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Editorial

Dissemination of one's research findings is an indispensable aspect of the research process. As per, the *Guidance document on Good Academic Research Practice* published by UGC, the goal of dissemination is to "inform the larger community of the findings of the research activity so that it becomes a part of the scientific knowledge base." The research findings immensely benefit other researchers, practitioners, policy-decision makers, and the public. *Al-Shodhana*, a multi-disciplinary refereed research journal offers such a platform by publishing original research papers from the teaching faculty and the research scholars belonging to the disciplines of Humanities, Social Sciences, Management and Business.

The current issue features six research papers across disciplines. Reji P John and E Thippeswamy's paper examines the level of cognizance of the health insurance schemes among Christian and Muslim households in Dakshina Kannada district. The paper indicates at the disparity in the level of awareness among the said communities, Hence, calls for a proper design, implementation and publicity of all the health insurance schemes of both the state and the central government.

Nafisa Shaja and Vishal Nayak study the impact of various appeals used in *Youtube* advertisements of insurance policies. The research makes use of Rhetorical Theory and Quantitative Content Analysis to elucidate the appeals in advertisements. The findings of the research indicate that most of the advertisements are logical in nature, and they use real time visuals and characters to convey messages. The researchers analysed the data using code sheet, dividing into different categories and sub categories based on the nature, significance, strategies, and stereotypes in advertisements. Vipin Chandran K P and Sandhya P deal with the transition of state policy from Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals in fighting issues related to health, nutrition, infrastructure, quality of education etc. They favour the SDGs as they seek to address not only the root causes of poverty but also the universal

need for sustained development to provide a life of dignity to all. Moreover, SDGs are more comprehensive in terms of global goals integrating the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development.

Analysing inputs from ministry documents related to foreign affairs and secondary data, Joyce Sabina Lobo examines individual perceptions, interests and opportunities availble for both India and Russia in the Indo-Pacific region. She argues that both nations should work towards the development of Growth Corridor in the central Asian Region, establish join collaborations, co-operate to enhance Indian naval capabilities, engage with in China trilateral agreement, diversify economic relationships, and enhance the focus on underdveloped regions of India's North East and Russia's Far East. Girish N and Nagya Naik discuss the second most represented role in science fiction i.e. mother. According to the authors Ridley Scott's *Alien* (1979) and James Cameron's *Aliens* challenge the stereotypical depiction of mother. The paper historicises the cultural, psychological and political aspects of coding the alien queen as monster feminine in James Cameron's *Aliens.*

I profusely thank the Principal of St Aloysius College (Autonomous), Rev Dr Praveen Martis SJ for his support. I'd like to thank all the contributors and all the members of the editorial board for their continuous support in publishing this issue.

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Dr Girish N
Editor-in-Chief

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HOW TO HAVE THEORY IN AN EPIDEMIC: NEUROCHEMICAL SELVES, IMMUNITIES AND NEW MEME-ORY CULTURES

Pramod K Nayar

Pandemics produce their own versions of and spins on literary-cultural Theory. As Paul Treichler's book, demonstrated, the constructions of the pathogen, victims and patients, the etiology of illness and the discourses of AIDS (her subject in the book) determine the framing of the disease.[i] In more recent studies Simon Cohn has shown how schizophrenics and bipolars incorporate the brain scan into their lives, their frames of 'living' the disease. He writes:

> the motive to have a scan, and their hope to take home a copy in the form of a printout or a set of image files, is ostensibly one driven by a search for legitimacy. This draws not only on the possibility of obtaining objective external markers of illness, but equally on the very subjective and hitherto largely concealed feelings, beliefs and experiences of living with a condition up until this time.[ii]

Cohn speaks of it as 'the imperative for materiality'.[iii] The scans are representations, but for the patients, they are also modes of explaining their selves, their symptoms and conditions, 'making it real' (in Cohn's phrase). It can disrupt their sense of illness and self, but also serve to elaborate a new self, to revise their 'old' one, argues Cohn:

> What is taken as "biological" by the patients is consequently not the possible causal base beneath their outward behavior that the scientists seek within the interior of the brain, but rather a definitive, overarching explanation of their diffuse experiences and intangible suffering that can be transposed as part of their experience of the condition.[iv]

That is, the scan and the diagnostic reports constitute a self in the patient-protagonist's account. Further, 'neurotalk', Suparna Choudhury and Jan Salby write in their introduction to Critical Neuroscience,

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pervades several domains of our everyday lives, beginning to exert various impacts on us through evolving "neuropolicies" and in some cases, by starting to transform our understanding of ourselves-as patients, consumers, students, teachers, and decision makers.[v]

Neurotalk appears in many forms in memoirs of Alzheimer's and Huntington's disease sufferers: diagnostic reports, popular representations of scientific progress, coverage of research.

This pandemic has been generating its own Covidian languages, from science to memes, poetry to prophylaxis. In what follows I outline a few moments in this new consciousness of ourselves. These are pointers for further exploration, and not a definitive study of Covidocene culture.

Our Neurochemical Selves

A report based on extensive market research begins:

> The global antidepressants market is expected to grow from $14.3 billion in 2019 to about $28.6 billion in 2020 as mental health issues are expected to surge due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic making an impact on the global economy. The market is expected to stabilize and reach $19 billion at a CAGR of 7.4% through 2023.[vi]

In the same week of April 2020, Nicole Lyn Pesce reports, citing a study by the University of Phoenix: 'More than 4 in 10 Americans are feeling loneliener now than ever before as a result of social distancing during the coronavirus outbreak'.[vii] In India, the University Grants Commission in numerous circulars and notices has asked institutions to monitor mental health of the students in the time of lockdown, uncertainties over the academic year and their workloads.

The psychological is one aspect of what Scott Slovic, in a recent presentation termed 'the Covid Mind'.[viii] If we expand this idea, the Covid Mind includes an increased interest in - and anxiety over - soaps, sanitizers, vitamins, immunity, vaccines and alternative systems of medication (palliative, therapeutic or anything else). We have got chemicals, molecules, the biochemistry of viruses and humans, on our mind. Welcome to our 'neurochemical selves' (Rose 2003), the self defined and constituted within the Covidocene.[ix]

Neurochemical selves are a particular instance of the Autobiological Self.[x] We now record our biological states. In the Covidocene our concern is with the following:

> The kinds of sanitizers, their form, percentage of alcohol, efficacy etc;
> We discuss endlessly vaccines and how they work;
> We have come to understand the chemical structure of viruses and other life forms;
> We even understand chemical processes through which the virus attacks and kills.

Further, we have been told, by various organizations and authorities, about symptoms, etiology and crisis engendered by infection. We infect others with not just viruses but also with anxieties.

Our neurochemical selves are constructed through the incorporation of the material- discursive chemicals around us. The pharma industry produces the chemicals, organizations and the state propound the use of them. Common knowledge, so to speak, popularizes them.

Reimagined Immunities

Priscilla Wald in her work on outbreak films in Hollywood noted that the myth of immunity has been debunked.[xi] The circuits of globalization that facilitate the movement of people, finance and materials also serve as the conduits for the transportation of bacteria and viruses.

A key feature of pandemics is the destruction of national borders through the intrusion and circulation of the pathogen. No community is safe, no national border inviolable. All immunity is imagined immunity.

In the age of the pandemic we have witnessed the breakdown of every form of immunity: financial-economic, political, social and of course the biomedical. The virus has proved extraordinarily effective, breaking through the human immunological barrier with consummate ease.

In the wake of the spreading pandemic, reports appeared that the US President sought the German pharma industry to manufacture the vaccine, if invented, for

the USA alone. Driven by the unimaginable collapse of its healthcare system and the rising body count, these offhand remarks from the head of state signalled the awareness of and anxiety over the American exceptionalism that has enabled its imperial march through the 20th century. America was not exceptional any longer and its borders, and that of its citizens, was as violable as anybody else. It was not immune, in other words. The President's attempts to obtain, exclusively, the vaccine was a last-ditch effort to retain this mythic immunity and exceptional status. UK's Brexit isolated it from the EU, but could not isolate from the virus. In an ironic return into the EU, Britain's vulnerability to the virus exposed, again, its porosity and common fate with the EU.

In a restaging of the *Lord of the Flies* scenario, stories of hoarding, black-marketing and victimization of alleged 'sources' of the virus appeared all over the world. Italy announced that senior citizens would not be allowed healthcare, since their healthcare sector was already overworked and overloaded due to the pandemic.[xii] Slavoj Zizek summarized it thus

> I don't think the biggest threat is a regression to open barbarism, to brutal survivalist violence with public disorders, panic lynching, etc. (although, with the possible collapse of health care and some other public services, this is also quite possible). More than open barbarism, I fear barbarism with a human face - ruthless survivalist measures enforced with regret and even sympathy but legitimized by expert opinions. A careful observer easily noticed the change in tone in how those in power address us: they are not just trying to project calm and confidence, they also regularly utter dire predictions - the pandemic is likely to take about two years to run its course, and the virus will eventually infect 60-70 percent of the global population, with millions of dead... In short, their true message is that we'll have to curtail the basic premise of our social ethics: the care for the old and weak.[xiii]

The presumed immunity of our social selves and social ethics has begun to erode.

The social breaks down in other ways too. The new call is to isolate oneself and to immunize oneself from the social (the slogan on the meme read: 'united we fall, divided we stand') in the age of safe distancing. The philosopher Catharine Malabou explicates the withdrawal from the social:

> I am on the contrary trying to be an "individual." This, once again, is not out of any individualism but because I think on the contrary that an epochè, a suspension, a bracketing of sociality, is sometimes the only access to alterity, a way to feel close to all the isolated people on Earth. Such is the reason why I am trying to be as solitary as possible in my loneliness.[xiv]

The valorisation of isolation by Malabou evoked a strong response from the Indians:

> the public self of men now quarantined is seeking compensation and an alleviation of their trivialized existence by imposing the burden of their boredom upon women. This is done by demanding efficient utilisation of homemaker's spare time - assumed to be plenty - and their time to spare (both becoming indistinguishable). Further, as consumerism has now been curtailed or limited by the closure of the public…[xv]

Immunization through isolation, self-imposed, had immediate but also long-lasting consequences for section of society that could or could not indulge in this practice, as Bikash Sharma and Shruti Sharma's response to Malabou captures.

We have begun to reimagine our immunities as developing from isolation and distancing. Ideas of inherited and herd immunity have begun to influence social behaviour and social psychology.

Making New 'Meme-ory' Lanes

Memes are the intertextual, conversational modes of the digital age. It is a cultural commodity. It has its own semiotics and ideological positions, made available in the form of very brief communicative methods. James Willmore and Daryl Hocking describe memes as

humorous or satiric digital texts involving multimedia content (e.g., static images, verbiage, audio, or video) that are repeatedly shared across the Internet...[xvi]

It is a complete genre, with its own rules. It is postmodern in the sense it appropriates pastiche, kitsch, fragmentary/fragmented narration. Bradley Wiggins terms the meme a cultural and social artefact,

> Whereas a cultural artifact offers information about the culture that creates and uses it … a social artifact informs us about the social behavior of those individuals or groups which produce it … Memes as artifacts possess both cultural and social attributes as they are produced, reproduced, and transformed to reconstitute the social system.[xvii]

Robert Wiggins terms it 'spreadable media' reliant on modification of the genre. It is a sign of demotic creativity as well.

In what follows I have a few provocations and propositions. These are not fully developed, for obvious reasons.

First, memes are units of memory, specifically cultural memory. They function as carriers of this memory ('memory actants', a term I borrow from Lisa Silvestri, 2018). They represent both, collective action and connective action. They are persuasive and they are public.[xviii]

Second, they now provide a language of pandemic expression. They do so because in the pandemic, memes have foregrounded several themes: the condition of the body, questions of hygiene, the role of the state, the practices of isolation and quarantine. Other themes have included the class-driven one of boredom, of excesses. Memes are attempts to make something invisible, such as the virus, visible. They do this by transforming the virus into a set of metaphors or metonyms of the complicated process of infection.

Third, transforming fear into metaphor and the terror of something invisible into the tangible effect of laughter, the meme is integral to the cultural documentation of the new sickness.

Fourth, memes have also served as inspirational moments - such as the one of the true superheroes being the healthcare workers. These are message-bearing memes. To be sure, there are disturbing and dark themes as well. In any case, they offer models of behaviour, the consequences of the behaviour and enable a process of pandemic social signification.

Fifth, memes have made disease the subject of a conversation. People kept diaries during previous epidemics, the memes are forms of note-making but the difference is that these can be modified. Hence it moves from a single source-mind to a collective artefact, worked through variation and combination. They function as collective coping mechanisms.

Sixth, In public health discourse the memes occupy a salutogenic place: concerned with the link between health, stress and coping, as Cernerud and Olsson have proposed.[xix] However, it appears that the memes also have an iatrogenic component: the infection of and through the memes is the result of the treatment prescribed to combat the virus - isolation and quarantine, safe distancing and social behaviour !

Much work needs to be done on the cultural role of memes during the pandemic.

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PRIVATE DISEASE, PUBLIC HEALTH AND ALIENATING CONTAGIONS: DYSTOPIAN FEAR AND STIGMA IN POSTMODERN SOCIETIES

Ratan Tilak Mohunta

Abstract

The human body with its organic materiality has been the subject and object of many philosophical enquiries and over a period of time, it has acquired a social and historical character. An elementary understanding of the body would be of its physiology; a view that would elaborate its biological aspect to suggest that it is a highly complex organism. However, the human body with its distinction as embodiment of a species called Homo sapiens is differentiated from other animal bodies. Such distinction is often noticed in anthropological, theological, cultural, and sociological accounts which are generally anthropocentric in their approach. However, the complete subjugation of nature by humans has created a complex, unequal and problematic relation between them, so much so, that humans now define themselves in absolute terms with no reference to other animal life. Ironically, all other forms of species now get defined by and in relation to humans. With his unbridled desire to push the limits of the human to unimaginable extremes, technological man has managed to create a new age of the anthropocene and pushed humanity to the edge of a posthuman world. Therefore, in order to understand the connotations of the human body, especially in the context of Covid-19 pandemic, one needs to locate the body in the present and analyze the various forms and processes of embodiment.

Keywords: embodiment, Industrial Society, Biologism, disease, Ontology

Social Ontology of the Body

For a long time, sociology has ignored the fact that human beings are basically corporeal entities, and this has resulted in an "analytical gap at the core of sociological enquiry" (Turner, 2008:2). Turner rightly points out that "collective phenomena" (2008:2) like ageing, mortality and births became the monopoly of demographic or ethnographic studies that reduced bodies to empirically observable data. He argues that sociology equally neglected what he calls the "theodicy of the body" (2008:2), and this failure of sociology to develop a theory of the body

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can be seen in prevalence of commonsensical notions of diet, exercise, fasting, and slimming. These ideas of the body are not only understood as essential for fulfilling sexual desire but also as "features of self-development in a society grounded in personalized consumption" (2008:2). In postmodern societies, an excessive objectification of the body in visual media representations has created a narcissistic obsession with the body. Further, the over emphasis on sexuality as the single most important function of the body has undermined other crucial functions necessary for existence such as sleep, metabolism, or production.

