Media, the State and Marginalisation
Media, the State and Marginalisation:

_Tackling Challenges_

Edited by
Rachna Sharma

Cambridge Scholars Publishing
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From rudimentary technology to the world of convergence, from a missionary zeal to a profit-making corporatised business, from editorial supremacy to marketing domination, from objectivity to outright propaganda, from regular employment to contract labour, from hawker sales to apps on mobile phones, from drawing rooms to bedrooms and even boardrooms, from the days of *Lifafa* journalism to paid news and private treaties, the media has witnessed phenomenal changes over the past few decades.

Perhaps no other industry (if one may use the term) has undergone so much change, not just in terms of technology, but also style, content, language and even ethics. This is not to undermine the media’s contribution towards evolving a mature and enlightened democracy. Over the years, it has taken on the high and the mighty, exposed crime and corruption in high places and penetrated remote and far-flung areas. Yet, would it be credible to state that it has become the voice of the voiceless?

In the quest for sustainability, has the media lost its way somewhere in the labyrinth of profiteering? Has it become a commodity? Are its priorities vis-à-vis the challenges of a developing country misplaced? Has it unwittingly become a tool in the hands of the very powerful elite it is supposed to confront?

It is also interesting to note that while the world over print media is on the back foot thanks to ever-evolving new media technology, where the simple smart phone is fast replacing not just cameras but also trained media persons and thereby ushering on board a whole new generation of citizen journalists, back in the world’s second-most populated country, newspapers are flourishing thanks to a sizeable chunk of neo-literates who look at them more as a symbol of empowerment. More and more people prefer to watch, hear and read news in their mother tongue, thereby giving an unprecedented boost to language media.

With the race on for grabbing attention, sensationalism is no longer an exception but the new norm. Spit and run has also become a regular feature with little respect for any code of conduct. For some, freedom of speech and expression has become synonymous with a licence to tarnish at will reputations of individuals and institutions with no moral compunctions whatsoever.
There is also growing concern over the polarisation of the media on political and ideological lines. Neutrality has become the casualty as rhetorical debates have overtaken substantive discussions and the newsroom has been turned into the new battleground for ideologies rather than new ideas.

The language of the media has also undergone a sea change not just in terms of grammar and literary aspects but also the tone and tenor. Aggression has become the new language with even anchors turning often into activists. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to say that activism is fast replacing journalism.

A comprehensive volume which looks into many of these contemporary trends and aspects was the need of the hour. Such efforts are required as part of the much-needed introspection the media has to undergo as the fourth pillar of democracy.

Communication has become an integral part of governance and the media cannot afford to ignore its fundamental role serving as a bridge between the downtrodden and marginalised sections of society and those at the helm of power.

I am glad that at the academic level, this volume has also looked into how slowly, but steadily, aspects of mass communication have entered the centre stage of sociology and political science over the last two decades. Any study of social and political processes of different democracies is inconceivable without taking into account not just institutions of social and political intermediation like political parties, interest organisations, and social movements, but also the media of mass communication.

The ultimate aim of the media is to empower people, as the information disseminated by the media helps and enables people to make enlightened decisions for the betterment of their lives. The significance of the media as a pivotal force for the overall socio-cultural and political development in a democratic set up has been effectively put across in this volume and would serve as a constant reminder to all media persons of their original mandate.

New Media and Digital Activism have been explained in this book with all their pros and cons. How for education, training and development New Media is a potent and less expensive source and how hashtag journalism has helped mobilise people’s attention to the issues related to women and other marginalised sections of society both make for interesting reading.

The misrepresentation and commodification of women in the media, be it cinema, television, print and even advertisements or endorsements have also been discussed in detail commendably, along with contemporary debates such as portrayal of LGBT identity and sexuality.
The media’s role in obliterating the sense of alienation among the people of Northeast India has the potential to change the dynamics in the region, which has the capacity to be a catalyst in India’s development story.

