigo production was the monopoly of the Company soon the servants of the company entered indigo trade and subsequently production of indigo after taking due permission of the factory. They trace that indigo cultivation began in North Bihar in 1782. The first major act of disturbance was recorded by the indigo peasants of Bengal in 1860 against the unjust and inhuman practice of indigo cultivation. This being too soon after the revolt of 1857 the government appointed Indigo Commission. The jurisdiction of the commission was restricted to Bengal. After the recommendations of the commission the indigo cultivation was no longer profitable in Bengal. Thus it was around 1860 that indigo cultivation got a boost in some parts of North Bihar – particularly Tirhut and Champaran.

They go further to describe the system of land holding, tenancy and modes of production. They rightly argue that without the proper understanding of the same it is not possible to understand the miserable conditions of the indigo peasants. The upheavals explained by the duo which were caused on account of the synthetic production of dye, the decline in the demand for the natural indigo leading to the reduction in the area under indigo cultivation, the rise again in the demand for natural indigo after the outbreak of the first world war and the restrictions on German products have been very useful to understand the situation with respect to the indigo cultivation. Various methods of indigo cultivation have been explained in the essay. The most notorious was the *tinkathia* system. They explain why the peasants found tinkathia system so oppressive. The duration of the agreement called *satta* was usually of 20 to 30 years. Under this agreement the factory

selected the best part of the land to cultivate indigo. The peasants had no freedom

to decide the same. With the entry of the synthetic dye when the demand for the natural indigo declined the factories charged compensation from the peasants to free them from tinkathia system and thereby transferred their losses to the peasants. The factories charged the peasants *tawan* (a lump sum amount) in lieu of commutation of obligation to cultivate indigo. They also explain the *sarabheshi* agreements (enhanced rents) and the system of *abwabs* (illegal cesses) which was rampantly prevalent in the district and made the lives of the indigo peasants miserable. A detailed list of the kinds of *abwabs* charged by the factories has been given in Appendix XII. In short they sketch a vivid pictures of how – *‘Planters had thus created a system that entrapped tenants in every possible manner, extracted every legal and illegal levy, pushing tenants into an existence of perpetual debt, penury, fear and exploitation’* (p. xlvii).

There were protests against this exploitative system. They trace the first recorded indigo disturbance in Champaran to 1867. These went on well into the next century. The provincial newspapers covered these incidences and the voices were raised in legislative assemblies as well. In December 1916 Raj Kumar Shukla went to Lucknow to raise the voice of the Indigo peasants in the session of Indian National Congress. He met Gandhiji at Lucknow. Although Gandhiji did not move or speak on the proposed legislation he agreed to visit Champaran at some future date to understand the prevailing situation in Champaran. This brings out how Gandhiji wanted to familiarize himself fully with the issues before deciding the plan of action. This meeting between Raj Kumar Shukla and Gandhiji was beginning of a very memorable period in the history of the struggle of indigo peasants of Champaran.

The entire period from the day Gandhiji arrived in Champaran on 10th April 1917 till he left Motihari on 30th and Patna on 31st January, 1918 has been covered in detail. There are interesting official despatches within the government circles even prior to the arrival of Gandhiji in Champaran. Tridip Suhrud and Megha Todi give a vivid account of the way Gandhiji planned and implemented his campaign. In a remarkably short period of time the recording of thousands of testimonies was completed. While this work was going on Gandhiji was also dealing with government machinery. Gandhiji decided to disobey the order served on him to vacate the district. The government backed down from this order and requested Gandhiji to submit the report based on his inquiry to the government. Gandhiji submitted a preliminary report to the government based on 4000 testimonies that he had collected till then. The Agrarian Enquiry Committee was appointed soon

after this with Gandhiji as a member of the committee. The report was signed by all the members on 3rd October, 1917. Gandhiji also tried to open schools in the district. Unfortunately this could not sustain due to his inability to get the volunteers from the district or from other parts of Bihar. '*With Champaran he ceased to be Mr. Gandhi who had agitated Indians in South Africa*' (p. lxv). With this first successful struggle Gandhiji became fully involved with the ongoing freedom movement in India.

