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From the Chief Editor's Desk

Scotopia (ISSN: 2455-5975) a multilingual online journal, published by Hiralal Mazumdar Memorial College for Women, Dakshineswar publishes research papers and articles of high standards. These papers are peer-reviewed by eminent experts. The Chief Editor, along with the academically dedicated members of her editorial board sends these papers to external academicians and scholars, after primary selection. The editorial board selects subject experts to review the works on the basis of their expertise in the field. The editors analyse the reviewers' comments and make a recommendation to the author for necessary improvement and then takes the final decision to accept or reject the papers. A single negative review, with which the editor agrees, may be sufficient to recommend rejection.

Etymologically the word *Scotopia* originates from the Greek *skotos,* darkness + New Latin – *opia*; in simple version it stands for *scotopic vision in New Latin; our college has designed this journal to spread knowledge to ensure* vision in dim light. 'Scotopia*'* thus conceptually enhances the ability to see in darkness or dim light. Our journal also attempts to spread the light of knowledge in this era of confusion, dilemma and darkness.

This is our proud privilege that renowned scholars of our college, as well as belonging to other colleges or universities or institutes send their contributions for publications. Normally the papers are of very high qualities and in real terms spread light of knowledge to the academic community. Readers' blessings and more powerful contributions will encourage us to proceed further to reach our destination for creating a world of divine intellect.

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Digital World – Power to Empower

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Prelude

In the recent decade we are captivated in a digitally empowered world, in which digital technology has taken a revolutionary step forward to transform almost every aspect of human life. Our personal space to professional domain- the entire existence is being encircled by digital network and digital communications. We dream to have digital devices to survive in a better way; our status symbol is our I-phones, our high configuration computers, our highly configured and high profile featured cell phones etc. From the workplace to entertainment world, travel, banking, shopping etc. are surrounded by digital mechanisms and data, especially big data. Virtual environment composed and developed by Internet and digital devices surrounds us, connects us with each other and with the world as a whole. Digital technology is allowing access to all type of information and communication, leading to enhancement of knowledge, giving us a comfort zone to strive for a better life. The world cannot even think to remain active and alive without websites, smart phones, digital televisions, video streaming, e-books, digital music, geo-location, without blogs, social media and so on and consequently computers, printers, self scanning devices, digital cameras, ATMs, robotics, drones and guided missiles. We buy and sell online, we read and write digitally and we even may start thinking and dreaming digitally very soon. Artificial intelligence is involved in all these and this has increased the threat to loss of privacy in an undemocratic way. Use of personal information to intrude in private sphere raises a bone of contention regarding power of the people vs. speed of marketing politics, market economy and commoditized society.

Digital Society: 'Power to Empower'

The term "digital" has become extremely popular connotation in this digitally driven world. Its implication cannot be simplified by explaining merely the terminology and epistemology of the

science and techniques of 'information dissemination' and 'networking'. Since the term has some performance potential, the world leaders are now inclined to think about a new perspective of the information revolution; new technical directions are coming up and more radical thoughts for future are taking place of the conventional ones. Digitization of different domains of human activities and human life and society has become a target and at the same time has become a process, leading to initiation of new set of policies with new terminology, renewed elaboration and with intelligent ambience. New vocabulary has emerged to address the issues of the digital world and to lay foundation of scientific and public discourses. Communications among ICT's inventors, policy-makers, businesses, citizens and their organizations regarding digital constructs, digitally tenable visions, strategies and their societal acceptance and implementation have become far more frequent. Some ICT experts prefer to use the term "digital" as a term specifying a higher level of technology and in a more metaphoric way; a qualitative change due to increased use of technological applications in many domains and spheres of human activities is in their projections. But some prefer to utter the term 'digital' in a simplified form, so as to touch the hearts of the mass, which is increasingly getting highlighted in the policy diaries of the world political and economic leaders. In all forms, the discussions and acts on the possibilities and prospect of digitization have become the stimulus of its development, more so in the pandemic era due to lockdowns, increasing health budget, shut down of educational hubs etc. Digitization, a process of conversion of technologies from analogue to digital form, resulting in a better quality of communication, network, transmission and storage has raised new possibilities of linking files.

Digital Environment: Indian Experience

 In India the virtual environment that has been constructed and developed through computers and empowered by the internet allows processing and storing of digitalized data like that in the other parts of the globe. In 1987, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, entrusted Sam Pitroda to lead six technology driven missions associated with telecommunications, water, literacy, immunization, dairy and oil seeds. He founded India's Telecom Commission and became its first chairman. Government of India launched Digital India campaign on July 1, 2015.

Keeping in mind the need for digitization Government of India had come out with innovative ideas and practical solutions to initiate the vision of digital India with the aspirations to promote its motto of "Power to Empower". The vision was to transform our nation into 'digital India and to create opportunities for all citizens to access all the amenities of civic life by harnessing digital technologies. The major objectives of this initiative were to supply high-speed internet altogether gram panchayats, to supply quick access to Common Service Centre (CSC) within the entire locality etc. It sought to restructure many existing schemes and to implement them in a synchronized manner. The vision was to empower every citizen with knowledge and information about digital services, enabling them to have better access to digital services, knowledge and information. Drives were taken for creation of more digital infrastructure, digital delivery of services, and digital literacy. Policies and best practices had been taken from the inspirations around the world to make this vision of a digital India a reality. At the initial phase this effort included the following

1. Broadband Highways
2. Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity
3. Public Internet Access Programme
4. e-Governance
5. e-Kranti
6. Information for All
7. Electronics Manufacturing
8. IT for Jobs
9. Early Harvest Programmes

The Government of India's entity Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL), executer of the Bharat Net project was entrusted the responsibility as the custodian of Digital India (DI) project. Some of the facilities proposed to be provided through this initiative were Bharat net, digital locker, e-education, e-health, e-sign, e-shopping and national scholarship portal.

As part of Digital India, Government of India planned to launch Botnet cleaning centers. National e-Governance Plan aimed at bringing all the front-end government services online to be in tune with the vision of Digital India.

- 'My Gov. in' was thought to be a platform to share inputs and ideas on matters of policy and governance and to ensure citizens' engagement in governance, through a "Discuss", "Do" and "Disseminate" approach.

- UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance) was conceived as a unified secure multi-channel multi-platform multi-lingual multi-service freeware mobile app of Government of India for accessing over 1,200 central and state government services in diverse Indian languages, including services such as AADHAAR, DigiLocker, Bharat Bill Payment System, PAN, Income Tax, GST, information regarding higher education institutions through AISHE, NIRF, UCCHASIKSHA PORTAL, vaccination data, Arogya Setu and fee or utility bill payments, education, students' enrolment, job search, health, agriculture, travel, Indian flight/railway tickets bookings, birth and death certificates, e-District, e-Panchayat, police clearance, passport, e-Sign framework, e-Hospital application, digital attendance and other utility services from private companies and far more.

Initiatives were taken for 'Back-end digitization'. Union budget of 2016 announced eleven technology driven initiatives including the utilization of knowledge analytics to trace tax evaders, creating a considerable opportunity for IT companies, Digital Literacy mission designed to cover six crore rural households, connecting 550 farmer markets in the country through the use of technology etc.. The government had planned to create huge seats of BPOs in various states and set up at least one Common Service Centre in each of the gram panchayats in the state to encourage BPOs and to boast up employability. E-Sampark Vernacular email service was launched to connect rural India with Digital India; the Government of India impelled giant email services provider giants including Gmail, office, and Rediff to provide the email address in regional languages. Digital India Mission is an initiative

that encompasses plans to attach the agricultural areas of the country with high-speed internet networks, like connecting post office branches in the rural areas electronically or promoting electronic transactions related to e-governance.

Challenges of Digital India

There are several challenges faced by this flagship mission:

1. Low internet speed, as well as the Wi-Fi hotspots, are slow as compared to other developed nations
2. Hurdles for small and medium scale industry to struggle for adapting to the modern digital technology
3. Limited capability of entry-level smart phones for smooth internet access
4. Inadequacy of technically equipped manpower in the field of digital technology
5. The growing menace of digital crime
6. Lack of user education
7. Digital illiteracy
8. Digital divide
9. Poor infrastructure
10. Lack of coordination among various departments
11. Issue pertaining to higher slab of taxation
12. Political micro-targeting and trespassing into private sphere of the individuals for vested political or business interests.

Government of India has taken a strong initiative, known as Digital India initiative to ensure smooth access of government services to citizens of world's largest democracy through electronic mode; to reach the people, even in remote areas, steps have been taken to improve digital infrastructure and to increase Internet connectivity. Thus digital revolution in India began as a part of dream project of the Government of India to take nation forward digitally and economically. But this initiative has lots of roadblocks in the way of its successful implementation. These challenges need to be addressed and a lot of efforts and dedication from

all segments are to be taken in order to extract the full potential of this programme, so that various new opportunities get open for the citizens of the country.

Government of India should take steps to make Indian society digitally empowered. Digital literacy should be incorporated in syllabus. Digital protection laws must be more effective to prevent crime. Awareness programmes are to be organized, especially in rural and remote areas, for digital education and information. Benefits and cautions regarding internet services are to be highlighted in the campaigns for digital India to increase the growth of internet usage, as well as prevent the occurrence of cyber crime. Digital divide needs to be addressed by strengthening the infrastructure and for this public-private partnership (PPP) might be potentially helpful. PPP models must be explored, licensing policies must be made easy and lucid and favorable taxation policies must be initiated for sustainable and steady development of digital infrastructure. Maximizing connectivity and minimizing cyber security risks by maintaining the database with utmost protection should be taken as a mission.

Digital Polarization

The big tech companies, political parties, interest groups etc. buy, sell and use data for activation of digital market, digital polity and digital society. These entities create a socio-psychographic profile of citizens/individuals to target their potential buyers/voters. Digital mechanism promotes microtargeting, leading to polarization, disinformation, and misinformation. Digital polarization shapes market or voting behavior of an individual in a way to give maximum benefit to the capitalists and the existing ruling community in their desired way. Donald Trump's deterrence project is one of the biggest examples of digital polarization; Donald Trump's deterrence project not only led to controversial election results but also promoted racial discrimination by the use of digital models and algorithms. Digital America deterred black Americans from voting in the 46th Presidential election, though the process started before Obama's reign. Digital society thus helps nurturing this kind of algorithmic bias which promotes and adheres social discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age , and the like. *Leave* campaign in the UK, leading to Brexit is another example of digital polarisation. Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and other social media platforms

often promote polarization and help spreading misinformation and disinformation. This threatens democracy.

It does not lead one to say that advent of digital society is a curse. It is not possible to either eliminate algorithmic bias or it is not worthwhile to stop the expansion of digital world, which is a mark of this era of technological revolution. There must be some regulations imposed by the governments on securing individuals privacy so as to ensure justice, equality and fraternity in the society and to promote ethical expansion of digital society, digital economy and digital polity.

In United States of America Equal Credit Opportunity Act of USA has been enacted which has made it illegal for a company to use a biased algorithm producing and nurturing discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age; this law has been designed to create a fair digital world. There are General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) regulation in European Union for data protection and protection of privacy in the European Union and the European Economic Area aiming to promote a digital world for progress of human civilisation. All the countries should enact such laws to ensure their citizen's privacy and democratic existence. In the name of transparency of algorithms and other public centric policies, citizens' private domain must not be jeopardised. Digital world has come with big challenges. Ethical administration of digital world can give leverage good social causes.

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When the Pandemic Infected Indian Federation

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Disaster:

COVID-19 has brought a once-a-century event before the entire world. In the first quarter of 2020 human existence has been affected in a superfast way leaving all of us utterly baffled putting our imaginative power also in abeyance. The pandemic tragedy seems to be more devastative than the World War II if we consider the range of affected areas. Every single aspect of geopolitics is tremendously stressed bearing consequences for local, regional, national and international politics. Crises are grappling economic, political and social lives in unprecedented ways resulting historical reshaping of power, government, governance and communities. The entire scheme of social contract where our existence is rooted upon is severely devastated. Several questions are floating on the air regarding the role of government, health sector, economic system, legal system and other segments of governance and public policy in local, national and international levels.

One of the most strained political concern during this COVID 19 period in India undoubtedly centers on the concept of "*Federalism*". The very concept of federalism and its several principles started facing serious challenges everyday leading to remarkable tension in the centre-state relations. Centrality of the union government has entered not only in the level of policy decisions but also in the level of *collective consciousness* in an unprecedented way making the basic foundation of federal democracy absolutely weak. The post independent tradition of democratic federalism with strong constitutional arrangement and rule of law is facing serious challenges showing critical signals for the foundation of Indian nationhood questioning the fundamental political structure of the land. It often seems that the federal narrative of the Indian state which has faced different ups and downs in different period is standing before a blind alley. Now the present paper will try to throw some questions on the changing nature of Indian federation with definite effects on national, sub-continental and global politics. This piece of writing is a product of documentary sources predominantly received from electronic and print media and finally the

accumulated information are submitted on the anvil of the broad theoretical paradigm of federalism to deduce certain conclusions.

The article starts with a very brief understanding of Indian federalism and some points of intervention. In the next phase elaborations are on some areas of sociopolitical challenges in the COVID19 period. Here it is worthy to remember that almost all the sociopolitical challenges to Indian federation have their roots in financial issues. In the concluding part attempt is made to find some convergence points on how the central and state governments can reduce the tension points to act together.

Foundational Principle and Opportunism:

The despicable nature of the Indian political parties deserves a special mention at the very beginning as all the major political parties support the principles of federalism absolutely and vouch for its proper implementation as long as they are in opposition bench of national parliament. However, the moment they occupy the majority in Loksabha they prefer to blissfully ignore all fundamentals of federalism. And this is the perennial problem of federal ethics in India. Moreover, all the leading political parties in the present times are proudly giving the open call for "*opposition free legislature*" in all their election campaigns. This is an utterly disgusting behavior bearing the innate desire to masquerade the basic principles of parliamentary liberal democracy that the framers of the Indian Constitution very meticulously developed for the land.

Indian federation from the very initial days suffers from some terminological fallacy. We all are aware of the fact that Article 1 declares that India, that is Bharat shall be a Union of States. Nowhere have we found the term "*federation*" leading to several subsequent problems. Founding father of the document Dr. Ambedkar categorically has stated on several occasions that there were certain advantages in describing India as a Union of states and this expression indicates two important facts: first, that federalism in India had not been the result of an agreement among the units and second, that the constituent units of Indian federation had no right to secede from it. K.C.Wheare also reiterates the same spirit somewhat by saying: Indian union is a unitary state with subsidiary federal features rather than a federal state with subsidiary unitary features. Similarly several other commentators have identified it as federation without federalism or union of unequal states. An interesting description was provided by Alfred Stephan in 1999 in his

famous article "Federalism & Democracy: Beyond the US Model". It regards India as "holding together"(meaning thereby that there is no pooling of authority and retention of nationality in that pattern of federation) federation and not "coming together"(where separate states combine their sovereign rights and assets to form a strong nation) federation. This is an idea which really is quite fascinating.

Now in the next part the author prefers to refer to the different categories of challenges that Indian federation has confronted in this COVID -19 era, resulting mostly from economic control of the union government which gradually has spread its dark wings over the socio-cultural domains with every step having distinct political cadence. A humble submission to start with is that COVID 19 has developed a completely directionless polity and economy for a large part of globe and not for India alone.

Power Play:

"**Lockdown**" is a new entry in the common vocabulary since March 2020 as different countries have adopted it as a strategy to control the rising curve of the disease. The Government of India on March 22, 2020 ordered a voluntary curfew followed by a number of combat regulations in different phases. The first in this series was declared on March 24, 2020 whereby the Central Government has ordered a nationwide *''lockdown''* for 21 days completely limiting the movement of above 1.3 billion population of the land as a preventive measure by stopping all kinds of activities barring a few essential ones. Till 30th May, 2020 we have witnessed 68 days of total lockdown in four phases and from 1st June began the fifth phase of lockdown along with 1st phase of unlocking.

After the great depression of 1930s the entire global economic system never suffered in such a shattering way as in front of COVID 19 pandemic. The massive halt in the economic front put the constituting states of India in a situation of complete income less status. While the sudden medical exigency put a heavy toll on their spending part as public health, sanitation and hospitals are state subjects. The outbreak of COVID-19 took place at a time which is an extreme inappropriate period for the economic sector of the country. The national economy already started showing palpable indicators of slowdown. Particularly investment rate and savings rate in the economy showed a clear downward trend. Employment fell. The result of lockdown

restrictions meant to contain the spread of the corona virus ultimately wiped out jobs and businesses for millions. The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) reported unemployment levels of 24-27% in April and May 2020, up from 8-9%, before the lockdown started. The situation improved to some extent in 2021 but again since August the situation is deteriorating. People who have not lost their jobs have reported income losses for pay cuts and lowering business profits. In a national survey of nearly 6000 households in May 2020, 84% of households reported decreases in income since the lockdown.(IFPRI:2020) The Indian economy contracted by 23.9 percent in the second quarter, the most drastic fall in decades. India's decline is the worst among the world's major economies.(NYT:2020)

However, before this severe blow official data of 2018-19 showed that our unemployment rate is highest in 45 years. India's economic growth is about 5.0 percent in the 2019-20 fiscal years, the slowest pace since 2008-09 and significantly slower than the previous year, according to the First Advance Estimates, released by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation. Amidst several upheavals the Covid-19 pandemic has emerged on top of the already brewing crisis giving a serious jolt to the slow moving economy with an all round halt.

The imposition of a pan-India lockdown, a precarious decision with so many repercussions was taken without any consultation with State governments. But prevention of Contagious Disease across states clearly is mentioned in item number 29 of the Concurrent List of Indian Constitution. Moreover, the issues of social security, social insurance, employment and unemployment all of which are integrally related as outcomes of lockdown decision categorically belong to concurrent list.

Several notifications and guidelines issued by Union Government following the lockdown declaration have paralyzed State finances. At the same time those have significantly undermined concepts of federal cooperation also, a foundational principle of Indian nationhood. The central orders covered even fields strictly falling within the domain of the State as per the 7th Schedule of the Constitution. This includes the state government offices, hospitals, shops, markets, industries, agriculture, alcohol etc.

The major share of states' revenue comes from liquor sales, stamp duty from property transactions and the sales tax on petroleum products. Closing down of these areas naturally

brought severe financial constraint for the states. Nobody opposed the series of interfering decisions of central government because the issue of human life is an important and extremely sensitive concern and COVID19 has percolated such an illogical state of mind among majority that any kind of opposition to the decisions would surely earn the anti-people tag for them. So, neither any political party nor the state governments took that risk of challenging the central decision, especially as election was slated for a number of states in coming days. Ultimately this approach undermines the basic principles of federal democracy.

The medial pandemic has unleashed pandemic beyond repair for fourth pillar of federal democracy. Flood of paid news leads to absolute loss of credibility for the media universally and for Indian media in particular putting the concept of federal democracy in leviathan like stage. Media is absolutely engaged in spreading sensational news instead of sensitizing the people about the disease. In the context of the pandemic the terror of media has let loose a spirit of *thanatophobia,* meaning thereby a type of anxiety developing out of a fear of one's own death or the process of dying. Media very successfully from the very beginning of pandemic has circulated and validated the notions of *thanatophobia* and lockdown in binary terms and thereby completely destroyed the domain of balanced, scientific and critical thinking which is indispensable for successful federalism as well as for any crisis management. The issue has reached such a pathetic stage that even the police terror for implementing lockdown has been justified by media and the general public in several states. The sense of mutual trust and camaraderie among the population, a sense of entitlement towards certain rights among the community members which are the bedrocks of federal democracy are lost completely. Thus the Gramscian concept of cultural hegemony of the state through ideological state apparatus has been completely percolated over the length and breadth of the society and community in every possible way.