The epistemological foundations of modern sociology rested on a "rejection of nineteenth-century positivism, especially biologism" (Turner, 2008:2), and focused instead on the "social meaning of human interaction" (2008:2). Turner partly agrees with Foucault's idea that modern sociology was closely associated with the "growth of rationalized medicine, through the collection of health statistics with the growth of urban populations in the nineteenth century" (2008:2). Such an approach, "by refusing to acknowledge the corporeality of the individual" (2008:2), reduced all individuals into subjects involved in endless social interactions to constitute the social and themselves. In their efforts to develop an interpretive sociology of individual selves' interactions with other selves, sociologists ignored the "body of the social actor" (2008:3), instead, they emphasized "the importance of culture and symbolism in the organization of the self and society" (2008:3). Sociologists argued that the main concern of sociology was to examine how human collectives negotiated politics, formed class groups, participated in economic exchange, and responded to demands of the state. They insist that the "human body cannot be located" (2008:3) in the theoretical discursive space of sociology.

In sharp contrast to such a view that assumes *apriori* that individuals are always already interpellated subjects, Foucault offers an alternative that compares well with Marxist materialism. In Foucault's analysis, the body becomes the site for exercise of power; it is the "product of political/power relationships" (2008:4). Turner rightly suggests that as an object of power, the body is produced in order to be "controlled, identified and reproduced" (2008:4). Disciplines of the body relate to singular bodies and is "referred to as an 'anatomo-politics'" (2008:4), whereas, regulations of populations "embraces the species body and involves a

'bio-politics' of populations" (2008:4). A careful analysis of the implications the body politic (the modern state) on individual and collective bodies in particular political contexts, will help one to understand humans as private and public bodies. The argument that proceeds from here will try to understand the processes through which bodies get designated as private, public, sick or healthy, citizen or immigrant, black, white, and so on.

The issue of the public and the private is not so much to debate matters like ownership of property or business; on the contrary, it has much to do with how and in what circumstances individual bodies become private or public. Political personalities, film or sports celebrities carry the stamp of "the public," but ordinary citizens become public when they move out of their hovels into spaces they can't lay claim to as their own. For individual bodies therefore, the public is a spatial coordinate that designates them as belonging to an alien space amidst other similar bodies. There is a general belief among members of internet communities today that the boundary between the private and the public is getting increasingly blurred. Barbara Couture admits that the "conflation of private life with public rhetoric" (Couture, 2004:1), has become the norm for ordinary individuals, with "interesting and perhaps problematic consequences" (2004:1). She rightly points out that some intrusions of the public into our private sphere are "legislated and involuntary" (2004: 1), while many others are voluntary. Air travel, for example, becomes an interesting instance of "the public questions of a stranger" (2004:1) about the contents of his baggage, which is followed by a personal body check "amid a crowd of onlookers" (2004:1). Voluntary intrusions like the ones she refers to as "private dalliances in public chat rooms on the Internet" (2004:1) are cheerfully encouraged by some. Celebrities sharing stories of their personal life on television or radio, popular TV shows like "Big Boss" where voyeuristic crowds hungrily consume private emotions and eccentricities of heroes, are other examples of voluntary intrusions.

We can understand this problematic of the private and the public only through a discursive analysis of the dialectic between the individual and the social. Bruce Horner makes an interesting observation while talking about challenges posed by Marxist theory to dominant ideas of the personal, especially in writing. Authors, who critically engage with public issues, often face the challenge of defending

their ideas against attack from bourgeois conservatives. To substantiate this point, he asks us to consider the move to categorize writers in terms of "race, class, and gender, say, or the reigning zeitgeist of a given time and place" (Horner, 2004:186). Such reductionism refuses to recognize the many living interactions between the individual and the social. He argues that many writers fall prey to such reductionist logic and "run back headlong into bourgeois-individualist concepts, forms, and institutions" (2004:186), which they see as their only protection. The imagined monolithic social then, becomes a threat to their individuation and they reject the social perspective on the personal as "inadequate and reductive" (2004:186). Such rejection of the social has resulted in an "a renewed valorization of the personal" (Horner, 2004:187) in postmodern societies, at least in writing. From a Marxist perspective, however, the individual is as much a part of the social as the latter is of the individual.

Disease as Deviation from Norm

The problem of locating the individual body in the theoretical space of sociology is also a matter of understanding it as an embodiment of the self and consciousness. Turner, in the chapter entitled "Ontology of Difference," (Turner, 2008:2) argues that the mind / body debate in philosophy or the "Nature / Nurture controversy in sociology of intelligence" are related directly to "the problem of human embodiment" (2008:2). In order to understand the problem, Turner proposes a sociology of the body that ultimately addresses itself to "the nature of social ontology" (2008:2).He finds Marx's ontology a useful paradigm to understand being in nature and nature of being and the further leap from natural to social being. The basic ingredients of such ontology are to be found in Marx's account of how "social beings transform and appropriate nature through the collective labour process" (2008:3). He explains that these relations are "essentially and critically historical" (2008:3). Humans with their potential to transform both nature and themselves through labour, turn nature into "an alien force," where nature becomes "not a thing-in-itself, but an extension of man" (2008:4).

Turner argues that Marx considered existence as "inescapably sensuous" (2008:4), but Marxists made no attempts to conceptualize the obvious fact that "human sensuous agents require embodiment in order to express their agency" (2008:5).

For this serious lapse in Marxist exegesis, they can be criticized alongside classical sociologists for their tendency to "ignore the body and to 'desomatize' social relationships" (2008:5). Turner acknowledges the validity of the criticism but insists that it is possible to develop Marx's ontology by incorporating "the notion of human embodiment" (2008:5). He makes an interesting point that the complexity of the body as "both a natural phenomenon and a social product" (2008:5), can be explained by extending "Marx's notion of alienation into a discussion of disease" (2008:5). This brings us to the most crucial question of how disease can alter both the natural and social character of the body. Disease is both a private and a public affair at once; as an alien force of nature that embodies humans, it creates a distance between the diseased body and healthy bodies. The problem of disease in the human body brings out "the subjective and objective experiences of embodiment" (2008:5).

To elaborate on the idea of alienation, Turner begins by stating an interesting paradox that "human beings both have and are bodies" (Turner, 2008:5). This opens a philosophical enquiry into the idea of possession and ownership of bodies. The ability to exercise control over our bodies gives us a sense of possession, though this embodiment being "also fundamentally social" (2008:5) does not necessarily promise us ownership. Under slavery and patriarchy, individuals feel a sense of loss of ownership of their bodies when external political and legal agents, with institutional support, exercise control over them. The objectification of bodies has a long history and "prostitution is notoriously most ancient of such arrangements" (2008:5). By creating an exchange value for what was earlier considered as having only a use value, commodification entails "a loss of sensuous ownership" (2008:5), which can be regarded as a "form of corporeal alienation" (2008:5). At least, one dimension of Marx's idea of alienation involves "loss of personal control" (2008:5); hence one can argue that disease involves "loss of bodily ownership" and therefore, it is "the most proximate and universal form of human estrangement" (2008:5).

Although disease can be seen as a form of alienation, the character of human praxis, as Turner suggests, is such that it can be "appropriated and transformed into culture" (2008:6). Further, disease can also have a certain class character as argued by Turner while discussing the cultural history of gout. 18th C medical

practice of treating the disease suggests that it was considered a "disease of affluence, leisure and urban civilization" (2008:6). If diseases were to be ranked in social terms they could be classified under the same economic categories used for healthy populations. Hence, diseases like tuberculosis, gout, hypertension, and diabetes can be "marked on a scale of prestige" (2008:6). Turner rightly suggests that disease is a cultural paradox; it appears to be in nature but is also "inevitably and deeply social" (2008:6). Although disease manifests itself in individual bodies, the external appearance of the diseased person becomes "part of a culture and personality through appropriation and interpretation" (2008:7). By its ability to create infirmity, disease forces dependence on medical professionals and others; in the process, it also restricts normal social contact and "undermines the coherence of personal identity" (2008:7). The diseased person thus experiences a loss of personal agency and will to exercise decisions or act as she would otherwise do in normal circumstances. Disease then becomes a stigma that she has to carry till she gets rid of it. This idea of stigma and fear of a diseased person will be taken up for discussion later in the paper. However, an oversimplified reduction of disease to individual malady might lead one to push its onus on the sufferer. Hence, Turner uses the argument of Susan Sontag to suggest that such an approach would "prevent us from grasping the social aetiology of human misery in capitalist society itself" (Turner, 2008:8).

In an age of genetic engineering and digital technologies, where the nature / culture debate has further intensified, it is all the more important to understand the complex processes of cultural signification of the body. Turner rightly states that "culture shapes and mediates nature" (Turner, 2008:2), and it is true that cultures are different across geographical spaces. He develops a rather elaborate discussion on rituals of cultural inclusion and exclusion of the human body at birth and death respectively, to argue that the fact of birth or embodiment may not "in themselves guarantee social membership" (2008:2). Exclusionary practices of death rituals indicate, in some sense, a transfer of bodies "out of culture back to nature" (2008:2). Turner is right with his argument that many cultures have traditionally tried to understand death much differently from the modernists. The modernist approach with its adherence to modern medical practices has made life and death more problematic. He argues that the problem is not merely technical since there is "an essential difference between medical death and

'social death'" (2008:2). A social ontology of the body should therefore include the living, the diseased, and the dead body.

Turner refers to Durkheim's sociological model to suggest that societies based on "moral authorities of the conscience collective" contrast with those based on "the moral reciprocity of the social division of labour" (2008:5). In modern capitalist societies, as religious beliefs waned and the notion of the sacred diminished in "stature, depth, and intensity" (2008:5), individuals began to relate to each other by "reciprocal obligations" (2008:5) created by economic division of labour. Turner, however, expresses his reservations about Durkheim's notion of law and insists that the problem of nature / culture division can be resolved only by bridging the "cultural division" (2008:5) between law, religion and medicine. He rightly argues that the relationship between "social illness and natural disease" has to be seen in the context of "the secularization of society" (2008:6). When one understands the transition from pre modern to modern societies, it becomes easy to recognize that "medicine has replaced religion as the social guardian of morality" (Turner, 2008:6). This transformation has resulted in the state appropriating all moral regulations previously legislated and implemented by religions in societies of collective conscience. Now, the state through its ideological apparatuses controls and regulates the body especially through "family law and preventive medicine" (Turner, 2008:7).

The secularization of the social therefore, effected the secularization of the body; diet and exercise that was once regarded as ascetic ideals of exceptional individuals like monks and sadhus, now became a secular democratic ideal of medical professionals. Individuals who managed to keep healthy bodies, de facto, became followers of the ethical prescription of medical scientists; those who caught disease not following the prescription, by default, submitted their bodies to them. Turner uses Weber's idea elaborated in the *Protestant Ethic* (1960) to further the argument on secularization that "Calvinistic individualism and asceticism" (2008:9), got "transferred through mutation into the secular world of capitalist business" (2008:9). In effect, the individual came to be seen as a healthy productive body capable of contributing to the GDP of his nation's economy. In contrast, disease became symptomatic of moral deviance, improper lifestyles, and "the product of social disorder" (2008:10). Although modern

medical science has developed extensive knowledge of curative practices of disease, it does not look at all diseases in morally neutral terms. The outbreak of AIDS epidemic that broke out in the United States in 1980's and the subsequent response of the medical fraternity can be taken as a case in point.

The functionalist approach to medical sociology advocated by sociologists like Talcott Parsons looks at social relations of health care setting as "products of a consensualist society" (Lupton, 2003:7). In this approach, the patient is placed in the role of "the socially vulnerable supplicant," and the role of the doctor is seen as "socially beneficent" (2003:7). Although Parson's work was path-breaking in terms of explaining the "social dimension of medical encounter," the functionalist approach has been criticized for neglecting "the potential for conflict" (2003: 8) inherent in medical encounter. A political economy perspective, in contrast, suggests that the sick, the aged and other marginalized groups suffer a double disadvantage since they have "restricted access to health care services and suffer poorer health as a result" (2003:9). From this perspective, the role of medical institution is to ensure that the population remains healthy enough to "contribute to the economic system as workers and consumers" (2003:9). The medicalization of health under late capitalism turned medicine into a "major institution of social control;" the professional control and dependence on medicine obscured "the political conditions which cause ill health," and removed people's autonomy to "control their own health" (Lupton, 2003:9). This approach is criticized for its over emphasis on inequality in capitalist societies and its neglect of advancements made by medical science to improve health standards and longevity. Nonetheless, these arguments reinforce the idea that medical encounters in the 21st C inevitably point towards the "cultural crisis of modern medicine" (Lupton, 2003:9).

This cultural crisis is an offshoot of the approach adopted by modern medicine to the secularized body of the sick. In the chapter entitled "The body in Medicine," Deborah Lupton discusses the entire gamut of bodies beginning with the gendered body and sexual body, to end with the dead body. She makes a crucial observation on the reluctance of social scientists and humanities scholars to "theorize or historically position the body," by stating that they did so only to avoid "the biological determinism of the 'hard' human sciences" (2003:23). She refers to Turner (1996) to suggest that the body completely disappeared from

view when macro sociologists focused on theoretical formulations of social system and controls, while micro sociologists concerned themselves with "individual behavior as socially constituted" (2003:23). The turn towards theorizing the body happened only in 1970's in Europe with the growth of social movements like feminism and the emergence of post-structuralist and postmodern theories.

The new interest of sociology in the body was also due to a host of other developments like the "emergence of HIV / AIDS, public controversies over pornography and drug use in sport, and the burgeoning of the field of medical ethics" (2003: 23). As a result, a social constructionist approach to the body emerged that began to look at the body as a territory that is "constantly constructed and reconstructed as discourses and practices struggle to give meaning to it" (2003:24). Lupton refers to anthropologists Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987) to describe three analytical and conceptual levels of the body. The first is the level of body understood as individual body differentiated from other bodies; the second is "the social body, or the symbolic, representational uses of the body;" as exemplified in terms like "the sick society," "the foot of the mountain," etc. and, the third, of biopolitcs of the body where the "state controls, regulates and surveys the control of bodies…to maintain social stability" (2003:24). The last of the levels is currently dominating debates in medical sociology by drawing attention to the control, regulation, monitoring, discipline, and surveillance of the body by state apparatuses that run the body politic. For Foucault, as Lupton points out, the medical encounter is a supreme example of surveillance where "the doctor investigates, questions, touches the exposed flesh of the patient, while the patient acquiesces, and confesses" (Lupton, 2003:26).