Testimonies :

The volume contains 378 testimonies of the total 7000 collected by the team of Mahatma Gandhi. Some of the testimonies were signed but a very large number of them had thumb impressions. These testimonies are the lived experiences of the indigo peasants. The pace at which these testimonies were collected is simply unbelievable. These bring out the keen desire of Gandhiji to understand the situation from the actual sufferers. One may say that these testimonies are a collection of similar stories. But what comes out is the confirmation of the severely oppressive system narrated by the peasants who were suffering under the same and its wide spread across the district. The most persistent grievances that were reported were the *tinkathia* system and the *sarahbeshi* agreement. The deep rooted resentment against the *tinkahtia* system and the forcible acceptance of *sarahbeshi* agreements clearly comes across through the testimonies. In addition to this the peasants were made to pay various kinds of abwabs. Their labour, carts, cattle, ploughs were taken forcibly by the factories. The peasants narrated the inhuman treatment they received from the *amlas* (factory employees) for not accepting the notorious *sarahbeshi* agreement such as beating, detaining in factory premises, payment of fines, subjecting the family members to similar harassment, taking away the utensils, other household items, ornaments, claiming the trees on the leased land, involving them in civil and criminal cases and so on. Even women received similar treatment. In short Gandhiji mentioned, an utter helplessness prevailed in Champaran at the time these testimonies were recorded, which he had not witnessed in any part of India where he had travelled (p. 239). These testimonies reveal the terror under which the peasants were living. It is interesting to read how even while experiencing utter helplessness the peasants also tried to protest in various ways and finally submitting only under the conditions of extreme duress.

Appendices :

There are 18 Appendices included in this volume. They are not only very interesting but also extremely important as the source material for the researchers. The original letter by Raj Kumar Shukla inviting Mahatma Gandhi to Champaran

district is given in Appendix I. This letter initiated one of the most important episodes of tremendous historical significance of the colonial period. The detailed list of *abwabs* (Appendix XII) enables the readers to understand the extent of the exploitation of the peasants. The detailed instructions given by Gandhiji (Appendix XIII) for the recording of the testimonies bring out their methodological significance. The preliminary report (which is based on nearly 4000 testimonies) submitted by Gandhiji to the government (Appendix XVI) is extremely illuminating. Though it was prepared in a very short period of time it describes the then prevailing situation in a very comprehensive manner.

The Report of the Champaran Agrarian Enquiry Committee (Appendix XVII) is also very comprehensive and brings out the prevailing agrarian system and the exploitation of the peasants in an elaborate manner. The Champaran Agrarian Bill, 1917 (as passed in the Council) (Appendix XVIII) brings out the satisfactory settlement of the struggle of the indigo peasants.

The entire chronology of *satyagraha* given in the end highlights that within a period of six months i.e. from the day Gandhiji arrived in Patna on 10th April and Motihari on 15th April, 1917, the Champaran Agrarian Enquiry Committee report was signed by all the members including Gandhiji on 3rd October, 1917. It was possible partly because of the tremendous mobilization of thousands of workers that Gandhiji managed by way of the public recording of the testimonies of the indigo peasants along with his committed team of lawyers and other workers.

This volume is very aptly titled. Gandhiji played tremendous role in enabling the indigo peasants to raise their voices fearlessly and in their own words. That record of their voices is authenticated by the thumb imprints on the testimonies. One can only marvel at this huge public experiment in collecting the evidence. It is a very comprehensive document of one of the most important struggles of the colonial period. Thanks to all the three editors that an extremely rich resource of archival record is available now to the researchers, Gandhian scholars and all others who are interested in the history of colonial India. The forthcoming volumes will undoubtedly add to the contribution of this record.

BOOK REVIEW

Dr. Hubnath Pandey (2021) *Kabir Vimarsh*, Mumbai Hindi Academy, Mumbai.

**Reviewer: Dr. Pradnya Anil Bhoosekar,
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The book 'Kabir Vimarsh' has been edited by Dr. Hubnath Pandey who is Professor of Hindi Vibhag at Mumbai Vishwavidyalaya. The book is published by Mumbai Hindi Academy, Mumbai in the year 2021.

This book has 10 chapters in all which are written by eminent scholars on the subject. Book has 6 chapters written in Hindi and 4 chapters written in English.

The book begins with the introduction by Dr. Manisha Karne, coordinator of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Antarrashtriya Sanshodhan Kendra. She has explained vision and mission of this center and basic purpose of publishing this particular book.