Money Matters:

It is the issue of GST compensation on which some state governments have raised their voice first showing signs of opposition to central directives. However the media in this crucial juncture has found untimely demise of SSR, the short time hero of Mumbai and involvement of Rhea, his partner, more important than either outright denial of GST compensation or abolition of

questioning hour in parliament and different state assemblies as if that will surely bring more fortune for the *aam admi* of India. This is a sheer violation of the role of media in federal system.

The GST issue is the prime cause for the decay of the federal character of Indian state. States' GST collections have been severely affected with their dues not disbursed by Centre in proper intervals. Centralization trends associated with GST collections drained the states' financial capacities. Despite repeated demands from the beginning, the Centre did not release any outstanding GST compensation till mid June 2020.(Vijayan:2020) After that also the release process is extremely irregular. The autocratic approach of the union government on GST issues is manifested greatly in the 41st GST council meeting on 27th August, 2020. In respect of 33% lesser collection of revenue in the first four months of current financial year than the last year the states naturally have asked for compensation package. As per the GST (Compensation to States) Act, 2017 the Centre is bound to compensate states for a five-year transition period for any potential loss in revenues due to implementation of tax. The states agreed on this new scheme with this specific assurance on 2017. Attorney General of India, who according to the Constitution is supposed to be the highest law officer of the land, took a highly confusing decision on the issue when the central government has referred it to him. The AG on principle agreed to the view that states should be compensated as per the law. But he placed the responsibility to GST Council for deciding the modalities of compensation. The GST Council opines that it cannot compel the centre to compensate by borrowing. In this dubious federal crisis the only truth is huge loss for the states. Amidst the GST row the honorable Finance Minister, the alumnus of one of the premier educational institute blamed the *act of God* for revenue shortfall and defended the Centre's stand of not paying GST compensation to states. Shrugging off any financial central responsibility the states are offered with two equally problematic options of borrowing by setting special RBI window with clear objective of putting them on further financial dreariness.

The trend towards centralization is also evident in the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the 15th Finance Commission (FC). It is entrusted to examine along others, whether revenue deficit grants should be provided at all for the State Governments (ToR5), and to recommend measures for controlling "populist measures by the States" [ToR 7(viii)]. Such directions not only compel the Finance Commission to go beyond its constitutional mandate, but also reveal how non-

elected bodies are being misused to constrain the fiscal space of the States. This not only weakens the foundations of fiscal federalism but also runs against the basic principles of cooperative federalism and a sense of distrust develops in overall polity.(Ghosh:2020)

The constitution of PM-Cares Relief fund and situating it above CAG audit jurisdiction is another bone of contention in the sociopolitical and financial relationship between the union and state governments. It is clear use of pandemic crisis to upheld partisan interest. This fund is created under the umbrella of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) contributions. But the central government has decided to keep Chief Minister's Relief Fund and State Relief Funds for COVID19 out of CSR purview. This is a direct dis-incentive measure towards corporate donation for the states. Surprisingly this exclusion is done merely by issuing a circular from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. It is simply an attempt to divert funds from States to Centre. It is not only illegal but also *ultra vires* the Companies Act, 2013, and is also unconstitutional by making an arbitrary distinction between two identical entities set up for same statutory purpose, i.e., the PM Cares Fund and the State Funds to fight Covid-19. Amitava Chaudhury, President IAPR, the famous RTI activist has categorically mentioned in two episodes of *RTI & Good Governance* series that RTI application for detail of the PM Cares has been rejected on the plea that this Fund is not a Public Authority under the ambit of Section 2(H) of the RTI Act, 2005. (Chaudhuri:You Tube:Ep:5)

The unilateral decision of the central government to suspend MPLADS for two years and diversion of the funds to the Consolidated Fund of India is another blow to the concept of fiscal cooperative federalism. It is definitely anti-federal centralization of financial resources burdening the states. In times of extreme health crisis, like the COVID19 situation, local level relief works seriously gets affected for this decision. The moment the fund allotted to MPLAD scheme is transferred to the Consolidated Fund of India it becomes a monopoly for the union government to decide the rule of games regarding its allocation depriving the separate local needs and the state priorities.

'*One India, One Agriculture Market*' slogan declared on June 3, 2020 is an open declaration of the centralizing objective of union government. Central government has introduced three anti-federal major agricultural market reforms acts in monsoon session: The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020, (removing cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onion

and potatoes from the domain of Essential Commodities Act list and putting them in private hands the government has directly touched the issue of food and nutrition of the people with far reaching consequences). The Farming Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, and The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020. PM Modi has defined the passage of these bills as a "watershed moment" for India's farmers. "Farmers have been given new independence in agriculture. They will now have more options and opportunities to sell their produce." But still farmers are protesting all over India. Several farmer groups have expressed that the farmers of different areas are apprehending of larger corporate exploitation. P. Sainath founder editor of the *People's Archive of Rural India* said in an interview that the Bills are an attempt to wipe out the fortunes of farmers simply. These three inter-linked acts reflect most concerted entry of the Centre into state sphere of agriculture as per the constitution. This trio ordinances clearly attack on states' limited revenue resources. The states cannot impose any market fee, levy and cess by their APMC (Agricultural Produce Market Committee) Act or any other state law. After depriving the states of the revenue, they earlier earned through sales tax by replacing it through centrally controlled GST, this is another attack for financially weakening the states and making them more dependent on the Centre. COVID -19 has made it clear that protecting agriculture as a state subject in Indian federalism would be a key economic, political, social and cultural battle in the coming years.

The attempted Labour law and governance reform (LLR) has proved to be equally dangerous. Annulment of labor laws, a product of long years of struggles of the working class of our federal democracy is directly destroyed by making the states allies. Facing serious labour unrest over last decades in different areas the centre has permitted the state governments to go ahead with labour reforms since labour falls under the Concurrent List in the Constitution. It is stated that the suspension of labour laws for the next three years will help the industry overcome the present crisis. It is needless to say that this decision is more political than economic. Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, and Odisha—have amended the Factories Act, 1948 during the lockdown to increase the maximum number of working hours per day from 8 to 12 and maximum working hours from 48 to 72 hours per week. This decision would surely reduce female workforce participation and will impose a "gender penalty" besides

other detrimental effects. According to a Business Today Report of September 2, 2021 the Indian female labour participation has already dropped to 16.1%. The ILO has also criticized it and calls for a transition to a '"decent working time" to ensure health and safety, work–life balance, promote gender equality, enhance productivity, and facilitate worker choice and influence over working hours.

Stop Talking:

Debates and discourses are the cardinal feature of federal democracy all over the world. In the monsoon session began on September 14, 2020 the central government through a simple notification has abolished the question hour using the excuse of COVID19 to murder the basic ideals of federal democracy. The opposition parties strongly criticized the move in vain and was quick enough to implement the same in different opposition ruled states with success.

Health Fiasco:

The pandemic on a whole has badly exposed the limitations of India's health system and its highly privatized nature which is increasingly going out of common people's reach. According to a recently published estimate in India two persons are drowned below the poverty level every minute to meet the medical expenses. (IFPRI:2020) The launch of digital health card with much fanfare may yield rich electoral dividends as instrument for data mining of citizens. But addressing health issues of the commoners will be taken up hardly. The real need stands exposed because of different media reports regarding acute shortage of critical care equipments, lack of testing facility, lack of proper protective gears for doctors and health workers and also increasing shortage of hospital space also. The overall budgetary expenditure by Centre and states in FY2020 estimates that healthcare is merely 0.31% percent of GDP. The Union Government in the year FY2021-22 with a lot of fanfare has increased the health budget to Rs. 2.23 lakh crore from the earlier years Rs. 94,452 crores. In government terminology this is an increase of 137%. But in reality it is only 0.34% of GDP. There was a clear recommendation of the National Health Policy (NHP) 2017 to increase health expenditure to 2.5-3% of GDP to improve the health sector of India and that has been violated in the context of pandemic even. (The Wire Science:01.02.21) The highly restricted access to healthcare during lockdown – where focus remained solely on

Covid 19, has led to many avoidable deaths due to other medical causes. In an RTI application mentioned by Amitava Chaudhuri, President IAPR it is stated that in response to one of their RTI application a spokesperson from the budget division of the Ministry of Health has responded by saying that "there is no dedicated budget-head for the COVID19 pandemic in the detailed demand for grant-in-aid for 2020-21".(Chauduri:You Tube:Ep:7)

The medical management of COVID19 pandemic is also a matter of concern for the union-state relationship. Initial classification of the zones in red, orange and green has generated strong criticism from several states. The states quite naturally being the direct authority in dealing with pandemic have demanded more autonomy. It is worthwhile to remember here that the central guidelines for managing COVID19 were formulated under the Disaster Management Act of 2005 and as per the Section 11(2) of this Act state consultations are mandatory for formulating and furtherance of National Plan. But in this case no consultation has been made with the state. Moreover, the arbitrary inspections of central teams in selected disease infected states also have created cracks in mutual trust in the federal relationship.

Covid-19 has not been any kinder to our resource-starved population in India, and definitely has overburdened the healthcare management. The first wave of the pandemic saw an unprecedented rush to secure drugs, critical equipment, hospital infrastructure, and skilled manpower through 2020. Fortunately due to the relentless work of medical workers of all categories and some noble social works by some individuals and organizations and some early measures stymied a large-scale negative impact on India. In 2021, despite the advancements in the vaccination programme, infrastructure, treatment protocols, and relentless efforts of our medical and sanitation fraternity, we have lost thousands of precious lives to the second, more virulent tsunami. Side by side another pandemic in all probability silently has already grabbed the society ant the result of that are yet to be calculated in detail. The Global Financing Facility, which has been tracking the impact of Covid-19 on maternal and child services after the first wave in 2020, has already flagged disconcerting dips in child immunization, outpatient consultations, and rising risk of complications from pregnancy.(Bhattacharya &Anand:2021)

India began a partial liberalization of the economy in the 1980s, but it was after the New Economic Policy of 1991 it fully embraced the new strategy. Liberalization, privatization and

globalization (LPG) became declared official policies. The role of the public sector was scaled down from its commanding heights. Health and education became two sectors where private investments started to pour in because of instant return and high profitability. Inequalities and exclusions in these two sectors soon became rampant. The poor and the middle class are pushed out completely. Infectious diseases like malaria, leprosy, small pox which were eradicated earlier, reappeared. In other words, since the 1990s the already crumbling India's public health system started signs of cracks due to lack of public investment and political commitment to positive health policy aiming at social change. As a result, when the pandemic hit India, its health system was completely vulnerable and unable to meet the new challenge.

Social Division:

Taking the opportunity of the turbulent situation arising out COVID19 the state authority very quickly posed several unsavory sociopolitical challenges before Indian federation. This includes legitimization of religion and caste based divisions in identifying the patient, division between *vande bharat* workers and migrant workers, rapid pace of privatization of key sectors without caring a bit about the people of the soil and of course suspension of any form of dissent through arrest, imprisonment and withdrawal of legal facilities. Concept of criticality which lies at the epicenter of both democracy and federalism is gradually losing its ground in a very fast speed. Compliance obligation, for both individuals and constituting states, has become the domineering ideology. Simultaneously common individuals are receding more and more in the background and the idea of boundary construction at different levels is gaining increasing social and moral justification.

Search for Survival:

In this segment let us try to formulate some points for providing some relief in the centre-state relations supplying oxygen to the federal ethos required for the state and individuals. In this section preference is given in digging into some ideas provided by famous political scientist Ashutosh Varshney almost seven years before in his article "How has Indian Federalism Done?" (Varshney:2013)The situation of Indian polity has undergone oceanic change after 2013 when the article was published, but still some of its elements remain relevant. It is felt from the clues

of Varshney that the approach of our society and polity towards Indian federation needs to be changed. From the early period of Indian federation political parties, the leadership, the media, the citizens and even academicians are used to decipher Indian federation in terms of binary. The oft-assumed binary is that the stronger the states are the weaker the centre and the vice versa. But now it's perhaps the time to draw a new formula where both can be simultaneously strong and powerful. Varshney makes a plea for understanding the concept of Indian federalism in relation to Indian nationalism.

There are predominantly four social diversities contributing towards the formation of modern Indian polity: language, tribe, caste and religion and all require great care to maintain proper social and political fiber. At the same time it is undoubtedly true that India's federalism is fundamentally rooted in two simultaneous pursuits of nationhood. Firstly, an embrace of state-based cultural diversities and secondly a commitment to the larger pan Indian political community. This spirit needs to be respected and reserved carefully. At the same time we must remember that the dispersed and crosscutting nature of India's ethnic configuration has also contributed to the survival of federalism. So any kind of gross trend towards assimilation from any sector should be prohibited by all means. Socio-cultural diversities of the land can never be compromised as it is the key to our internal and external security concerns. Secular or composite nationalism should be our guiding principle and that is of course different from either long prevalent melting pot approach or present majoritarian nationalist approach, which is essentially fundamentalist in nature. Instead of emphasizing on the idea of "nation-state" our focus could be shifted in building up "state-nation", where a citizen should be a part of larger nation keeping his/her all other socio-cultural identities, like sex, caste, religion, linguistic identities including the state related federal identity unharmed. This can help in maintaining the multiple identities of the citizens in a complementary way sans confrontations. All cultural and social variations should be equally preserved with same vigor and without any attempt to trimming them down. Side by side, regarding the distribution of fiscal resources there should be a continuous attempt to flatten the economic diversity by making access to financial reserve equal for all. All of these are of utmost importance in developing a strong centre in the context of strong states as well.

Another important formulation for reconciling federal problems can be drawn from the famous pragmatic American thinker John Dewey almost a century ago.(Ostrom:1979) In his famous work on "The Public and its Problems"(1927) a very interesting formulation has been provided by Dewey. His central focus was on developing the method of "intelligent cooperative experimentation" for solving the problems of federal polity. He at the beginning has rejected the language discourse inherent in the theory of state as the very moment we utter the term "state" a score of intellectual ghosts arise to obscure our vision drawing into consideration logical relationship of various ideas, far away from real human activity. Dewey has suggested to avoid this inherent trap of the state and to focus on human activities and thereby to highlight the concept human behavior, which have consequences for others. So instead of state attention must be focused on public. Public, to Dewey is a body of individuals all of whom are "affected by the indirect consequences of a transaction to such an extent" that it is deemed necessary to have those consequences symmetrically cared for. Dewey has further suggested that in determining how good a particular state is, we have to look at the degree of organization of the public and the performance level of the officers in carrying their functions with care for public interests. Dewey has the belief that federalism enables concurrent and overlapping self governing communities to function as articulated and self conscious publics capable of regulating affairs with beneficial consequences.

Arise Awake Righteousness:

The present author believes that this formulation of Dewey is extremely relevant in the context of postmodern neo-liberal federations which are marked by the existence of multiple organizations and institutions of both national and international dimensions. In this context along with extremely high flow of media inputs awareness generation is not much difficult among the public. But the question is how the public would prefer to behave particularly in the context of rampant fake news? If they choose to exert their identity in rationalistic way there are several opportunities and similarly if they prefer to remain as irrational nonentities bowing before the strong power holders as dictated voters merely, there is adequate arrangement to make it happen. In other words, the ball is on the court of the public. Following the formulation of John Dewey thus, the success of a federation depends upon the capacity of its public to behave justifiably.

In this regard we must remember that November19, 2021 is definitely a day for victory of the Indian struggling peasants against the three infamous agricultural laws passed during pandemic. Time has not yet come to evaluate its subsequent and covert consequences but for the first time in recent years popular demand received positive government response at least overtly. The Loksabha and the Rajyasabha passed the bill to repeal the three farm laws on November 29,2021 in the same manner in which the laws were brought, that is, without any discussion. This naturally has generated a faith on the role of popular protest, though we have to remember faith and success are not synonymous and perhaps some extra caution is perhaps the need of the hour.

Now, to end the long discussion in short, the final submission is that the battle against corona virus is a long drawn process and is not going to end very quickly. A virus neither recognizes the national boundary nor the state boundaries. The pressure to foot the cost of lockdown bill is hitting the centre hard but it is harder for states. Coordinated pandemic policies involving both central and states with equal respect and knowledge reserve, involving experts of public health, economy, diplomacy and other segments of governance can only bring some interim reliefs, though solution is still far away. Unfortunately it seems that both at the union and state levels the governments are geared mostly in making arrangements and institutionalizing processes that could serve their ruling dispensation afterwards. Now if India chooses to fight the COVID19 war with the street smart politicians as leaders whose sole focus is on gaining electoral numbers without broad vision, severe crises will surely grapple us in the coming period and many of those would come from completely unknown sectors. Fight against COVID-19 is not a battle against corona virus only but a fight against stupidity, unscientific mindset/action, superstitions, vested interests – different layers of power play are involved in it in a vicious way. So we have to be very cautious. The primary change has to be initiated by the government of India. It must redefine its responsibilities towards its citizens adopting inclusive approach including universal social welfare for all citizens. This is the ethical implication of COVID19 crises before Indian federation. We sincerely believe that defeating Covid-19 is extremely important but the victory must never be pyrrhic for our federal structure and ideology. Indians have to decide whether in near future we are going to say that India "was" a federal system or India "is" the most powerful federation. The entire play actually rests upon the "public" of India.

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Managing personal & professional life: Conflicts & solutions

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In the modern world most people irrespective of their gender have to serve dual roles of a family person and a working person. In the family again there can be multiple roles, that of a parent, caregiver, bread earner vis-à-vis in workplace roles of multitasking. Hence one individual may need to juggle between several roles everyday and is expected to do full justice to each and every role everyday year after year. This rather superhuman profile, even if feasible, is greatly appreciated socially. But the person putting on that garb may not be at ease with this superhuman image. This article will endeavour to explore the conflicts of juggling between personal and professional roles and finding plausible solutions for the same.
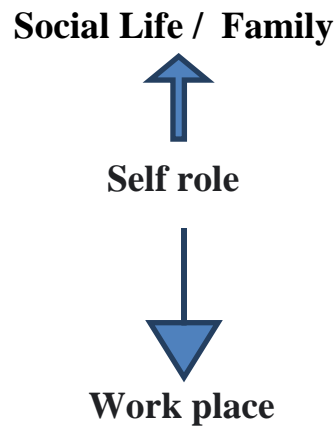
The discussion can begin with the very basic concepts of family and profession. Family is a socially recognized group of two or more people usually joined by blood, marriage, cohabitation ,adoption which forms an **emotional connection** amongst members and is also seen as an economic unit of the society.

Workplace is a location where someone works for the employer or for oneself. It is a place of employment which can range from home office to office building, field or factory. In a workplace an activity is done where the worker exerts strength or faculties to perform a task , which eventually gives **earning for a livelihood.**

The highlighted words above show the depth or the importance of both the spheres as a human being survives both personally (with emotional connection) & professionally (with earnings for a comfortable life for self & family with whom one has that emotional connection). Thus both the domains become equally important.

Hence between these two domains often conflict occurs because of inter-role conflict in which the role-demands stemming from one life domain (work or home) are incompatible with role demands stemming from the other domain (home or work). Thus an individual experiences incompatible demands between work and family roles, making equal participation in both roles

difficult. This imbalance creates conflict at the work-life interface, a diagram of which given below.