Contagions: Private Body, Public Health

Lupton rightly points out that in public health discourse, the body is seen as "dangerous, problematic, and ever threatening to run out of control, to attract disease" (2003:33). For centuries, the spread of infectious diseases in particular, have attracted the most stringent regulatory measures from governments, out of fear of the disease contaminating the whole body politic. Control over bodies in the name of public health "has often been coercive and discriminatory" (2003:33), as seen in the response to outbreaks of plague, cholera, tuberculosis, and more recently, to HIV/AIDS and COVID-19. There are instances from 16[th]C to the

present, where entire households have been confined to their houses or forcible shifted to quarantines when "public health officials designated one member as infectious" (2003:33). Lupton argues that public health authorities have historically singled out the most vulnerable groups like workers, migrants, foreign nationals, and the poor as agents of disease "requiring forcible 'hygiene' programmes sometimes involving the destruction of their homes and isolation from the rest of society" (2003:33). She supports this argument with examples of Canada, in early 20thC, targeting immigrants with quarantine regulations and medical examinations; and the curious case of Australia invoking a public health act of 1902 in 1989 to detain for some time "a sex worker who had publicly admitted to being HIV positive but not willing to enforce condom use among her clients" (2003:33). Such coercive strategies in handling diseases continue to be used by states, often by invoking archaic laws. Here in India too, in the context of Covid -19 pandemic, we witnessed, with shock and dismay, the huge reverse migration of workers from big cities in the aftermath of a nation-wide, three-week lockdown that was announced on the night of 24 March 2020 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The fear of getting quarantined for so long without jobs, forced many of them to walk hundreds of miles home and some of them died due to exhaustion and hunger.

The public health movement which began in Europe in the 18thC developed a new rationale by the 19thC for "the surveillance of bodies in the interests of gathering information" (2003:34) to target disease. A new field of epidemiology emerged as a system of documenting, "measuring and reporting back to a system of government agencies" (2003:34). Other examples of surveillance include maintaining health records of new born babies. In early 20thC, Britain came up with "such innovations as milk depots" (2003:34) in various towns to supplement babies with cow's milk. A separate file was opened for each baby to record its weight and height. Health workers in Scotland visited households of underprivileged children regularly "to check the state of cleanliness and requiring their mothers to provide information about their diets" (Lupton, 2003:34). In the 21stC, health promotion advertisements, body disciplines of diet and exercise have become the new norm of educating people on health. In the new dialectic of public health the freedom of the individuals to behave as they wish is "pitted against the rights of society to control individuals' bodies in the name of health" (Lupton, 2003:35).

Increasing medicalization of disease in technologically advanced, western societies ushered in a sense that health can be ensured by following the prescriptions of public health professionals. With digitalization of huge populations, it became much easier for the state to screen, identify, and monitor potentially dangerous, individual bodies. Insuring health safety of citizens became a matter of government and containment of sick bodies its legal obligation. Epidemics, with their potential to infect and destroy many lives, were therefore seen as posing serious threat to public health. The economic cost of maintaining public health became a major concern in capitalist societies, however, the health industry flourished with huge private investments flowing into medical science research, equipment and pharmaceuticals. When health becomes capital intensive, it necessitates the calculation of risk. Sudeepa Abeysinghe admits that with increasing globalization, assessment and management of risk has to be taken at the global level.

Abeysinghe suggests that understanding risk management "as a problem of global health governance" (2019:12) is important to plan strategies for handling spread of epidemics. She explains the challenges to global health management given the fast changing strains of viruses and bacteria that emerge in different places on the planet and the multiple state actors involved in handling such crises. She analyses the response to the outbreak of H_1N_1 in 2009 using various documents including publicly available WHO documents. Such analysis of the discourse surrounding an epidemic sheds light not only on the response of the states but also on "the wider nature of the institutional governance of disease risk" (2019:13). She admits that a global epidemic that transgresses national boundaries leaves "authority over globalized public health risk indefinite" (2019:14). In such cases, a global health institution like the WHO can only present itself as concerned with "coordination and facilitation of dialogue," not only with state actors "but also corporations, NGOs and other elements of civil society" (2019:14). Interestingly, this list also includes big pharmaceutical corporations. A pandemic therefore, involves nations-states, international actors, business, capital and also the affected public that includes migrants, women, workers, and others.

In what appears as a strange twist of destiny for believers in pre-determinism, epidemics seem to challenge all institutionalized forms of knowledge, and more importantly, the human will to power. Neoliberal democracy is now contested not by citizens of the state but by a new viral agency that promotes disease as a truly

global democracy. Peter Baldwin in the opening chapter of his book *Disease and Democracy* (2005), quotes a fictional "strangeglove's nemesis" to suggest that "democracy requires uncorrupted bodily fluids, whether precious or merely quotidian" (Baldwin, 2005:7). He refers to Churchill's infamous rhetoric of "blood, toil, sweat, and tears," to hint that populism and rabid conservatism in politics thrive in moments of crisis. Politics waits for opportunities and any serious public health emergency shows how "bodily fluids are the sap of the body politic" (2005:7). He argues that in the age of AIDS, when body contact and intimacy is feared, civilization "rests on our ability to keep our bodily fluids apart" (2005:7). Although this might sound like an overstated reaction to epidemics, it merits some consideration given the regimented political response a global epidemic invokes. Body fluids become the renewed self-expression of individuals as purity of blood and the new science of epidemiology result in "expressions of blood-based nationalism" (2005:7) in politics. Bacteriology, with its impartial methods of testing, replaces the old patient – doctor binary with an objectively deterministic logic that reveals one's "epidemiological status" (2005:8).

Bodily fluids therefore, play a central role in determining an individual's political agency, when illness, in the best circumstances seen as "a private misfortune," becomes "public and political" (2005:8). Baldwin suggests that communicable diseases can be listed under two categories of bodily contact; voluntary and involuntary. Sexually transmitted diseases like syphilis or AIDS are acquired through voluntary contact whereas, tuberculosis or smallpox are acquired involuntarily. In any case, the decision to isolate the infected is largely political and depends on the deference with which "the community's interest" and "the rights of the afflicted citizen" (Baldwin, 2005:8) are treated. Quite often, in public health discourse, policy decisions are justified in the name of the public, hence individuals have little choice other than falling in line with the dominant discourse. A Sexually transmitted disease such as AIDS became a metaphor for "sex, blood and death" by violating the species line "invoking biblical admonitions against abomination of the most basic sort" (2005:10). The metaphorical baggage of a disease may influence its public perception; AIDS was sometimes regarded more as "a social and symbolic phenomenon with medical consequences" (2005:11), than as a disease in a biological sense. Baldwin argues that in the context of the epidemic, the "core values" of American society was revealing

itself in "selecting preventive strategies against the epidemic" (2005:11). The Manichean choice offered to citizens was "individual rights, liberty, and democracy, on the one hand, or compulsion, exclusion, and force, on the other" (2005:11).

Traditionally, contagions meant that infected persons "such as lepers and plague victims were shunned and excluded" (2005:12), however, the "bacteriological revolution" altered our perspective of disease transmission and "also morally neutralized disease" (2005:12). Illness became a value neutral entity, just and democratic in spirit, that often struck with "Olympian impartiality, carrying away the virtuous and virginal and sparing gluttons and drunkards" (2005:12). By late 19thC all industrialized nations of the west "fell prey to the collectivist engineering of Eugenics" (2005:15). Baldwin argues that the new idea of dealing with epidemics brought the politics of left, right, and liberals on the same side. "Sweden and the United States practiced sterilization widely" (2005:16). Authoritarian regimes with hyper populist agendas, took such matters too seriously, as exemplified by the Nazi slogan "Your health does not belong to you" (2005:16). The 20thC showed a spectacular increase in lifestyle related disorders like obesity, cardiovascular disease and some cancers that "now caused the highest mortality" (2005:16) in western societies. However, lifestyle was a matter of choice to be exercised consciously by citizens; it couldn't be mandated by law. As a result, the law took a turn from prevention of illness to "the promotion of health" (2005:16).

In order to regulate risky individual behavior, the law was invoked by mandating "seatbelts and motorcycle helmets," insisting condom use on prostitutes, banning "certain drugs and testing to ensure compliance, clamping down on smoking, and raising the legal age of drinking" (2005:16). From a public health perspective, it can be argued that these are inevitable measures taken in public interest, but they are also deeply political decisions. The question remains whether such decisions aren't intertwined with the interests of capital that profit from the manufacture of seatbelts, helmets, condoms, cigarettes, alcoholic beverages, and the illicit trade in drugs. Public health therefore is "a continuation of politics by other means" (Baldwin, 2005:19). Baldwin rightly raises doubts about the politics played in the name of ethics while dealing with epidemics, through a series of ethical questions. Should citizens be "vaccinated against smallpox,

should syphilis be prevented by regulating and inspecting prostitutes… or should the state abstain from controlling its citizens' sexual transactions?" (2005:19). In an age of biotechnology where body organs are traded for money, the rhetoric of the political class, cleverly masked in the garb of ethics, sounds hollow and difficult to believe.

Alienation, Fear and Stigma

Baldwin states that public opinion to an epidemic often shapes the response but, it is also true that the former is itself influenced by responses to such catastrophes in the past. The immediate reaction of the public to an epidemic is fear and anxiety, as result of which it jumps to the conclusion that the carriers of disease should be isolated. Disease is identified with the victim and the exclusion of his body from public domain is demanded. The fear of catching the disease then transforms into fear of the infected body. The public opinion in America about AIDS was along these lines as it "clamored for the authorities to take decisive, even harsh, actions, and was willing to blame scapegoats" (2005:202). Scapegoating of marginal groups is a common phenomenon in crises like epidemics. It was done with the Jews during "the plague of the Middle Ages," "the poor, Jesuits, and physicians for cholera in the 1830s," "Italians in America for polio in 1914" and so on. Each country decides its own scapegoats depending on the dominant prejudices prevalent among the national public. Baldwin argues that in "North America, AIDS was at first a disease of Haitians; in the Soviet Union, of the West and capitalism; in India, of Africans; in Japan, of all foreigners" (2005:203). The public feared AIDS and likened it to plague, "transmittable by casual contacts and requiring draconian precautions" (2005:203). While some called for "criminalizing homosexuality," others called for "quarantining seropositives" (2005:204). Extreme reactions included a fundamentalist preacher in 1983 suggesting that "AIDS victims should be killed to prevent transmission" (2005:204); in Finland where incidence of AIDS was one of the lowest, a professor of virology proposed "detaining seropositives on a deserted island, once home to a leper colony" (2005:204). Such reactions of the public towards victims of a life threatening disease, confirms the idea that alienation is still the underlying condition of late capitalist societies. An epidemic only helps to bring it to the surface.

Added to the experience of social alienation brought about by the biomedical approach to life, is the victim's own sense of alienation forced upon him by the disease. By incapacitating the victim, the disease creates in him a feeling of loss of agency, thereby alienating him from his normal self. It is commonly observed in all cultures that the ill "experience alienation and a search for meaning" (Lupton, 2003:94), that might not be adequately mitigated by medical intervention alone. In the case of patients suffering from terminal illness, it not only disables the body but also disturbs her peace of mind. Disease removes the ill from their "social roles and activities, including work, relationship and family obligations" (2003:95), and creates a deeply painful sense of helplessness and exclusion. Lupton illustrates her point with the experience shared by cancer patients about their illness. She notes that such individuals felt "uncertainty and an acute sense of loss in general and loss of control" (2003:96); moreover, persistent identification as a cancer patient made them feel that they could not "adequately communicate to others the horror of their experience" (2003:96). Illness therefore, becomes a condition that the patient has to come to terms with; most illnesses of serious nature are generally treated as the enemy that must be defeated. The jargon used in describing the experience is typically militaristic as in, "she is battling cancer," or "this is a war against Corona that we are sure to win," and so on. However, unlike conventional battles fought in vast geographical spaces, disease makes individual bodies the sites of deadly battles.

Alienation creates anxiety and fear about how things may turn out eventually, more importantly; it forces one to recognize the truth of mortality. To get out of the alienating experience of disease and suffering, affected individuals have no choice but to seek medical attention in a hospital. Ironically, the hospital with its regimented, ritualistic approach to disease can itself turn into another alienating experience where you are identified with many other diseased inmates. As Lupton rightly points out, the hospital is a place "fraught with competing meanings of anxiety, threat, despair, hope, fear and punishment" (2003:101). The sombre atmosphere of the hospital presents one with a picture of decay and death. The doctors and nurses in their crisp white overcoats, the sick being wheeled around in chairs and stretchers, the smell of antibiotics and sanitizers, together create the strange aura of a professional clinic. This modern institution of disease, legally takes charge of sick bodies with the "promissory rhetoric"

(Lupton, 2003:101) of remediation. It is a place one goes to "when something is wrong;" except in the case of childbirth, "the hospital as an institution signals visible social deviance" (2003:102). It is the prison house of the sick, where patients have "little or no control over" simple matters of everyday life like "when they eat or sleep, the clothes they wear… and the manner in which they defecate or urinate" (2003:102). The change and disruption in the notions of temporality created by the hospital setting, result in "diminished status" (2003:102) for the patients. "The boundaries of public and private space are dissolved" (2003:102), as their bodies are surrendered to total control of the medical apparatus.

A potentially lethal contagion like COVID-19 can generate a neurosis of fear. As regular news bulletins on television give statistical data of individuals affected, those recovered and cases of mortality, a sense of terror envelops huge populations quarantined in their homes to check the spread of the virus. The computerized data map resembles digital screens at airports displaying details of arrivals and departures of flights. Data mining technologies, as computer professionals call it, reduce life and death to a number game where you might be the next player. Fear of disease is also closely related to the fear of death; Lupton suggests that the changing meaning of death over the centuries provides examples of how a "physical event is constructed through cultural custom" (2003:47). He argues that historical writings on the body show how "notions of corporeality" (2003:47) have changed in western societies. In 16th and 17th centuries in Europe, death was largely "a non-medical ceremony;" a member of the clergy was in-charge of the death bed. Enlightenment ideals of rationality "lessened the religious meaning of death and by the end of the 18th C, the idea of "medicalized death" (2003:48) was taking shape. In modern times therefore, death is public event and dead bodies are objects of analysis "to confirm and document the cause" (2003:48)

Culturally therefore, the idea of death was transformed from a medieval religious ritual with the promise of heaven, to a secular medical ritual that involved declaring the body as dead. This rational notion of death as the termination of life creates more fear in believers in after life as it probably does in atheists who denounce such ideas. Fear, after all, has no such boundaries of faith and non-faith, it manifests equally in the consciousness of all bodies. Has the new

medical ritual of treating sick bodies mitigated the fear of those affected by disease? Barbara Ehrenreich discusses this issue extensively in her book *Natural Causes* (2018). She argues that any medical procedure that does not have a "demonstrable effect on a person's physiology" (Ehrenreich, 2018:21), can be categorized as a ritual. They can have "intangible psychological effects," hence they need to be investigated to find out whether those effects "contribute to well-being" of patients or only serve to deepen her "sense of helplessness" (2018:21). She refers to parallels drawn between healing rituals of supposedly primitive tribes and modern rituals of western medical practice, by medical anthropologists." The ritualistic "annual physical exam" introduced in the 1920's and later "recommended by the American Medical Association about a decade later" (2018:23), always appeared as a "high-stress hurdle in the life of any health-conscious medical consumer" (2018:23). She avers that these exams always helped determine the "innocence (health) or guilt (disease)" of the examinee's body. Rituals have traditionally functioned as community practices of inclusion, and occasionally as exclusionary practice also. However, unlike traditional community rituals, medical procedures "tend to be transgressive" and often "violate accepted social norms" (2018:24). However, the medical fraternity does not consider intervention as transgression, as the doctor and the patient, consciously or otherwise, "enact the ritual of domination and submission" (2018:28). There is no reason to believe, however, that the ritual practices of modern medicine mitigate the fear of disease among patients.