The book also talks about the institutional efforts in science communication to inculcate a scientific temperament among marginalised sections of the society. Scientific temperament indicates an inquisitive mind and enquiring attitude that incorporates not only logic but analytical approaches too. This scientific orientation can be helpful in many ways, hence the role and responsibilities of the media in developing this approach and raising public awareness on various science and technology-related issues. Government programmes are of prime importance to facilitate this.

The diverse concepts and perspectives throwing light on the nuances of the media world have been critically interpreted by eminent scholars not only from the field of media and communication but also from political science and sociology. This lends more credibility and authenticity to the volume.

All in all, a must read for not just media professionals, academicians, scholars and students but also for policy makers and people who wish to understand the functioning of the world’s largest democracy.

October 2, 2017
New Delhi

K G Suresh
Director General, IIMC
PREFACE

Media works not only as a watchdog of any society, but has always been seen as an influence on socio-cultural and political systems in the society. Where traditional media has been influential in connecting state, civil society and citizenry, new media is looked at with great hope to shape the young democracy with inclusive growth. Nevertheless, over the last few decades, the role of media in democratic governance has been debated for its biased representation of certain classes and lack of representation of the marginalised.

Interestingly, the relationship between the media, the state and other factors has been seen both as having the potential to tackle the challenges of all sorts of inequalities—such as caste-based, religion-based, etc.—that keep the weaker sections of society at the margins, and at the same time creating a nexus to keep the marginalised away from the mainstream. Academic debates on media and governance, thus, indicate the influence of political elites, interest groups and economic powers in the performance of media outlets and journalists. At the same time, there are the scholars who celebrate the media, particularly, for playing a positive role through investigative journalism and digital platforms in articulating social mobilisation, inclusive governance with participation of all. In this context, the country could be seen as a rich laboratory for exploring the links between the media and the power structures of the society. To explore this relationship; the changing nature of the governments, the media, the public as well as the marginalised groups; and, the question of participation and inclusion of all sections of mainstream society, a National Seminar on the theme of Media, State and the Marginalised: Tackling Challenges was hosted by the Department of Journalism, Kalindi College, University of Delhi in March 2016. This book is a post-seminar volume of selected papers presented at the seminar. The book presents the issues of the media processes and relationships between the media, state and the marginalised sections of society from both a comparative and an interdisciplinary perspective. Through bringing together the academics, media and the general public from across the country, the book offers the significant findings in relation to the following concerns:
The patterns of governance shaping media systems
Media reforms strengthening democratic governance
The extent to which public and private media reproduce populist and polarising discourses
The extent to which digital media challenges traditional information flows
The patterns emerging from the relationship between the state, civil society and the media (public and private)

Drawing upon these key issues, the book aims to investigate the aspects of the relationship between the media, the state and the marginalised in the country:

Firstly, the mediatisation and personalisation of politics; political and media populism; digital media and political mobilisation and locating the issues of marginalised sections of the society in the whole process. Secondly, comparing public media services; comparing media markets; comparing journalistic cultures; and comparing regulatory frameworks to arrive at an inclusive media environment which may lead us towards tackling the challenge of the marginalised. Also, the issue of media and governance revolving around investigative journalism; media accountability and media reforms; questions of authority and control by the state, communication and global change in connection with the mainstreaming of the marginalised groups so that participation of all in the democracy and governance may be ensured.

To delve into these issues, the deliberations have been made on and around all the key components of the media, the state and the marginalised; and all the relevant aspects of media studies, including media technologies, media content and media actors have been critically examined. Accordingly, the following are the broad sub-themes studied in the book:

Media and Political Communication
Representation of the Marginalised and Media Ethics
Journalism and Socio-cultural Representations
New Media, Social Media and Digital Activism
Alternative and Community Media
The Marginalised Media
Critical Theory and Media Criticism
Media Reforms and Issues of the Marginalised
This book brings before you diverse thoughts and different perspectives related to the varied issues, to allow you to see the dynamics surrounding media, state and the marginalised, which complete the understanding towards the everyday socio-political process as a whole. Eminent scholars from the field of media and communication, political science and sociology along with media practitioners and social activists from across the country have contributed their work to this book. Therefore, it would serve as a rich source of not only the contemporary empirical studies and quantitative analysis but also the qualitative assessment of the system engaging the government and the media as the social institution working towards inclusion and mainstreaming of the marginalised sections of Indian society.