Dr. Hubnath Pandey writes editors point of view titled 'Hum na Marihe' and makes the reader understand as to how Kabir's thought will help everyone face tough times and overcome difficult situations like the COVID 19 pandemic.

Chapter 1: Anandghan aur Kabir: This chapter is written Dr. Kumar Pal Desai, who is ex professor of Gujrathi in Gujrat Vidyapeeth, and great drama and literature writer who was honored with Padmashri award. The chapter explains the style and subject covered by Anandghan. Chapter also provides information regarding similarities and difference of Anadghan and Kabir like they both have same views about Hindu- Muslim unity. Both the poet express their personalities in their poems.

Chapter 2: Kabir: Avdharnaonka Punaravishkar: This chapter, written by Prof Chitranjan Mishra who is ex professor of Hindi Vibhag at Deendayal Upadhyay Vishwvidyalaya, Gorkhpur. The chapter elaborates Kabir's thoughts and goes on

to prove that Kabir's poems are more like reinvention of old concepts. Kabir has different thoughts on charity, dissipation of knowledge and salvation etc. Kabir

states that saints are recognized by their nature and not by their clothes and anything else. In Kabir's point of view saints should have no dispute with anyone. Instead of fighting for religion one should try to be good person. Kabir always attacked wrong beliefs in any religion. Kabir's poem gives differing views of religious concepts and nomenclature. The chapter presents main features of Kabir's poems which support to removing of wrong beliefs.

Chapter 3: Kabir Sahitya- Bazaarwaad: This chapter is written by Dr. Ratan Kumar Pandey who is ex professor of Hindi Vibhag, University of Mumbai. Bazaarwaad is marketism. The chapter attempts to give Kabir's idea about marketism. Kabir spreads the message that greed should be according to the need. Paper gives idea about how concept of marketism was shared by Kabir. Author gives *Kabir's dohe (couplets)* to support his statements. Kabir promotes importance of Bhakti - Business in life

Chapter 4: Kabir ke naari sambandh ke vichar: This chapter is written by Dr. Birodevi Krushna Ramotra who is ex professor of Hindi Vibhag of Rajaram Shasakeeya Mahavidyalya Kolhapur. In this chapter author has discussed status of women since ancient period. at the time of Kabir woman is treated as a commodity for consumption, a widow was treated as inauspicious. A woman used to get respect only if she is a mother. The chapter gives information about Kabir's view about women.

- Nari ka Asat Roop
- Nari ka Sat Roop
- Nari ka Kumari Roop
- Nari ka Mata Roop
- Nari ka Parkeeya Roop

In all this version kabir always appreciate women as *maata*.

Chapter 5: Kabeer Ki Prasangikta: This chapter is written by Vashishta Anup who is professor of Hindi Vibhag Kashi Hindu Vishwa Vidyalaya, Varanasi. The chapter highlights importance of Kabir as a preacher who spreads religious truth. Kabir was a good observer and pointed out disorders of the society. The chapter further gives messages that Kabir criticizes of laying importance on the external of religion. He equally criticized Brahmin, Muslim, Sikh, Mullah. Paper highlights the Kabir's thought of God as omnipresent and ignores narrow mindedness of two communities. The chapter supports Kabir's doha in Hindi for reference.

Chapter 6: *Sant Kabir aur Peer Shams ke Adhyatmchintan ka Tulnatmak Adhyayan:* The chapter is written by Dr Urvashi Pandya who is professor of

Gujrathi Vibhag, Mumbai Vishwavidyalaya.

Paper gives comparative study of Saint Kabir who was a Nirgun Sadhak and Peer Shams who was a follower of Muslim religion.

The chapter is presented in three parts:

1. Bhakti moment and related literature
2. During this period social and cultural aspects covered by Kabir and peer Shams
3. Literature created by both of them through social thinking

This chapter gives detail description of bhakti of three period and information regarding Peer shams. Paper focusses detail information regarding Peer Parampara.

Chapter 7: *Kabir- text and context:* This chapter is written by Divya Jyoti who is a research scholar at Jawaharlal Nehru University. This paper seeks to contextualize and critically analyse the debate on Kabir's identity and language and his criticism of institutional religion. Hagiographies of Kabir form an important part in understanding his socio religious, historical and political context. The Kabir's idea of Bhakti was simple that bhakti was centered on an individual who is not blinded by the rituals. He gave importance to mind than any other god. According to Kabir internalization of an ethical divine force which requires human beings to act morally and reasonably and remembering God in each and every breath one takes. Author has done huge reference for writing this paper. Kabir's poem often finds examples of how ritual often constructs the body.