Fear is a ubiquitous phenomenon; its universal and all pervasive character allows little room for free thinking. Postmodern urban societies function with a complex arrangement of power which presumably assures a sense of security to all individuals. As long as the semblance of order is maintained, individuals go on with life with full trust in state institutions that they believe, run with their tax money. The lurking fear of an unknown agent disturbing the order comes true only in the face of a huge crisis like the outbreak of a pandemic. Francois Debrix & Alexander D. Barder argue that late modern, western societies thought "they had conjured away the specter of a state-of-nature-like violence" (Debrix & Barder, 2009:398) till 9/11 happened. Only then did the western world wake up to a new understanding of terror; an objectified fear of a faceless enemy who can strike you anywhere and at any moment. For the first time in history, a nation

declared war on an unknown enemy, calling it a "war on terror." With the sudden "accentuation of fear" came the realization that the enemy is "beyond any form of restraint, located in a domain where it no longer obeys any political rationality" (2009:398). Debrix and Barder use the terror attack of 9/11 to question the validity of the Hobbesian modern state in the context of the 21stC. The sovereignty of the modern state, in Hobbes' argument, rests on the premise that it is able to "defend the property and basic rights of individuals" (2009:399), including their right to be free from harm. However, in the wake of an extraordinary situation like the one mentioned above, what happens to "practices of sovereignty and state power when the fear of the enemy borders on the absolute?" (2009:399).

The discussion on the modern state and its response to fear can be extended beyond the particular terrorist attack of 9/11. It is necessary to draw parallels between the terror strike and the fear of an epidemic to analyze and assess the political implications of overarching fear. The Hobbesian solution to conquer absolute fear was to concentrate and centralize it in the power of the sovereign. Debrix and Barder insist that in fact, "this fear resides in the very persona of the sovereign" (2009:399). They argue that the fear of catastrophe functions not only as fear of bodily harm, it becomes crucial to "the maintenance or replacement of political institutions" (2009:399). When absolute fear disseminates among entire populations, the sovereign state is immensely empowered to act ruthlessly against what is officially regarded as forces of disorder and disruption. The fear of disaster which, as in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic was only terror of a virus (natural), transforms itself into "political fear" of a common enemy. The "centralized fear" or the power of the undisputable sovereign, now acts with "arbitrary, executive, and policing force" (2009:399), to restore order and normalcy.

The individual subjects / citizens acquiesce their will to the sovereign in the belief that their well-being and security is taken care of. The politics of terror as seen in the exceptional military operations that proliferated across the globe in the aftermath of 9/11, is justified in the hope that it will "make 'us' free from fear" (2009:400). A Foucauldian analysis however, informs us that fear is made "productive or reproductive of society," not only to allow the sovereign to "mobilize death, terror, or endless destruction," but also to enable life or "a

certain conception of what it means to have live bodies in society—to thrive" (Debrix & Barder, 2009:400). For Foucault, governmentality is the collective forms of micro-management of power, where visible and invisible forms of repression become the functional norm in postmodern societies. The biopolitics Foucault proposes helps us to "re-conceptualize the relationship between power and fear in modernity" (2009:406). The question that deserves our attention in moments of extreme danger is not how the sovereign can manage to "keep dangers and fears in check" (2009:407). On the contrary, it is to identify the indictors of "productive fear," brought about through "biopolitical techniques," that prevents one from living a "normal, regulated, or optimized life" (2009:407) in the public sphere.

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COVID-19 AND ITS IMPACT ON SMALL AND MARGINAL FARMERS AND MSME SECTOR

G V Joshi

Abstract

Covid-19 has been producing alarming effect in both developed and developing countries. There are two leading categories namely, small and marginal farmers and the Minor, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) in India which are virtually annihilated by the lockdown imposed by the Central Government against a threatening pandemic. The farmers included in this article and MSMEs have some common traits demanding strong policy measures. The unorganized labourers have moved in crowds from towns and cities to villages generating the impact of what is called reverse migration. The author has chosen this theme because both small and marginal farmers and MSMEs have a special role in the process of inclusive growth. Much more needs to be done to uplift these categories facing a situation of crisis.

Keywords: MGNAREGA, marginal farmers, fiscal deficit, inclusive growth

Setting of the Problem

Covid-19 is affecting individuals, communities and institutions in various ways in different countries. The United Nations has very recently estimated that by the end of 2020 as much as 8% of the world's population could be pushed into destitution, largely because of the wave of unemployment proliferated by the lockdown. The CRISIL predicted on May 26 that the Indian economy may shrink by not less than 5 per cent in the current fiscal because of the lockdown. It has gone to the extent of warning that India is facing its worst recession.

The baffling effects of Covid-19 as well as policy measures devised by both developed and developing countries to meet it are quite likely to remain academically relevant for a fairly long time. The thinking that inequality will get accentuated within a country and across countries is widespread and well-founded. The longer the period the pandemic will take to subside, the greater will be its adverse impact on assets creation, direction and utilisation. There is

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a sensational atmosphere all over the world because health issues come to the forefront in every battle against Covid-19. Many battles so far are frustrating.

There are many economic, political and racial questions paralysing developing countries. Many of these countries are already having a drag on resources. The unorganized and poverty-stricken laborers have moved in crowds from towns and cities to rural areas where their services are not immediately needed. They are paid less due mainly to reverse migration. There is an acute shortage of labourers with necessary skill and dexterity in other areas. This is causing rise in wages as they have better bargaining capacity *vis-a-vis* their employers. However, they are not numerically preponderant. The impact of reverse migration is being noticed by the political leaders at the helm of affairs in this country exhibiting their dexterity in raising abortive slogans and empty dreams accompanied by an unusual capacity to twist realities by allocating as much as 10 per cent of GDP (!) for a cause that actually deserves more. There is no shortage of glamour as the economic package is said to have aimed at making virus-hit economy self-reliant!

Some resemblance between the two categories namely small farmers (marginal farmers included) and those in MSME sector could be identified. Barring a very few exceptions, both the categories are important in the process of inclusive growth. Both are facing consequences of rivalry with the other comparatively powerful categories for securing inputs. There is the adverse impact of borrowing from informal sources on both. Both were hit by the policy measures before the onslaught of Covid -19 that included the hurried decision of note-ban and ill-conceived GST. Needless to say, many victims are in the list of priority sectors formulated by the Reserve Bank of India(RBI) . Now they are bearing the brunt of Covid-19 rudely shaking their roots and mercilessly threatening their future.

This article makes use of secondary data and information for throwing light on the two categories included. It heavily depends on information and articles published in the English dailies the *Deccan Herald* (DH), *The Hindu, The Indian Express*(IE) and *Hindu Business Line*(HBL) and a leading Kannada daily, *Prajavani*. It uses books, articles and reports throwing light on the main idea.

Plight of Small and Marginal Farmers.

Small and marginal farmers are not poor everywhere. In China the productive capacity of the small farmers became evident with the provision of inputs and guidance by the Government agencies in 1970s and 80s. In Japan there was a tremendous rise in yields of small   farms during the post-War period as the government there evinced a lot of interest in guiding , encouraging and supporting them. Research in India has shown that diversification to the fruits and vegetables segment is likely to benefit small and marginal farmers more than the large ones (Niti Aayog, 2018). Many small and marginal farmers in Maharashtra immensely gained by growing fruits in the very recent decades by taking benefit of the state employment guarantee scheme.

However, success stories are very few while failures are many; there are in fact empirical studies revealing the vulnerability of small farmers . For instance, small farmers without resources to cultivate had leased out lands to large farmers in the late 1970s (Nadkarni,1976). To put it differently, there were instances of reverse tenancy giving rise to a serious contradiction in land reforms. By the beginning of 1980s, it was tending to become a national problem. Research conducted in many parts of the country disclosed the emergence of big or dominant tenants and small landlords. In the conferences of Revenue Ministers of the States held during 1980s and the early 90s in New Delhi, the consequences of unconventional pattern of tenancy were deliberated. Now, when damages caused by Covid-19 are being discussed, we cannot expect any wonders in the form of permanent investments on land as terms and conditions of dominant class tenancy are not basically conducive.

The *Economic Survey* 2015-16 called for a paradigm shift in agriculture for lending support to farmers, especially small and marginal farmers. The important measures suggested by it were more investment research on hybrid and high-yielding seeds, technology, mechanization and efficient water use via micro-irrigation to make it consistent with Prime Minister's slogan "more crop per drop" (*Economic Survey,* 2015-16). All these continue to remain essential for raising the productivity of farms facing special problems which Covid-19 has brought.

For illustrating acute problems of small and marginal farmers we may choose two states, the Punjab and West Bengal. In the Punjab, one of the cradles of the

Green Revolution, the policy of loan waiver did not stop farmers' suicides . The findings of an empirical study conducted by the Punjab Agricultural University(PAB) in 2017 are now important. The study found that on an average three farmers committed suicide over a period of 17 years in the state. Nearly 76% of those who committed suicide were small and marginal farmers (Gautham Dheer, 2017). The sudden lockdown due to Covid-19 multiplied difficulties of small farmers growing fruits, vegetables and food grains in the Punjab. They got unbelievably low prices as the supply chain was rudely disturbed. They were not able to shift their produces to places of their choice.

The poverty of small farmers in West Bengal, the country's largest rice-growing state, needs hardly any elaboration (Soumya Das, 2019). The per capita agriculture landholding in the state is just 0.64 hectare. The reports collected by the Society for Social and Economic Research reveal that the small farmers get caught in the vicious circle of debt, irrespective of crop damage or bumper crop, due to the lack of adaptation and coping capacities. While a bad crop leaves them with no yield, excess production results in a glut in the market decreasing the price. Given this situation, the widespread Covid-19 has spread panic among many small farmers already victimised by the cruelty of nature in the form of severe cyclone. In the East Medinipur district, hopes of small farmers growing paddy were shattered by untimely rainfall, higher wage costs and much lower selling price of paddy. What has happened in Punjab and West Bengal has happened to the disadvantage of small farmers in many parts of the country in different ways. The dire consequences of the vicious circle of poverty of the small farmers are now visibly clear. Undoubtedly these are partly attributable to the shocking spread of Covid-19.

The poverty of small farmers in India has a long history. Joshi found that there were many middlemen capturing the gains of food inflation with the result that the microscopic minority of the marginal and small farmers generating marketable surplus did not prosper. As he wrote in 2011, "Tall talks on inclusive growth in India can only take us on a bridge that is not built and to the heavenly state that does not exist" (2011). Now many of them are rendered helpless as they are invaded by Covid-19.

The *Economic Survey* 2017-18 elaborated that farmer income losses from climate change could be between 15% and 18% on an average, rising to anywhere between 20 to 25% in unirrigated areas of the country (*The Hindu,* 2018). The plight of small and marginal farmers in areas hit by climate change due to the operation of Covid-19 needs no elaboration. Its consequences are already writ large in many parts of Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chattisgarh and Jharkhand. Many small and marginal farmers spoiled the grains, fruits and flowers out of frustration because they are not able to transfer their produces to other areas to get a better price. The meager compensation paid to them by the government either in kind or in cash cannot touch even the fringe of their problem.

The *Economic Survey* 2018-19 reported the distress of the large class of small and marginal farmers in the agricultural ecosystem. With the decline in the size of landholdings, the country now has to focus on resource efficiency for accomplishing sustainability in agriculture and also for reducing poverty in rural India. This urgent need of the country is a macro level programme to assure reasonable remuneration to migrants in villages who are intimidated by Covid-19.

MGNREGA as a Macro Level Programme.

Nirmala Sitaraman, the Union Minister for Finance, announced a number of schemes to boost up employment for alleviating rural poverty. On May 14, 2020, she announced that the Central Government decided to release ₹ 30 thousand crore to small and marginal farmers as loans through NABARD for financing seasonal agricultural operations. In addition, they are exempted from paying installments of crop loans for three successive months. Loans will be disbursed through cooperative credit institutions and regional rural banks. Commercial banks plagued with NPAs are not even in the scene now!

Subsequently, on May 17 the Finance Minister declared in a press conference that rupees one lakh crore would be released to generate employment under MGNREGA for the labourers of the unorganised sector who returned to the villages. This included the sum of ₹ 61 thousand crores already sanctioned in the Budget for 2020-2021. It appears that the Union Finance Minister was compelled by the circumstances to concede to the signgificance of MGNREGA.

MGNREGA operationalysed since 2006 is no doubt a step towards alleviating rural poverty by executing the employment guarantee programme. Notwithstanding some minor criticisms, MGNREGA is considered essential in the context of rural distress in the backward regions for poverty reduction, prevention of starvation, reducing distressed migration of the poor and empowerment of the rural women (Moodithaya, 2009). Decline in poverty levels is concomitant with the operation of MGNREGA resulting in the execution of land leveling, rain water conservation, upgrading and desilting water bodies etc (M V Shridhara, 2019). All these are the indirect benefits made accessible to all categories of farmers.

With the purpose of extending direct benefits of MGNREGA to agriculture, Arun Jetli, as Union Finance Minister, to the surprise of opposition parties, declared in his first budget of July 10, 2014 that wage employment would be provided through works that were more productive, asset creating and substantially linked to agriculture and allied activities. Jetli in his second Budget for 2015-16 was more clear. He declared that his Government was committed to supporting employment though MGNREGA and admitted the need for improving the quality and effectiveness of activities under it. However no much progress was attained later because the former Chairman of Karnataka Agricultural Prices Commission T N Prakash Kammardi informed this author that only paddy cultivation on dry lands was included into the ambit of MGNREGA.

Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister, exhibited his extra-ordinary skill in attacking MGNREGA while canvassing for Lok Sabha elections of 2014. By 2016 there was a change in his attitude; he saw its positive side. On February 28, 2016 addressing Kisan Kalyan Sabha at Bareli, Modi expressed the need for altering MGNREGA for making it helpful to agriculture. Now when Covid-19 is demanding urgent solution to practically every problem, the Karnataka Janashakti Organisation has suggested that daily wages in MGNREGA should be raised from ₹ 200 to ₹ 375. The duration for employment should also be increased from the present 100 days to 200 days, it suggested (Joshi, 2020). All these demands intend to protect the interest of the poor migrant workers badly needing the shelter of a big programme like MGNREGA.

To sum up this part, the catastrophic Covid-19 has adversely affected marginal and small farmers together constituting a major weaker section of the rural

society. No doubt some long- term measures to ameliorate their condition by ensuring timely supply of inputs are necessary. But right now MGNREGA has to emerge as an effective policy measure for unorganized labourers entering villages. They should be enabled to work on the small and marginal holdings. After all, these holdings deserve a special attention in any policy towards the inclusive growth in rural India.