I hope this book will be of interest to academicians, scholars and students of applied social sciences, especially in the fields of media studies, political science, and sociology. The book will also benefit media practitioners working in the media industry along with general readers. I am also hopeful that the book will equally prove to be a document for governments to use for policy formulation and reforms (by introducing, debating and interacting on the issues and causes highlighted in the book as well as commissioning the suggested measures given in the chapters) to bring together all the sections of society.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Media, State and the Marginalisation: Tackling Challenges was a long-awaited seminar, bringing all together at one forum to deliberate upon the topic. Looking at the gravity of the subject matter, the seminar was held at Kalindi College, University of Delhi in March 2016. The College provided all possible institutional support for the seminar and the University Grant Commission, New Delhi enabled the seminar with a generous grant. Academicians, media practitioners, research scholars, and eminent persons working in various governmental and non-governmental sectors came together to discuss the changing nature and relationship between the media and the governing system in India and how to deal with the dynamics between them. The contributors to this seminar presented their papers, and some selected papers were edited for this volume. I thank the contributors for their prompt cooperation and patience since I took a comparatively longer time to edit the book.

Veteran Journalist Padmashri Shri Jawaharlal Kaul and Vice Chancellor of Kushabhau Thakare University of Journalism and Mass Communication, Prof. M S Parmar extended their unconditional support. Eminent personalities and Senior TV Journalists, Mr. N K Singh and Ms. Alka Saxena shared their experiences and shed light on a fresh impetus to achieve the set objectives of the seminar. The professional friends who provided boosts in morale include Mr. Ashok Srivastava, News Anchor, DD News and Aditi Tondon, Special Correspondent, The Tribune, New Delhi. As always, my mentor Prof. Sushma Gandhi, Amity School of Communication (ASCo), Amity University (Haryana) blessed me for the success of this gigantic task.

Right from the conceptualisation of the topic, my senior colleagues, specially Dr. Sunita and Dr. Nivedita Giri from the Department of Political Science, Kalindi College offered the much-needed academic advice throughout the process. It would have been a tiresome exercise had my students not been there. Nisha Dagar, Oishani Mozumdar, Diksha Singh, Princy Pal, and Neha Rani Patel were a source of energy during the seminar. I am thankful to all of them and all other friends who work as faculty members and students in various departments at Kalindi College whose names are not mentioned here. From outside the University, old colleagues from academia, my seniors and well-wishers Prof. Ambrish
Saxena and Dr. Sarvesh Dutt Tripathi were always there to offer support for a rightful cause. I owe the timely publication of the book to my friend Dr. Madhushree Chatterjee, who took out time from her extremely busy schedule to review the work.

This book could have not been written without the generous support from Dr. Suman Sharma, Principal, Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi. Being the organisation head of my current institution, she is the beacon of intellectual thinking, academic experience and full of encouragement for all and I am not an exception. It is the supportive environment of the Institution built by her that allows us to achieve our goals well set in time. I received support from my Departmental Head, Dr. Vartika Nanda, in a similar vein. I thank her for all the positivity and I find myself fortunate to be a part of the Journalism Department of Lady Shri Ram College.

Although it took me more than a year to produce the book, my thoughts on the media, governance, polity, and their relations with the marginalised sections of the society have been developing over a much longer period. Thanks to my husband, Ravi Tripathi, my brother-in-law, Mr. Laurent Triponey and my sister Ms. Sonal Sharma who helped me to develop my thoughts on the subject through foundational debates, discussions, deliberations and critical rounds of conversations related to socio-political perspectives on the theme. They encouraged me and provided all possible support to develop this book. My five-year-old son, Rudra Priya Tripathi deserves more than a thank you since he let me take a huge amount of time credited to him.