Chapter 8: *Kabir and Ambedkar on Religious Traditions: Critiques and Reconstructions:* This chapter is written by Dr Amita Valmiki who is Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy Ramniranjan Jhunjhunwala College of Arts, Science and Commerce (Autonomous) Ghatkopar. The author highlights that both Kabir and Dr Ambedkar had a view that all the religions teach liberty, equality and fraternity. Both of them felt that the religion is inappropriate structurally and ontologically and intended to deconstruct the religion and make it a democratic one based on humanity. The author has also found similarities in the thoughts of western thinkers and Kabir and Ambedkar.

Chapter 9: *Kabir's Religion: Religion That Underlies all Religion:* This chapter is written by Dr Vasudev Manohar Athalye who is Associate professor,

Department of English, Gogte Joglekar College, Ratnagiri. The chapter focusses to study Kabir's views on religion in the context of social religious and political

situation. The author attempts to understand ideas and practice of Kabir's views on religion. Kabir always insist love and devotion which is the best way to meet God because God is omnipresent. The chapter begins with definitions of eastern and western thinkers like Dr Radhakrishnan, William James etc. This chapter covers four aspects of religion which Kabir has explained

- Nature of God, brahman or divine
- The pathway to God
- The transformation it brings
- True master and true discipline or devotee.

The chapter concludes with following views on Kabir.

- Kabir was good observer critic of the society
- He opposed wrong practices in society
- He taught inward spirituality and outward ritualism
- He was opponent of caste and image worship
- Love of God and love of humanity were fundamental basis of religion

Chapter 10: *Treatment of Mysticism in Kabir's Poetry*: This chapter is written by Dr. A. P. Pandey Principal VIVA college of Arts, Science and Commerce Virar. The chapter explains about mysticism, meaning and explanation regarding it and history, use of it in different religions. The author examines Kabir as a mystic poet. Shankaracharya's theory of Adwaita seems to have impacted deep on Kabir's thought. Kabir's mysticism can broadly be divided into three heads,

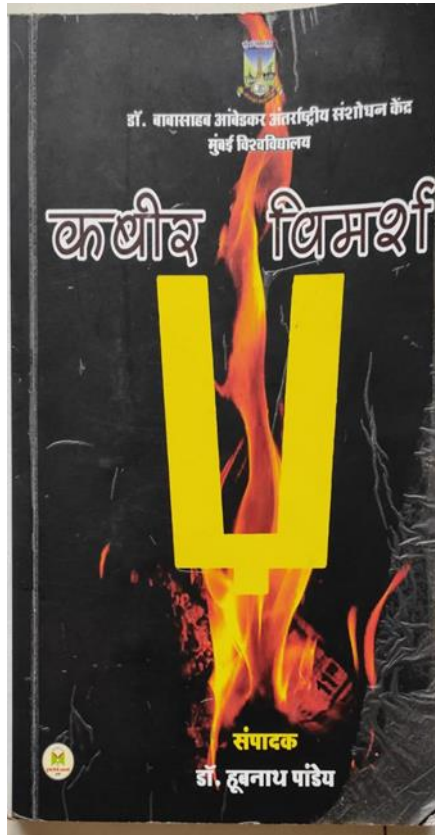
- Emotional mysticism
- Meditational Mysticism.
- Nature mysticism