Social Life / Family

↑

Self role

↓

Work place

Nature of this conflict is bidirectional, namely :

a) **Work-to-family conflict (WFC)**: It occurs when work responsibilities interfere with family responsibilities. In such cases individuals become incapable to meet role demands in the private life due to work demands.

b) **Family-to-work conflict (FWC)**: It occurs when familial responsibilities interfere with work responsibilities. In such cases individuals become incapable to meet role demands in the work domain due to private life demands.

This conflict has three basic areas of difficulty. Such as:

a) **Time Based Difficulty** – Competing with the time requirements between Work & Family roles i.e.Time devoted to one role prevents meeting the demands in the other role.

b) **Strain Based Difficulty** – Pressure in one role hindering performance in the second role i.e When stress or strain in one role prevents meeting the demands in the other role.

c) **Behaviour Based Difficulty** –Incompatibility of behaviours necessary for two different roles i.e. When the behaviour required in one role makes it difficult to fulfill requirements of another role. Infact this difficulty is most important as it is the only area which is visible from outside. And often the previous two areas have

a direct and comprehensive impact on this, thereby making one's behaviour visibly incompatible to outside world.

This visibility is manifested in types of conflicts a person faces or bears starting with the most powerful one i.e.

1. Conflict with the **self** , the internal battle of dilemma which makes a person confused. This confusion often creates, even unknowingly……..
2. conflict with **others,** being caused by unprovoked & unnecessary wrong behaviour.. In the larger sphere, this gets manifested as…………
3. conflict with the **environment** , i.e. home atmosphere or work atmosphere where a person finds difficulty to adjust.

II

There may be several reasons causing such conflicts between family & work. But the commonest ones are identified as :

1. **Workaholism**: When one's priority of work may interfere with family commitments. Usually in the lives of those infatuated with work, overabundance of work takes priority over everyone and everything else. This excessive work prevents one from forming and maintaining intimate personal relationships and close friendships. Workaholics spend a vast amount of time in work-related activities, which results in ignoring family life, social life and even personal relaxation times. Marital problems, trouble with maintaining close relationships, isolation from friends and family happen as a result of Workaholism.

2. **High Work Demands** : This can be portrayed by extensive, irregular, or inflexible work hours, work overload, extensive travel, career transitions, unsupportive superior or organization. Other work demands creating work-family conflict includes compulsory or unexpected overtime/ shift work which can prevent a staff to fulfill an important family responsibility eg. picking up his or her child from school or taking elderly parents to doctor.

3. **Family Commitments :** When experiences and commitments in the family which include presence of young children, primary responsibility for children in case of single

parent or one parent having an away job, elder care responsibilities, interpersonal conflict within the family unit, unsupportive family members interfere with work life. This results in lower work productivity of employees.

4. The other reasons of conflict include lack of proper communication, stressful family members, no work division of household chores, being far from family (in home front) & discrimination, bullying or harassment, lack of job satisfaction (in work front).
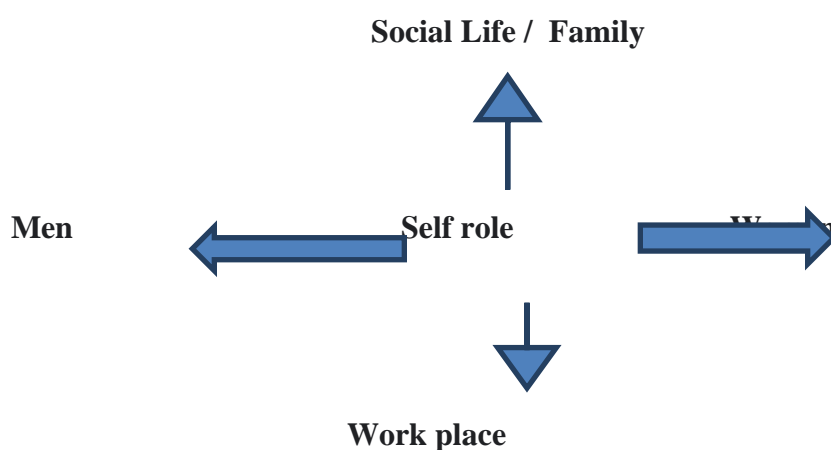
Quite naturally these conflicts have unpleasant outcomes as well which mainly affect the person facing such conflicts starting with :

1. **Dilemma** between family and profession resulting in
2. **dilemma of action choices** which is the inability to prioritise work between the two domains.
3. This dilemma causes **dominant stress** emerging due to
    - **unrealistic expectations based on irrational beliefs** i.e. social role construct of duties of a wife, a mother, the eldest son, only child etc.
    - **social undermining** when a person fails to live up to such expectations
    - **shared decision control** creating opposed and argumentative decisions
    - **lack of social support** particularly in **dual-employment families** with minor children.
4. And finally continued stress causes **adverse effects on the person's life** as a whole by…….
    - increasing risk of anxiety, burnout, depression, and substance use disorders. People who are stressed are more likely to engage in unhealthy dependences like cigarette smoking, taking alcohol, drug abuse and poor dietary habits, all of which affect general health.
    - by adversely affecting performance because due to stress an employee can make constant mistakes, relationship with co-workers deteriorates and finally productivity is **reduced**.

- In case of people living far away, too much time away from the family causes tension & worries which means the extra time an employee is spending at work is not at all productive.

III

Till here the discussion has been gender-free. But in reality one's gender becomes a large factor in work-family conflict because sometimes gender may determine the role of an individual in home or in work place.

Social Life / Family

Men   **Self role**   **Women**

Work place

Some such discriminations are worth exploring :

In work place a term called **Ideal worker** refers to an employee who is "committed to work above all else". Such workers take up tasks beyond formal and assigned duties and give valuable attributes to the organization.

- Women in the workplace can be inaccurately perceived as **not ideal worker** under the false notion that women have less commitment to their organizations than their counterparts because they are thought to be dividing their time (and their commitments) between family and work and hence less dedicated to the organization. It is important to remember that in a male controlled organization, typical concept of "ideal worker" does not accommodate the family lifestyle. Hence it gets difficult for working women

- to get ahead in the workplace while still maintaining a home and family as per the societal ideas & expectations.

- On the contrary a male staff is considered as an " Ideal worker" because an **unmarried male** is seen as devoid of "typical" family responsibilities. In case of a **married male ,** if his wife is at home tending to the "typical" family responsibilities, he is thought to be more dedicated in the workplace. It is important to note that higher percentage of males at the top of the <u>organization hierarchy</u> creates workplace policies which reflect strong gender discrimination and never acknowledges the competence of women at workplace.

- But strangely an **unmarried female** is also seen as devoid of "typical" family responsibilities and hence often gets dumped with an overload of work which is exploitative in nature.

This gender discrimination is manifested even in home front in case of a family where parents / couples both of whom have professional lives. Still it can be seen that -

- the mother has to attend Parent- Teacher Meeting in school, taking leave from work or even cancelling important work.

- in case the child is sick, only the mother has to stay back .

- after a hectic work day for both the partners, female working spouse is expected to do the household chores.

But the worst gender discrimination is seen in the case of working mothers who are compelled to pay a **Motherhood penalty** (a term coined in sociology) which has dual manifestation:

- **In workplace** - Mothers are thought to be much less committed to their jobs, less authoritative, and less dependable than non-mothers. This fact is completely disregarded that it is the mother who takes care of & rares a baby into being a grown up & thus shows how dependable and committed she can be. Such wrong perception often demotivates a competent female staff to not take up challenging assignments.

- **At home -** When mothers try to be committed to jobs, they are perceived as bad mothers, not caring enough for or giving more time to children as they spend more time outside home. This " judgemental" attitude often affects a mother's psychology so much that she may get engulfed by a sense of guilt for being away from child for a long time and therefore often try to compensate wrongly by giving too many gifts &/or unjustified lenience to the child. This hampers proper upbringing of her child, for which again she will be blamed when & if the child grows up as pampered, selfish and indisciplined. Therefore this motherhood penalty is not only society-inflicted but also many a times self -inflicted, which eventually harms both the mother and the child in the long run.

But with more and more people, both men & women getting into professional life, the need for a balance between the two domains became necessary and from sociological & psychological points of view certain suggestive solutions started surfacing. It is true that every problem and the reaction to it is person specific, neither coping mechanism is identical among people, yet idea of some basic way outs and willful adherence to those definitely help fight the dilemma and handle the situation better.

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IV

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Amongst the probable wayouts two basic theories are talked about :

- **Boundary Theory:** According to this theory a person divides life into two interdependent sections, work and family respectively where individuals have to play different roles and bear different responsibilities in each section. Since the sections are interdependent, two roles cannot take place at the same time. As a consequence an individual has to **participate in role transformation** between expectations of the workplace and expected roles within the family structure resulting in a constant **oscillation** or swaying between the two roles as a pendulum.

- **Border theory :** This other theory expands the idea by considering the influences each section has on the other. This theory actually attempts to point out ways to manage the

conflict by multitasking thus integrating the two segments by working simultaneously & thereby **achieving balance** between two conflicting identities.

As previously mentioned, this conflict has 3 basic areas of difficulty. Hence those 3 areas need to be managed as well.

1. For managing Time Based difficulties most important is **Schedule Control** which can be defined as flexibility or flexible work arrangements. This flexibility includes :

- **Timing of work :Whether working time starts early morning or** during rush hours or in the evening. This time-schedule needs to be balanced with time for family accordingly.
- **Number of hours to work. : This duration may** vary depending on home situation or emergencies. So working hours need to flexible accordingly.
- **Location of work :** Work location affects both commuting time and total time away from home. Hence longer the distance between home & workplace, stress is more. So maintaining contact with family using modern day devices like WhatsApp, video calls etc can minimise that stress.

2. For managing Strain based difficulties the following measures become useful :

- Exploring membership & concept of responsibility in two systems by questioning the stereotypes defined by society and family. This can be ideally explained as arguing the justification of gender discriminatory social constructs for men & women.
- Such social constructs are usually deeply embedded in the psyche of those who are actually suffering for it or are causing the suffering. In order to get rid of one's own social stereotypes, the individual has to personally work through it by getting over the guilt feeling (in case of women) & by accepting that like working women, working men also need to perform dual responsibilities.
- Lastly while redefining relationships in terms of equality & redesigning new/ unconventional roles for self, one should be aware of the "price" to be paid in the process. Therefore by denying social constructs while both men & women perform dual

role equally, they are likely to face criticism which they will need to brace against it jointly and avoid stress.

3. Managing behavior based difficulties are to some extent similar to Strain management processes and may need work-supportive behaviour from others in both the domains of Family & Workplace. This will require :

- Acceptance of partnership in the real sense between women & men both in family & work settings by adopting practices like collaborating & accommodating.

- Not compromising while redefining relationships & redesigning new roles for self in social system, which means in the process not succumbing to criticism in any domain.

- Avoiding provocative behaviour from others both at home and workplace, as this will result in confrontation, mental stress and finally jeopardy of assigned responsibilities.

- Finally conflict-management needs an individual to discover processes of anchoring the self in the decisions taken, against the criticism & carry on in one's chosen path confidently and unfalteringly.

V

It is important to note that administration can also play a proactive role in reducing this conflict by providing :

- **Instrumental support which is manifested in** flexible work scheduling policies .
  This actually is the day-to-day support that institution provides in the form of managing work schedules and responding in concrete ways to meet workers' family needs while still ensuring that the work gets done. With advances in technology institutions now can implement telecommuting policies for individuals who work outside home for intense schedules & need ways to keep in touch with their families when they cannot physically be with them. Here this institutional support can allow employees to keep in touch regularly with family through video calls or even permit them to work from home and provide more flexibility and control over their schedules.

- **Emotional support** is when a staff feels comfortable discussing family commitments with the superiors. When institution is aware of and sympathetic to staff's family needs, many family-friendly policies can be implemented which may include maternity,

paternity, parental & sick leaves and health care insurance. Institutes may also provide child care options either as on-site child care centre or by providing references of child care centres closeby where a parent can quickly go between work to get assured that the child is safe and also give the child the necessary mental assurance that parents are around.

- **Role modelling behaviours- Staffs** will feel more confident in using appropriate strategies to balance their work and family commitments if they can see that those strategies are actually working for others, most importantly their seniors/ bosses.

Therefore if an institution can create an environment that values oscillation or integration, cares for employee's work–life balance , it is able to attract and retain satisfied employees, improve their performances and boost employees' morale and institutional identification as well.

After searching the conflicts and solutions in the work- life interface, therefore in the final analysis what emerges is that for any person (irrespective of gender) who has a dual role to play as family person and as a working person, the individual needs to find a balance between both domains by adopting certain methods which can be shortlisted as

- schedule control
- work supportive behaviour from family
- family supportive behaviour from workplace
- minimising gender-discrimination.

And all these can be achieved if there is understanding, caring, sharing for one another and by being bold to face criticism in the way.

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Socio-economic impact on Nivedita Setu, Kolkata, West Bengal – An insight through Exploratory Factor Analysis

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Abstract

Infrastructure, according to economists, is the backbone of each and every economy. Facts and figures plainly reveal that when given the option, investors prefer to invest in countries with more developed infrastructure. As a result, rapid infrastructure development is one of the most fundamental ways for a country to capitalise on diverse economic prospects. It is therefore unsurprising that countries all around the world place a high priority on infrastructure development. The current research was conducted on Nivedita Setu and was separated into several sub-sections using a structured questionnaire. The current study will attempt to assess socio-economic progress by examining potential for increased economic productivity, socio-economic competence to improve a long and healthy life, and equitable economic distribution. Exploratory Factor Analysis with Principal Component Analysis and the Varimax Method of Rotation are the key tools employed here.

Key words :- Nivedita Setu, Economic productivity, Structured questionnaire, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Principal Component Analysis

I. Introduction

Developing countries such as India have echoed this view, announcing plans to invest billions of dollars to create and enhance their infrastructure in order to keep up with the rest of the globe. As a result, infrastructure and its finance are critical issues worldwide, regardless of whether a country is developing or developed. Because infrastructure is such a high priority issue around the world, funding infrastructure projects is also seen as a huge concern. As a result, an entire field of study known as infrastructure financing has emerged.

Nivedita Setu (also known as Second Vivekananda Setu) is a multi-span extradosed bridge that connects Howrah and Kolkata in West Bengal. It was completed in 2007. It runs parallel to the ancient Vivekananda Setu, which opened in 1932 and is about 50 metres downstream. Sister Nivedita, Swami Vivekananda's social worker-disciple, is honoured with the bridge's name. The Belghoria Expressway connects the junction of NH 16 and NH 19 at Dankuni to NH 12, NH 112, Dumdum/Kolkata Airport, and the northern sections of Kolkata. The bridge has a capacity of 48,000 vehicles per day.

II.   Brief Review of Literatures

According to **Klingebiel (2001)**, governments have offered grants, loans, and guarantees to investors as part of an overarching strategy to encourage private finance and provision of infrastructure services. This assistance has frequently been supplied through the use of institutionalized specialty financial facilities. Governments around the world are attempting to boost private capital flows into a variety of infrastructure sectors. However, private sector participation has been restricted, particularly in emerging nations, due to investor aversion to many of the commercial, financial, and political risks associated with large-scale projects.

Land sales as an infrastructure finance strategy were investigated by **Peterson (2006)**. The first section examines the land leasing procedure and its implementation in China, which has committed to transforming land assets into infrastructure on the largest scale. Many Chinese towns have financed half or more of their very high urban infrastructure investment levels directly through land leasing, with the rest financed through borrowing against the value of land on their financial sheets.

Green infrastructure, according to **Dunn (2010)**, is a cost-effective and ecologically friendly solution to water management and natural resource conservation in metropolitan environments. Green infrastructure, according to this article, has unique and exceptional benefits for the urban poor that are rarely acknowledged or discussed. Green infrastructure can improve urban water quality, reduce urban air pollution, improve public health, increase urban aesthetics and safety, produce green collar jobs, and assist urban food security when focused in impoverished neighbourhoods, which it often isn't.

Broadhurst et al. (2017) identified the fundamental trends and problems posed by the combination of the Internet's unparalleled reach, speed, and scale with violent extremists' political objectives. Cyber weapons, vital infrastructure, attribution, the Internet of Things, recruitment and propaganda, financing, legislation and countermeasures, and cyberwar are among the topics covered in the book. Each one includes a concise overview of a crucial facet of the cyber terror issue, a study of developing trends or views, and additional pertinent material or instances discovered during the investigation.

Morris (2019) claims that optimal approaches to infrastructure policy and design that detect specific types of market failures minimise financing costs and improve the ability to attract funding in the private provisioning of infrastructure. When state systems are poor organizationally it is first desirable to enhance the state capacity so that it can minimally undertake the responsibilities of design, regulation, development of frameworks, and of monitoring, for the private delivery of infrastructure. This is especially true when there are dual market failures resulting from both the natural monopoly and the appropriability failing.

III. Objectives of the study

- To highlight on the social as well as sociological impact of the Nivedita Setu.
- To focus on the economic impact of the select infrastructure.

IV. Research Methodology

The data collected for the study is primary in nature. The data has been collected with the help of a structured questionnaire. Random Sampling method has been used to select the respondents before interviewing.

At first a pilot survey has been conducted here within 30 respondents to gather a basic knowledge about the customers' perception regarding the selected bridges. Then on the basis of the factors identified a structured questionnaire in 5-point Likert scale has been prepared to conduct the market survey **amongst 130 respondents**. The Bridge is chosen on Judgemental Sampling Basis amongst the prominent bridges in Kolkata and its surroundings. Appropriate statistical tools and techniques including descriptive statistics, Exploratory Factor Analysis and multivariate analytical techniques will be used depending on the nature of data.

V. Results & Discussions

Gender of the Respondents: Out of the total respondents of 130, for this particular bridge, 84.6% are males and 15.4% are females.

Educational qualification of the Respondents: Majority of the respondents were below 10th standard.

Monthly Incomes of the Respondents: Majority of the respondents were having monthly earnings below INR 5000.

Residential Area of the Respondents: Out of those 130 respondents, 38.5% belongs to the City areas, 30.8% belongs to the Town areas and only 30.8% belongs to the Village areas.

Climatic Conditions of the Study Area: Due to the formation & usage of the Nivedita Setu, no major changes came out in the climatic conditions of the nearby areas of the bridge and it remains to be natural.

Land Use of the Study Area: Due to the formation & usage of the Setu, Land usages are proper for maximum of the respondents.

Perception of Pollution in the Study Area: After the formation & usage of the Nivedita Setu, the maximum respondents said that the nearby areas of the bridge became unhealthy due to pollution.

Perception of Health & Hygiene in the related Study Area: As 57.7% of the respondents responded that the nearby areas of the bridge became highly unhygienic, so it can be concluded that, after the formation & usage of the Setu, the nearby areas of the bridge became highly unhygienic.

Perception of Changed Noise Level in the Study Area: After the formation & usage of the Nivedita Setu, the Noise Levels remained gone beyond tolerance limit according to the responses of the maximum respondents.

Perception of Changed Vibration in the Study Area: After the formation & usage of the Setu, majority of the respondents said that Vibration Levels are within their tolerance limits.

Past Emanation in the Study Area: After the formation & usage of the Setu, majority of the respondents said that Past Emanations are intolerable for them.

Traffic Jam in the Study Area: After the formation & usage of the Setu, majority of the respondents said that the traffic jams are normal for them in that area.

Solid Waste Disposal in the Study Area: After the formation & usage of the Setu, majority of the respondents said that the solid waste disposal are normal.

Drainage in the Study Area: After the formation & usage of the Nivedita Setu, majority of the respondents said that the drainage systems are within their tolerance limits.

Conveyance in the Study Area: After the formation & usage of the Setu, majority of the respondents are happy with the conveyance facilities they are receiving from the bridge.