Finally, I want to dedicate this book to the memory of my late father, Shri Suresh Chand Sharma who was there with me to help me during the initial draft of the book. He was always an inspiration and contributed his share for the mainstreaming of the marginalised through supporting people in need always, without any publicity. He is and will remain an inspiration for all of us for the difference he made in our lives.

More generally, I would like to acknowledge the institutional support of the Kalindi College, University of Delhi, for when my thoughts on media, state and the marginalised were starting to come together, I was based in the Department of Journalism at Kalindi College. I thank Dr. Anula Maurya, Principal, Kalindi College.

I want to thank Cambridge Scholars Publishing for having accepted the proposal and the support, feedback and encouragement they gave me throughout the preparation of this book. Thanks to Victoria Carruthers, Theo Moxham, Helen Cryer and Adam Rummens for the patience in dealing with my numerous printing requests, and to Dr. Rose Norman who
helped me in the editing of the book. I am grateful to Mr. K. G. Suresh, Director General, Indian Institute of Mass Communication who took time to read parts of the book in draft form and consented to write the Foreword for it.

With the great sense of gratitude to everyone instrumental in helping me to bring out this book with a different perspective to that generally seen in academia, I hope that the book will be of considerable interest to fellow academics in my field. Equally, it will benefit media practitioners in filling the gaps to achieve an inclusive society through endorsing desired practices. It will also benefit governments in increasing knowledge of the fallouts and giving suggestions for tackling the challenges in mainstreaming the marginalised through cohesive work between the government and the media and including suggested measures in policy reforms. Several people and institutions have made this book possible. Nevertheless, I take the sole responsibility for any criticism that derives from its reading. I welcome the readers and thank them in advance for their valuable response on reading the book.

Rachna Sharma
# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
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<tr>
<td>AAGSP</td>
<td>All Assam <em>Gan Sangram Parishad</em></td>
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<td>AAP</td>
<td><em>Aam Aadmi</em> Party</td>
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<td>AASU</td>
<td>All Assam State Union</td>
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<td>AFSPA</td>
<td>Armed Forces Special Powers Act</td>
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<td>AICC</td>
<td>All India Congress Committee</td>
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<td>ASSOCHAM</td>
<td>Associated Chambers of Commerce of India</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCCL</td>
<td>Bennett Coleman &amp; Company Limited</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCG-CII</td>
<td>Boston Consulting Group-Confederation of Indian Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>BJGVJ</td>
<td><em>Bharat Jan Gyan Vigyan Jatha</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>BJP</td>
<td><em>Bharatiya Janata Party</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>BJVJ</td>
<td><em>Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>BRIC</td>
<td>Brazil, Russia, India and China</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBCI</td>
<td>Catholic Bishop’s Conference of India</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBI</td>
<td>Central Bureau of Investigation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Critical Discourse Analysis</td>
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<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>CII</td>
<td>Confederation of Indian Industry</td>
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<td>CRG</td>
<td>Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group</td>
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<td>C4D</td>
<td>Communication for Development</td>
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<td>DB</td>
<td><em>Dainik Bhaskar</em></td>
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<td>DJ</td>
<td><em>Dainik Jagran</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food &amp; Agriculture Organisation</td>
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<td>FMCG</td>
<td>Fast Moving Consumer Goods</td>
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<td>FTII</td>
<td>Film and Television Institute of India</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GGA</td>
<td><em>Grameen Gyan Abhiyan</em></td>
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<td>GGGR</td>
<td>Global Gender Gap Report</td>
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<td>GMMP</td>
<td>Global Media Monitoring Project</td>
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<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
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<td>HRD</td>
<td>Human Resource and Development</td>
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<td>HT</td>
<td>Hindustan Times</td>
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<td>IAMAI</td>
<td>Internet and Mobile Association of India</td>
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<td>ICTs</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technologies</td>
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<td>IDI</td>
<td>ICTs Development Index</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<td>TRP</td>
<td>Television Rating Point</td>
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<td>ULFA</td>
<td>United Liberation Front of Assam</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNGPID</td>
<td>United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement</td>
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<td>UNHRC</td>
<td>United Nations Human Rights Council</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>UNLF</td>
<td>United National Liberation Front</td>
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<td>VIPNET</td>
<td>Vigyan Prasar Network of Science Clubs</td>
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<td>VP</td>
<td>Vigyan Prasar</td>
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<tr>
<td>VRCs-VKSs</td>
<td>Village Resource Centres &amp; Village Knowledge Centres</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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INTRODUCTION