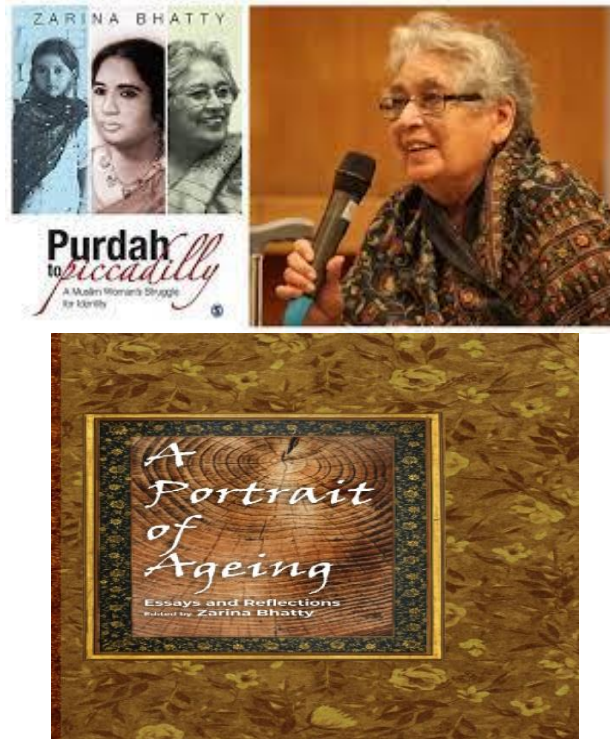
Cover page of the book is very attractive and impressive which tells abstract of Kabir's thoughts. Being follower of the Ramanadi sampraday the biggest vaishnav cult the cover page is depicting it's symbol Urdhwapundra . Kabir had stood against all evil customs and traditions in the society . It is symbolically represented by burning of texts and scriptures.

Conclusion

The book shares detail information about Kabir's life and verses. Kabir has been one of the most important figures in the religious and political history of India. He

is poet, social reformer, has done great work for Hindu Muslim unity. He is founder of modern India. Main aim of his writing is to spread the message that there is no difference between God and human being as God exist in all human beings. There is difference of opinion about Kabir's birth and name., date of birth. Authors of the chapters are very well-known personalities in their fields. They have written scholarly papers and references are given under the chapters. All references are books and primary sources. Authors have included Kabir's poems to support their views in English and Hindi. Authors attempt to connect Kabir's literature to today's situation is very remarkable e.g. He respect women as mother than Kumari. Today whole world is facing inter religion conflicts. Kabir never accepts importance of any religion, caste. He gives equal importance to the other religions. Authors have titled their chapters very attractively and meaningfully. When I read this book, I was motivated to read more literature about Kabir by other writers. As a librarian I would recommend my literature students to read this book.





TRIBUTE TO PROF. ZARINA BHATTY (1933-2023)

by Prof. Vibhuti Patel

Prof. Zarina Bhatti was a great educationists who contributed for women's studies in terms of teaching, training, research, documentation and active involvement in the women's rights movement.

Zarina Bhatti was born in the year 1933, grew up and completed her school education in Lucknow in an extended family of grandparents, parents, siblings, uncles, aunts, cousins.

After her marriage, she completed her bachelor's in sociology and political science and masters in Sociology from *London School of Economics, UK*. She also completed her Ph.D. against tremendous opposition from the family.

After relocating from London, she to Delhi, she taught at the college of the *University of Delhi* for 10 years. She worked as a gender expert for several international

agencies including International Labour Organisation, *International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)* and *Asian Development Bank (ADB)* during her 50 years of active career that demanded extensive travelling and field work within India and abroad. She faced all the challenges in her personal and public life with dignity and poise. She was elected as the *President of Indian Association for Women's Studies (IAWS)* for its for the 10th National Conference of IAWS where the main theme was “Sustaining Democracy: Challenges in the New Millennium”. She also provided leadership to *Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)*, New Delhi. In 2015, she was awarded the *Devi Awards*.

Prof Zarina's writings and studies are not only poignant and moving but are always inspiring. She was a stalwart in conducting grounded researches on women in the informal sector of economy and advocated for social security and social protection of unorganised sector workers. She authored an inspiring autobiography (2016) depicting her roller-coaster journey of life, titled, *Purdah To Piccadilly—A Muslim Woman's Struggle For Identity*, Sage Publication and edited volume (2022), *A Portrait of Ageing: Essays and Reflections*, published by Destiny Media. She was much ahead of her time in terms of her life choices, academic and research engagements and feminist commitments. She was popularly known as Zarina Apa.

Prof. Zarina Bhatti was a secular humanist and committed to feminist principles of gender justice and social justice. She touched lives and inspired 4 generations of men/women/children. She had a youthful charm even in her 80s and kept in touch with her friends and travellers in the women's movement through social media even after her failing health. She enjoyed tremendous good will due to her warm and welcoming smile, readiness to share knowledge, engaging style of storytelling, persuasive approach in argument and a quest for knowledge construction with an aim for justice.

We pay our homage to this iconic figure and will always remember her through her writings.