Need to Strengthen the MSMEs

The need to strengthen MSMEs arises from a variety of reasons as they complement the larger businesses by providing inputs, machines and several services to larger businesses, besides generating employment on a large scale. Approximately there are 6.30 crores of MSMEs 50% of which are located in seven states, Karnataka being one of them. Contributing about one-third of the country's GDP, the MSMEs have a pride of place in the inclusive growth process. In 2019, nearly 51% of MSMEs were found in rural India, while the remaining 49% were in towns and villages (*The Hindu*, 2019).

The MSME sector has both bright and dark sides which infact makes the task of developing it complicated and challenging. The Confederation of Indian Industry completed a survey in 2019-20 which covered over 1,05,347 in this sector across more than 350 industrial centres in 28 states. It found that MSMEs were the largest job creators over the preceding 4 years especially in industry and tourism, textiles and apparel, machine parts and logistics (Urvashi Prasad, 2020).

The dark side of the picture is, however, frightening. The Omidyar Network and BCG found in 2018 that lending to many MSMEs was through informal channels leading to exploitation in 2018. As it reported, "Nearly 40% of MSME lending is done through the informal sector, where interest rates are at least twice as high as in the formal market'' (HBL, 2018). It also disclosed that an additional 25% of MSME borrowing was invisible and was through personal proprietorship loans. Besides, the use of obsolete technology and low productivity are often destabilising the MSME sector. The lockdown has been paralysing this sector in several ways. A nation-wide programme to infuse courage and confidence into the sector is required as the adverse impact will be enduring and wide-spread.

The MSMEs in Karnataka are also experiencing serious crises. Here more than 6.5 lakh MSMEs are providing livelihood to not less than 70 lakh families of workers. Of these as many as 1.5 lakh units are now facing a grave crisis as the result of Corona-19; 20 lakh workers would, therefore, be rendered jobless. (Editorial, *Prajavani*, May 12, 2020).

After issuing a number of statements, the Union Finance Minister has at last revised the definition of MSMEs increasing their threshold limit for investment on May 13, 2020 :

> 1. Any firm with an investment up to ₹ 1 crore and a turn over under ₹ 5 crore will be classified as 'micro' unit; 2. A company with an investment up to ₹ 10 crore and turn over up to ₹ 50 crore will be classified as 'small', and 3. A firm with investment up to ₹ 20 crore and a turnover under ₹ 100 crore will be classified as 'medium'. (*Deccan Herald*, May 14, 2020)

The Union Finace Minister made two important announcements: Firstly, a sum of ₹ 3 lakh crore of collateral-free bank loans for small businesses hit by Covid-19 was announced. Secondly, to save MSMEs from unfair competition from foreign companies, the centre disallowed global tenders in government procurement up to ₹ 200 crore. Though the Union Finance Minister has the satisfaction of declaring significant stimulus package, subsequent experiences have, however, shown that it has not produced the necessary positive impact. This stimulus package would also contribute to ballooning of fiscal deficit to as much as 7.9% in the current financial year.

The gravity of the situation is clear from what Shaktikantha Das, the Governor of the RBI announced in a press conference held on May 22, 2020: Repo rate is reduced to 4% ,the lowest in two decades. The reverse repo rate is reduced from 3.75% to 3.35% (*Deccan Herald,* 2020). Das admitted that economic growth would be in the negative zone in 2020-21. To be in sink with the Central Government, he promised new tools to boost growth. The fact of the matter is that the MSME sector like the small and marginal farmers would not be able to recover so long as Covid-19 continues to baffle the economy.

To conclude, Covid-19 will continue to annihilate small and marginal farmers and MSMEs unless very serious efforts are made by both the Centre and States to mitigate it. It will frustrate the efforts to attain the much needed inclusive growth as it has the tendency to aggravate inequality in India. Much more needs to be done by governments to protect and promote the weaker sections chosen in this article since they are not having in-built-capacity to withstand the terrible onslaught of Covid-19.

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COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE ROLE OF BEHAVIORAL ECONOMICS

Pradeep Kumar B

Abstract

"New Normal" has become the buzzword due to Covid-19. The realization that the pandemic is here to stay tended people to redesign their opportunities of livelihood. Behavioral Economics, a new branch in economics that integrates economics with other disciplines in an attempt to present real economic behavior of man, has been found to be relevant in explaining the behavior of economic agents in the times of Covid-19. This paper focuses on certain aspects in behavioral economics which the policy makers find useful in designing their strategies to deal with the spreading of the pandemic.

Key words: *Present Bias, Status Quo Bias, Optimum Bias, Framing effect, Affect heuristic, Herding Behavior, Infodemic*

Introduction

It has become obvious that Covid-19 is to stay with us for some more time. It has become another major disease that haunts us by testing our immune system, and sometimes aggravating the existing critical disease, leading to death. Among the reported cases elsewhere in the world, its rarely due to covid-19 that people have died, making it concrete the virus can be detrimental to already unwell patients. But the news of success rate has been going up is a sigh of relief for many, especially, to the administrators and health workers. The so called 'New Normal' has almost been fully accomplished with lockdowns being lifted and people have been allowed to move freely albeit with certain peripheral and policy guided hurdles. Masks have become mandatory and sanitizer an essential cosmetic. Physical distancing has become the norm although not been practiced as seriously as it ought to have been. The long wait for preventive vaccine is uncertain despite self-claimed success at developing such vaccines by leading countries.

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Unlike many diseases including community diseases which ravaged us in earlier times, Covid-19 has had a far reaching and wider consequences. Its unprecedented character in spreading and the fear that it has created in the minds of people, and the challenges it has brought about to the economy and in the health sector seem to have been manifold and unlikely to be resolved in the near future. Most of the economies have witnessed dwindling output, income and employment over the last six months since the surfacing of the first case in the Wughan province of China. Some countries have been deadly affected by the pandemic whereas some others, especially Sweden and Switzerland have been able to withstand the spreading of the virus to a greater extent.

It could be observed that countries where physical distancing and other behavioral etiquettes are in place have been able to speedily come back to normalcy. This calls for an urgent revisiting of the mitigating strategies of this pandemic apart from the standard and conventional procedures recommended by the World Health Organization which are predominantly aimed at treating the virus induced health issues rather than taking precautionary measures to effectively contain the spreading of the virus. It is here behavioral economics, an emerging field of studies in economics which studies the societal and economic aspects of human beings rather than just focusing on the technical attributes of the economic behaviour of human beings, becomes more relevant. This paper is an attempt to look into the tools in behavioral economics which can be applied to douse the flames of covid-19 pandemic in the areas as wide as economy, health and policy making. This paper is structured as follows: the following section is devoted on elaborating the concept of New Normal.' It analyses how it is different from the existing normalcy. The next section dwells into the ways by which devices in behavioral economics and its theoretical premises could be effectively used to elucidate the commonly visible behavioral changes witnessed in economic agents particularly consumers and producers. The penultimate section deals with certain 'biases' as explained in the context of covid-19. The final section concludes with certain positive notes.

On the 'New Normal'

'New Normal' refers to the life after covid-19 or the life with covid-19, and this has been the denotation to which this concept often gets applied in the literature

on the pandemic. Literally, it paints the impression that Covid-19 has replaced the pre-covid normalcy by the post-covid new normalcy. In fact, when the virus erupted, we were misled that, with lockdown and physical distancing the spreading of virus could easily be checked and the system would come back to normalcy as before. But quite contrary to this early perception, it has become obvious that virus would not leave us any soon and we would have to live with the virus, and this realization has led to the restarting of economic and social life amidst the fear of a spreading virus. In fact, the 'New Normal' denotes a life with covid-19 rather than a life after covid-19. 'New Normal' calls for certain behavioral changes from all stake holders including economic agents like consumers, distributors and producers. This is because the virus has a deadly effect not only on the life of human beings but also on the livelihood of human beings. The lockdown which was initially thought to be a panacea to tide over the crisis has turned out to be the most disastrous as all economic activities faced set back, and people were deprived of essential income and lost many opportunities of employment. It made us realise that these kinds of ill-planned lockdowns have destroyed more lives than what the virus had done alone.

Before we think of 'New Normal', it would be interesting to ponder over what had been the 'Normal'. When we were 'Normal', we used to go to offices often in public means of transport, worked there till evening, students used to attend schools, employees attended their workplaces. We didn't wear mask, we shook hands of each others, greeted coworkers and customers with smiling faces. We had social gathering and social functions in which we used to participate without fear or hesitation. None would look at others as potential carriers of the deadly virus. In 'New Normal', we behave as if the people around us are surrounded with the presence of deadly virus. We keep physical distancing and sanitize frequently. 'New Normal' envisages a situation where we are expected to continue what we had been doing in pre-covid period but with a new framework and pattern. In that sense, 'New Normal' has more to do with the behaviors of economic and social agents, which reflect in their economic, social and political dealings. Interestingly, this new normal does not seem to be envisaging any perceptible improvements in the economic and social conditions of human beings. Rather, they are expected to behave in such a way as to insulate themselves from the impending intrusion of the virus into their body and also to protect others from the

spreading of the virus from oneself to others. The rest of the things viz. work and other dealings are expected to persist as before.

If we look around now, some sectors are thriving even in the times of covid-19, for instance, online transactions, online trading, online classes, online webinars and the companies engaged in the production and management of online platform tools etc. For them, what we refer above as new normal does not seem to be normal. Rather, much better than the new normal, it is a 'better normal'. They experience an unprecedented scale up in their turnover, profits and revenues. Many such firms have witnessed running down of their inventories thanks to the escalating demand for their products. It is reported that some software giants have started hiring more workers to meet this unexpected increase in business.

'New normal' should also be seen in the way of the organization of social and economic life including the way we work. The new normal has been shaped more by the constraints created and exacerbated by the virus rather than our choices and preferences with regard to the kind of job or the condition of jobs to be accepted. Nevertheless, the already set in complacency in dealing with the virus raises eyebrows because it compels us to ask ourselves whether the old normal would be reset again instead of the celebrated new normal. The above fear is not baseless as we have had in history instances of old normal revisiting as if we have not learnt enough from the experience to retune ourselves to face the future. For instance, the financial excesses which had culminated into the financial meltdown and global financial crisis of 2008-09 was thought to have been something which would tempt financial and economic stake holders to restrain themselves from indulging in extravagant economic activities. But, much to the despair, we have been again lured into mammoth size financial dealings, and the financial turbulence have started encapsulating the real economy, creating troubles to all the stake holders. The plight of many economies even before the covid-19 set in throws light on the failure to learn from the past experiences.

In the 'New Normal', what is 'new', and what is 'normal'. When we long to return to 'normal', and waiting to adapt ourselves to the 'new normal', the pertinent

question is: have we had a 'normal' good life? Or is there anything to be glorified in 'normal'? The fact of the matter is, we had never been so 'normal' even in the pre-Covid days. It creates a feeling that in the post-Covid times, we ought not be 'new normal' but 'different normal'. Different normal refers to, leading our life to with much positivity compared to pre-Covid day normalcy. For instance, we need to emphasize more on sustainability issues, and learn how to coexist with other beings. In other words, post-Covid normalcy should be an era of coexistence which must involve developing new sources of green energy and new ways of respecting the workers and works of all kinds.

Behavioral Economics and New Normal

Behavioral economics, deals with the application of psychology and other disciplines to economics. It explains how the economic agents viz. consumers, firms, institutions and governments behave as they do in real life. Behavioral economics, can immensely help policy making in studying the behavioral patterns of people. As we have been observing ever since the spread of covid-19, there are unprecedented changes in the economic behavior of people due to their attempts in striking at the pandemic and in the struggle for their livelihood. Apart from maintaing hygiene, physical-distancing, stay-at-home and work-at-home, people as economic agents appear to have been adapting to new kinds of behavioral patterns, which have already been producing their influences on the key economic variables viz. income, employment, output and confidence in business etc. Arriving at feasible economic decisions based on rationality seems extremely challenging for all economic agents in covid times. Unless decisions are taken keeping covid in sight, the costs of such decisions are likely to outweigh their benefits, resulting in inexorable and irreparable losses in future in terms of the deterioration in economic and health status in both micro and macro levels.

Economics, as a discipline of social science, presumes that people take decisions based on rationality assumptions. For the consumer maximizing utility is the kea, while for the firms it is maximizing profit. In technical parlance, a consumer maximizes utility when the price that he pays for a product becomes exactly matches with the utility that he achieves from it. In the same manner, a firm is said to maximize profit when the additional money spent on an additional

product becomes exactly equal to the additional revenue that product brings in. For these things to happen in real life, both the producer and the consumer must act rationally, which is, usually, unlikely to happen even in normal conditions. Therefore, when people confront an extremely difficult condition created by the pandemic, the rational economic decisions are likely to be rendered ineffective, and hence the principle of 'bounded rationality' as described in the realm of behavioral economics may seem to be a relevant strategy to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic. It is true that policy interventions suggested on the lines of behavioral economics can help economic agents in taking better decisions with regard to their choices and preferences apparently to deal with the exigencies jeopardizing opportunities of livelihood (Soofi, Najafi, & Karami-Matin, 2020).

Behavioral Economics acknowledges that people are not as rational economic decision makers as the standard mainstream economic theory, mainly the neo-classical economics, assumes. People rarely do any cost-benefit analysis while taking a decision even in normal condition. Behavioral economics has recently gained an unprecedented attention in the realm of policy making both in developed and developing nations. Partly this is due to the trespassing nature of this branch of economics as it uses insights from psychology, neuroscience and cognitive sciences to elaborate on how people behave in different circumstances. Behavioral economics is built on the foundation that people are not strictly rational and technical in the sense that they attempt to emphasize the marginal loss and benefit of an action to arrive at decisions, rather they are more seemed to be 'biased' in taking decisions. Economic agents, consumers, firms, institutions or governments, do not seem to have infinite rationality and will power to take right decisions always. The decisions are not based on the analysis of complete or available information so as to enable economic agents to predict the outcome of their actions or policies as accurately. These inherent and practical limitations on applying the theory based rationality principles tempt economic agents to use the rules of heuristics to design and shape their economic decisions. Therefore, for the success of any policy interventions, be it health or economic policy or a mix of both, we need to identify these points of 'biases' or the application of the use of 'rule of thumb' by economic agents in their decision making process and use such biases as entry points for policy interventions so as to tackle the

pandemic affectively. In fact, it is here, the behavioral economics finds its relevance.

On 'biases'

Although behavioral economics deals with many 'biases' of economic behavior of people, only a few are seemed to be relevant to explain the conditions which we face in Covid-19 times. One of such biases is what we often call as 'Present Bias'. As the name itself denotes, it is nothing but a tendency on the part of the individual or any economic agent to prefer the present condition even if it yields a lesser benefit compared to the future benefit. These people may often be called Myopic Economic Agents, agents with present bias whatever little it gives them in return. For instance, an individual wants to take a decision to visit a crowded market to purchase a thing: if he or she visits the market, the benefit is the immediate satisfaction which he or she gets from the consumption of the thing; if he or she does not go to the market, the benefit will be the long term health benefit arising out of not being infected by the virus. A myopic economic agent may prefer to visit the market to buy the product not only in exchange of the money but also indirectly in exchange of the virus as well with long term health consequences, the costs of which may outweigh the benefit from the consumption of the commodity.

Some individuals have inertia in their attitude and life style in the sense that they do not want to change the current status and appear to be absolutely unwilling to change. In other words, they do not want to disturb the 'equilibrium'. This preference for the current status is often termed as 'Status Quo Bias'. This bias can be effectively used to pursue economic agents to adopt health enhancing behaviors though the use of what is often called 'nudges[1]' (Thaler & Sunstein , 2008). A nudge is defined as any aspect of the 'choice architecture'[2] that influences individuals' decision making in a predictable way without changing economic incentives (Hansen & Jespersen, 2013). In other words, a 'nudge' is where the 'choice architecture' is modified, without reducing the option available to individuals. Nudges have been used by policy makers in different parts of the world to deal with the spreading of the Covid-19 pandemic. For instance, in UK, "'happy brithday'-20 second hand washing rule" is a case point to highlight the use of nudging in containing the escalation of the virus (Bloom, 2020)[3]. Similarly,

placing hand sanitizer dispensers in more accessible spots and drawing attention of visitors or customers to them with some visual clues or sounds can be regarded as an example of Nudges (UNDP, 2020).

The outcome of the expected hygiene standards in the times of covid-19 is another need to use the tools of behavioral economics. Often, individual choices depend on the outcome of certain actions (Druckman, 2001). This is what is referred to as "Framing Effect." An outcome of an 'act' can be framed in terms of gain or losses: gain-framed messages and loss-framed messages. For instance, the statement that covid-19 recovery rate is India is 77.66% is gain-framed message whereas mortality rate induced by covid-19 is 1% is a loss-framed message. Which message must be opted is something which has effect in determining the required behavioral pattern in economic agents conducive to fight the covid-19. Nevertheless, too much information causes much worry, and it would be difficult for economic agents to search out the required information. In fact, in our present fight; we are not only dealing with the pandemic but also with 'infodemic[4]', which is fighting an environment filled with misinformation and disinformation. In these times, the need of the hour is 'myth-busters' in order to check excessive information (infodemic) that looms over us.

No sooner than did the government lifted the lockdown in many places, we saw people venturing out as if to release their pent-up pressure, resulting in a jump in the number of daily covid-19 cases in India. Why has this been happening? This is on account of a misunderstanding that virus would not infect them. This can be explained with the help of 'optimism bias and over confidence' effect in behavioral economics. Optimism bias is defined as people's tendency to either overestimate or underestimate the outcome of an action in which they are indulged in. Sometimes, people estimate the probability of positive future outcome as greater than the average and that of negative future outcomes as less than the average (Yoshimura & Hashimoto 2020). Optimism bias seems to have been an important cause of the increase in covid-19 cases after the lifting of lockdown in many countries. Studies have shown that optimistically biased economic agents perceive their risk of covid-19 to be low and vice versa (Park, Ju, Ohs, & Hinsley 2020).
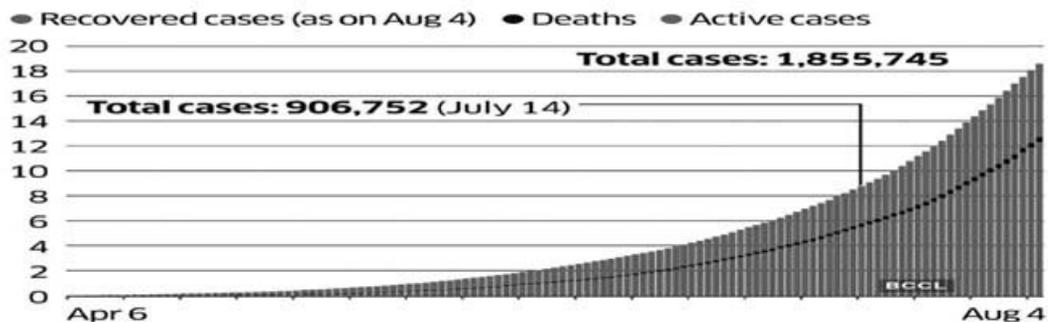
Now we turn to how economic agents judge risks and benefits associated with an economic or social action like protecting one from possible infection for not adhering to physical distancing. A person assesses or judges the outcome based on how it 'affects' him. This is termed as 'affect heuristic' It simply states that when the economic agents feels positive (negative) about a behavior, they judge its risks low (high) and benefits as high (low) (Ali, Paul, & Johnson, 2000). For instance, if an individual feels positive about visiting a crowded shopping mall amidst the repeated warning, he will judge such visits as being not risky. On other hand, if he feels negative about accessing a health insurance policy, he will tend to find fault with such policies. This behavioral pattern can have influence individuals in shaping their attitude towards the repeated advices by the authorities with regard to the conditions of pandemic.

It is interesting to note that some individuals do not even believe themselves. In some localities, particularly in low income areas, people wear masks only when others wear it. Sometimes, I witness people going to shops without wearing masks and no sooner than they realize that others have put on masks covering their mouths and nose, they immediately return to their homes to wear masks. This is explained as 'herding behavior' or 'social influence'. Herding behavior occurs when people consider a certain behavior to be good or bad based on the behavior of other people and mimic the behavior (This is somewhat akin what we often discuss in consumption function theories in the name of the relative income hypothesis or demonstration effect). If you live in a place where your neighbor always stays inside the home, you are more likely to show adherence to stay-at-home policy. If the herd behavior signals negative things, it is

indicative of the whole system getting jeopardized due to the detrimental effect of the pandemic.

Conclusion

Having lived with the pandemic for the last six months, it has become evident that it is not a health issue alone, rather is something which intrudes into the social and economic life of all human beings. Perhaps, for the first time in human history, such a disease created by an invisible enemy has been making lives troublesome for all people and in all the countries alike. Therefore, it calls for equipping our health infrastructure so as to fight the virus. It also reminds us of changing our behaviors to the tune of what is required to fight the virus. In this respect, behavioral economics can be used to frame health and economic policy responses of governments and civil societies.

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[1] NUDGES play an indisputable role in Behavioral Economics. The expanded form NUDGES may be written as: i**N**centive, **U**nderstand mappings, **D**efaults, **G**ive feedback, **E**xpect error and **S**tructure complex choices.

[2] Choice architecture is the environment in which individuals make decisions.

[3] In UK children are told to sing happy birth day song twice while washing their hands.

[4] Infodemic are an excessive amount of information (mostly misinformation and disinformation) about a problem.

COVERAGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN ENGLISH DAILIES OF INDIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Reshma Babu* and Melwyn Pinto SJ**

Abstract

The study focuses on the coverage of news items relating to 'environment' published on a specific time frame in three English dailies in India: The Hindu, The Times of India and Deccan Herald. The study analyses the amount of space and importance given to the news items related to environmental issues using content analysis. Basing the study on the theoretical framework on Walter Lipmann's 'Public Opinion,' the study tries to examine the power of media in shaping public opinion through the coverage given.

Keywords: Environment, ecology, public opinion

Introduction

Media plays an important role in informing and shaping people's opinion. Communication as a process incorporates a handful of experiences and events. Hence everyday happenings become a communication event (Kumar, 1994). Chowdhury (2014) holds that people know more about what is happening around them through media and it is considered as the reflection of society; and there is a need to know how media disseminates its content to the public. It was Walter Lipmann in his *Public Opinion* (1922) who spoke about how media moulds the public opinion and the importance of communication in this process. His writings emphasised the importance of the press and the public working together for creating a change.

As far as spreading awareness through the press is concerned, the environment has always been a subject of importance. Media becomes an important aid to provide information to people about environmental issues. Media focuses on what is happening around the globe. Many literary works, films and environmental movements have drawn the global attention to stop the environmental crisis (Manulak, 2016). Print media, particularly, has been playing a critical role as the

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carrier of message for initiating actions to protect the environment.

Environmental education and its impact on people are studied by researchers over the years and it is found to be the most influential factor for fostering positive attitudes and behaviours (Alyaz, Isigicok, & Gursoy, 2016). Newspaper as the primary source does have a role in propagating environmental concerns to protect nature. However, environmental news occupies a miniscule part of news coverage in Indian newspapers. Keeping a track of the environmental coverage in Indian newspapers can help to examine if such news is a priority for print media and also help in forming public opinion on protecting the environment.

Since global environmental movements and climate change are the most discussed topics worldwide in the present scenario, this study seeks to examine the environmental coverage in three major Indian newspapers selected on the basis of reach, especially in terms of the number of editions the newspapers bring out and also the popularity they enjoy. The study seeks to compare how these three newspapers deal with issues related to environment.

The Climate Action Summit took place in New York on September 23, 2019 to discuss ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45% over the next decade, and to make it zero emissions by 2050. It reinforced the idea of the need to reduce global temperature by 1.5 which was said to be one of the objectives in the *Paris Agreement* 2015.

The *Youth Climate Summit* featured a full-day of programming that brought together young activists, innovators, entrepreneurs, and change-makers who are committed to combating climate change at the pace and scale needed to meet the challenge – namely that it would be action-oriented, intergenerational, and inclusive, with equal representation of young leaders from all walks of life (Britannica, 2020).

Greta Thunberg addressed the problem of climate change and initiated a movement known as *#FridaysforFuture* (Woodward, 2019). Thunberg attempted to bring the notice of the lawmakers to give attention to climate change. The activism of this teenage girl has indeed triggered a positive sense among people and world leaders to take serious actions against man-made environmental problems.

The present study, thus, attempts examine how this event was highlighted in the

Indian newspapers and also how environment related news in general features in the selected newspapers during the course of the year.

Review of Literature

A number of studies have been carried out about how media, specifically the newspapers, have reported environmental issues. Most of the reviewed studies used content analysis method. Dutt and Garg (2000) did a content analysis of 27 newspapers in India from January to December 1996. The study concluded that *The Pioneer* gave more space compared to all other newspapers. Mittal (2012) studied climate change coverage in *Hindustan Times, The Indian Express* and *The Times of India* during the release of the *IPCC Fourth Assessment Report*. According to the study, both *Hindustan Times* and *The Indian Express* have a dedicated team of reporters covering the environment news.

Lucas (2013) did a content analysis of the English dailies, *The Hindu* and *The Times of India*. It was found that *The Hindu* published more articles than *The Times of India.* Similarly, Meda (2016) did a content analysis on *The Hindu* and *The Times of India* to study the amount of space given for environmental issues. The results showed that *The Hindu* published more news items. Archita and Sajeev (2013) analysed *The Hindu, The Times of India* and *Indian Express* between 2005 and 2010. In this study too it was seen that *The Hindu* gave maximum coverage for environment related issues. Dutt, Garg and Bhatta (2013) analysed coverage of environmental issues in 31 prominent national dailies published in Indian metropolitan cities. Data gathered was fed into *Fox-Pro* and the result showed that *The Times of India* gave maximum space for environmental issues.

A study by Schäfer and Schlichting (2014) shows an analysis of media representation of the science of climate change and the issues associated with it. The results suggest that there was a clear growth in reporting climate in the year 2008 and most reports focused on the problems related to the developed western countries. Praveen (2016) explored and quantified the articles published in *The Times of India*. The study concludes that the newspaper has given considerable space for the environment and sustainable development issues. Jangili and Ponugoti (2016) did a content analysis of the dailies *The Hindu, The New Indian Express, Telugu Eenadu* and *Vaartha* from January 1, 2002, to December 31, 2002. The Telugu newspapers

published the highest number of news items related to the environment. Showkat (2017) did a research on the space assigned for climate change in the dailies *The Hindu* and *The Times of India* through a content analysis. Here too the study revealed that *The Hindu* gave more space for environmental news.

Objectives and Method

From the literature that is reviewed above it is clear that newspapers give a considerable importance to the publication of environment related news. This study has employed a similar approach with a specific Indian context. Since the year 2019 was eventful with regard to global environment protests, the study looks into how Indian newspapers covered such environmental issues.

The primary objective of this research is to study the coverage given by Indian newspapers to environment related issues.

The secondary objectives of the study include the following:

- To quantify the number of items related to environment issues reported in newspapers and study the significant differences of the coverage by them.

- To determine the amount of space allotted by newspapers to environment issues.

- To study significant correlations among various types of coverage related to environment in newspapers.

Method

The prime consideration in the selection of the newspapers was prominence as reflected in their circulation, regional representation, readership and widespread appeal. For the study, the researcher chose three popular English dailies in India, *The Hindu, The Times of India* and *Deccan Herald*. The method used for the analysis is quantitative content analysis method which is appropriate to quantify the data collected. Guidelines from Krippendorff's (1998) content analysis method were taken for the study.

The units of analysis for this study consisted of news reports, editorials, articles, columns, features and photos published in the front page, inside pages and editorial pages of the three selected dailies. The number of columns spread and quantum of

space was measured in square centimetres (CM2). The gathered data was fed into the SPSS software for further analysis. ANOVA and Pearson Correlation tests were used to get the statistical significance and the correlations existing between and among the variables.

Sampling

The sample was collected from a continuous week and a constructed week. The reason for choosing the constructed week was to control the bias of recurring trends in news coverage. For the continuous week, the researcher gathered the data from the newspapers from September 15 to September 21, 2019 and for the constructed week newspapers were selected randomly from different months of 2019. As the global climate strike took place in September 2019, the continuous week was chosen from the same month. Thus, a sample of 7 newspapers each for both continuous week and 7 random newspapers for the constructed week were selected.

Data Analysis

The data was analysed encoding it through SPSS software based on the categories such as page wise significance given to reports, articles, features, editorials, number of pictures, and the amount of spaces devoted by all the three dailies.

Newspaper	Front Page	Local News Page	State News Page	National News Page	International News Page	Editorial Page	Total
The Hindu	4	0	1	3	3	1	12
The Times of India	3	0	2	2	1	0	8
Deccan Herald	2	1	1	5	2	0	11

Table 1: Page-wise description of publication of reports

When the total publication of reports in the front, local, state, national, international and editorial pages was analysed, it was found that *The Hindu* published a maximum of 12 reports followed by *Deccan Herald* with 11 reports in the fourteen issues of newspapers that were studied. *The Times of India* had less reports on the environment issues as compared to the other two newspapers as shown in Table 1.

When it comes to the articles published in the dailies, *Deccan Herald* published 1 article on national page and 9 articles on the editorial pages. This also suggests that though the three newspapers did give importance in publishing articles in the editorial page, they gave less importance in publishing the news about national environment related issues. It is also noticeable that *The Times of India* had less coverage in terms of articles in the stipulated weeks. *The Hindu,* however, managed to publish a total of 3 features in the international and national page during the constructed and continuous week followed by *Deccan Herald* with only one feature story as described in Table 2.

Newspaper		Features		Editorial	Pictures
	National News Page	International News Page	Editorial Page		
The Hindu	1	2	0	11	27
The Times of India	0	0	0	10	20
Deccan Herald	0	0	1	11	32

Table 2: Publication of features, editorials and pictures

When analysis of publication of editorial was considered, as shown in Table 2, *The Hindu* and *Deccan Herald* published 11 editorials each on environment related issues while *The Times of India* published 10. All the three dailies took up the issues related to the environment seriously and gave fair coverage even through editorials.

The maximum number of pictures in different pages published during the time frame was by *Deccan Herald*. It had published a maximum of 32 pictures both in the continuous and constructed weeks. Compared to *The Hindu* and *The Times of India*, *Deccan Herald* published more pictures. *The Hindu* published a maximum of 27 pictures and *The Times of India* 20 pictures.

Newspaper	Reports	Features	Editorials	TOTAL Space (CM^2)
The Hindu	12	3	11	5477.69
The Times of India	8	0	10	4153.81
Deccan Herald	11	1	11	6374.11

Table 3: Total amount of space allocated by newspapers

The importance given by a newspaper to a subject can also be measured in terms of the total amount of space allotted to that particular subject. Print media is all about space. In this study, the amount of space given by individual newspapers was measured in square centimetres (CM^2). The results in Table 3 show that *Deccan Herald* gave the maximum space for news related to the environment compared to *The Hindu* and *The Times of India*. It was a total of 6374.11(CM^2). The next newspaper for maximum space was *The Hindu* with 5477.69 (CM^2) space devoted to environmental news. Among the three dailies, *The Times of India* provided the least amount of space during the time frame with a space of 4153.81(CM^2).

The research also carried out ANOVA test to see if there were any significant correlations.

	N/Mean/SD		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Reports	TH (34; M: 0.35; SD: 0.485)	Between Groups	.001	1	.001	.006	.937
	TOI (23; 0.35; 0.30)	Within Groups	20.775	92	.226		
	DH (37; 0.30; 0.33)	Tofal	20.777	93	.223		
Articles	TH (34; M:0.21; SD: 0.410)	Between Groups	.000	1	.000	.001	.975
	TOI (23; 0.22; 0.422	Within Groups	16.851	93	.181		
	DH (37;0.03;0.164)	Total	3.830	93	0.041		
Features	TH (34; M:0.09; SD: 0.288	Between Groups	.001	1	.001	0.30	.863
	TOI (23; 0.00; 000)	Within Groups	3.829	92	0.42		
	DH (37;0.03;0.164)	Total	3.830	93	0.041		
Editorial	TH (34; M:0.3.2; SD: 0.475)	Between Groups	0.17	1	0.17	0.76	.783
	TOI (23; 0.42; 0.507)	Within Groups	21.089	92	.229		
	DH (37; 0.30; 0.463)	Total	21.106	93	.226		

		Reports	Editorials	Articles	Features	Number of Pictures	Amount of Space
Number of Pictures Th (34; M:0.85; SD: 0.500)	Between Groups	1.677	1	1.677	2.271	.135	
TOI (23; 17.17;0.778)	Within Groups	67.940	92	.738			
DH(37;1.19;1.126)	Total	69.617	93	.748			
Amount of Space TH(34; M:2.97; SF:.865	Between Groups	26.653	1	26.653	5.043	.27*	
TOI (23; 3.00; 1.477)	Within Groups	486.198	92	5.285			
DH (37; 3.62; 2.509)	Total	512.851	93	5.514			

Table 4 : ANOVA test for type of week

For the type of week, the results as shown in Table 4 reveal that *Deccan Herald* had given more space for the coverage of environmental issues with a mean score of 3.62, which was statistically significant in comparison to the space allotted by the other two newspapers (TH – 2.97; TOI – 3.00).

As regards the publication of various news items in three newspapers, the ANOVA test revealed no statistically significant difference for various types of news or the amount of space given by the three newspapers.

		Reports	Editorials	Articles	Features	Number of Pictures	Amount of Space
Reports	Pearson Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N						
Editorials	Pearson Correlation	-.504**					
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000					
	N	94					
Articles	Pearson Correlation	-.388**	-.397**				
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000				
	N	94	94				

Features	Pearson Correlation	-.148	-.151	.008		
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.155	.145	.939		
	N	94	94	94		
Number of Pictures	Pearson Correlation	-.105	.051	.163	-.016	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.316	.625	.116	.881	
	N	94	94	94	94	
Amount of Space	Pearson Correlation	-.138	-.053	.160	.047	**.495****
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.184	.612	.124	.656	.000
	N	94	94	94	94	94

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Test for types of coverage and space allotted by newspapers

Along with the ANOVA tests, Pearson Correlation Test was carried out for the type of coverage and the amount of space allotted by newspapers. As seen in Table 5, there was significant correlation in four cases.

First of all, editorials had a significant correlation with reports. This suggests that as the number of reports increase in a newspaper, the number of editorials too increase correspondingly. Similarly, articles correlate both with reports and editorials. Here what is seen is that as the articles increase, there is a probability of increase in the number of reports and editorials published by the particular newspaper and vice versa.

Further, the amount of space allotted for environment related issues by newspapers correlates with the number of pictures published. This too suggests that the more space newspapers devote to these issues, the more pictures are likely to be published. From these tests what can be seen is that *The Hindu* had given more importance in reporting issues related to environment. Compared to the other two dailies, it was seen that *The Hindu* had a lead in publishing more reports, features, articles and editorials. However, *Deccan Herald* had given more space for environment related news in comparison to the other two dailies.

Conclusion

Through this study of newspapers on environment issues, it is established that newspapers do consider environment and related issues as important. Reinser (1992) in his research mentions that the news appearing on the front page is considered to be the most important news and people would read it often.

In most of the previous studies it is seen that *The Hindu* had devoted more space and importance in reporting on the environment related problems. It is also seen in the studies by Lucas (2013), Meda (2016), Archita and Sajeev (2013) that *The Times of India* gave less importance in reporting about the environment in the previous studies as well. Same trend could be seen in this study also.

It is noticed in this study that *The Hindu* seemed to have published news in most pages. It published four news reports on the front page whereas *Deccan Herald* gave only two. *The Times of India*, however, managed to give only three reports on the front page during the time frame, though it has not given much coverage in the inside pages. When compared to the total publication of reports, *The Hindu* gave a maximum of 12 reports followed by *Deccan Herald* (see Table 1). It is also seen in the analysis of the tables that *The Hindu* leads in the publication 11 of articles, features and editorials, whereas *Deccan Herald* leads in the number of articles, pictures and the amount of space given for the news items published.

Though *Deccan Herald* gave a fair coverage in terms of space when it came to environmental news, it is noticeable that *The Hindu* managed to publish news items on environment in most pages. The newspaper even published features in national and international pages on environmental issues which the other two dailies failed to do. But with regard to editorials*, The Hindu, The Times of India* and *Deccan Herald* took up the issues related to environment very seriously. Publishing editorials on issues suggests that the newspaper considers such issues as very important. The very fact that all the three newspapers had considerable number of editorials published in the stipulated issues is itself a reflection of the importance they rendered to environment related subjects. This indeed is a positive trend in Indian newspapers.

While the study reveals that the print media is quite serious and responsible in its coverage of environment and related issues, there is a need for media in general

and print media in particular to convert such publication to a media campaign so that burning issues of the environment are taken seriously by the policy makers.

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THE NEXUS BETWEEN POWER AND CORRUPTION IN COLONIAL INDIA: LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS

Vishnumoorthy Prabhu

Abstract:

The research paper discusses the role played by the British official class and its representation in building the Empire. Unlike the representation in the popular literature, this class as a totality depicted certain traits that were contrary to the professed moral superiority of the white men. Though the role of the bureaucracy in the creation of empire cannot be undermined, the ideological justification of Empire projected this class as the torch bearers of civilization striving to bring the light of civilization to the colonies. The literary representations of colony portrayed this class as imbibing the values of the rational, and progressive west. This paper examines the discourse on the British administrative class and analyses some of the literary representations to show how under the veneer of white superiority, the essential human failings lurk out. The white man's greed for power and money are as much a part of the colonial enterprise right from the beginning. The paper argues that the official class involved in corrupt practices in re-creating the aristocratic splendor of the British nobility as against the professed aims of the colonial mission. The article analyses select novels to examine how the nexus between power and corruption were dealt within literary representations of colonial India.

Key words: Nabob, colonialism, corruption, liberal despotism.

The literary representations of colonial India document the dominant colonial ideology of how the west created the east. It is also true that colonies created the British empire as much as the latter created the former. India as a colony helped *Great Britain* sustain its power and glory as a global power in the Nineteenth century. Lord Curzon said that as long as England ruled over India they were the greatest power in the world. He further added, "if we were to lose it, we shall drop straight away to a third-rate power" (92). This stressed the strategic importance and the need to retain 'the brightest jewel in the imperial Crown.' However, the imperial discourses toned-down the economic motives and white exploitation behind the colonial enterprise by surfacing "Britain's quasi-divine right to rule the subcontinent" (Judd 92). This notion of white superiority drew strength from the prevailing notions of racial and religious ordering of the day to prioritize white men over the coloured. The discourses of power portrayed the ruling class as the enlightened and unblemished in comparison with the ruled who were portrayed as 'the other' of the

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ruling class. While the justifications of Empire saw Indians as unable to rule themselves, it was also seen as their "highest duty towards India" that made them maintain their dominion in India (Judd 104). It is in this context that the myths about the efficiency of the British, their physical and moral superiority and strength of their character are portrayed in different ways in justification for their lawful dominion. A small number of British battalions defeating the bigger Indian armies and an even smaller number of British bureaucrats administering the vast and a diverse land like India are held out as testimony to the European superiority. Dennis Judd speaks of the importance of bureaucracy in maintaining the vast dominion. He refers to the view that "the Raj was thought to be a superb example of the incorruptible administration of a subject people by an imperial power" (92). Though British bureaucracy set a praiseworthy model of administration, the view that it was 'incorruptible' needs to be examined. Rather, this paper looks at corruption that was a part at the highest level of the British rule in India. The image of 'the nabob' provides a reference point to look at the corruption and callousness that was a part of British officialdom.

The term 'Nabob' has interesting derivations in the context of British Imperial history. Derived from the term 'Nawab' (a title assumed by the princes as well), its variant 'nabob' in Britain, was often used with negative connotations. The term was referred to the British men who served under the Raj as officials and made a huge fortune for themselves. The source of such a huge income was suspicious. These nabobs involved in political and commercial operations by using their influential position. The mercenary motives and the desire for leading a luxurious life was one of the objectives behind joining the company service. Life in India in late seventeenth century was not easy for the British officers. Dennis Judd in *The Lion and the Tiger* observed how 'English activities in India caused much controversy and comment at home.' He went on to observe that this was the case throughout the period of British rule in India. The ways in which colonialism affected the colonizer is not discussed to the extent the effects of colonialism on the colonized were discussed. Though there are references to colonial officers speaking about their lot, such narratives do not get as much attention as their romantic views about the colonies attract. Judd offers one such view by a Company man who says,

> ...at home, men are famous for doing nothing; here they are infamous

> for their honest endeavours. At home is respect and reward; abroad is disrespect and heartbreaking. At home is augmentation of wages; abroad no more than the third of wages. At home is content; abroad nothing so much as wages. At home is content; abroad nothing so much as grief, cares and displeasure. At home is liberty; abroad the best is bondage. (Judd 20)

The official class on the fringes lived a life of boredom and lack of autonomy though they became the instrument of domination. Life was very hard for the company officials in a far-off land that seemed mysterious for them. Naturally, the best advice the company offered to its officials was restraint and segregation. Though some of the "Company servants 'went native' with their liaisons with the native women, such instances were frowned upon as 'letting the side down' and as incompatible with the deportment of a ruling European elite" (Judd 20). In spite of such hazarduous life conditions, there was a great interest among the British to serve the Company for monetary benefits. Many of the company officials involved in private trade as their associations with native states provided them with opportunities.

P J Marshall, the Professor of History at King's college, speaking about the British-Indian connections refers to the dichotomy that the individual company officials amassed great fortunes while the British East India Company (Henceforth, BEIC) was threatened of bankruptcy in 1772-73. He goes on to say that "individuals seemed to be able to extract wealth from India at will. Great 'nabob's' fortunes were apparently made through corrupt means; Indians were being despoiled and the company and the nation were being cheated (46)." The trial of Warren Hastings is seen as one such example. For the conservatives such as Burke, Warren Hastings represented a nabob exercising unbridled power. The trial also indicates how the colonial atmosphere provided easy chances for the British officers to use their power to make money. Burke, who led the tirade against Hastings, considered him "a new kind of nawab." Hastings was called 'a usurper' for he claimed "a kind of despotic power." Burke argues that Hastings was a mere delegate of the company and could act under several royal charters authorized by parliament and by the charters that the company received from the Moghals. The power that Hastings "supposed himself justified by namely a delegated subordinated arbitrary power was to Burke a

nonsense. Meanwhile it was evident that "the East India company have not arbitrary power to give them (282)."

However, neither corruption nor despotism was just a characteristic of the Company administration. As we see in this paper, these traits continued till the very end of the British administration in India. While they justified the despotism of their rule by terming it 'benevolent despotism' needed to civilize an uncouth population of India, the literature of the period didn't refer to corruption that had been a part of colonial enterprise from the beginning. In the initial period of company operations, the high ranked company officers mainly came from British nobility. They could understand and respect the rich heritage of India. But as the British strengthened their hold on bigger territories, they needed a greater manpower to manage the affairs of India. As the British took control over the political affairs of the country, they had to take up a different role than that of the traders. They had to perform the political role of administering the land with the ideas of a prince—the ideas that appeal to the Indian masses. As they came to enjoy the political power, the high-ranked officials of the company constituted themselves into an aristocracy which they couldn't think of at their native country. The British in their discourses justified the 'rule by Indian idiom.' Lord Valentia in *Voyages* opposed those who considered that the expenses of Government House in India extravagant. He argued,

> Head of a mighty Empire ought to conform himself to the prejudice of the country he rules over; and that the British, in particular, ought to emulate the splendid works of the princes of the House of Timour, it should be supposed that we merit the reproach which our great rivals, the French, have ever cast upon us, of being alone influenced by a sordid, mercantile spirit. In short, I wish India to be ruled from a palace, not from a counting-house; with ideas of a prince, not with those of a retail dealer in muslins and indigo. (235-6)

Lord Valentia justified British emulation of pomp and splendour of the native rulers lest his countrymen were termed mere businessmen. In fact, it is ironic that the company which was established for the purpose of setting up trade should now think of such an association with trade and commerce an inconvenient one. This idea of rule by Indian idiom and liberal despotism gain strength after the administration of the country is taken over by the Queen. The Queen's Proclamation

of 1858 stressed on the liberal rule. Yet, the violent memories of the revolution/ mutiny had a nightmarish effect on the British imagination as displayed by the mutiny novels that came out in significant number in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

With the greater bureaucratic control in legal and administrative matters, the scene was thrown open for the new bureaucratic class recruited generally from the burgeoning British middle class. This class had cherished Victorian notions of racial superiority informed by the Darwinian theories. This class considered itself morally superior to the colonised people and tried to assert white supremacy in every aspect. It is in this period that the ideology of empire got strengthened by such theories as 'the Whiteman's Burden.' As the opportunities for making money became popular, there was competition and lobbying for the company positions. As P. J. Marshall notes, Many others turned to India primarily as the means to a fortune. Competition for places in the Company's civil and military services became intense. Political influence and appointments brought people to India sometimes of a higher social status and with more aspiring cultural ambitions than those of the young men drawn through the established channels of recruitment. Under government nomination, for instance, was sent Sir William Jones, a scholarly polymath, to the royal Supreme Court at Calcutta. (47)

There were many officials who came to India in search of lucrative commissions. John Lang, an Australian solicitor speaks about the opportunities for this new class in the princely states as well. There were artists, engineers, financiers and lawyers whose services were sought after in the princely states. As the 'British India' expanded its control over India, administration of a vast territory necessitated a great number of fresh recruitments. There was also a stiff competition to enter into the Company's service. Earlier, young aspirants were recruited by the 24 Directors of the BEIC mainly by a system of patronage. Generally, the young men from middle or the upper class could exert influence on the directors and get into positions such as military cadets, civil service and surgeons. Having gained wealth in company service, these officers flaunted their wealth and power and tried to live the life of aristocracy that they couldn't afford in their native country. Making use of the opportunities to amass wealth in their colonial positions, many of the influential officers tried to gain political power by contesting elections back at home. These situations clearly exhibit the tendency to involve in corrupt practices. Yet, the literary

representations projected the British officialdom as the 'representatives' of the mighty British empire. As a part of this great empire, the class is projected as the repositories of an ideal behaviour and the values that the image of empire would like them to possess. The training that the new recruits underwent helped them to imbibe certain principles. As a rule, the officers were not allowed to mingle with the native population as such a contact was considered to have a corrupting influence on the officials. Hence, it is an established notion in the official circles of the colonial administration that Indians were not only considered corrupt, but their contact could also have a corrupting influence on the colonial officers.

J K Buda, in his article "The Literature of British India" observes that the novels and personal accounts by the British official class quenched the curiosity of the natives in England about their growing empire in India. He notes:

> Some of the earliest Indian novels published in England go back as far as the 1780s, and by the beginning of the 19th century, a steady stream of quaintly exotic novels was serving to assuage the British public's curiosity in its ever-growing Indian possessions. Many of these early novels deal with the 'nabobs' of John Company — merchant adventurers who returned from India fabulously wealthy, and flaunted their riches before an astonished London society. (1)

The novels published in the colonial period deal with the corruption and extravagant lifestyle of the Nawabs, ministers and the servants of the Princely states. Contrary to the British India (Principalities under the control of British), Princely India (sometimes referred to as 'Indian India') was considered backward, stagnant and decadent. Hence, though liberal ideas had taken roots in England through the Reform Bill and the New Poor Law, the advocates of reforms were cautious about such revolutionary changes in India. Though many reforms were introduced and India could become a laboratory for the creation of the liberal administrative state, the idea of 'representative government' was still not considered. Rather, the policy of the 'Doctrine of Lapse' brought several states under British control. The writers in this period found the British presence in India not only beneficial for the country but also important to the deliverance of the people from their uncivilized condition. J S Mill, who advocated 'Representative Government' felt that "subjection to a 'foreign force' and a government 'in a considerable degree despotic' was appropriate and

even necessary" for countries like India (Metcalf 31). The novels that deal with the life of the Anglo-Indians portray life in a different cultural context, the boredom and social life of the British officials etc. After the events of 1857, many historical novels were written on the theme of revolt against the foreign rule. The 'novels of the mutiny' as they were popularly known in the British circles predominantly dealt with the trope of rape and victimization of the white woman vis-à-vis the valorization of white men. The novels taken up for discussion in this paper are mainly the ones that deal with the corruption of British officials.

The British presented Indians as 'the other' of their ennobled and efficient self. The common opinion that the Indians cannot administer themselves and hence, the presence of the British in India is beneficial in keeping the despotic rulers and the corrupt officials in check. The literature written on the theme of governance portrays Indians in general as corrupt people who are ready to sacrifice the system for personal gains. Lord Elphinstone says that the only useful purpose the princely states might serve was to act as "sinks to receive all the corrupt matter that abounds in India" (Moraes 91). The princely India, the other of 'British India' portrayed as the land of opportunists in corruption. There are many accounts or European travelers that represent India as a country where corruption is the order of the day. One such example of callous misappropriation to the extent of incredibility is *Greater Britain* by Charles Wentworth Dilke. Dilke who says, "not only unbounded tyranny and extortion, but incredible venality and corruption, prevail in the greater number of native states":

> Example of Raja of Travancore wanted to build a bungalow contracted to a builder at rupees ten thousand. The contracted later asked to be let off. Your highness, of the 10000 Rs, your prime minister will get 5000 Rs, his secretary 1000 Rs, the baboos in his office another 2000 Rs the ladies of the zenana 1000R s, know the bungalow itself will cost 500 Rs, so where am I to make my profit? Corruption, however, pervades in India all native institutions; it is not enough to show that native states are subject to it, unless we can prove that it is worse there than in our own dominions. (272-3)

Dilke asserts that natives live in comfort in British India and are 'less likely to starve' and only the opportunists could clamour against the just rule of the British. The

motive behind such representation is to prioritise the colonial rule by casting aspersions on the rule of the native kings. Edward Thomson in *An Indian Day* deals with the theme of how the British are not prone to corruption while the Indian officers are. In the novel, the *Raja of Kenduti* and his mother try to bribe a British officer to arrange an election but the upright officer rejects the offer. However, the Raja would accomplish his aim with the help of a corrupt Indian Commissioner. Many of the novels set on the Mutiny do speak about the administrative lapses of the princes and their offer of bribe to the British residents in order to get a favorable report sent to the Governor. *Sword and the Pen* presents one such example of native state trying to bribe the company representative to send a sympathetic report on their rule. Though the corruption of the company officials and the bureaucrats under the empire is depicted in some literary works, the dominant discourse on colonial administration brushes aside these acts in viewing company administration as efficient and enlightened. The intention of the paper is to examine such a theme as revealed in Louis Bromfield's significant work, *The Rains Came*. The action of the novel is situated in the model state of Ranchipur in the last phase of colonialism. The state of Ranchipur has embraced the colonial modernity in terms of modern education and technology and is looked at with awe even by the British nobles. Yet, in its enthusiasm to outdo the British governance, it meets its catastrophe.

Corruption is one of the major themes in *The Rains Came.* The novel is set in the declining phase of the Raj. As the author envisages, the story is set in India caught between the two worlds- one dead and the other powerless to be born. *The Rains* discusses the fate of British officers caught in flood and cholera that plagues the mysterious city of Ranchipur. Tom Ransome, the protagonist surprisingly comes into contact with Lady Esketh, his long lost love in Ranchipur. She had accompanied her rich husband to visit the local Maharajah for horse trade. Lady Esketh and Tom Ransome's are initially drawn to each other and are repelled by one another's character. The missionaries and other Europeans residing in Ranchipur are captivated by the dazzling richness of the Esketh. The Maharaja and the Maharani are presented as liberal minded and progressive in their attitude. *The Rains Came* discusses Indian outlook of development through Western know-how. The novel deals with the catastrophe that a mechanical imitation of the West would lead to. The book also speaks suggestively about fascism and military dictatorship of the time. The novel raises issues about the country's pride and reliance on its own history and culture versus the Western model of development. Western model of

development is depicted as an advantage, if followed in the true spirit. However, mere imitation of technology without necessary vision is doomed to fail as signaled by the destruction caused by the substandard dam that breaks open causing the tragedy in the end. Corruption and inefficient work culture is held as the reason for the disastrous end of Ranchipur.

The liberal native leaders of the city welcome modernity into Ranchipur by embracing progressive outlook. The modern schooling system, the hospital and the Engineering college and the dam are all the testimony to it. The Mahrajah and Maharani had "a kind of mystical child-like faith in the miracles which could be worked by the great engineers from the West…things which no Indian could conceive or execute" (303). However, the shoddy work on the dam that was supposed to provide irrigation and fresh water leads to a great catastrophe. 'For twenty-three years since the day the dam was finished as one of the wonders of India the fault had remained hidden' (303).

The Maharajah had blind faith on the engineering skills of the West. He fell an easy prey to the mealy-mouthed Aristide de Groot, who claimed "to have built dams and factories in Switzerland and Austria, in Italy and Sweden, in Brazil and China?" (Bromfield, 304). Aristide de Groot appears to be even great a mystery for the people of Ranchipur than the town itself was for the whitemen. Many years after the catastrophe, as the people of Ranchipur recall, de Groot

> was not as he had said, a Swiss, nor anything else very definite, but simply a man without a country, an adventurer and a swindler. …with no prejudices as to race or creed or colour, with a tongue which had a lightening quickness like the tongue of a Russell's viper. One or two clever people like the Dewan and the old Maharani remembered Aristide de Groot, twenty-three years afterwards, only as a pair of eyes, cold eyes like those of the deadly Krait which must have regarded all men as exactly alike simply because they were potential victims of Aristide de groot. (304)

His 'viper's tongue was smooth enough to persuade the Diwan and the shrewd Maharani. Aristide de Groot symbolizes evil at its best. The evil as envisaged by the old Diwan as a part of the Western narrative of progress. The novel didn't exhibit

corruption as a personal trait but as a systematic and organized connivance to protect itself. Aristide de Groot has a mysterious sense of belonging to the place he occupies. He easily influences people through his viper's tongue. As the Diwan says, "In his eyes was hidden the whole tragedy of European greed" (Bromfield, 304). After the catastrophe, the Diwan realises the fault of not listening to the voice of his instinct and blindly believing the foreigner. He says, "Men like that should be stamped out like serpents. If they are not stamped out, the West is finished. It will destroy itself" (304). Yet, people like de Groot could avoid legal action or escape punishment with the help of corrupt lawyers who readily help them. Further, it becomes clear that many statesmen and senators and bankers were among the intimate friends of de Groot. Bromfield writes,

> The British Government even discovered with a certain shock that four or five important men in London, including Lord Heston and his journalist rival, Lord Skillington, had spent week-ends with Aristide de Groot on his yacht or at his chateau near Compiegne or his house in Biarritz. (306)

It is not just de Groot who is corrupt. Lord Heston, who comes to Ranchipur to trade horses with the Rajah is also corrupt. His corruption is revealed through Lady Heston's ponderings when she observes her sick husband and thinks:

> There you are- not the swaggering Lord Heston, boasting and bullying and buying   what you want, but just plain, vulgar Albert Simpson, the son of a small building contractor in Liverpool, who got beyond himself. You,'ve never done a good deed for anyone unless it brought you profit and glory. And you have ruined men and women who trusted you for the sake of power and money. Oh, you've given money to charities in large lumps well-advertised in your newspapers, but it never cost you anything. …. It made people who didn't know you say you were generous, and it served to whitewash your character and cover up a lot of sculduggery and stifle criticism of your enemies. You'd betray your own country if it would bring in another shilling or another ounce of power. (196)

Mrs Heston thinks that if she were to write a biography of Heston, "that would put you in Jail or in an asylum for madmen."

Oh, you're very shrewd… using your newspapers, your mines, your factories, your steamships, round and round in an endless chain, turning profit for yourself at the expense of workmen, shareholders, of humanity itself. (196-197)"

Like de Groot, Heston has become very powerful at the expense of the people and the country or rather at the expense of humanity 'itself.'

The Rains Came looks at corruption as systemic in its application. It is treated as a part and parcel of modern civilization. It is the system that paves the way for corrupt practices and validates it. Corrupt individuals take advantage of the system by hoodwinking the noble aspirations of people like the maharajah. The tragedy of Ranchipur is an example of how the modern ways of development contain within itself the seeds of mass destruction. It is considered the necessary evils of the modern civilization that boasts about making life convenient. Irrespective of the potential harm it could do to humanity, the complex forces of capitalism project these models of development. The theme of corruption is closely linked to the change in the life style caused by colonial modernity espoused by people like de Groot and Lord Heston. In their mad pursuits, they take advantage of the system to amass wealth and fashion themselves as new 'nabobs.' Their greed and mercenary motives of capitalist expansion are at the heart of the colonial enterprise. The colonial discourses hailed the capitalist model of development as emancipatory. Yet, the contradictions are perceived by people like Gandhi who saw it as enslaving rather than emancipatory. *The Rains Came* juxtaposes these conflicting views and shows the contradictions of application of colonial model of development.

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➢ A minimum of 45% aggregate in optional /major subjects in the qualifying examination.

MSc. : Chemistry and MSc. Analytical Chemistry

➢ BSc. Degree of Mangalore University or any other degree recognized by the University as equivalent thereto, with Chemistry as one of the optional / major subjects.

➢ A minimum of 50% (45% for SC / ST candidates) aggregate in chemistry subject in the three year degree course.

MSc. : Mathematics (Two year/four semester course including project work)

MSc. : Bio Chemistry (Two year/four semester course including project work)

➢ Eligibility: Same as that of M.Sc. Biotechnology

MCom.: Students with B.Com, BBA and other Commerce and Management Degree from recognized Indian or Foreign University and secured aggregate 50% and above.

MA : Journalism and Mass Communication

➢ Students with BA, BAJC, BCom, BSc. or any other equivalent degree in any discipline from a recognized University.

MA : English (Two year/four semester course including project work)

➢ Graduate Students of Optional English, Communicative English or any students of BA, BHRD, BSc, BCom with two years or 4 semesters of English Language Study.

MA : Economics (Two year/four semester course including project work)

➢ B.A Graduates with Economics as Compulsory Subject.

MSc. : Physics (Two year/four semester course)

➢ BSc. Degree of Mangalore University or any other degree recognized by the University as equivalent thereto, with Physics as one of the optional / major subjects. A minimum of 50% (45% for SC / ST candidates) aggregate in Physics subject in the three year degree course

MSc. : Food Science & Technology

➢ Candidates shall have studied any branch of Life Sciences with Chemistry/Biochemistry as one of the major/optional/subsidiary subjects securing 45% marks (40% in case of SC/ST candidates) in the aggregate excluding languages at the undergraduate level.

MSc. : Corporate Psychology

➢ Students have passed the 3 year degree examination any subject of Mangalore University or any other university considered as equivalent to, provided that they have secured a minimum of 45% (40% for SC/ST/Category I Candidates) marks

MSc. : Counselling (Two year/four semester course)

MCA : Master of Computer Applications (Three year/six semester course including project work)

MSc. : Bioinformatics (Two year/four semester course including project work)

MSc. : Software Technology (Two year/four semester course including project work)

MBA : Master of Business Administration (Two year/four semester course including project work)

Research Centres:
Departments of Biotechnology, Chemistry, English, Kannada, Commerce, Economics, Management, Bioscience