RACHNA SHARMA

I. General introduction

The nature of democratic states and their governing systems are changing at a pace. Media as an institution, especially after the advent of new media, has its role to play in the social events (even if not a “social change”) that are taking place in the socio-political arena at present. Today, while observing “movements” on social issues at an increased frequency, with increased participation of the public, the claimed media interventions and the changing role of governments in this triangular relationship, one is compelled to locate the issue of marginalised sections in society. With this objective at centre stage, this book attempts to find out the answers to the following questions: What is meant by “media” in an age of high dependence on media technology? How does the state take a new shape under influence of media technologies as well as shape media through influencing it in a democratic framework? Who are the marginalised in the fluid socio-politico-economic structures? Do they exist in groups? What kind of coverage do they get in the media (if they get any!) towards mainstreaming? To begin with, this chapter maps out the tradition, history and idea of democratic India and also attempts to draw a picture of the relationship between the media, the state and the marginalised as actors in Indian society.

Evolution of the Indian media

In political theories, mass media has been defined in accordance with the political structures of the countries. Thus, normative theories of press talk broadly about four theories—Authoritarian Press; Libertarian Press; Social Responsibility Press; and Socialist Press. Development communication theory and democratic participant theory is a further extension to these press theories given by British scholar Denis McQuail (2010). These theories demarcate the processes of mass communication in terms of the organisational structures of the media, degree of state control of the media
and the types of content the media offer. However, as the world is witnessing increased globalisation, more countries are transforming into liberal economies and democratic systems, and similarly the media is also observing a structural change all over the world and more so in India, where the advent of electronic media is a very new phenomenon, yet is competing or colliding with new digital social media. Interestingly, mass media in India is converging, taking shape on the basis of the requirements of the new set of stakeholders and audiences along with the traditional readers and audiences.

It has been more than a century since the newspaper industry (including the vernacular press) flourished fully in India. The newspapers which were directly established by or with the support of industrialists used to have missionary editorial set-ups until a few years after India gained independence. The press started to grow as conglomerations during the 1950s and 1960s with horizontal expansion in regional media. However, it was yet to see the fully commercial fervour which finally took shape in the 1990s with the “economic liberalisation” in the country after a “nationalist spell” during the period of Emergency. This was the time when private media channels were establishing their markets and experimenting with the content (news and entertainment) upon audiences. The content on all available mass media was “controlled” through the ownership (private or public) since the flow of communication was one-way. Eventually, the content of the electronic media could be classified into two groups—on the one hand, highly informative and specialised content promoting “elitist” interest; on the other hand, the content of some channels was so designed to attract maximum audiences, hence was local, sensational (more generally based on crime, cricket, celebrity) and even promoted superstition. Newspapers, though, are able to maintain their structural sanctity; however, sometimes newspapers encounter tough competition from their electronic counterparts and have been observed to be “under pressure” in terms of their content. Therefore, the mainstream media, over the course of time, was observed to be removed from the issues of governance and particularly the issues of marginalised sections of society in India.

Although community media (newspapers taken out by rural communities, radio operated in remote areas, etc.) was present, it was the “interactive” internet which would bridge the gap between the mainstream and margins. With social media taking up issues of marginalised areas, sections of society and individuals, the state as well as the mainstream media was compelled to bring changes to the blurring structures. As a result, we see the incorporation of more interactivity and participation of
audiences and the public in mass communication processes. Nevertheless, the nature of this interactivity, the participation of the public with the media and the role of the audience as creators of content need closer scrutiny.