HOMAGE TO CHANDITA MUKERJEE (1953-2023)

By Prof. Vibhuti patel



I remember Chandita Mukherjee (20-4-1952 to 18-4-2023) as a helpful, self-effacing and highly refined comrade. During 1980-1985, Chandita provided all audio-visual support for Forum Against Rape/ Forum Against Oppression of Women campaigns. After our weekly meeting, Chandita and Anjali Bombay Monteiro would quietly come and ask what could they could do for the rally/demonstrations/public meeting. At the event, they would reach with posters/placards and take photographs of the event.

During 1980-1983, Chandita took photographs of all our demonstrations, rallies, sit-ins and generously shared with the mainstream media to go along with the reports by journalists. Chandita would visit colleges and community based organisations as a representative of AVEHI to present slideshow of 'Women and Reproductive Health' (*Kahani Nahanyachi*) and patiently answer questions of young adults. AVEHI Slide-show on Menstruation was organised also in bustees and classrooms by us. Chandita would politely answer all queries of the

participants.

When COMET Media produced, 13 episodes of '*Bharat Ki Chapp*' under leadership of Chandita, it became an important resource to explain history of science and technology in India.

When I met Chandita as a new-comer to Bombay in 1977, she introduced me to the Cultural Centre of the House of the Soviet Union in Mumbai, as I wanted to borrow prints of Sergei Eisenstein's "Battleship Potemkin" and "Strike" for screening in the meetings of trade unions- HMS, AITUC, CITU and Vadodara Kamdar Union in Vadodara. At that time I was staying in the working women's hostel, Bhagini Samaj on the 3rd floor of VIKAS Apartments, just above their meeting place which was a flat on the 2nd floor of the same building. On 26th January, 2009, Neela Bhagwat - a noted feminist classical singer, lyricist and composer invited for lunch her feminist friends who had been associated for over 3 decades. It was a memorable meeting. All of us were nostalgic about our collective efforts in the women's movement-Sonal Shukla from VACHA, Chandita Mukherjee from COMET Media, Anjali Monterio from School of Culture-TISS, Shanta Gokhale renowned art- critique, Lalitha Dhara-author of series on 19th century social reformers and activist with YWCA and Women Networking, Vijaya Chauhan from UNICEF (retired), a veteran Feminist Aruna Burte and myself shared challenges faced in our journey in the social movements.

On 6-3-2009, SNTD Women's University, Mumbai had collaborated with Vacha Charitable Trust to commemorate 8th March in our Committee Room where short films made by girls from VACHA, who were trained by Chandita, were screened. Chandita's We felicitated Chandita who was not prepared for so many nice things being told about her by so many of us!! She blushed.

Women rights and Women's Studies movement salutes documentary film maker and media activist, Chandita Mukherjee for her commitment to Development Media for Equity and Social Justice.

OBITUARY TO PROF. MARIA MIES (1931-2023)

By Prof. Vibhuti Patel



Veteran Feminist, Prof. Maria Mies (1931-2023) passed away.

During late 1970s, I was active in Socialist Women's Group that worked with the working class women; and debated paid and unpaid work, production of life and reproductive labour of women in our study circle. We were also bringing out newsletter, *Feminist Network* that connected us with newly forms feminist clusters in several cities of India. One of them was Stree Shakti Sangathana in Hyderabad through whom we got to know of Maria Mies. At that time she had concluded her field work of a very important study on lace makers of Narsapur (Andhra Pradesh). During the International Women's Decade, (1975-85), International Labour Organisation had come up with Women, Work and Development series in which her study was published. She shared her book . She was an established academician interested in research on women's role in economic development and how unpaid work benefitted capitalist systems. Maria introduced us to dual approach of world capitalism with a common goal of subordination of women by 'housewifization of while women' and 'super exploitation of coloured women ' in its drive for capital accumulation. In 1979 when she established the Women

and Development Programme at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, Netherlands, her regular interactions provided inspiration to newly emerging autonomous women's organisations and women's studies centre.

I still have vivid memory of her session on 'Methodological guidelines for feminist research' at the workshop organised at Indian School of Political Economy. She exposed us to an alternative, feminist and decolonial, approach in research methodology and ethics of participatory action research; knowledge construction for social transformation based on egalitarian principles.