Findings of Exploratory Factor Analysis

The responses of the questionnaire are measured on a Likert scale; hence they are continuous in nature. In the exploratory phase to find out the constructs from the dataset, Exploratory Factor Analysis has been conducted. The following sections represents the results: -

Table 1: KMO & Barlett's Test

Table 11.4.1.: KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.792
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	742.161
	df	210
	Sig.	.000

(**Source:** Primary Data compiled through SPSS)

The value of KMO is **0.792** which is much higher than 0.5 that indicates the sample is adequate for carrying out factor analysis. On the other hand, the control of Sphericity (Barlett's sig < 0.001) proves that EFA can be carried out.

Principal Component Analysis for Exploratory Factor Analysis

Principal component analysis (PCA) is a technique for lowering the dimensionality of such datasets, boosting interpretability while minimising information loss, according to **Ian T. Jolliffe & Jorge Cadima (2016)**. It accomplishes this by generating new uncorrelated variables that optimise variance in a sequential manner. PCA is an adaptive data analysis technique because it simplifies finding new variables, the principal components, to solving an eigenvalue/eigenvector problem, and the new variables are specified by the dataset at hand, not a priori. In order to carry

out Principal component analysis (PCA), and to identify the factors which have socio-economic impact on the respondents, there are twenty-one (21) variables which are extracted into eight (8) factors which **68.350% of the total variance.** The rotated component matrix has been developed with Principal component analysis as extraction method and Varimax with Kaiser normalisation.

Table 2: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues Total	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings % of Variance	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.926	18.696	18.696	3.926	18.696	18.696	3.772	17.964	17.964
2	2.324	11.068	29.764	2.324	11.068	29.764	2.124	10.112	28.076
3	1.840	8.760	38.524	1.840	8.760	38.524	2.016	9.601	37.677
4	1.519	7.231	45.755	1.519	7.231	45.755	1.442	6.865	44.542
5	1.328	6.326	52.081	1.328	6.326	52.081	1.307	6.224	50.766
6	1.248	5.944	58.025	1.248	5.944	58.025	1.265	6.025	56.791
7	1.138	5.419	63.444	1.138	5.419	63.444	1.215	5.785	62.576
8	1.030	4.906	68.350	1.030	4.906	68.350	1.213	5.774	68.350
9	.923	4.397	72.748						
10	.865	4.121	76.869						
11	.736	3.505	80.374						
12	.667	3.178	83.552						
13	.548	2.608	86.160						
14	.534	2.543	88.704						
15	.481	2.289	90.992						

16	.473	2.253	93.245					
17	.364	1.733	94.979					
18	.325	1.548	96.527					
19	.265	1.264	97.791					
20	.236	1.124	98.914					
21	.228	1.086	100.000					

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

(**Source:** Primary Data compiled through SPSS)

Table 3: Rotated Component Matrix

	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
x1	.825							
x2	.800							
x3	.798							
x4	.793							
x5	.763							
x6	.727							
x7		.866						
x8		.814						
x9		.772						
x10			.883					
x11			.862					
x12								
x13				.824				
x14				.725				
x15					.805			
x16								
x17						-.847		

x18								
x19							.822	
x20								-.774
x21								

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 11 iterations.

(**Source:** Primary Data compiled through SPSS)

(**Source:** Primary Data compiled through SPSS)

Interpretation of the Factors as per Exploratory Factor Analysis

All the related variables were merged into eight Exploratory Factors like:

(i) **Exploratory Factor–1:** From the above table, it is seen that the first Factor (Factor 1) consists of variables X1, X2, X3, X4, X5 and X6. Thus, the first exploratory factor with six variables is named as **"Facilities and Increased Standard of Living".** The multiple regression equation for this variable **"Facilities and Increased Standard of Living"** is greater than 1 and is explained by the following formula:

B_1 = 0.825x1 + 0.800x2 + 0.798x3 + 0.793x4 + 0.763x5 + 0.727x6 .... [i]

(ii) **Exploratory Factor–2:** From the above table, it is seen that the second Factor (Factor-2) consists of variables X7, X8 and X9. Thus, the second exploratory factor with three variables is named as **"Adverse Effect on Climate and Illegal Logging".** The multiple regression equation for this variable **"Adverse Effect on Climate and Illegal Logging".** is greater than 1 and is explained by the following formula:

B_2 = 0.844x8 + 0.866x7 + 0.772x9........................... [ii]

(iii) **Exploratory Factor–3:** From the above table, it is seen that the third Factor (Factor-3) consists of variables X10 & X11. Thus, the third exploratory factor with two variables is named as **"Life Danger and Social Variations".** The multiple regression equation for this variable **"Life Danger and Social Variations" is** greater than 1 and is explained by the following formula:

B_3 = 0.883x10 + 0.862x11 .... [iii]

(iv)Exploratory Factor–4: From the above table, it is seen that the fourth Factor (Factor-4) consists of variables X13 & X14. Thus, the fourth exploratory factor with two variables is named as **"Urban Movement and Higher Education".** The multiple regression equation for this variable **"Urban Movement and Higher Education(B_{19})"** is greater than 1 and is explained by the following formula:

$B_4 = 0.824x13 + 0.725x14$ .... [iv]

(v) Exploratory Factor–5: From the above table, it is seen that the fifth Factor (Factor-5) consists of variable X15. Thus, the fifth exploratory factor with two variables is named as **"Change in Livelihood Pattern".** The multiple regression equation for this variable **"Change in Livelihood Pattern(B_{20})"** is greater than 1 and is explained by the following formula:

$B_5 = 0.805x15 + 0.728x13$ .... [v]

(vi)Exploratory Factor–6: From the above table, it is seen that the Sixth Factor (Factor-6) consists of variable X17. Thus, the sixth exploratory factor with one variable is named as **"Time and Cost-Effective Occupation".** The multiple regression equation for this variable **"Time and Cost-Effective Occupation"** is greater than 1 and is explained by the following formula:

$B_6 = 0.847x17$ .... [vi]

(vii)Exploratory Factor–7: From the above table, it is seen that the seventh Factor (Factor-7) consists of variable X19. Thus, the seventh exploratory factor with one variable is named as **"Increased Cost of Living".** The multiple regression equation for this variable **"Increased Cost of Living"** is greater than 1 and is explained by the following formula:

$B_7 = 0.822x19$ .... [vii]

(viii) Exploratory Factor–8: From the above table, it is seen that the eighth Factor (Factor-8) consists of variable X20. Thus, the eighth exploratory factor with one variable is named as **"Cultural Exchange".** The multiple regression equation for this variable **"Cultural Exchange"** is greater than 1 and is explained by the following formula:

$B_8 = 0.774x20$ .... [viii]

VI.   Conclusion

According to the EFA, it can be said that decision making in relation to the socio-economic impact of the **Nivedita Setu** on the respondents **(D$_{SEIN}$)** depends on **seven** factors namely, **"Facilities and Increased Standard of Living", "Adverse Effect on Climate and Illegal Logging", "Life Danger and Social Variations", "Urban Movement and Higher Education", "Change in Livelihood Pattern", "Time and Cost-Effective Occupation", "Increased Cost of Living" & "Cultural Exchange" i.e.**

$$D_{SEIN} = \beta 1 + \beta 2 + \beta 3 + \beta 4 + \beta 5 + \beta 6 + \beta 7 + \beta 8$$

Furthermore, it may be stated that Vivekananda Setu had grown weakened as a result of its age, rising utility costs, and excessive traffic, making even repairs impossible. A second bridge was desperately required. As a result, Nivedita Setu was built parallel to it, about 50 metres (165 feet) downstream. Upstream traffic movement (Bally to Kolkata) is facilitated by Vivekananda Setu, whereas downstream traffic is facilitated by Nivedita Setu (from Kolkata to Bally). The main challenge was to design and build a new bridge that did not obstruct the view of the old Vivekananda Setu, did not dwarf the historically significant Dakshineswar Kali Temple, which is located well within visible distance, and could carry significantly higher levels of fast traffic for around half a century while also resolving all social and economic issues.

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The Life and Thought of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa: A Spiritual Journey

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" Having overcome ego, passion, greed, anger and desire, one becomes worthy of one's own being, the Supreme Being" (Bhagavat Gita, Chapter 18, verse 53)

Key Words: Religion, Spirituality, Humanism, Knowledge, Truth.

The million dollar question which is uppermost in the minds of most men and women who are not familiar either with the Indian spiritual tradition or with the lives of her great prophets is, who is Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa ? Why is he so famous and universally acclaimed as a seer ? There are different theories and interpretations of the identity and mission of Sri Ramakrishna, but none is adequate enough to unravel the whole truth , his legacy and prophecy, his vision and philosophy. None can explain the veil of mystery surrounding his life and personality which radiated through robust spiritual energy in a span of only about 52 years at the height of the well - known Bengal Renaissance of the 19th century. An eclectic, an ascetic, sage ,seer , prophet, an unlettered Brahmin priest, worshipper of the Goddess, a devoted Hindu, an unorthodox and eccentric thinker and so on and so forth. No description of this quintessential life can sum up the totality of his being and his prophecy.

The life and thought of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa have been explored by thousands of scholars and admirers in the last hundred and twenty five years in an endless sequence starting with Swami Vivekananda(1863-1902), his most famous disciple. It was an amazing spiritual journey from a village rustic to a great prophet for all mankind and for all time. It was not a systematic and conscious life and he never constructed an academic philosophy in a conscious manner in metaphysical terms. Nor did he do any extraordinary thing apart from the

performance of daily worship of the Goddess and discourse with his near and dear ones. His thought and ideas simply flowed spontaneously from his heart and soul in a refreshingly simple and resplendent language which would be intelligible to the men of ordinary capabilities and intellect.He endlessly immersed himself in the ocean of his spiritual thinking, sometimes suffering from ecstasy and delirium, and sometime getting lost in a world of pure bliss and highest spiritual consciousness.

Sri Rama Krishna Paramahansa encountered many challenges and resistance from his contemporaries, the orthodox Brahmins, the Christian missionaries, the BrahmoSamaj, the so called young radicals and Westernized, English educated Bengali middle class intellectuals etc. who were questioning each and every Hindu scripture and refusing to accept sainthood as well polytheistic idol worship. He took everything in his own way and answered each and every question in a mannerhardly seen or done before. He continued to remain calm and dispassionate to all these currents and cross-currents of the 19th century schools of thought, worshipping and meditating with utmost devotion and sincerity in the hallowed temple built by Rani Rashmoni(1793-1861). He was , in fact, a spiritual reformer who succeeded in transforming and humanizing traditional Hinduism in the face of great challenges posed by the critics and fanatics.

The life and thought of Sri Rama Krishna can be summed up in few words: Do good and be good and heaven is not to be found in the sky or in the clouds but in this existential world of all living creatures. His message that service to man is ultimately a service to God means service to all humans, rich and the poor, the enlightened and the ignorant, the superior and the inferior, the healthy and the sick, the sufferers and the victims without difference or discrimination (Swami Saradananda, 1920). He had the most liberal and secular mind which was searching for the unity of all men, races, religions, creed and faith. He had the vision of God in all living creatures and he was propagating a philosophy of humanism for those materialists who were devoid of spiritual and human feeling. The great master had infinite ability to transform men and women as we know. The skeptics, the non- believers, the ignorant realized it when they came into contact with him.

The religion and philosophy of Sri Ramakrishna are based on the fundamental concepts of equality of men and women, gender justice and women's empowerment, secular humanism and service to mankind through performance of duties. He did not believe in renunciation but

emphasized peaceful social co-existence. Men and women , living in our society, should not abdicate their duties to the society. Spirituality and divinity can be attained or achieved by living in the society and not by renouncing this world. Sri Ramakrishna told Rani Rashmoni to initiate social reforms and welfare activities for women and the downtrodden. He advised Swami Vivekananda to attain knowledge and enlightenment to light up the mind and soul and to educate the people. Truth, according to him, is God and belief in the Universal Soul.Swamiji subsequently expanded the vision and horizon of Sri Rama Krishna's philosophy by stressing the need for education, enlightenment and uplift of the people, especially women.

Sri Ramakrishna's vision of empowerment of women is evident from his worship of Sri SriSarada Devi, his wife, as the incarnation of Universal Motherhood. Sri Ramakrishna movement opposed all the evils and vices of the 19th Century Bengal, like casteism, untouchability, communalism, patriarchy, Brahminical despotism, fanaticism, dogmatism and intolerance. The movement was directed towards the establishment of a free, secular and liberal society through restructuring of traditional Hinduism.

Swami Vivekananda was initially introduced to Sri Ramakrishna in November 1881 when they met each other at the house of Sri Surendranath Mitra, a wealthy and influential devotee of the great prophet. At that time Swamiji was not very conscious of the power and spirit of the great master, but gradually understood his teachings and acknowledged it in the following words:

"All that I am, all that the world itself will someday be, is owing to my Master Shri Ramakrishna." (" My Master", 1901)

The religion of humanity as propounded by Sri Rama Krishna is a religion based on devotion , faith and humanitarian work for the poor and the downtrodden. There is no room for caste, creed, sectarianism or dogmatism in such a scheme of things. All roads lead to the same goal and all are free to worship the divine. Communal religion is not an end in itself. His *Kathamrita* or discourses contains the sum and substance of his perennial philosophy which points toward humanity as the manifestation of divinity. In such a philosophy, man is regarded as the incarnation of the divine and God resides in every soul and every form of life. To lead a pure and spiritual life, man must first purge himself of his ego, creed, hatred, jealousy, desire, anger and cruelty. He must rise above his immediate self to be able to see God in everything. He must not distinguish between one religion and another or between one community and another. Just as all

are the same in the eyes of God, so all should be treated equally by the society. Our life or existence is just a passing stage in the unfolding of the universal spiritual consciousness. What we do in this life is everything and this will determine what we want to be. The prophet, the great master, Sri Rama Krishna, being an incarnation of the Lord, is alive today and will remain so for all time to come to lead and inspire us and to light up our whole existence with his divine glow. His life is his message and his message is our timeless treasure which will pull us out of all troubles at every twist and turn of life.

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(M)*Otherhood*

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The first essence of being alive into life, the socially age old structured epitome of womanhood is to be believed lies on motherhood, the aura of motherhood is the ultimate legitimised respect for a woman where the 'mother figurine' is found in plethora of advertisements, iconographies. a concept ingrained into the societal structure lies burdened on the feminine shoulders which actually belie a woman's choice on her body, the self imbued in the body is almost forgotten appropriately in the words of Nivedita Menon, "I am this body and that the self stops at the boundaries of the skin" the queer politics on the female body is not new but running through a purposive diplomatic malicious process under the patriarchal society. The image of the mother the arduous and elusive quest of women's highest miracle that is as exquisitely beautiful as it is chillingly terrifying when considered about the slithering violence which is placed as codified social norm.

Western feminists, though have long theorised on the subject, especially on a key question: do women have a choice on whether they want to embrace motherhood, or are they socialised so effectively into the role almost from their own birth that they do not recognise it as one? Family, community, builds a nation, certain pseudo farcical pictures that is long percolated in the minds, Nivedita Menon, in her book *Seeing Like a Feminist,* argues that family is an institution is based on inequality its function is to perpetuate particular forms of private property ownership and lineage Decades ago, Simone De Beauvoir, in her famous work *The Second Sex* had weighed in on the ties that bind the structures of the patriarchal order and motherhood, arguing that choice needs to be brought into the equation. The mother concept, is made to believe one of the beautiful, miraculous, a universal yet intriguing concept, ie, relatively attuned with a woman since the prehistoric days. Marriage, is a highly regarded social institution that has for centuries inspired moral beliefs which encourage and protect it. Relationships in the society which

maintain a fine social balance are treasures in all civilizations because they inspire other relationships and contribute to a positive, cooperative, and stable social environment, and marriage is considered to be part of socially conformed relationship where motherhood is a normal expectable outcome. Motherhood is not biologically determined, but rather culturally constructed as a woman's primary function by patriarchal society. A social constructed process actually takes place, and designed for ultimate destination of a woman which she is designated as a woman's primary function and is glorified by patriarchal society, it is a aim which is often thrashed on her, that is most often not chosen by her, but rather imposed upon her. She has no choice but to accept this function, for if she deviates, she will be deprived of social acceptance. Moreover, motherhood is conditional and it is patriarchal society which dictates who can and cannot be a mother. The age old myths, of the child invoking in the mother, the feeling of love and care, instinctively its realization of the self and social entity develops from the mother it has come and by the mother it has been nourished the mother is the "be all and end all". The state of motherhood is always given a philosophical connotation, iconic symbol of all powerful, mother Kali or the Durga cult figure, and makes it appear a enigmatic emblem that the society, can easily regulate, confine or channelize female's life and make it the panacea of all calamities[3], the act of giving birth is the only moment when both pain and pleasure converges at times many a conventional societies instills a divine impression to this motherhood making it a spiritual transformation from wifehood. The mother's impression biologically is strikes deep root in the brain of the foetus that dwells in the womb and helps in developing the child. But at the same time in this transformation the decision of a woman hardly matters. Thus, it is evolved that the progress and continuance of the human society is always dependent upon the woman's ability to give birth. Without women's reproductive labour, society would cease to exist. Ii is due to women, and essentially women's potential maternal function, that society has an interest in attempting to regulate female lives. Social existence is influenced by maternal potentials, irrespective of caste , class and colour. Thereof Throughout history women lacked essential freedom due to the familial and societal norms a social obligation and restriction to maintain their home and children. A girl's life moves, rather gets entangled in the domestic chores and her individuality is hardly developed