**Nature of the Indian state**

As a principle, democracy has remained an integral part of Indian society. The country has been exploited and reigned over by various foreign rulers and later, colonised by the Portuguese, Dutch, French and British empires; however, such a negative atmosphere hardly affected the “basic nature and structure” of Indian society, rather strengthened it as one united nation. For centuries, Indian natives suffered from utter oppression, looting, poverty and ages of darkness, yet came out of all of this as the largest democracy in the world. Fleiner and Basta Fleiner (2009) provide a critical, yet interesting argument about the caste system in India in relation to the nature of the state in historic times:

The caste system and the importance of local communities at the level of the municipalities served also to strengthen an enslaved people against its oppressors. Castes and local communes enabled the strong cohesion necessary to withstand and surmount the injustices suffered. In consequence, the castes cut themselves off from each other and became increasingly self-contained. They established separate jurisdictions and judiciaries for separate castes. These strong structures within a society fragmented by hundreds of different castes meant that, in spite of their cruel reign and in spite of the attempts by Islamic moguls to convert the entire population to Islam, the foreign occupiers controlling the central government remained more or less isolated from the people. They did not govern with the people but rather above the people (445).

Local democratic traditions of India are one of the reasons for this, as also indirectly indicated by B. Moore (1966) in his scholarly work on democracy. The biggest example of the democratic values of Indian tradition is the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, itself. Peace and non-violence based, the Indian National Movement sets an example for the whole world even today. “This revolution had its roots in the Indian philosophy of life (Weltanschauung), which teaches that happiness can only be attained by rising above material desires. The spiritual and independent person cannot easily be seduced by revolutionary ideologies promising material happiness” (Fleiner and Basta Fleiner 2009, 360).
The same values find a written form and currency in the Indian Constitution. Meticulously written with precision, the Indian Constitution embraces the idea and soul of democracy not only found in Indian tradition but advocated by great political thinkers the world over. The very virtue of equality comes therein with the declaration of India as a “Sovereign State.” As Aristotle states (book IV, 1291b):

Of forms of democracy first comes that which is said to be based strictly on equality. In such a democracy the law says that it is just for the poor to have no more advantage than the rich; and that neither should be masters, but both equal. For if liberty and equality, as is thought by some, are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost. And since the people are the majority, and the opinion of the majority is decisive, such a government must necessarily be a democracy.

Yet, cautious about the ills of “absolute power,” India as a state imbibed the federal system with decentralization of power. With a President as the supreme head, the composition of the Lok Sabha (Lower House) as “House of People” and Rajya Sabha (Upper House) as “Council of States” in Parliament clearly maintains this balance, where the Prime Minister as the head has to keep the trust of the Lower House and the consent of both the Houses in legislative processes. The Union and State list stated in the Constitution demarcate all the responsibilities and powers therefore given to the union and states. Decentralisation as a core value of democracy was advocated by Mahatma Gandhi time and again, as also preached by Rousseau who believed in “small republic” to “give effect to the will of the people” (Fleiner and Basta Fleiner 2009, 371). The concept of “checks and balance of power” can be stated as another example of the democratic principle of the Indian state. The Indian Constitution confers the judiciary with paramount authority in relation to the matter of legal justice as well as interpretation of the Constitution. “The factual weight of the judiciary is related to the strong legal consciousness rooted in Indian society, which was developed through the caste system. The courts in India occupy a similarly important role as the courts enjoy for instance in the United States” (Fleiner and Basta Fleiner 2009, 445). Remarkably, from Pan-Indian Unity and unbreakable national identity to decentralisation of powers from centre to state, the Indian Constitution not only provides equality but also offers space for “positive discrimination” to accommodate the weaker sections of society, more prominently through state policy of Directive Principles. The Indian Constitution focuses fully on the protection of individual rights and liberty.
in the greatest possible manner. Universal Adult Franchise is one of the instances that depicts the democratic spirit of India ahead of even some of the developed nations of the world, as it was marked at the time of constitution-making while some of the European countries were witnessing the movement for the right to vote for all. Provisions given under Fundamental Rights within the Constitution present an exhaustive list of all individual freedoms and liberties.