Thorough her grounded research, Maria showed how women's labour gets devalued and exploited under capitalism that treats poor women of colour as a 'last colony'. Intersectional perspective put forward by Maria in her academic writings while deconstructing dynamics of capitalism thriving on patriarchal control over women's sexuality, fertility and labour and colonial exploitation and Maria's firm belief that women's liberation is intertwined with the larger social movements striving for distributive justice and environmental justice; were found most convincing by the socialist feminist scholars of the South.

Maria was warm and friendly, had a big heart and faith in global sisterhood. During late 1970s till 1990, we used to meet and interact with Prof. Maria Mies regularly in the workshops, study circles, consultations, conferences and meetings of Feminist International Network on Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering (FINRRAGE). After 2 weeks of passing away of Maria, we lost another stalwart of FINRRAGE, Prof. Jalna Hanmer. Both Maria Mies and Jalna Hanmer invited me to join FINRRAGE (Feminist International Network on Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering) and be its country representative. While introducing me to the gathering in Berlin in 1988, Maria said, "Vibhuti has coined term for Indian women as 'endanger species' as an abuse of scientific technique of sex determination and sex selection is resulting in femicide". In this FINRRAGE conference, I was invited to speak on 'Sex Determination Test and Femicide' and on "Sexist, Racist and Classist biases of Population Control Policies'. There was a huge participation of women from the industrialised world who were fighting against new reproductive technologies. To energise the participants; I began with the most popular song of the reproductive rights and reproductive autonomy movement by the Australian feminist band, a parody (that changed from actual 'intra uterine device (IUD)' that was used on mass of women in poor countries to imaginary 'intra penis device' (IPD). This song exposed utter brutality of vertically imposed, bureaucratically mismanaged and barbaric practices against women from the postcolonial countries, in the name of population control that violated dignity and bodily integrity of women. All

participants including Maria joined me in singing; women participants and children were also dancing. I goes like this,

I sing you all a song, about a wonderous new device,
A nation's latest contraceptive plan,
A funny little object they call the IUD,
Is guaranteed to fit an average man.
It's IPD, It's IPD, It may feel too good to you,
But it is not hurting me.
So every time the pain begins to feel your eyes with tears,
Remember I put up with it for years.

They tested it on whales,
they tried it out on mice,
they used it in the poorer paths of town,
It is cleverest invention since the automatic life,
Guaranteed to never let you down.
It's IPD, It's IPD, It may feel too good to you,
But it is not hurting me.
So every time the pain begins to feel your eyes with tears,
Remember I put up with it for years.

Now, some people are never satisfied,
So scientists are working once again,
They have found something better than the good old IUD,
Moring after pill for men.
It is pill that is better than the IPD, it may not be too safe,
But you will have to wait and see,
So set aside your worries, and put way your fears,
Remember I put up with it for years.

At the meeting of the working group of FINRRAGE, I got to meet feminists working on reproductive rights, from Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, USA, Scandinavian and European countries. All of us had come to the meeting with our publications- reports, newsletters, journals, books, resolutions, statements and posters. I had carried copies of *In search of our bodies : a feminist look at women, health, and reproduction in India* that had also included this song by the Australian feminist band of 1980s.

Working with Maria, Jalna, Renate Cline on RAGE Bulletin published by Pergmon Press, UK was a great learning experience in transnational feminist solidarity.

Maria Mies whole heartedly supported our campaign against sex-determination and sex selection and highlighted sexist, racist, fascist and ableist biases of all new reproductive technologies based on principles of 'selection' and 'rejection'. She would aver, "Pro-natalist and anti-natalist policies of social engineering are two sides of the same coins."

Her inspirational writings based on grounded research and quotable quotes, 'coloured women as a last colony for capital accumulation', 'invisible hands of working class women' have been cited by us in our lectures, research reports, training programmes and study circles. Maria's books are included in the syllabi of Women's Studies and Gender and Development courses in India. The most popular of them are

- Mies, Maria (1980). *Indian Women and Patriarchy: Conflicts and Dilemmas of Students and Working Women*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing English translation of her Ph.D. thesis
- Mies, Maria (1982). *Lace Makers of Narsapur: Indian Housewives Produce for the World Market*. London: Zed Books.
- Mies, Maria (1986). *Patriarchy and Accumulation on A World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour*. London: Zed Books.
- Mies, Maria & Veronika B.T. (1988). *Women: The Last Colony*. London: Zed Books.
- Mies, Maria & Veronika B.T. (1999). *The Subsistence Perspective: Beyond the Globalised Economy*. London: Zed Books.

Legendary collaborative knowledge construction by Mies, Maria and Vandana Shiva (1993). *Ecofeminism* proved to be a guiding light to understand current challenges posed by climate change and to seek pathways for sustainable development.

RIP, Prof. Maria Mies, you will always be not only with us but also with the posterity, for your MUST-READ books and articles.

"The Earth has enough resources to meet the needs of all but not enough to satisfy the greed of even one person".

Mahatma Gandhi

OBITUARY

Dr. Harshada Rathod (1953-2023)
By Prof. Vibhuti Patel



Feeling extremely sad that our dear colleague, Dr. Harshadaben Rathod passed away on 13th June 2023. She was a great asset for Maniben Nanavati Women's College as well as the SNTD Women's University and was serving on many important Committees of the university till her demise. Her valuable contribution and commitment to empowerment of girls through education was unique. Under her supervision so many women scholars completed their Ph.D. dissertation. She led a simple life and financially supported the education of innumerable girls throughout her life.

I have fond memories of teaching at the Economics Department as an adjunct faculty MA and M.Phil. courses during the early 1980s when she was the sincerest student in the class. She was full of idealism and adhered to Gandhian values of simplicity, sweat-labour and high morals. Harshadaben became my colleague when I joined as a regular faculty in 1988 at Research Centre for Women's Studies, SNTDWU, Juhu Campus. She had enrolled for a 6 weeks course on '*Women in Changing India*' to prepare for the foundation course introduced in 1990. She

proactively took part in all activities- discussions, group work, poster making, singing, writing and reviewing. She stood out for her commitment, work ethics and honesty of purpose. After that it was always inspiring to work with her. She had close association with the Economics Departments of UG and PG Courses of all affiliated and conducted colleges of SNDTWU and the University Departments in Mumbai and Pune.

She was sincere, devoted and punctual in rendering her services, both as a principal of Maniben Nanavati Women's College and as a member of several decision making bodies of the SNTD Women's University. It was witnessed in everyone's love for her and an overwhelming response on email, WhatsApp, Facebook as well as in the *#In Memorium* at the SNDTWU on 15-6-2023 that was received from teachers, staff, scholars and past students when the sad news of untimely demise of Harshadaben were shared.

During her Principalship at Maniben Nanavati Women's College, Vile Parle (W), Dr. Harshada Rathod implemented excellent innovative programmes:

- carefully curated study tours,
- education with entertainment programmes,
- staff-development and gender sensitization workshops,
- research writing workshops for teachers,
- innumerable inter-collegiate events such as research paper competition, GenderLogues
- debates on the contemporary challenges faced by India and our planet
- State-National-International seminars/conferences within and outside India
- Documentary films on socially relevant themes
- Establishment of Centre for Gandhian Studies

Harshadaben had an unmatched energy. For me, She was 'a friend in need'. During the last 2 years of nursing my paralysed father, she not only gave useful tips and shared her experiences of looking after her ailing parents; but she also helped by personally carting a heavy box of hygiene products (in bulk) from the wholesale market in her neighbourhood. She never thought that it was beneath her dignity to personally carry the huge box from Ghatkopar to the college from where I would pick it up.

When Mumbai police conducted 'Operation Help' and rescued thousands of trafficked girls who were housed in 13 shelter homes of Mumbai; as a principal, Harshadaben opened the doors of the college for those girls who were eligible for

admission. and some of them were admitted to the junior college. She did this without any publicity and also while maintaining confidentiality about their painful past. These girls in difficult circumstances were given one-to-one counselling, hand holding in teaching and care for their dignity and safety. Now, several of them are leading respectable lives. I was most touched by this compassionate and life-changing action on the part of Harshadaben.

For her students and Ph.D. scholars, she played a role of mentor, guide & philosopher. It was an amazing experience working with her as she touched our heads and hearts. She set an example of a good human being, helpful colleague, proactive administrator, honest institution builder, hardworking researcher. She had bare minimum personal needs, believed in the dignity of labour, nurtured the younger generation with generosity of heart. She was a GIVER- of kindness, knowledge and support. Now, Dr. Harshada Rathod has made a permanent place in our hearts.

She will be remembered as an ideal teacher and a role model for the academic community. Rest in Peace, dear Harshadaben.