'Motherhood', this beautiful stereotypical concept, if thought is mediated by their social levels, economic circumstances and religious belief. Thus, in this intriguing social manipulation of deciding upon women's body, after marriage is well-framed social normative process, whereas if thought there could be many choices of not being or accepting to be a *mother*, for a married woman. Does getting married obliterate or specify her necessity of being a mother or rather the choice is being often due to societal pressures. Is it merely a feeling, an ideology, a concept or a social construction. This paper tries to view the whole concept under the light of Mary Sanger's thought and philosophy. Let us bring this whole concept of *being* and *beingness* that supposedly gives the ultimate entity to the women, As established in the philosophy Margaret Higgins Sanger (born Margaret Louise Higgins), was an American birth control activist, sex educator, writer, and nurse. Sanger popularized the term "birth control", opened the first birth control clinic in the United States, and established organizations that evolved into the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. At this time the spirit of age became synonymous with capitalism, working class problems, child labour and the crudest forms of industrial apathies. The Indusrial Revolution in Victorian England had subsequently brought an unprecedented progress , economic growth and development, a belief in this age prevailed that unrestrained capitalism. In the First World War women had to fend for themselves and their families, without their husbands or fathers, during the First World War the roles of women changed because they had to enter the work force and be support of the family and men, off, at war. Yet still quite surprisingly a woman's primary function was to bear and raise children and there was no option to develop the individuality despite of a inconvienient, economic position. But quite synonymously women at this age also participated in the wars and was actually an equal participant in the work force of men and various other work, where women were entering into work scenario she was supposed to make an equal contribution in the work force along with her participation in the family. And quite an astonishing part is that she hardly had any decision making rights in being a mother. Quite clearly, she neither possesses the autonomy nor the authority in the procreation process . Well one perceives that there is a prudent and diplomatic deletion of the depiction of the actual stature of women at this level . Multiple pregnancies took a health toll on women, raising multiple children were economically inconvenient In this aspect Mary Sanger was the first one to create a birth control clinic Sanger was iconoclastic in bringing the concept of safe and secured motherhood the role of mother is not merely lulling the

child but definitely rearing it and empowering it and that it all depends upon the mother , that the mother is ought to have the decision making power to decide whether "she will be a mother or not". That women's authority and autonomy over her own physicality , family and child is ought not to be the subject of patriarchal autocracy . Well what is noteworthy that in this whole debate motherhood concept and birth control movement runs the *question of essentialism* as the concept of feminism. The concept of Essentialism derives its meaning from an understanding of the way language functions in relations to an independent realist 'object'. Thus, it ascribes to the argument that there are certain fixed essential qualities that determines the identity in a woman. And it has become pedantic to associate women with the essential characteristics like supportiveness, empathetic, caring, committed and motherly linking to the various cognates like biologism , Naturalism , Universalism trying to enhance the core essence of woman and making a woman susceptible to societal normative image . For instance in the words of Elizabeth Gross 'naturalism is a form of essentialism where a fixed nature is postulated 'or biologism in particular bonds women closely to the functions of reproduction and nurturance. Motherhood, if visualized in this aspect actually vents out the reason that women are always misrepresented or under- represented in position of social authority, status , and rather is confined to domesticity and is entailed into paradigm of work –loads and responsibilities like motherhood. The child and mother concept is the purest, serenest and the creative concept that holds the very source of creation – family , society , community, state, nation and country. And well under the light of essentialism a women invariably attributes to the social categories , fuctions and activities and is given a cultural identity. Sanger's movement actually tries to question the patriarchal authority that has long vested authority and has given a fixed image . Sanger was a public health nurse in New York city[4] and being a nurse she was a part of various reproductive cases she witnessed women being trapped in poverty, with occupational hazard, low wages and the appalling working condition made a larger section of women prey to many a hazard physical, psychological, economic and cultural. Margaret Sanger who led the birth control movement and the term 'birth control' came in vogue mainly with Mary Sanger and her book, *My Fight for Birth Control* , that woman no longer had to conform to the stereotypical bineries the structured framework to be a wife, and then a mother. Woman no longer had to enhance the masculine spirits   to express the feminine but to create a world of fusion of the feminine element . Universally constructed woman is related , in terms of family and children men always had the

autonomy , and is the deciding factor in progression of the family. Sanger actually vents out the option of individuality or the development of the essential entity of the woman as mother. Sanger proclaims. Feminists and progressive reformers were divided over Sanger's crusade for birth control. Alice Hamilton, Crystal Eastman, and Katharine Houghton Hepburn supported Sanger, but others, such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Carrie Chapman Catt, thought that birth control would increase men's power over women as sex objects in her birth control crusade. The unending struggle behind all these crusade, is the basic decision regarding the reproductive rights of a woman - such as whether and when to have a child, whether and when to abort a child are by and large made for women by patriarchal society. The woman's sexuality is controlled by social structures, and ideology ensures that she is not even aware of this control over her body. The pertinent questions of debate could a woman be childless as her choice, could she have the abortion rights, the patriarchal dominance over the womb and the foetus is what throttles woman's identity and makes her one of the marginalized groups. The growing amount of fertility clinics, and the hovering queues which numbers mostly the woman in this age speaks of a numb voice largely ignored by the dominant assertive masculine world. The societal obsession and fascination with female body and reproduction has constructed the repressive pressure of being a mother which otherwise demands female autonomy and choice.

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'Friends' in Waiting or 'Enemies' in the Making!: The India-China Storyline

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Abstract: India and China, the two gigantic superpowers and their strength of relations dates back to the 1950s when both the countries had been busy with their struggle against the evil of imperialism. The association between the two, since the past has undergone various phases of solidarities and animosities, the legacy of which is still being carried forward as is evident from some recent incidents which have contributed in making it a more complex one.

This article is an endeavour to investigate the swinging trends between India and China thereby throwing light on their future course of action.

Keywords: India, China, Association, Solidarities, Animosities, Trends.

India and China have been the two most populous nations on Earth along with a sound possession of nuclear weapons. There have several upheavals witnessed by both the countries besides instances of sparking friendship have made the ties more important with time.

History Comes First: A Befitting Influence

At the very outset, links between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and India had been a modest one. In connection to this, Indian Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his efforts deserve a special mention regarding India's Non-Aligned Movement. According to him, being friends with China by supporting the latter's entry to the United Nations (UN) would lessen the chances for the latter's attack on India. Besides this, it was the Chinese Communist Party which believed that India's support accompanied by the US all provided strength to Dalai Lama for fleeing Tibet therefore causing a huge uproar within the region. Similar to this, stood China's pressing claims demanding India's acceptance of the former's control over the Aksai Chin road connecting Xinjiang and Tibet during 1956. This led to a series of clashes in 1962

which after repeated appeals led to the withdrawal of the Indian forces from the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The arrival of Deng Xiaoping led to the arousal of new beginnings between New Delhi and Beijing. His leadership paved the way for the formulation of policies that asked for restoring relations with the countries like India, Indonesia, Vietnam, Singapore, etc. Apart from this, China embarked upon a new track of active participation by virtue of being members of the organizations like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) to name a few. The relationship got further accentuated in 1988 following the visit of the then Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi to Beijing. This proved to be an antidote for the Tibetans owing to their anti-Chinese acts along with securing the LAC through an Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity in 1993. This finds expression in Deng Xiaoping's words,

"Let both sides forget the unpleasant period in our past relations, and let us treat everything with an eye on the future."

The Nuclear Quandary

India's conduct of the its first nuclear explosion peacefully in 1974 had deeply influenced the Indo-China ties following the second one in May 1998 that sparked serious outrage within the country. A brainchild of Homi Bhabha, the provision of nuclear arsenal within the Indian regime would facilitate the country's military modernization and progress. In relation to this, the Chinese nuclear tests in 1964 which raised a lot of eyebrows in the route of its dealings with India were believed to be the chief motivators that showed the path for India's nuclear tests. Adding fuel to this entered Pakistan and its nuclear cooperation agreement with China in 1986. China, in its race to skip India for grabbing Asian dominance agreed to supply M-11 missiles to Pakistan. As against this backdrop Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1998 took plans for India's nuclear tests as a measure to show that the country was not lagging behind in developing nuclear deterrence against China.

As against this backdrop, differences did crop between both Beijing and New Delhi regarding their outlook on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). According to the Chinese authorities, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation

Treaty provided a fillip to the United States of America (USA) and the Soviet Union in exerting their hegemonic power, although the country had been included in the list of possessors of the nuclear weapons as guaranteed by the NPT. It was only in 1992, that Beijing finally gave its nod for being a NPT member on the grounds that the US-Soviet alliance would focus on reducing their speed in the chase for acquisition of the nuclear arms. India as a case has been unable to achieve anything regarding the NPT membership. Besides this, China was also accused of exporting nuclear materials to Pakistan despite the latter being a proliferation-sensitive country. However, this appeared to be a major difference within India's picture since it agreed to the customary rule of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons thereby paving the way for nuclear disarmament as well as energizing the India- China rift.

India and China showed stark differences regarding the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). On the one hand, the former advocated its refusal in signing the CTBT for it declared itself a nuclear weapon state that would not conduct any tests in future. Though in this case, the Indian policy makers and their uncertain attitude regarding the conduct of nuclear tests coupled with innumerable doubts surrounding the genuineness of weapons all posed as an impediment in India being a signatory of the CTBT. On the other hand, China though not ready to sign the CTBT at first, was persuaded by its own policy makers to finally nod its head which would in turn maintain its image within the global arena. Following the above, China finally agreed to sign the CTBT in 1997 primarily with an effort to keep itself in the long run.

'Look East': The Looking Glass

The first phase of Look East policy with its ample amount of stress on the competitive spirit between India and China was taken to be an important issue causing serious changes in the relationship between the two countries. Contrary to this stood the Look East Policy Phase 2 where stress was laid upon the notions of connectivity and the expansion of bilateral partnerships. The advent of the 1990s witnessed the growing closeness between the India and the USA accompanying the American cry for unity against terrorism. This brought India and China nearer who would in turn foster the spirit of dialogue apart from proving reasons justifying the Lion of Control (LOC). Besides this, China being a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) got the opportunity of exerting its influencing over the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) which pushed New Delhi to collaborate with the ASEAN countries for its mutual benefit. This

has rightly been stated by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee during his China visit in 2003 which endorses the view of 'new step forward in strengthening the all round cooperation between India and China in the new century'.

Besides this, India's close bonding with Myanmar has been visualized as a balancer regarding the scope of Indo-China relations. Myanmar's membership of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the country attaining its full membership status in ASEAN gave access to Indian trade towards the east, an attempt directed mostly to lessen tensions within the North-Eastern region. Thus, as could be seen from the above context that India then harped on a policy of regionalism. Regionalism or the Look East Policy, on the one hand envisions stronger ties between India and ASEAN whereas on the other hand Phase 2 heavily concentrates on the extension of its arena from China to Australia including the East Asia. Although the above account makes it clear that India-China relations have been hugely influenced by the Look East paradigm, a thorough examination of the present day changes also needs to be done in order to gain a solid footing of the evolving relations between both the powers.

Pakistan: A Bonus or Blight

China's increasing bond of friendship with Pakistan became evident in certain recent trends. This was evident in the Chinese declaration where both the Chinese and the Pakistani troops came together for joint patrolling of the China- Pakistan border. The term referred as 'border' here does not change the mere truth of Pakistan not sharing any boundary with China though it signifies the zone of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) surrounding Xinjiang to which India agrees to be a possessor. The ties between Pakistan and China are well known by the spread of the Chinese actions to the areas like Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, etc. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has made Pakistan a centre of attention from China's perspective. As stated by Andrew Small, author of the China-Pakistan Axis, regarding the Pakistani side, CPEC made China a far more important patron than it had been when the two sides sought their security partnership. The Silk Road Initiative deserves a special mention in this case which highly endorsed the Chinese interests working towards the betterment of relations apart from laying a firm ground for China's emergence as a dominant economic power. Adding to this, comes India and its uneasy stance regarding the CPEC, where India's requirement to

promote the 'Belt and Road Initiative', a $46 billion project furthering connectivity and infrastructure. India's refusal to this venture strained ties between India and China.

As against the environment, China's affinity for Pakistan gained momentum post Beijing's approval to extend its technical 'hold' for further 3 months in 1267 Committee of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). This resolution was primarily an effort to ban Masood Azhar, the Jaish-e-Mohammad leader by the UN, the instigator behind the attack on the Indian Air Force (IAF) base in Pathankot. According to the spokesperson of the Indian Foreign Ministry, Vikas Swarup, there had been repeated appeals by India to condemn Azhar in order to prevent the spread of terrorism but it was China itself that negated the proposal owing to its blossoming relations with Pakistan. India along with the other 14 members except China called for a travel and assets ban on Azhar for which the former needed to place its application for the second time before the 1267 Committee along with the charge sheet details. China's call for negotiations between India and Pakistan had been visible since the aftermath of the Uri attacks in Kashmir where attention was given upon consultation and dialogue for an effective condemnation of the menace known as terrorism. As against this backcloth, it becomes fairly clear that Pakistan and China's modesty has generated greater mistrust between them and thereby given both the countries a chance to rethink about their relationship.

'To Be' or "Not to Be": The NSG Regime

India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) has been one of the most contentious events taking place within the contemporary scenario. Though India dreamt big, its prolonged attempts and high hopes all dashed to the ground due to China's opposition to the former being a member of the NSG group. China assertion gained importance which stated that being a signatory of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) appeared to be a necessary prerequisite for seeking membership into the 48-nation grouping called NSG. China was backed by Brazil, Switzerland, Austria, Turkey, New Zealand and Ireland in its move against India. As against this background, came in the US who in turn stood as an impediment in the Chinese decision against India. The US standpoint during President Obama's tenure aimed at the dominance of the Asia-Pacific through the cooperative efforts of the US itself, China and India along with the other countries in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea region. Refuting the US claims, the Chinese ministry accorded the former's strategy to be 'farewell gift' for India

since the completion of President Obama's tenure. In reaction to such unjustifiable Chinese allegations, the US Ambassador to India Richard Verma assured that the US would continue to extend its helping hand to India and its disappointment surrounding India's major failure at the NSG plenary in Seoul would call for constructive efforts from both sides as Major Defence Partners on this issue. Besides this, there was Pakistan especially Islamabad which also met the same fate regarding its entry into the NSG all for being a non-NPT signatory. India's application for the NSG membership had been highly applauded by the countries like Mexico, France which facilitated the efforts for combating proliferation coupled with keeping a check on the export of nuclear, biological materials to name a few. Prior to this in 2008, a NSG waiver promoting access to civil nuclear technology with China's consent was imposed upon India. New Delhi's want for becoming a nuclear supplier together with extending its civil-nuclear sector found huge support in the countries namely Mexico, France and Switzerland. Unfortunately, India's membership bid was accepted by all the other 47 countries excepting China. According to the reports stated by the Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, the above cannot be held true in entirety since China was not the only country opposing NSG membership. India had strong credentials for become a NSG member. However, it needs to be said that China by way of its opposition to the NSG deeply strained ties between both the countries. Above all, China amongst such controversies, also spoke of some constructive measures for facilitating entry of the non-NPT members like India especially through the group known as 'Friends of NSG" headed by Argentina.

Besides the above, on either side of the coin comes the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). This proved to be useful for India which included the country in its list of members. The Indian posture by virtue of being the 35th nation did not suffer in the hands of China by virtue of the latter being a non- member of the 35- nation regime with its request pending since 2004. Thus, this showed signs of cordiality on part of India by raising its level on the global platform. Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar gave the green signal to MTCR that essentially targeted towards the unchecked proliferation of missiles and their delivery systems thus enabling India to sell the BrahMos missile of whom India is a joint manufacturer along with China.

Intermingling Standpoints: A Bird's Eye-View

China has also been a bone of contention between India and Pakistan over their membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) fearing the fact that the Indo-Pak entry might lead to disturbances in the domain of Chinese influence. Viewing the lighter side of it, the New Delhi-Islamabad entry might also have a positive outcome to mend their already existing friction and subsequently develop a cordial friendship. As against this setting, comes the 'One- China Policy' referring to the perspective of China's existence as a singular entity thus diminishing the fact that China is divided into Mainland China and Taiwan. The US provided the breaking point with its unanimous support to Mainland China thereby generating animosity between India and China. India needs a careful handling of the situation, without disturbing ties with the US or China that could pave its way for being an emerging superpower. India also needs to keep a neutral image from the US, China and Pakistan's perspective in order to draw benefits during the times of need.

Notable in this context, is Russia's growing relations with the US especially after Donald Trump's arrival with the lifting of economic sanctions against Moscow that would in turn hamper Russia's relations with China. Taking India as a reliable partner, Russia being a source of India's military equipment is also worried over India's close proximity with the US. China in order to protect its image in the arms market has brought in Pakistan as its saviour or as an answer to its Russian counterpart which has strained ties with China over its increasing closeness within the Indian arms market. Contrary to this, comes India's plan of the deployment of BrahMos missiles along the India-China border which is perceived as a threat to security. India's capability in launching the Agni-5 missiles followed by Agni-6 has gifted China a source of anxiety in disguise of India's greater military prowess. The actual necessity within this framework is the Chinese understanding of the fact that India is now ready to match steps with it which sheds chances of ignorance. Fearing India's rise, China has joined hands with Pakistan in the production of ballistic and such other missiles, or to be more specific has embarked upon its journey as a counterforce against an emerging India. Apart from the above, India's agreement with Iran for the Chabahar port development may be cited as an example explaining India-China competition to have its foothold in Iran. Though China had initially decided to this port

development process it was India who ultimately acceded to the need therefore establishing its control over its Iranian counterpart.

Another major area of concern between New Delhi and Beijing is the South China Sea. Though the dispute primarily brewed between the Philippines and China over the latter's acquisition of the Scarborough Shoal, China's claim over 90% of South China Sea waters call for a proper examination. India, whose 55% of trade passes through the Straits of Malacca opening into the South China Sea, is now wary of the fact that China might send ships to the Gulf of Aden, which in turn might seriously hamper the Indian Ocean security. As against this backdrop, China has warned India not to interfere in the South China Sea dispute if it aimed for better economic relations through tariff reduction of made-in India products. China's assertion to Japan regarding its irrelevant participation within the South China Sea dispute has led to emerging differences of opinion between the two countries. This called for visits by the Japanese Defence Minister General Nakatani to India, who in attempt to sort out relations urged for a meeting with the Defence Minister of India Manohar Parrikar and Prime Minister Narendra Modi requesting coordination within the maritime region between India, US and Japan similar to the one held during the Malabar exercise especially those who viewed China as the one hampering interests with the South China and the East China seas. This was seen as an attempt on part of New Delhi and Tokyo since 2014 along with the US whose aim was to create a stable environment within the Asia-Pacific region thereby maintaining a distance with China countering Chinese tactics to establish control over the aforesaid region.

Interestingly, Indo-Chinese cooperation also brings into limelight the recent incident of a rescue operation of a merchant ship hijacked by the Somali pirates in the Gulf of Aden. Though the Chinese side disregarded the Indian help, above all this incident came as a sigh of relief amidst the hotbed of tensions between India and China over a range of issues starting from the Dalai Lama's recent visit, China's opposition to India's NSG membership together with China blocking the Indian efforts of declaring Masood Azhar as a terrorist by the UN. Besides this, there are several other issues which hint at India-China complexities. The Chinese blockage of the Brahmaputra tributary at Xigaze in Tibet is an example where the former has shown less generosity in exchange of hydrological data with its Indian counterpart. Adding to this, comes

the Indian challenge of thwarting China's efforts of close dominance in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) therefore arousing an intricate environment.

Money Counts: A Shifting Equilibrium

In recent times, various instances generating a positive attitude have got reflected between India and China. One such instance has been the rail line connecting Rasuwagadhi to Birgunj bordering Bihar that would grant a huge status to China within the South Asian domain. On the economic front, the severe downfall of India and its engineering exports along with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Sri Lanka have raised an alarm on part of both India and China especially the former for its less demand of steel and other products. According to the recent reports of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), India has achieved an enormous growth than China as shown by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of India to 7.4% in 2017-18 compared to China which remains 7.6% in 2018-19. Moreover, estimates have shown that India's inflation is to grow to 5.2% in 2017 and 5.4% in 2018 with exports growing to 6%. This has largely been an outcome of enhanced Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flow, stronger domestic demand along with agricultural improvement all which have contributed in India's rising status to be a fastest growing economy of the world. China's economic hold over India seems relevant in its increasing demand in Nepal who cuts China along with United Kingdom (UK), US, Japan and Switzerland as its 5 bilateral development partners thereby striking off India's name from the list based on the disbursement of Official Development Assistance (ODA). Chinese FDI in Nepal stood to $57 million in 2015-16 whereas India's pledged FDI was $18 million. China's increasing closeness with the economic sector in Nepal largely made it a reliable one in the eyes of Nepal which again showed signs of tension regarding India who wanted to safeguard the Himalayan nation from becoming totally dependable on China for its growth.

Before summing up, India-China clash of interests have started since history and have been continuing till today. The Chicken's Neck and its vulnerable position has been a serious issue for India as that would affect its relations with the North East. China has been involved in several developmental projects that have not been the same for India. Moreover, China together

with Pakistan have worked together to lessen Indian influence where India should try to maintain a work balance with every country within its proximity that in turn would serve as an antidote to the Chinese hegemony.

Dalai Lama's recent visit to Arunachal Pradesh reignited greater animosity between India and China. According to the historical records, China following India's defeat in 1962 had withdrawn beyond the MacMohan Line running between India and Tibet thereby leaving Tawang and Arunachal Pradesh in Indian hands. As against this backdrop, serious differences cropped up between both the countries owing to the fact that China considered Arunachal Pradesh as its own, referring to it as South Tibet. This seemed to have caused a deep wound to China's sentiments that became amply visible in the country's objection to Dalai Lama's visit to Arunachal Pradesh. Regarding India it chose to maintain a firm stand and considered him a spiritual leader who was solely free to go anywhere in India. This finds firm assertion in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) statement,

"The government has clearly stated on several occasions that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is a revered religious leader, who is deeply respected as such by the Indian people."

Beijing expressed its supreme desire to have control over Tibet that ushered in its wish to approve the name of Dalai Lama's successor. Though in 1969 the decision laid with the Tibetans as to who would be his successor, the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) declared its power to decide who would be the next highest monk of Tibetan Buddhism. This received a hateful response from Dalai Lama himself who was strictly against the Chinese endorsement for his next successor and therefore regarded it as a move to deprive the Tibetans. His rejection of the Chinese claims led to the creation of a hostile environment in China who in turn believed to gather ample support to their demand for a Chinese approval for Dalai Lama's successor through the central government's support which would look into this matter thus resolving differences with China.

Furthermore, India-China rift has also been witnessed in Dalai Lama's visit to Mongolia which greatly angered the Chinese officials leading to an economic blockade. Despite India's help, the situation worsened that resulted in the Mongolian authorities blocking the entry of Dalai Lama forever within the Buddhist country. Notable within this context, comes China's

objection to Dalai Lama as a part of the group of Noble Laureates who aimed at meeting the President of India for which India went to specify the details stating it as a non-political visit. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to the Tibetan Prime Minister in-exile to attend his swearing-in ceremony made China furious thereby generating mass protests in the country.

In addition to the above, Dalai Lama's visit to Arunachal Pradesh has compelled the Beijing government rename towns in the region as a move to establish its rule over what it declares as South Tibet. The 6 places been renamed as Wo'gyainling, Mila Ri, Qoidengarbo Ri, Mainquka, Bimola and Namkapub Ri the Chinese step was an effort to express its displeasure against Dalai Lama's visit to Arunachal Pradesh backed by a strong support from India who took it as a purely religious visit. This invited a harsh response on part of India who resented against the Chinese government claiming Arunachal Pradesh as a vital part of India. This clearly finds place among the words of the MEA Spokesperson Gopal Baglay, *"Assigning invented names to towns of your neighbour does not make illegal territorial claims legal. Arunachal Pradesh is and will always be an integral part of India"*. This in turn has hugely affected the question of participation in the 'One Belt, One Road Infrastructure Plan' Summit hosted by China where the tussle surrounds the CPEC whose passage through India has not provided the latter a reason to cherish. As against this background, the Chinese measure of renaming the cities of Arunachal Pradesh have greatly strained Indo-China ties all that need to be looked upon urgently.

Therefore, in a nutshell, the roadmap of cooperation between India and China show signs of mistrust thereby leaving possibilities of chalking out the areas of convergences providing a boost to their friendship. The same was reiterated by President Pranab Mukherjee during his tour to China in June. As rightly asserted by him,

"By 2025, it is likely that our successful trade, flow of investments and collaborations in information and technology may bring about transformative changes- not only in our countries but also in our extended neighbourhood and beyond."

The need of the hour is that both New Delhi and Beijing shall make room for more developments and through an avoidance of the continuous fissiparous tendencies try to solve the irreversible differences arising between them through the best possible avenues. It is only through such varied platforms where both India and China would work with the view in mind

that emerging trustworthy ties between the two serve as the only key towards a stable and a secure environment thereby leading to a rise in the standards of both the countries within the arena of international relations.

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সুন্দরবন : আবেগ ও বাস্তবতা

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'সুন্দরবন' নামটি আবিশ্ব মানুষের কাছেই চুম্বকের মত আকর্ষণ সৃষ্টি করে। ভ্রমণপিপাসু বা অনুসন্ধিৎসু মানুষ সকলের কাছেই সুন্দরবন এক অপার বিস্ময়। এর প্রতি প্রত্যেকটি মানুষ সুড়ঙ্গ-গভীর টান-ভালোবাসা অনুভব করে । তবে এ সুন্দরবনে নদ-নদী -সমুদ্রবেষ্টিত রয়েল বেঙ্গল টাইগার সহ বিচিত্র জীবন নিয়ে গঠিত। পরিবেশের ভারসাম্য রক্ষায় তার ভূমিকা অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। ভারত ভূখণ্ডের সুন্দরবনের ১০২টি দ্বীপের মধ্যে মাত্র ৪৮টি দ্বীপ সংরক্ষিত বনাঞ্চল হিসেবে তার অবস্থান ধরে রাখতে পেরেছে। বাকি ৫৪ টি দ্বীপে প্রায় ৪০-৪৪ লক্ষ মানুষের বসবাস ।সংরক্ষিত বনভূমির প্রাণীদের মতো আজ তাদেরও অস্তিত্বের সংকট দেখা দিয়েছে। অনির্দিষ্ট জীবন ,প্রতি মুহূর্তে মৃত্যুর হাতছানি, বিপন্ন অস্তিত্ব,বিরতিহীন সংগ্রামের মধ্যেই এখানকার মানুষের বেঁচে থাকা। জাগ্রত অরণ্য আর উদাসীন সাগরের মাঝখানে মানুষ খুঁজে পেতে চায় তার সুখের ঠিকানা ।সে ঠিকানায় মাঝে মাঝে হানা দেয় ভয়ংকর সুন্দর রয়্যাল বেঙ্গল টাইগার।প্রবল বেগে ধেয়ে আসা ঘূর্ণিঝড় বা সাইক্লোন। একে নগরের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ বিচ্ছিন্নতা,তার উপরে এই ঘূর্ণিঝড়ের আঘাত মানুষকে দিকভ্রান্ত করে দেয়। তিল তিল করে গড়ে ওঠা দীর্ঘদিনের স্বপ্ন,সম্পদ চুরমার হয়ে যায় কয়েক ঘণ্টার দানবীয় ঝড়ের আঘাতে।

১৯৬০-১৯৯১--এই সময়ের মধ্যে ২৫ বার প্রবল ঘূর্ণিঝড় আছড়ে পড়েছে এই এলাকায়। তবে সম্প্রতি ২৫ শে মে ২০০৯ যে ঝড় আছড়ে পড়ল এই অঞ্চলে তার তুলনা সত্যিই বিরল। 'আয়লা' নামে বিখ্যাত হয়েছে সে ঝড়। বঙ্গোপসাগর ও আরব সাগরে তৈরি ঘূর্ণিঝড়গুলোর নাম কি হবে দুই সাগর সংলগ্ন ১৩ টি দেশের ট্রপিক্যাল সাইক্লোন রিজিওনাল বডি(TCRB) তার তালিকা বানায়।'আয়লা'নামটি মালদ্বীপের দেওয়া। এই বিধ্বংসী ঝড়ের প্রভাবে ভারতবর্ষের দিকের ৩৫০০

কিলোমিটার নদীবাঁধ এত বেশি জায়গায় ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হয়েছে যা কল্পনাতীত। মূলত কৃষিনির্ভর এই অঞ্চল তিন মরশুম নিষ্ফলা ছিল ।রুটি-রুজির টানে দিশেহারা মানুষ ভিনরাজ্য এমনকি ভিনদেশে পাড়ি দিতে বাধ্য হলো। এমনিতেই বেশ কিছুদিন ধরেই এই অঞ্চলে কৃষকের সংজ্ঞা পাল্টাতে শুরু করেছিল। বড় কৃষক তো ছিলই না, ছোট চাষী মজুর ধরে চাষ করে সারা বছরের 'খোরাকি' যোগাড় করতে পারেন না। কৃষকের চরিত্র বদল হয়ে মূলত কৃষি-শ্রমিক, প্রান্তিক চাষী, ক্ষেত মজুরে ভরে গেছে এলাকা। বর্ধমানের কৃষকের সঙ্গে সুন্দরবনের কৃষকের সমস্যা, রুচি এবং চিন্তার যে অনেক ফারাক সেটা অনেক সময় বিশেষজ্ঞদের দৃষ্টি এড়িয়ে যাচ্ছে ।কৃষকের সমস্যা যেমন বীজ- সার- কীটনাশক -ডিজেলের দাম বৃদ্ধির সঙ্গে সম্পৃক্ত, তেমনি সম্পৃক্ত সামাজিক চেতনার মধ্যেও। ব্যক্তি এবং ব্যষ্টির সেই দ্বন্দ্বে ব্যষ্টি চেতনাই যে কৃষককে ভবিষ্যৎ সুরক্ষা দেবে এটা না অনুভব করলে সমূহ বিপদ।

বহু তরুণ উপার্জনের তাগিদে পশ্চিমবঙ্গের বাইরে বাঙ্গালোর, তামিলনাড়ু, মহারাষ্ট্র এমনকি আন্দামানের পথে পা বাড়াচ্ছে। তারা সমাজের কুড়ি শতাংশ তো বটেই। প্রথমে এরা পরিবারকে রেখে যেত। পরবর্তীতে সপরিবারে পাড়ি দিল মোটা টাকা রোজগারের আশায়। এতে কোন দোষ নেই। একুশ শতকের মানুষ তো আর কোনো গণ্ডির মধ্যে আবদ্ধ থাকতে পারেন না। কিন্তু বিপত্তি ঘটল অন্য জায়গায়। স্বাভাবিক শ্রমের সঙ্গে 'ওভার টাইম' খেটে কঠোর পরিশ্রমে সে তিল তিল করে পয়সা রোজগার করেছে।সে পয়সায় ক্ষুন্নিবৃত্তি নিবারণ হয়ে বাড়তিও থাকছে। কিন্তু গ্রামে বৃদ্ধ বাবা-মায়ের তত্ত্বাবধানে রেখে আসা এদের ছেলে বা মেয়েটি লেখাপড়ায় বেশিদূর এগোতে পারছে না। দিশেহারা মানসিকতা নিয়ে বেড়ে উঠছে তাদের শৈশব অথবা কৈশোর। এদিকে তাদের বাবা মায়েরা ২-৩টি ভাষা শিখে হাতে বেশ কিছু টাকা নিয়ে ছয়-সাত মাস পরে যখন বাড়ি ফিরছে গ্রাম-সমাজের সঙ্গে তাদের মানসিকতা আর কাজ করছে না। মহেশ গল্পে 'গফুর' একদিন আমিনার হাত ধরে ফুলবেড়ের চটকলে কাজ করতে যেতে বাধ্য হয়েছিল। কৃষক গফুর রূপান্তরিত হয়েছিল শ্রমিক গফুরে। কৃষি- নির্ভর সুন্দরবনের এই নব্য যুবদের অবস্থানও তাই। কৃষক, ক্ষেতমজুর বা প্রান্তিক চাষী পরিবারের ছেলেমেয়েরা আজ পাড়ি দিচ্ছে শিল্পনগরীর দিকে ।একদিন সাত পুরুষের ভিটে মাটি ছেড়ে স্ত্রীকে নিয়ে ভিন রাজ্যে যাওয়ার কথা তাঁদের কল্পনাতেও ঠাঁই পেত না। এখন আর স্থানের গণ্ডি তাঁকে বাঁধতে পারছে না। অর্থ উপার্জনের তাগিদ তাঁকে অনিবার্যভাবেই পেশাচ্যুত ও স্থানচ্যুত করছে।

কিন্তু এহ বাহ্য। একদিকে শিল্পাঞ্চলের অস্থায়ী শ্রমিক, অন্যদিকে গ্রামের স্বাভাবিক বৈশিষ্ট্য থেকে দূরে সরে আসা-- এই দুই বৈপরীত্যের টানাপোড়েন তাকে নিয়ত কুরে কুরে খাচ্ছে। নির্বাচন, সামাজিক উন্নয়ন, মূল্যবোধ-- সবই তার কাছে নির্ধারিত হচ্ছে অর্থের নিরিখে।আজন্ম-লালিত সংস্কার আর গ্রাম সমাজের সরলতা এসব তার হৃদয়ে আর গুঞ্জন তোলে না। ক্রমশ ফিরে আসা দিনগুলো দীর্ঘায়িত হবে।ভোট আর খুব নিকট আত্মীয়ের মৃত্যু ছাড়া গ্রামের টানে সে আর ফিরতে চায় না। কিছুটা সময় না গেলে অবশ্য বোঝা যাবে না যে সে ঠিক কোথায় শিকড় গ্রথিত করবে। শরীরের তাগদ কমার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে যখন উপার্জন কম হবে তখন তাদের সিদ্ধান্ত কি হবে সেটাই

এখন বড় প্রশ্ন।

আর এক দল তরুণ যাঁরা এলাকায় থাকছেন পড়াশোনা শেষ করে অথবা না করে, তাদের মধ্যে দ্রুত অর্থবান হওয়ার মানসিকতা গড়ে উঠেছে। এম. জি. এন. আর. ই. জি প্রকল্পে গতর খাটার লোক অপেক্ষা উমেদারি (স্থানীয় ভাষায় 'কোড়াদারি') করার লোক বেশি হয়ে যাচ্ছে। কেউ কাজ করতে চাইছেন না। সবাই এক অলীক আয়ের উৎস 'মাস্টার রোল' তৈরি করছেন।

আপাত নিরীহ সুন্দরবনের অধিকাংশ জায়গা জুড়ে গত ১০-১২বছরে অদ্ভুত এক মেলার আয়োজন হচ্ছে। টিকিটহীন সেইসব মেলা দিনের পর দিন এমনকি মাসাধিককাল ধরে চলে। প্রতিদিন কমপক্ষে ৩০-৩৫ হাজার টাকা খরচ হয়।এই খরচ আসে জুয়ার(স্থানীয় ভাষায় ফড়)আসর থেকে।পুলিশের উপস্থিতিতে এই আসরে সর্বস্বান্ত হয় গরিব মানুষ। এলাকায় চুরি-ছিনতাই বৃদ্ধি পায়। সব জেনেও শুধুমাত্র ভোটের কারণে নীরব দর্শকের ভূমিকা নেয় রাজনৈতিক দলগুলো।স্থানীয় প্রশাসনের সঙ্গে চুক্তিতে দিনের পর দিন এই অবস্থা চলছে। বেলা শেষে টইটুম্বুর হয়ে বাড়ি ফিরে স্ত্রী ও মাকে অকথ্য গালিগালাজ এমনকি মারধর করছেন ভাবীকালের কর্ণধারেরা।

অনুমোদন লাগে না এসব মেলা করার জন্য। পুলিশ কস্ট দিলেই সাতখুন মাপ। এস.ডি.ও এবং ফায়ার ব্রিগেডের অনুমতি নেওয়ারও প্রয়োজন বোধ করেন না।থানার বড়বাবু থেকে গোটা পুলিশ প্রশাসন সাপ্তাহিক চুক্তিতেই মেলা চালান। অভিযোগ করলে একজন আরেকজনের ঘাড়ে দোষ চাপিয়ে এড়িয়ে যান। প্রবেশমূল্যহীন এইসব মেলায় গ্রাম এমনকি শহরতলির যুবতীদের সমাগমও ঘটে।গভীর রাতের সেই অন্ধকার জগত সুন্দরবন অঞ্চলের মানুষকে বড্ড কাঠখোট্টা করে দিচ্ছে। স্বাভাবিক প্রতিবাদ বন্ধ হচ্ছে অর্থ এবং ভীতির পরিমণ্ডলে। সাধারণ মানুষ খুব অসহায় বোধ করছেন। মানুষ ক্রমশ তার প্রতিবাদ ভুলে অচিরেই মিশে যাচ্ছে স্রোতে। জুয়ার আসরে আকছার ঘটছে মহিলাদের উপস্থিতি। আদর্শ-লজ্জা-ভয় সংস্কার এসব বিবেচিত হচ্ছে টাকার মাপকাঠিতে। তাই তিন হাজার টাকার মাসিক বেতনের আই.সি.ডি.এস-এর সরকারি চাকরির জন্য তিন লাখ টাকা দিতেও পিছপা নন মানুষ। এই অভিযোগও শোনা যায় মান- সম্মান ,ইজ্জত- আব্রুও বন্ধক দিতে হচ্ছে। এ বড় বেদনাহত করে আমাদের।

আর লেখাপড়া শিখে যাঁরা লব্ধপ্রতিষ্ঠ হচ্ছেন ডাক্তার-ইঞ্জিনিয়ার- অধ্যাপক-শিক্ষক বা অন্য পেশায় তাঁদের মধ্যে ঘরে ফেরার টান থাকছে না বা এলাকার প্রতি সহমর্মিতা কমছে মূলত দুটি কারণে। এক ,এলাকার অস্থির পরিবেশ ,স্কুলে পড়াশোনার অবক্ষয়। এস.এস.সি দিয়ে দূর থেকে যাঁরা আসছেন অধিকাংশ চাকরি পেয়েছেন এই মনোভাবে আসছেন, পড়িয়ে ছাত্র তৈরি করব-- এই মানসিকতায় নয়। সুন্দরবনের অধিকাংশ স্কুলের ছাত্রেরা স্কুলের শিক্ষকদের উপরই নির্ভরশীল থাকে। সেখানে বিরাট ডিগ্রিধারী শিক্ষক ছিলেন না কিন্তু তাঁদের আন্তরিকতা ছিল প্রশ্নাতীত। অসম্ভব শেখানোর তাগিদ আর ছাত্রদের সন্তানতুল্য ভালোবেসে পড়ানোর গুণে যে রেজাল্ট হতো

আজ কিন্তু তা হচ্ছে না।৫-৬-৭ঘন্টা দূরত্ব অতিক্রম করে দু-তিনটি নদী পেরিয়ে এসে কোনরকম দায়সারা গোছের পড়িয়ে আবার ফেরার তাড়া তাকে বড় ক্লান্ত , ক্লান্ত করে দিচ্ছে। এক সময় এই অঞ্চল থেকে অসংখ্য ডাক্তার ,ইঞ্জিনিয়ার হয়েছেন।এখন অধিকাংশ উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক স্কুলের বিজ্ঞান শাখা উঠে গেছে অথবা মুষ্টিমেয় দু-একজন ছাত্র পড়ছে। তাদের অধিকাংশই আবার পরবর্তীতে বিজ্ঞান নিয়ে পড়ছে না। দুই, কী লাভ ফিরে গিয়ে খাল-বিলের দেশে? এত কষ্ট করে বিদেশী সাবান দিয়ে সোঁদা মাটির গন্ধ গা থেকে দূর করেছি, আবার কেউ সাধ করে ফিরে যায়? যায়না। যায় না বলেই ভাবনার সেতু রচিত হয় না। কেউ কাউকে চেনার প্রয়োজন বোধ করেন না। উত্তর প্রজন্মের কাছে অজানা থেকে যায় পূর্ব প্রজন্মের কৃতিত্ব। ছিন্নমূল হয়ে 'না ঘরকা না ঘাটকা' হয়ে তিনি কেবল মাত্র অর্থোপার্জনের যন্ত্র হয়ে যাচ্ছেন । বাড়ি ফিরে তার মনের দ্বিতীয় প্রকোষ্ঠে (Second Chamber) আর অনুরণন তোলে না জন্মভূমির ভালো-মন্দ।

তৃতীয় সমস্যাটা আরো গভীর।যাঁরা ঐ অঞ্চলের ভূমিপুত্র এবং ওই অঞ্চলে চাকরি করেন তাঁদের মধ্যে বেশ কিছু অংশ অদ্ভুত এক মানসিক দ্বন্দ্বের স্বীকার।স্ত্রী, ছেলেমেয়ে এবং বন্ধু-বান্ধবের চাপে সোনারপুর ,বারাসাত ,মধ্যমগ্রাম ,বসিরহাট বা শহরতলীতে কোথাও একটা ঘরভাড়া অথবা নিজস্ব ঘর বেঁধে থাকছেন ।সেখান থেকেই গ্রামে যাচ্ছেন চাকরি করতে (গ্রামে নিজস্ব জমিজমা, ঘরবাড়ি থাকতেও)। যে আশায় তার এই পরিকল্পনার অধিকাংশ ক্ষেত্রেই সেই ছেলেমেয়েরা ভালো রেজাল্ট করতে পারছে না ।বরং বেশি স্বাধীনতা পেয়ে অচিরেই সে আদর্শচ্যুত হচ্ছে। ফলে চাকরিসূত্রে শরীরটা গ্রামে থাকলেও মনটা থাকছে শহরতলীতে তার পরিবারের কাছে। দোদুল্যমান মন নিয়ে ক্লান্ত শরীরে তাঁর আর ভালো লাগেনা। শুধু দিন গুজরান করাই সার। অথচ এঁদেরকে কেন্দ্র করে আবর্তিত হয় গ্রামের মানুষের স্বপ্ন -আশা- ভরসা।

এই প্রসঙ্গে একটা বিষয় এখানে উল্লেখের প্রয়োজন। আগে সুন্দরবনের গ্রামে সারারাত ধরে যাত্রাপালা অভিনীত হতো। মানুষ সারারাত ধরে সেখানে থাকতেন। এখন কিন্তু সে প্রবণতা কমেছে। রাত বারোটার পর খুব কম জায়গাতেই যাত্রাপালা দেখতে মানুষ থাকেন। শুধু তাই নয় ,এখন আর যাত্রাপালা দেখতে ভিড়ও হয়না ।সিডি, কেবল টিভির প্রভাব অনস্বীকার্য, কিন্তু তারচেয়েও বড় কারণ সুন্দরবনের মানুষ যাত্রাকে আর নিজস্ব সংস্কৃতি বলে মনে করেন না। আমাদের ছেলেবেলায় সুখে-দুঃখে যাত্রা, মনসা-মঙ্গল, বেহুলা ভাসান ,দক্ষিণ রায়ের পালা যেভাবে উন্মাদনা সৃষ্টি করতো এখনকার ছেলেমেয়েদের কাছে তা হাসির খোরাক মাত্র ।কিছু বছর আগেও গ্রাম মাতানো বুড়িছোঁয়া,পলাটু, ডাংগুলি, মার্বেল,কিত্ কিত,গাদন, হা-ডু-ডু এখন বিস্মৃতির অতলে তলিয়ে যাচ্ছে।

গ্রামের আদিবাসী সম্প্রদায়ের নিজস্ব সংস্কৃতি টুসু বা ভাদু গানের মধ্যে হিন্দি গানের সুর শোনা যাচ্ছে। কীর্তনীয়ারাও এই ধারার বাইরে নয়। এটা খারাপ কী ভালো তা সময়ই বলবে।কিন্তু নিজস্ব ঘরানা হারিয়ে একটা 'হাঁসজারু' জনসংস্কৃতির জন্ম দিচ্ছে। কাঠুরে, বাউলে ,মৌলে, ঘরামি করাতি ইত্যাদি পরিচয় দিতে এখন আর কেউ গর্ববোধ করে না।সন্ধ্যেবেলা নদীর তীরে দাঁড়িয়ে নৌকো টানার ছপাৎ ছপাৎ শব্দ আর ভাটিয়ালি সুরের গান শোনার অভিজ্ঞতা এখনকার যুবকদের আর হয় না। মাঝনদীতে নৌকার ছইয়ের মধ্যে রাত কাটানোর বিরল অনুভূতি বা কে নিতে চায়?

পূর্বসূরির পেশাকে ভালো না বাসা আর আধুনিক পেশার পক্ষে নিজেকে যোগ্য না করতে পারা-- এই দোদুল্যমানতায় অনিশ্চিত ভবিষ্যতের দিকে এগিয়ে চলেছে সুন্দরবনের যুব সম্প্রদায়ের অধিকাংশ।

সুন্দরবনের যুব মনন তাই এখন অদ্ভুত এক বাঁকের মুখে দাঁড়িয়ে দিশেহারা। রুটি-রুজির তাগিদ থাকবে,বড়ো হওয়ার স্বপ্নও থাকবে, ভালোবাসার জন্য মনের মানুষ থাকবে, থাকবে আরো অনেক, অনেক কিছু। কিন্তু যার জন্য তাদের এত কদর সেই আন্তরিকতা,পরের জন্য সব ফেলে ঝাঁপানো কোথায় হারিয়ে গেল রে? ও খোকা তোর মন কোথায়?

তথ্যসূত্র:

১.শ্রীখণ্ড সুন্দরবন: সম্পাদনা: দেবপ্রসাদ জানা

২. আইলা ও তার পুনর্গঠন: সুভাষচন্দ্র আচার্য

৩. বই ভেসে যায়: সুপ্রীতি রায়

৪.নিম্নগাঙ্গেয় সুন্দরবন সংস্কৃতি পত্র :সম্পাদক বিমলেন্দু হালদার (জুলাই 2009)বিবেকানন্দ রোড বাইলেন ।সোনারপুর। কলকাতা-১৫০

৫.সুন্দরবন ও আইলা ।সম্পাদনা: জ্যোতিরিন্দ্র নারায়ন লাহিড়ী ও সঞ্জয় মৌলিক। প্রকাশক: তেপান্তরের স্বপ্ন। গুড়াপ, হুগলি।

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স্বগতোক্তির সন্ধানে
পর্ণা মণ্ডল
স্টেট এইডেড কলেজ টিচার,
বাংলা বিভাগ,
দক্ষিণেশ্বর হীরালাল মজুমদার মেমোরিয়াল কলেজ ফর উইমেন।

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নাট্যাভিনয়ে নয়, এ সন্ধান জীবনাভিনয়ের মঞ্চে। শিল্পী-সাহিত্যিক অবশ্যই এই সন্ধানের সীমানা ছাড়িয়ে। কিন্তু আপামর জনসাধারণ? নিজের সাথে কথা বলা, নিজেকে নিজের করে খুঁজে পাওয়া – সব কেমন এলোমেলো হয়ে গিয়েছে বৈদ্যুতিন সম্মোহনে। হাতে গোনা কয়েকজন ছাড়া আমার-আপনার মতো অনেকেরই সেই মায়াজাল ছিন্ন করে বেরিয়ে আসা সম্ভবপর হয়ে উঠছে না।

স্বগতোক্তির হাতছানি যে কতটা দুর্দমনীয়, তা এই আস্বাদ থেকে বঞ্চিত নতুন প্রজন্মের একটা বড় অংশের কাছে হারিয়ে যাওয়া খেলনা-বাটির মতো। ব্যক্তিগত সমস্যা নিরসন, সাংসারিক সুখ বজায়, পেশাগত ক্ষেত্র মোকাবিলা, শক্তিক্ষয় হ্রাস, একাকিত্বের অসহনীয়তা এবং আরও নানান কিছুর সুরাহা স্বগতোক্তি। তাই বলে, পৃথিবীর নির্জনতম দ্বীপে একাকী সাধনা করে স্বগতোক্তির অনুসন্ধান কাম্য নয়। সকলের মাঝে থেকেও তো নিজের সাথে নিজে দিব্য গুছিয়ে কথা বলা যায়। কি আশ্চর্য পরিতৃপ্তি! কি অনাবিল আনন্দ! নিজের কাছে নিজের আশ্রয় পাওয়ার শীতলতা, এই তপ্ত পারিপার্শ্বিকতার মধ্যেও। ভাবুন তো, আপনি হয়তো প্রতিপক্ষ কাউকে পরিস্থিতির চাপে সামনাসামনি পেয়েও মোক্ষম জবাব দিতে দ্বিধাবোধ করছেন, অনায়াসে সেকথা মনে মনে বলে দেখুন। রাগ কিছুটা প্রশমিত হয় কিনা! জীবনে কোনো গুরুত্বপূর্ণ কাজ করার আগে অথবা সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণের আগে নিজস্ব বিচার-বিবেচনাও স্বগতোক্তির হাত ধরে সফল হতে পারে। শুধুমাত্র চলভাষময় জীবনই জীবনের সূক্ষ্মাতিসূক্ষ্ম মনস্তাত্ত্বিকতারও সুরাহা করতে সক্ষম, একথা যতই একাংশের মতামত হোক না কেন, শেষ পর্যন্ত স্বগতোক্তির বিকল্প নেই। অবশ্যই যুগোপযোগী বৈদ্যুতিন ছন্দে পা না মেলালে, সে জীবনের ওয়াকিং রেস থেকে বাতিল। তা বলে, এই যে চলভাষকে সর্বস্ব করে তোলা, এ যেন নিজেদের অন্ধত্বের পথে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়া। বর্তমান বৈদ্যুতিন মাধ্যমজাত খেলা কতটা মারাত্মক ও জীবনহানিকর হতে পারে, তা আমরা বিগত দিনে দেখেছি, বর্তমানেও দেখে চলেছি ও ভবিষ্যতেও এর রাশ না টানলে আপাত উন্নতির চাকচিক্যে কতটা অন্ধকারে তলিয়ে যেতে হবে, তা ধারণারও বাইরে। আজ থেকে কয়েক বছর আগে আমাদের ছোটবেলায় দেখেছি - পারিবারিক বা সামাজিক কোনো অনুষ্ঠানে নানাজন সম্মিলিত হলে কত আলাপ-আলোচনা, কত স্বতঃস্ফূর্ত হাসি। এখন সেই হাসি নিজস্বীর ফ্রেমে বন্দি। সোশ্যাল মিডিয়ার খাঁচায় বন্দি পাখির মতো সেই হাসিকে ব্যক্তিগত ভালোলাগাটুকুর আকাশে ওড়ার অবকাশ না দিলে যে জীবনে অনেক অনুভূতিই রয়ে যাবে অধরা!

যদিও একুশ শতকের বিশের দশক থেকে যে অতিমারির কবলে জর্জরিত সমগ্র বিশ্ব, তাতে এই মুঠোফোনের প্রয়োজনীয়তা বহুমুখী হয়ে উঠেছে। যোগাযোগ, শিক্ষা, আপদকালীন সংযোগ- সর্বত্র এর শব্দ-নিঃশব্দ অস্তিত্ব। কিন্তু মনের মুক্তির পথ কিছু ক্ষেত্রে দিশা খুঁজে পেলেও, বেশির ভাগ অংশেই মনের বিকাশের প্রতিবন্ধকতা প্রত্যেক মানুষকে বিচ্ছিন্ন দ্বীপে পরিণত করে তুলেছে। 'মেঘদূত' প্রবন্ধে রবীন্দ্রনাথ লিখেছেন "আমরা যাহার সহিত মিলিত হইতে চাহি সে আপনার মানসসরোবরের অগম তীরে বাস করিতেছে; সেখানে কেবল কল্পনাকে পাঠানো যায়, সেখানে সশরীরে উপনীত হইবার কোনো পথ নাই (পৃ- ৭১৬)।" এই কল্পনাও তো স্বগতোক্তির এক অঙ্গ। কল্পনার

সম্ভাবনার বীজ যদি দিনের শুরু থেকে রাতের স্বপ্ন পর্যন্ত বৈদ্যুতিন বিকিরণে শুষ্ক হয়ে যায়, তবে বিদ্যাপতির কথা ধার নিয়ে বলতে হবে - ... "অঙ্কুর তপন তাপে যদি জারব, কি করব বারিদ মেহে (পৃ- ১৩৭)।" তবে, দিনের কিছু অংশে যদি বৈদ্যুতিন সম্মোহনের সেই মায়াজাল থেকে নিজেকে ছিন্ন করে নিজেতে মগ্ন হওয়া যায়, তবে সেই শুষ্ক বীজের অঙ্কুর স্বগতোক্তির জলসিঞ্চনে উড়াল দেবে আত্ম-আবিষ্কারের পথে। হারিয়ে দেখা যাক‌ই না কোনো মুহূর্তে – জনারণ্যের মধ্যেও মনারণ্যে।

তথ্যসূত্রঃ

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, 'মেঘদূত', ১৩৯৩ (চৈত্র, সুলভ সংস্করণ) রবীন্দ্র রচনাবলী, তৃতীয় খণ্ড, বিশ্বভারতী, কলকাতা

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فلسفہ انسانیت کا استعارہ ٹیگور اور اقبال

دبیر احمد

کولکاتا

دنیا کی کسی بھی زبان کے ادب کا مطالعہ سیاسی اور سماجی حالات کی تاریخ کے بغیر ناممکن ہے۔ رابندرناتھ ٹیگور اور اقبال کے دانشورانہ وقار کے متعلق گفتگو کرنے سے قبل ضروری ہے کہ ان تاریخی حالات و واقعات کا ذکر کیا جائے جن سے مذکورہ دونوں شعراء کے ذہنی رویے اور فکری میلانات کی ہم آہنگی محسوس ہوتی ہے یا جنہوں نے انسانی زندگی کی تہذیب اور معاشرے کے گونا گو پہلوؤں پر اپنے خیالات کا اظہار کیا ہوا ایسے وقت میں جو بار تقا اور تبدیلی کا نازک دور رہا ہو۔ ۱۸۵۷ء میں آزادی کی پہلی جنگ میں شکست کھانے کے بعد سارا ہندوستان دھیرے دھیرے آخری جنگ کی تیاریوں میں مصروف عمل ہو گیا۔ اس بار پورا ملک عزم و استقلال کے ساتھ انگریزوں سے اپنا وطن واپس لینا چاہتے تھے تا کہ آزاد قوم کی حیثیت سے اپنا سر اونچا کر کے یں ظاہر ہے کہ اس ناسازگار ماحول کو خوش گوار بنانے اور سرخرو ہونے کے لیے نہ صرف شہروں میں بلکہ گاؤں میں بھی جنگ میں کامیابی حاصل کرنے کی تدابیر پر غور و فکر کرنا تھا۔ دوسری طرف پوری دنیا پر پہلی جنگ عظیم کا خوفناک سایہ منڈلا رہا تھا۔ ان نامساعد حالات سے نبرد آزما ہونے کے لیے ایک ایسے پرسکون راستے کی تلاش تھی جس پر چل کر ہندوستان کا ہر شہری اپنی منزل پر پہنچ سکے تا کہ تھکا ماندہ مسافر کو ایک گونہ سکون نصیب ہو اسی زمانے میں ہندوستان کو دو اہم شاعر ٹیگور اور اقبال مل گئے۔ تھکے ہوئے اور ہارے ہوئے یا یوں کہا جائے کہ بے بس ہندوستانیوں کو ایک زندگی عطا کرنے کے لیے۔

دونوں مذکورہ شعراء کی شخصیت نے ہندوستانیوں کی اجتماعی فکر کو مہمیز کیا کیونکہ ٹیگور اور اقبال کا پیغام بالکل ایک جیسا تھا۔ دونوں ساری دنیا میں امن کا پیغام بلاواسطہ، اور ہندوستان میں بلاواسطہ دینا چاہتے تھے۔ انسانیت کا درد دونوں میں تھا۔ دونوں اپنے ملک عزیز سے محبت کرتے تھے۔ دونوں کی آنکھیں ہندوستان کی آزادی کا خواب دیکھتی تھیں اہل نظر سے یہ باتیں پوشیدہ نہیں کہ ۱۹۰۴ء میں اقبال نے ایک نظم ''ہمارا دیش'' لکھا۔ اقبال نے اس نظم میں کئی تبدیلیاں کر دیں جو آج بھی ترانہ ہندی کی شکل میں موجود ہیں یہ نظم ہندوستان کی شان و شوکت اور اس کی عظمت میں لکھی گئی۔ میں سمجھتا ہوں کہ رابندرناتھ ٹیگور کا گیت جسے قومی گیت کہا جاتا ہے اسی نظم کا حصہ ہے۔ دونوں نظموں کو سامنے رکھیے اور دونوں کے مفہوم کو سمجھیے تو آپ پر روشن ہوگا کہ دونوں شعراء کی تخلیق میں حیرت انگیز مماثلت ہے۔ دونوں محبّ وطن ہیں اور دونوں کی فکر اور شعری جہات میں بہت حد تک مماثلت ہے۔ دونوں کی نظموں میں عمیق خیالات اور شدت جذبات کے عناصر ملتے ہیں دونوں اپنے کارناموں کے لیے ہمہ گیر شہرت کے حامل ہیں گرچہ دونوں کی زبانیں مختلف تھیں۔ واقعات و حالات کے تئیں فکر بھی مختلف۔ باوجود اس کے دونوں نے اپنے فلسفیانہ اساس کے تناظر میں انسانیت کے اعلیٰ قدروں کی جس طرح حمایت کی ہے اس کی نظیر خال خال ملا کرتی ہے۔

ٹیگور ویدانت اور بالخصوص ویشنو فلسفہ کے اسیر تھے۔ متعلقات ٹیگور میں مذہبی اثرات یا ویشنو فلسفہ کی بنیادی اہمیت ہے۔ اس طرح بنیادی سوال یہ پیدا ہوتا ہے کہ کیا واقعی ویشنو فلسفے کے اوصاف نے ہی ساری دنیا کو ٹیگور کا دیوانہ بنائے رکھا۔ ویشنو فلسفہ ہندوستانیوں کے مخصوص فکری تناظر میں ایک مخصوص طبقے کے لیے بلاشبہ انتہائی اہمیت کا حامل ہے۔ لیکن ٹیگور کو پوری دنیا میں جس قدر پذیرائی ملی اور دنیا ان کی جانب متوجہ ہوئی، اس سے خیال پیدا ہوتا ہے کہ دیگر خصوصیات بھی ہوں گی جن میں ساری دنیا نے جذبہ فکری تسکین کی صورت گری محسوس کی ہوگی اور اب بھی محسوس کرتی ہے۔ ٹیگور کی شاعری کے مختلف ادوار پر اگر نظر ڈالی جائے تو ایسا لگتا ہے کہ ویدانت فلسفہ کی کارفرمائی ایسے عناصر کی ہو رہی ہے جو افکار ٹیگور کے پس منظر میں جاری ہے لیکن اس کا پیش منظر بہت سے دیگر عوامل سے مل کر تیار ہوا ہے اس پیش منظر میں خارجی وقوعے تو آتی جاتی لہروں کی طرح شامل ہیں لیکن ان لہروں کے پس پشت ویدانت فلسفہ انسانی اقدار سے ہم آمیز ہو جاتا ہے اور اس کی شاعری ویدانت فلسفے یا ویشنو افکار کی گونج کی بجائے انسان دوستی کی شاعری کے روپ میں سامنے آتی ہے۔ اگر اردو شاعری کے تناظر سے اس کا تقابل کیا جائے تو اس میں ہم اسے متصوفانہ شاعری کا ایک روپ بھی قرار دے سکتے ہیں۔ تصوف مذہب کے جامد نظریات اور طریقۂ کار سے بلند ہو کر عشق و محبت کو اپنا محور بناتا ہے جسے روحانیت، مادی زندگی اور علم و عقل کی لطافتوں کے ارتقاء کا نام دیا جا سکتا ہے۔ وہاں بھی بلاتفریق مذہب و ملت انسان دوستی کو بنیادی اہمیت حاصل ہے۔ ٹیگور کی شاعری میں بھی ویدانت اور ویشنو فلسفے کے باوجود ہر مذہب و ملت کے لیے الفت و محبت کا پیغام ملتا ہے۔ یہی خصوصیت ٹیگور کی تحریروں کو آفاقی بناتی ہے۔ اگر یہ سوال کیا جائے کہ ٹیگور کی عالم گیر قبولیت کو ایک لفظ میں بیان کیا جائے تو وہ لفظ ویدانت یا ویشنو یا مذہبی تناظر رکھنے والے کسی دوسرے لفظ کی بجائے بس لفظ محبت یا انسان دوستی ہی ٹھہرے گا۔ یہی وہ خصوصیت ہے جو ٹیگور کی شاعری کو بلالحاظ مذہب و ملت اور ممالک و اقوام میں مقبول بناتی ہے۔ اس کی وجہ یہ ہے کہ ان کے افکار و خیالات میں ایک نوع کا تدریجی ارتقاء ہے۔ ارتقاء کا یہ سفر مذہب سے شروع ہو کر انسان دوستی تک پہنچا ہے۔ ابتدائی دور میں ان کے یہاں مذہب کا غلبہ تھا لیکن بعد کی شاعری میں مذہب تہذیبی اور ثقافتی تناظر میں ایک پس منظر کا کام کرتا ہے۔ ٹیگور بچپن کے زمانے میں تنہائی کا شکار ہو کر کھڑکی سے فطرت کے مناظر کو دیکھا کرتے تھے۔ ذرا بڑے ہوئے تو والد کے ساتھ ہمالہ کی سیر کو گئے۔ مہینوں کے اس سفر نے ٹیگور کے وجدان کو متاثر کیا اور مناظر فطرت میں آگے چل کر فکر اور فلسفے کی آمیزش ہونے لگی۔ ''صبح کی نظمیں'' اور ''شام کے گیت'' تو ان کے دو ایسے مجموعے ہیں جن میں فطرت کی روح آبسی ہے۔ مناظر فطرت میں فلسفے کی آمیزش بھی ان کی شاعری کی آخری منزل نہیں۔ یہ فلسفیانہ جہتوں سے گزرتے ہوئے انسان دوستی تک جا پہنچتے ہیں۔

ٹیگور اور اقبال فطرت کے حسن اور انسانیت سے خوب محبت کرتے ہیں۔ جس کا اظہار یوں کیا ہے۔

''میں نے اپنے دل کی گہرائیوں میں انسانوں سے محبت کی ہے اس تصور نے میرے
کشتئ حیات کے بادبانوں میں خوشگوار دباؤ کی طرح حدت پیدا کی ہے۔ بادبان نے
کبھی ادھر اور کبھی ادھر رخ موڑا ہے تاہم یہ موج کسی تصنیف کی حد بندیوں سے بالا
رہا ہے''۔ (پرباشی چیت)

اس سلسلے میں اقبال نے تو یہاں تک کہہ دیا کہ

دھرتی کے باسیوں کی مکتی پریت میں ہے

اور جب اقبال کے یہاں حب الوطنی کا جذبہ شدت اختیار کرتا ہے تو وہ خاک وطن کے ہر ذرے کو اپنا دیوتا ماننے کو تیار ہو جاتے ہیں اور بعد میں ''سارے جہاں سے اچھا ہندوستاں ہمارا'' جیسا قومی ترانہ لکھتے ہیں۔

ٹیگور بنیادی طور پر ایک شاعر تھے اور ساری زندگی شاعر ہی رہے ان کی شاعری میں شدت جذبات کے ساتھ ساتھ موسیقیت کا حسین امتزاج ملتا ہے اقبال ان کے برعکس تھے وہ اپنی شاعری کے ذریعہ پیغمبری کا کام کرتے ہیں اس سلسلے میں ڈاکٹر رفیق ذکریا کا اقتباس نقل کیا جا سکتا ہے۔

''ٹیگور نے انسان میں رومان کو دریافت کیا، اقبال نے جاں بازی و جاں نثاری کو۔ ٹیگور نے نسوانی حسن کی تشریح کی، اقبال نے مردانہ شجاعت کی۔ ٹیگور کی شاعری میں موسیقیت ہے، اقبال کی شاعری میں انسیت۔ ٹیگور ہمیشہ باعمل رہے اور اقبال پرسکون''

ٹیگور اور اقبال زمانے کی سماجی اور سیاسی صورت حال سے متاثر ہوئے گرچہ دونوں نے نئی نسل تک پہنچنے کے مختلف راستے چنے لیکن دونوں شعراء نے اپنی اپنی زبان کے ادب کو مالا مال کیا۔ ٹیگور کی آواز اقبال کے شعری مزاج سے بہت حد تک مطابقت رکھتی ہے۔ ٹیگور اگر فطرت کے حسن کے شیدا ہیں تو اقبال اس کے اسیر نظر آتے ہیں۔ اقبال کی شاعری میں حب الوطنی کا جذبہ کارفرما ہے تو ٹیگور کے یہاں بھی ان باتوں کو شدت کے ساتھ محسوس کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ اس طرح کی نظمیں ان کے مجموعہ ''نو ودیا'' میں شامل ہیں۔

اقبال کے یہاں بھی اس فلسفہ کو محسوس کیا جا سکتا ہے بلکہ اقبال حرکت و عمل کو زندگی کا جز بتاتے ہیں بطور نمونہ اشعار پیش کر رہا ہوں۔

جنبش سے ہے زندگی جہاں کی

یہ رسم قدیم ہے یہاں کی

ثبات ایک تغیر کو ہے زمانے میں

سکوں محال ہے قدرت کے کارخانے میں

ٹیگور اور اقبال فطرت کے حسن اور انسانیت سے خوب محبت کرتے ہیں جس کا اظہار یوں کیا ہے۔

ٹیگور اور اقبال دونوں ایک ہی عہد اور ایک ہی طرح کے مسائل سے نبرد آزما تھے ظاہر ہے کہ ایک دوسرے کے دلوں میں احترام و عزت ہونا لازمی جز ہیں۔ ٹیگور خود اقبال کے ایک دوست عباس علی خاں کو مخاطب کرتے ہوئے ایک خط میں یوں لکھتے ہیں۔

مجھے اس بات سے دلی مسرت ہوئی کہ آپ نے میری اور عظیم شاعر سر محمد اقبال کی شاعری میں گہرا ربط پایا۔ مجھے اس بات سے اکثر کافی تکلیف پہنچی ہے کہ ناقدوں کا ایک گروہ تقابلی اساس پر میری اور سر محمد اقبال کی ادبی خدمات کے درمیان غلط فہمی پیدا کرنے کی کوشش کر رہا ہے۔ ادب کے تئیں یہ ایک غلط رویہ ہے مجھے یقین ہے کہ میں اور سر محمد اقبال دونوں ادب میں صداقت اور حسن کی تلاش پر مامور دوست ہیں اور ایک ایسے مقام پر ہماری ملاقات ہوتی ہے جہاں انسانی ذہن آدم ابدی کے حضور میں اپنے بہترین نذرانے پیش کرتا ہے۔

(عباس علی خاں کے نام ۷،فروری ۱۹۳۳ء)

ٹیگور کا خیال ہے کہ

اپنی ہی خوشی سے اے خدا تو نے مجھے غیر فانی بنایا ہے میرے فانی جسم کو تم بے شمار مرتبہ
مٹا کر ہی اسے نئی زندگی سے سرفراز کرتے ہو۔

تو اقبال "بالِ جبریل" میں اسی خیال کو یوں پیش کرتے ہیں

یہ نکتہ میں نے سیکھا بوالحسن سے
کہ جاں مرتی نہیں مرگ بدن سے
چمک سورج میں کیا باقی رہے گی
اگر بے زار ہو اپنی کرن سے

دونوں شعراء کے یہاں فلسفۂ حیات کا جائزہ لیا جائے تو کہا جا سکتا ہے کہ ٹیگور اور اقبال کے یہاں فکر ایک ہی طرح ہے سوچنے کا انداز بھی ایک ہی طرح ہے۔ ٹیگور اور اقبال کی شخصیت اور نظامِ فکر کے نشو و نما میں جو تیں جذبہ محرک کے طور پر کام کر رہی ہیں ان میں سب سے اہم قوت بنی نوع انسان سے محبت ہے یا انسانوں کے مسائل سے گہری دلچسپی ہے۔ ہر اہم اور معتبر فنکار کی طرح ٹیگور اور اقبال کی فکر اور درد مندی کا مرکز و نظر انسان کی ذات ہی رہی ہے۔ ٹیگور اور اقبال حیاتِ انسانی، اسی کے حال اور مستقبل سے گہری دلچسپی رکھتے تھے۔ انسان کی ذات سے یہ تعلق خاطر، وطن اور اس کی آزادی کے بارے میں ان کے رویے پر بھی خوب اثر انداز ہوئے یہی وہ بنیادی امتیاز ہے جو ٹیگور اور اقبال کے بعض معاصرین چکبست، سیماب اور جوش جیسے شعراء کی حب الوطنی اور مسلک آزادی کے درمیان ایک حد فاصل کھینچتے ہیں یہاں ہمیں دوسرے پہلوؤں پر بھی غور کرنے کی ضرورت ہے کہ دونوں شعراء کے بیشتر معاصرین اپنے عہد کی سیاسی قوتوں، نظریوں سے ہی ذہنی غذا، ہمت، جوش اور ولولہ حاصل کرتے رہے جبکہ ٹیگور اور اقبال ان شعراء سے بلند ہو کر اپنے معاصرین کو راہ دکھانے کی کوشش کرتے رہے دراصل ٹیگور اور اقبال کو ایسے محرکات اور مقاصد کی تلاش تھی جو انسان کی عملی قوتوں کو دائمی حرارت بخش سکیں۔ وطن اور اہلِ وطن سے والہانہ محبت کا وہ جذبہ جو دونوں شعراء کی ابتدائی نظموں میں پوری قوت کے ساتھ سامنے کر سامنے ابھر کر آتا ہے

بالخصوص اقبال کے یہاں وجود آدم سے ان کے تعلق خاطر گری سے پگھل کر جستہ جستہ نئے سانچوں میں ڈھلتا چلا جاتا ہے۔ علم و آگہی کے نئے سرچشموں نے حب الوطنی کے جذبے کو نئی منزلوں سے آشنا کیا لیکن یہ بات نشان خاطر ہے کہ اس سفر میں ٹیگور اور اقبال دنیا کے مظلوم اور محکوم انسانوں کی فلاح سے لمحہ بھر کے لیے بھی اوجھل نہیں ہوئے۔بعض افراد کا خیال ہے کہ اقبال وطن کے تصور سے منکر تھے جو غلط ہے۔ وہ عام ہندوستانیوں کی طرح اپنے وطن سے بے انتہا محبت کرتے تھے۔ ہندوستانیوں کے دکھ، درد، ان کی صعوبتوں، ان کی غلامی سے دکھی تھے جس کا اظہار انہوں نے اپنے ابتدائی دور کے کلام میں جسے حب الوطنی کی روح کہا جا سکتا ہے ملک کی غلامی کا احساس تھا۔ تصویر درد کے یہ اشعار میری بات کی تائید کرتے ہیں۔

رلاتا ہے ترا نظارہ اے ہندوستاں! مجھ کو

کہ عبرت خیز ہے تیرا فسانہ سب فسانوں میں

دیا رونا مجھے ایسا کہ سب کچھ دے دیا گویا

لکھا کلکِ ازل نے مجھ کو تیرے نوحہ خوانوں میں

نشانِ برگِ گل تک بھی نہ چھوڑ اس باغ میں گلچیں!

تری قسمت سے رزم آرائیاں ہیں باغبانوں میں

ان اشعار میں دلسوزی، دردمندی سے اندازہ لگایا جا سکتا ہے کہ اقبال اپنی زندگی کے آخری ایام میں اس دولت بیدار سے ہرگز محروم نہیں تھے وہ فرقہ پرست قوتوں کے بڑھتے ہوئے قدم سے دکھی تھے۔ وطن سے گہری محبت کا ایک ثبوت وہ خطبہ وصدارت ہے جو ۱۹۳۰ء میں مسلم لیگ کے الہ آباد کے اجلاس میں دیا تھا۔ اس خطبہ میں اقبال نے سماجی مفکر کی حیثیت سے اپنے عہد کے ہندوستان کے پیچیدہ مسائل کے پیش نظر جن بنیادی اصولوں کی بات کی تھی اس کی آج بھی اہمیت اسی طرح ہے۔

رابندر ناتھ ٹیگور انسانی تعلقات کے شاعر ہیں۔ ان کے اشعار میں لامحدود فضا کا احساس ہوتا ہے۔ وہ اپنی روح کی نغمگی کو فطرت اور فضا کے ترنم سے ہم آہنگ کر دینے میں کامیاب ہو گئے ہیں۔ یہ فضائی احساس انگریزی کے مشہور شاعر ورڈز ورتھ اور اردو کے فراق کے ہاں ملتا ہے۔ ٹیگور کے یہاں یہ احساس زیادہ گہرا، رچا ہوا اور معنی خیز ہے۔ ٹیگور اپنے طور پر اس حقیقت کو محسوس کرتے ہیں اور اسے اپنے مزاج میں سمونے میں کامیاب ہو گئے ہیں۔ ایسا اس لیے ہے کہ ٹیگور کے پیچھے ایک بڑی تہذیب بھی ہے جو ان کے نغموں کی کشش و توانائی کو مزید قوت بخشتی ہے۔ ان کے نغموں میں عمر کی پختگی، بیداری اور آگہی کو محسوس کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ دراصل اجتماعی زندگی کے انقلابات احساس کی بنیاد میں بلاشبہ تبدیلی کا موجب بنتے رہتے ہیں جس کے معنی ہیں جذبات کی تہیں، ان کی آوازیں، ان کی موسیقی اور ان کی کیفیت غرض کہ ہر چیز بدلتی رہتی ہے۔ ٹیگور نے اپنے آفاق گیر وجدان کے سہارے اپنی منزلیں آسانی سے طے کر لیں۔ یہ دلیل بے

معنی بھی نہیں کہ ٹیگور کے جذباتی ردعمل اور ان کے فکری عمل میں ایک نوع کی طرفگی اور پہلوداری ہے جو ان کے معاصرین کے یہاں تقریباً مفقود ہے۔

احساس کی شدت ٹیگور کو انسان دوست بناتی ہے۔ یہ احساس اگرچہ ایک فرد کا ہے لیکن معاشرے اور سماج کا زائیدہ اور پروردہ بھی اور اس سے وابستہ بھی۔ ٹیگور کے اس انفرادی احساس میں پورا معاشرہ، بلکہ پوری انسانی تاریخ سمائی ہوئی نظر آتی ہے۔ اس تاریخ میں الہٰیات کا تصور بھی ہے اور عبدیت کا زمزمہ بھی۔ اس زمرے میں پوری کائنات اور اس کے جذبات اپنے اپنے طور پر شریک ہوتے رہتے ہیں۔ تاہم ان تمام زمرے میں مقام عبدیت کی شناخت اور عبد و معبود کے رشتے کی اہمیت اپنی جگہ مسلم ہے۔ لیکن اس رشتے میں مرکزی جہت انسان ہی کو حاصل ہے۔ رابندر ناتھ ٹیگور کی شاعری کی سب سے بڑی خصوصیت یہ ہے کہ وہ عام انسانوں کے قریب نظر آتے ہیں۔ عام انسانوں کے مسائل کو سمجھتے ہیں اور اسے اپنی شاعری کا جز بنا کر پیش کرتے ہیں۔

ٹیگور محض شاعر نہیں بلکہ کائنات کے مسائل اور اس کی گتھیوں سے جو ہمارے اردگرد پھیلی ہوئی ہیں، اس سے بخوبی واقف تھے۔ وہ انسانی کیفیات کا عرفان بخشنے کے ساتھ ہی نئی زندگی، نئی قدروں اور نئے شعور کی پرچھائیاں بھی دکھاتے ہیں۔ دراصل کائنات ٹیگور کی نگاہ میں ایک سوالیہ نشان ہے۔ وہ اس کے غم اور مسرت، اس کے آدرش اور اس کی تاریخ سے آگاہی بھی رکھتے ہیں۔ وقت کے ساتھ ساتھ ٹیگور کی انسان دوستی مزید نکھر کر سامنے آتی ہے۔ چنانچہ ان کے شعری مجموعہ ''نو ودیا'' میں یہ شعور مزید پختہ ہوتا ہوا نظر آتا ہے۔ یہ وہ زمانہ ہے جب ہندوستان انگریزوں کی سیاست کا شکار ہو رہا تھا۔ سیاسی اتھل پتھل نے شاعر کو پریشان کر رکھا تھا ہندوستان کی یہ حالت زار ٹیگور کو آنسو بہانے پر مجبور کرتی ہے۔

گیتا نجلی کے خالق رابندر ناتھ ٹیگور نے زندگی جینا سیکھا تھا۔ غریبوں، بے کسوں اور یتیموں پر دست شفقت رکھا تھا۔ دنیا میں کوئی ایسا نظر نہیں آتا جس نے اپنی زندگی میں پریشانی کا سامنا نہیں کیا ہو۔ اگر وہ تخلیق کار ہے اور سچا تخلیق کار ہے تو اس کی تخلیق میں یہ تمام باتیں لاشعوری طور پر درآتی ہیں۔ یہی وجہ ہے کہ ٹیگور کے یہاں بھی کبھی کبھی ناامیدی، اداسی اور افسردگی کا بسیرا ہوتا ہے۔ اس کا اعتراف انہوں نے ان الفاظ میں کیا ہے :

''زندگی میں ایسا وقت بھی آیا جب پے در پے رنج و غم سے نڈھال ہو کر ایسا محسوس ہوا تھا کہ زندگی کا سب کام پورا ہو چکا ہے، اور اب میں ایک چراغ سحری ہوں۔ اب ایشور کا نام جپنے کے دن ہیں لہٰذا اسکون قلب اور ابدی امن کی منزل کی تلاش کرنا ہی واحد کام ہے''

غرض کہ ٹیگور اور اقبال کے فلسفہ کو آج لوگ اپنے جلو میں نئے معنی لیے ہوئے لفظوں کو استعمال کرنے میں فخر محسوس کرتے ہیں۔ بعض نقادوں نے ٹیگور اور اقبال پر مختلف قسم کے لیبل چسپاں کرنے کی کوششیں کیں۔ ایسا کرتے ہوئے ٹیگور اور اقبال کی شاعری موضوع بحث نہیں بنی بلکہ دونوں کا فلسفہ، پیام، تصوف یا دوسری زبانوں کے شعراء یا ادبا کے ساتھ ان کا تقابلی جائزہ لیا جس سے دونوں کی شعری خوبیوں کو پس پشت ڈال دی گئیں۔ میرا خیال ہے کہ ٹیگور اور اقبال کا تعلق مندر کے اس پجاری کی طرح ہرگز نہیں ہے جو اپنے دیوتاؤں پر صبح شام عقیدت کے پھول چڑھاتا ہے۔ ٹیگور ہوں یا اقبال دونوں نے تشبیہ کی ندرت اور استعارے کی مدد سے اپنی شاعری میں ایک کیفیت، موسیقی اور آہنگ پیدا کرنے کی کوشش کی۔ لہذا یہ بات پائے ثبوت کو پہنچتی ہے کہ ٹیگور اور اقبال کی شاعری میں کوئی بھی فلسفہ ہو، معمولی یا غیر معمولی، وہ ہماری محسوسات کا جز بن جاتے ہیں اور یہی وہ محسوسات ہیں جو دونوں کی شاعری کو معراج عطا کرتی ہیں۔

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