This is the reason the Indian democratic system is still sustainable against the odds and amidst spells of crisis, unlike her neighbouring countries. By comparing the Indian state with that of Japan, Fleiner and Basta Fleiner (2009) tell how, unlike the traditional institution of the imperial family (in Japan), the Indian Constitution provides for a strong democratic frame. To quote them further:

The President appoints the Prime Minister, serves as guardian of the Constitution and declares emergencies. However, the long-standing predominance of the Congress Party hindered the President in the exercise of his constitutional powers. The political conditions led in fact to a centralisation of the power of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, even though in this longest constitution in the world (more than 300 articles) only two articles mention the Prime Minister (445).

India also suffers from some glitches and odds which test her strength as a democracy, from time to time. We cannot deny the fact that a few politically powerful families have been ruling the “democratic Indian state” traditionally, against the very conscience of democracy. Similarly, various pressure groups that could have strengthened democracy in body and soul, have been observed liaising for votes for political parties. The issues of minorities can be taken here as an example. The question of the rights, protection and inclusion of minorities only come to the light when political implications were attached to them. More profoundly, they were mostly used as a vehicle to fetch maximum votes from certain sections of society; when on the contrary, they should have been provided with opportunities to participate in direct governance along with the political process on equal and fair grounds. This is one of the reasons that marginalised groups, with a low mandate or individual count, generally do not account for various political parties while going into elections and preparing manifestos, which again, goes against the principle of “one person, one vote,” in the absence of any weightage given to the individual vote count. Sociologist Patrick Heller (2012) suggests for “the formation of citizens rather than the formation of classes” to nourish the democracy and argues, “To understand that if any virtuous linkage might exist or
emerge between subordinate class politics and economically and socially just outcomes, we need to focus more specifically on the conditions and possibilities for the effective practice of democratic politics” (645).

**Who are the marginalised—whether they exist or not?**

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines marginalised as one who is “relegate[d] to an unimportant or powerless position within a society or group.” This definition seems to be based on political participation as a criterion. However, before participation in political processes, the issue is (a lack) of “reach and access” to resources—prominently social and economic—which in turn lead to political “reach and access” and hence, participation. The combined perspective can be found in the definition of marginalised given by Colin Harvey and Stephen Livingstone (2000) when they say, “By the term ‘marginalised individuals and minorities’ we mean those segments of the society who, due to a variety of reasons, are silenced within the democratic process, or at least are significantly constrained in voicing and pursuing their claims through it” (445).

More thoroughly, the concept can be understood in relation to the history and culture of any given society. It is a social construct—different in time and space. Thus, while for Frones (2001), a marginalised individual is a person who is “jobless and lacking ‘suitable’ identity,” clinical psychologist Pachankis (2006) finds “loneliness and isolation” as two prominent issues faced by marginalised individuals, having “powerful, negative impacts” on his or her everyday life. Jan StorØ (2013) focuses on “practical social pedagogy” to deal with the social inequality and marginalisation. “The social pedagogic concept of marginalisation is usually understood as a relationship between people and society, not as a human characteristic” (Hamalainen 2005, cited in StorØ 2013, 18). Stressing the need for creating “conditions for social participation in mainstream community,” Madsen (2006) expounds marginalisation at three different levels, i.e. “the approach to the individual; his social and cultural conditions; and the complex interplay between people and their social environment.” He further states that “it is the task of social pedagogy to create conditions for social participation in mainstream communities” (cited in StorØ 2013, 18).

Therefore, “marginalised” in itself is an unclear concept and has been seen in relation to or comparison with other concepts, individuals and/or groups. It is contextual, situational, and relational. This is critically explained by Marc Galanter (1997), referring to the challenges in making policy for the marginalised: