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1-15 MAY, 2018

Down To Earth

FORTNIGHTLY ON POLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

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27th ANNIVERSARY

SIMMERING

THE WORLD IS GETTING YOUNGER, AND ANGRIER

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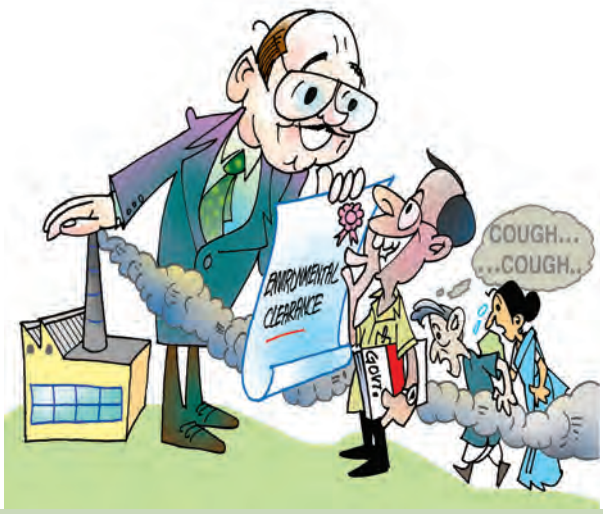

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For registration: **kindly email at Sujit@cseindia.org**

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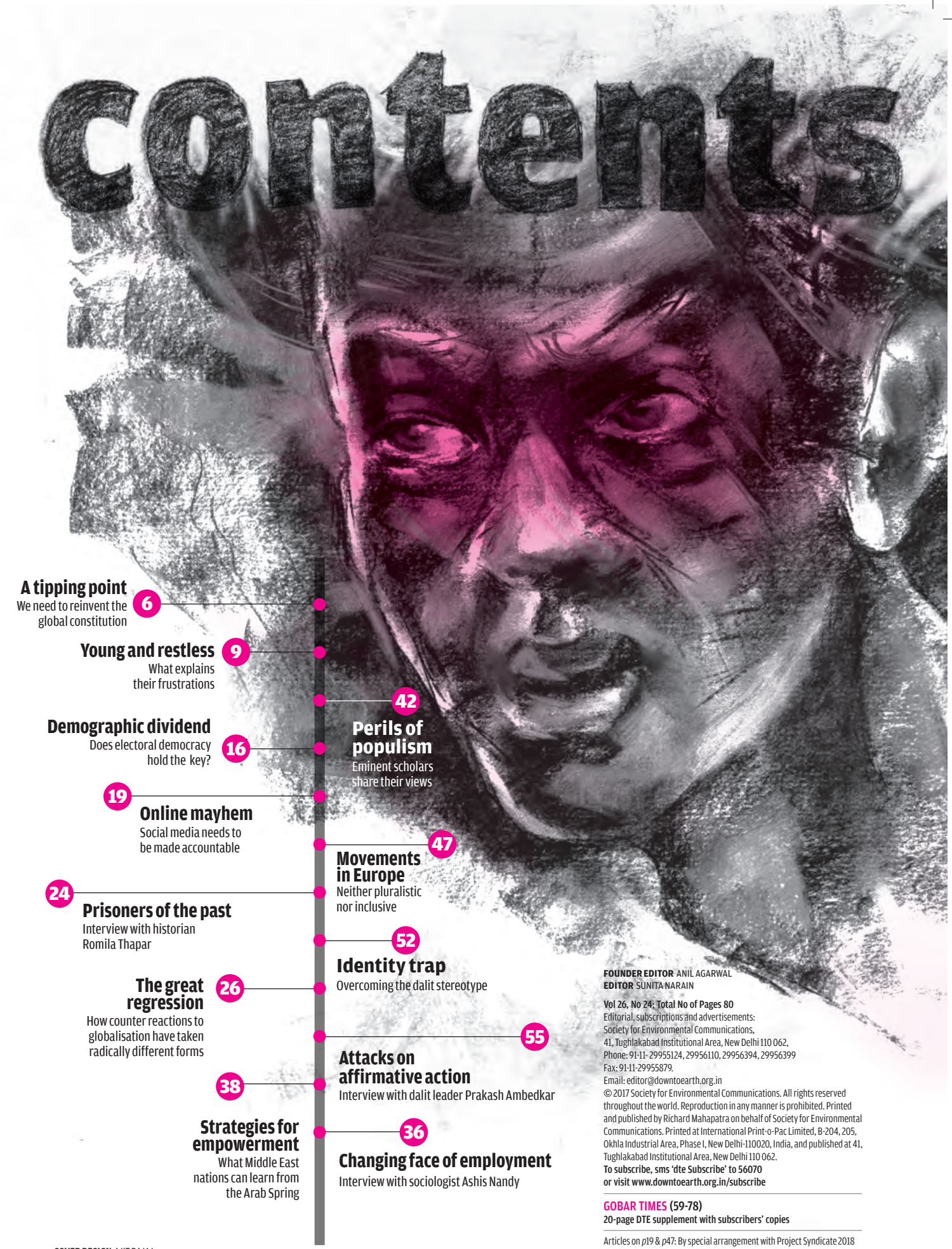

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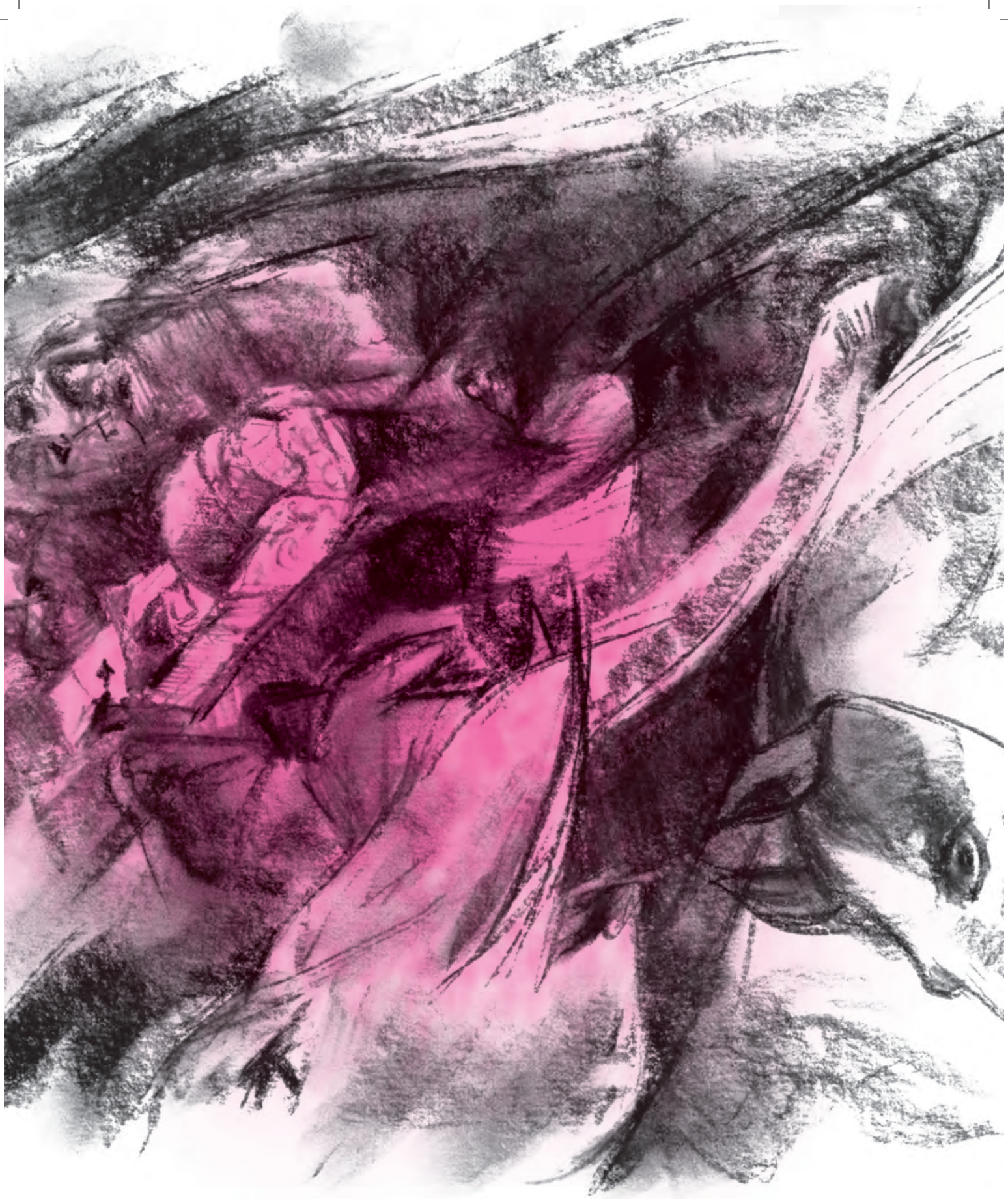

A FOLKTALE

KEDARNATH SINGH

When the king died
his body was laid
in a large coffin of gold.

A handsome body
no one who saw it
doubted that it was
the body of a king.

First the minister came
and stood with his head bowed
before the body
then the priest came
and mumbled something
under his breath for a long time
then the elephant came
and raised its trunk
in honour of the body
then the black and white
horses came
but confused
by the grimness of the scene
they couldn't decide
whether they should neigh.

Slowly–very slowly
came
the carpenter
the washer-man
the barber
the potter . . .
they stood around the
magnificent coffin.

A strange sadness surrounded
the coffin.

Everyone was sad
the minister was sad
because the elephant was sad
the elephant was sad
because the horses were sad
the horses were sad
because the grass was sad
the grass was sad
because the carpenter was sad...

(Singh was a Sahitya Akademi awarded Hindi poet who died in March 2018. Translated from Hindi by Alok Bhalla)

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27th ANNIVERSARY

THE YOUNG, OLD AND AN UNEQUAL WORLD

YOUNGER, MEANER, MORE SELF-INDULGENT, ANGRY AND INSECURE IN A CLIMATE RISKED WORLD. WE DON'T DESERVE THIS

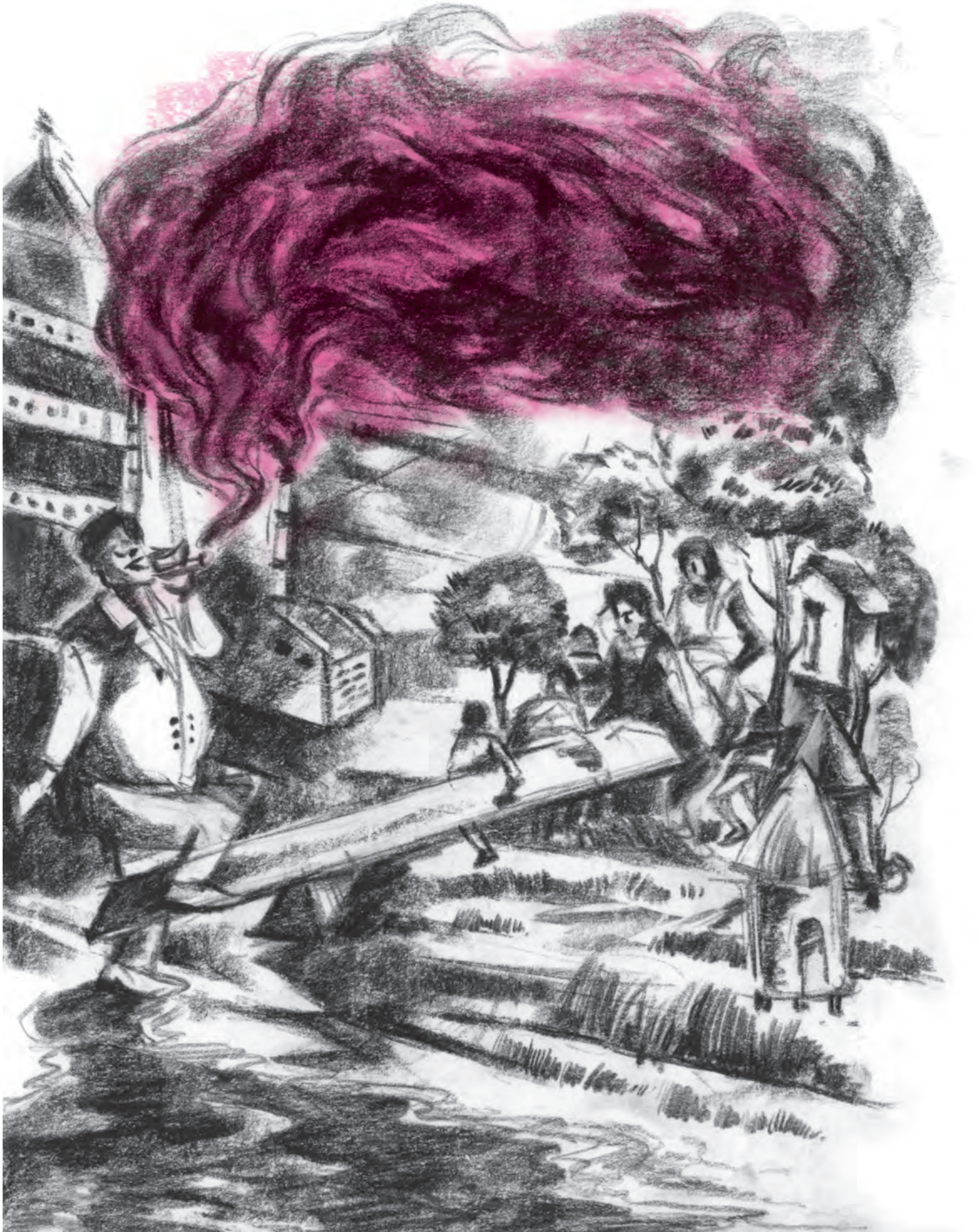
SUNITA NARAIN

IN JANUARY 1993, *Down To Earth* published the original "World on a Boil". Its then editor, Anil Agarwal, wrote forcefully that in 1992, the world had moved several steps towards globalisation, but without giving attention to the sharp economic, social and cultural divides. He wrote—in what seems so prophetic today—that this tumultuous year, which saw the launch of (unfair) world trade rules and climate agreements, would set the agenda for globalisation in an intensely unequal world.

It is May 2018—a quarter of a century later—and it seems that the world has not just imploded, but it has also come apart, unraveled. Sins of deliberate omission have come home to roost. Our time is a time of deep crisis.

Today, the rules of global trade—which were made by the then rich to get richer at the cost of the poor people and their environment—are not working for the so-called rich as well. In the past 25 years, globalisation has indeed linked markets, opened up trade and made some in the world much more affluent. This globalisation of markets was combined with another major development in the past 25 years —the unexpected but marvelous growth of the Internet. This connected people, but more importantly, it has brought the marketplace into our space. Connected cyberspace. Connected consumers.

So, on one hand, globalisation changed the very nature of production—it moved away from countries



where labour, environment and material costs were high to where these costs could be discounted or just ignored. Labour did not move. Production did. There is no doubt that this has left large numbers of the formerly employed and formerly affluent feeling betrayed by the new economy. After Brexit, the world is now moving towards a full-blown trade war.

On the other hand, the Internet has changed commerce so much so that goods can be sold over cyberspace. The combination of the two developments is that business has shifted out of the small mom-pop brick and mortar business. It has been replaced by an Internet-driven business, a corporatised mean and mercenary machine, which has now been found to indulge in everything—from tax evasion to privacy thefts. The new business is the old business.

We have all been willing participants in this makeover. It just seemed so benign. We thrived on the growth of the social media. We became creatures of this new game in town—we vented our anguish and then vented our hate on this new platform. We crossed the line between public civility and brutality, and into bestiality so quickly that it should worry us. Indeed shame us.

But we believed we were changing the world—this tool was empowering us to be part of networks and build pressure on governments to act. It was the pinnacle of democracy. The first big win was when regimes—which were labelled as dictatorial and cruel—were brought down by citizens' pressure. From Arab Spring to citizen journalism, we feverishly believed in this new world of social media activism. We thought we were in control. We were leading the charge.

How wrong we were. How naïve. How technology seduced. The fact is today it is because of social media that democracy is in danger—the recent Facebook scandal is the tip of the iceberg. Forget petty personal privacy concerns. The real game is the takeover of our freedom to elect our leaders. It is not incidental. It is certainly not accidental. It is part of the package, when we have decided that we will accept the world that is built on our convenience to share, vent, shop and consume. This sharing world is not a caring world. It cannot be.

The root is that we did not fix what was broken. We just moved on. It should not surprise us, or shock us, when Oxfam calculates that the richest 1 per cent of the world and, in fact, the richest eight persons in the world now own more wealth than the poorest half of the world population combined. In 1992, it was an intensely divided and unequal world. In 2018, it is even more divided and so even more angry —and remember it is younger and so, more anxious for opportunities.

OUR TIME IS A TIME OF DEEP CRISIS. POOR ARE LEFT BEHIND; RICH FIND IT NOT SUPPORTIVE

Climate change is not making things easier. Across the world, there are signs of an impending catastrophe. The poor, particularly farmers, are already hit. They have little defense mechanisms to provide support and succour. They are also angry. They have every right to be.

But this is not about the poor. The deluge is coming. We will all be hit. The legacy is the problem. Not just in terms of the carbon dioxide, which is already in the atmosphere. No, the real legacy is the fact that our world agreed to an agreement on climate change that was not equitable—this meant that there was no real cooperation and the poor did not reduce their emissions, because the rich were intransigent. Today, we have no real answers to wean us away from the fossil economy. If the world had accepted the need to share atmospheric space, it would have shared and it would have reinvented growth.

The question is what do we do? We cannot turn back the clock. But we can wind it differently. This means going back to the drawing board to write up the principles—the societal values that must drive countries, businesses and people. It means getting back the politics of morality and justice. It means rewriting the Constitution of the world and of each country, from where the rules of governance and transaction can then be derived. I know this sounds idealistic and definitely out of sync in this world of suits and technology fixers. But the next 25 years cannot be more of the same. This is not an option. ■

@sunitanar

27th ANNIVERSARY

ANGER OF THE JOBLESS YOUTH

THEIR FRUSTRATIONS IN AN UNJUST WORLD CAN TAKE VARIOUS EXPRESSIONS—A FIDAYEEN IN IRAQ, A STONE PELTER IN KASHMIR, A MERCENARY IN SAUDI ARABIA, A RABID *GAURAKSHAK* (COW PROTECTOR) IN INDIA OR A HEDONIST IN SHANGHAI

RAKESH KALSHIAN

…milega ilm-e-jihalat-numa se kya un ko
nikal ke madrason aur universitiyyon se
ye bad-nasib na ghar ke na ghat ke honge
main puchhta hoon ye taalim hai ki makkaari
karodon zindagiyon se ye be-panah dagha…

(What can possibly the young gain
from the useless knowledge dished out by
madrasas and universities?
Dazed and confused they appear, these
wretched souls
Is this education or pure scam, I wonder
What treachery with countless lives!)

FIRAQ GORAKHPURI, the irrepressible Urdu poet, penned these lines almost four decades ago, but they have a hauntingly contemporary ring. While his quarrel over the nature of pedagogy remains ever moot, the blight on the promise of youth today is probably far more pernicious.

To get a sense of the scale of the betrayal, chew on this disturbing statistic: according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD's) *Economic Survey of India*, over 30 per cent of India's youth (about 120 million) is neither employed nor in school or in any kind of apprenticeship. Add to this a crumbling welfare state, rising inequality, a rapidly changing economy that constantly needs new skills, a consumer culture that feeds on ever-new material fantasies, a never-ceasing carousal of violence, and, not to mention, a traditional society struggling with what novelist V S Naipaul described as a million mutinies, and you have a potential tinderbox.

Well, blame it on corrupt and myopic politics, an outdated and financially-strained education system, an economic system skewed in favour of the rich, and, arguably, disruptive technologies—the usual suspects. But there is a fifth factor that's making life even more difficult and precarious for

this century's young. Demographers call it the "youth bulge", a phrase first coined by the German social scientist Gunnar Heinsohn in the 1990s to describe a phase in a country's demographic transition when even as fewer kids die at birth, women continue to be as fertile as before. Over the next two to three decades this translates into a youth bulge in the population curve.

With teenagers accounting for over 41 per cent (2011 Census), India is clearly experiencing a youth bulge. By 2020, the average age in India will be 29, making it the world's youngest country with 64 per cent of its population in the working age group.

India is not the sole witness to this phenomenon. In fact, the world as a whole has never been younger. According to the Population Action International (PAI), a Washington-based private advocacy group, at least 62 countries, mostly from West Asia, South Asia and Africa, have a "very young" populace, which means every two out of three people are under the age of thirty. As Africa's population mushrooms, it is set to become the youngest continent in another 30 years.

DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

Many social scientists, economists and politicians theorise the youth bulge as a double-edged sword. Harness its potential, and you enjoy higher growth and peace—a double dividend. Squander it, and you incur diminishing growth and social strife—a double jeopardy.

With the world plagued by high rates of unemployment, especially amongst the young, the auguries for the future of today's youth are not very auspicious. Take India, for example. Even though officially only about 13 per cent of Indian youth are unemployed, much less than say Greece's 40 per cent, many believe this figure does not reflect the whole truth as there is a significant proportion that are working as contract or ad hoc labour.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi keeps harping on India's demographic dividend, but figures suggest that it is just one more of his government's many clever but empty jumlas. According to the latest *Employment and Unemployment Survey* released by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, India needs to generate 10-12 million new jobs every year, but it mustered a paltry 5 million between 2012 and 2016. Last year, the government abandoned its ambitious plan to train 500 million workers by 2022 as it could manage a mere 20 million at the end of three years. The situation appears even grimmer considering traditional sectors such as agriculture, fisheries and forestry—which employ over 38 per cent of Indian youth—are in a grave crisis.

OVER 30 PER CENT OF INDIA'S YOUTH ARE NEITHER EMPLOYED NOR GOING TO SCHOOL

The figures also suggest that the more educated you are, the greater the odds that you won't find a job. There are no figures on the number of underemployed, but according to Craig Jeffrey, an Oxford University professor who has studied the lives of educated youth in Uttar Pradesh, a large number of educated youth in India are just "doing timepass" (an Indian colloquial expression for whiling away time) as they can't find suitable jobs.

More specifically, picture this: according to various surveys, of the one million engineers that graduate every year, as few as 7-12 per cent are fit to be employed! If figures leave you cold, you only have to watch NDTV journalist Ravish Kumar's 25-part expose on the pathetic state of higher education to see through the dangerous hype around the much-bandied phrase "the demographic dividend".

If only the anguish of these idlers could be harnessed by social, political and even literary movements, like it was in the US and Europe of 1960s! Unfortunately, the idle minds "doing timepass" are slowly but dangerously turning into the proverbial devil's workshop where religion, politics, crime and poverty may combine in toxic brews. The Muzaffarnagar riots of 2013 is one such example.

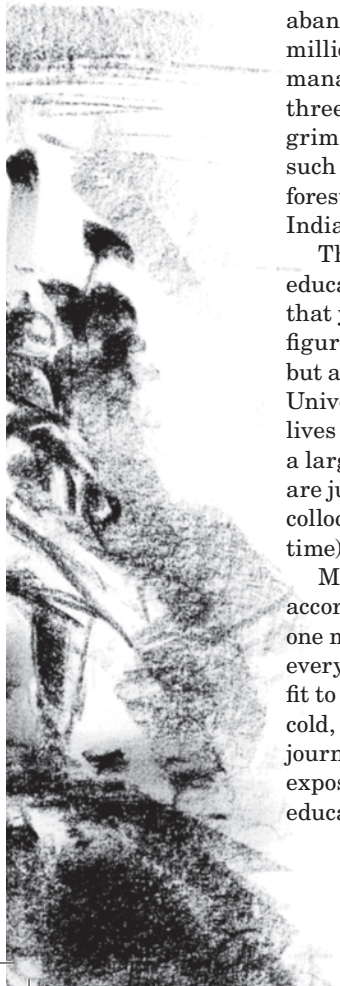
India is not alone in this awful mess. In 2017, two out of three South African youth were jobless. In Greece and Spain, it was two out of five. In 2013, the world had 202 million people out of work.

The Great Recession that gripped the world in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis shows no signs of letting up. If anything, automation is making it worse. But what's clear is that young are bearing the brunt of it. About 74 million youth between the ages of 15 and 24 were unemployed in 2013. Although that figure has come down by 3 million since then, it is still about 35 per cent of the total unemployed.

As prolonged joblessness renders the young cynical and angry, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has warned of a "scarred generation" that may become easy fodder for fascist, religious or political groups like the ISIS in West Asia, the Taliban in Afghanistan, or the Bajrang Dal in India. Or it may take to a life of crime, like leaking question papers, peddling narcotics, rioting, stealing credit cards, or joining the ranks of the lynch mobs.

THE PRECARIOUS GENERATION

That said, figures only give you a broad brush. Youth, it goes without saying, is not a monolith, and it would be foolish to paint them with the same brush when they are deeply coloured by class, race, language, caste, political ideology, religion and culture. You can't equate an Aboriginal youth with a white Australian youth, or a village Dalit youth with an upper caste



rich urban youth in India. However, as important as these markers are, one cannot deny that youth today live in an increasingly globalised world that peddles more or less the same desires such as the smartphone, the Internet, Facebook and branded products. In a global marketplace, every youth is a potential consumer.

However, if there is one marker that subsumes every other difference, even more than consumerist fantasies, it's precarity. To quote political philosopher Zygmunt Bauman, today's youth have been "cast in a condition of liminal drift, with no way of knowing whether it is transitory or permanent". In other words, there is no guarantee that you might get a job even after spending a fortune to get a degree, or that you may not be laid off tomorrow. The gig economy in the digital labour market where young freelancers work at cheap rates and at time zones when their body clock is telling them to sleep is a perfect illustration of the ridiculously precarious lives of the young.

It is this precarity of their dreams, indeed of life itself, that makes the millennial such a fragile, and hence angry, creature. This anger and frustration against an unpredictable and unjust world can take various expressions—a fidayeen in Iraq, a stone pelter in Kashmir, a mercenary in Saudi Arabia, a rabid *gaurakshak* (cow protector) in India, or a hedonist in Shanghai.

MISSING PIECES

Even as the disillusioned youth occupy the world's attention by the sheer violence of their numbers, we know precious little about them. Even less about young women. Perhaps the only place to find credible data on youth is the Youth Development Index (YDI) developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat. It tells you, for instance, unemployment, drug abuse and depression are common among both rich and poor nations; or that of the 45,000 national level legislators in the world, only 1.9 per cent are below the age of 30; or that the odds of a young woman not having a job or education are twice that of a young man.

But data crunching can only give you a snapshot of the big picture. For a more nuanced understanding, you need multi-layered ethnographies, which are sadly lacking. Even journalistic accounts are far and few between. Journalist Snigdha Poonam's *Dreamers* offers a rare peep into the largely undocumented lives of India's youth. Her book is an account of her conversations with young men and women across the country. In an interview to the online paper *Scroll.in*, she gave her two cents on India's latest generation: "If I had to boil their philosophy down to two words, it would be: whatever works. Like it or not, young India is what it is—unsatisfied, unscrupulous, unstoppable. Few young Indians I met had a clear sense of right and wrong; fewer gave a damn about it."

Poonam might be guilty of pandering to a stereotype about small town youth. But media images of recent agitations by disgruntled youths of communities like the Jats, Patidars, and most recently dalits do give the impresion that the youth are disaffected, confused, angry, and, most importantly, wired—it's no surprise that the social media has become the favourite disruptive arena where the youth today can vent their outrage against anything they don't approve of.

BEHIND THE MASK

Be that as it may, journalistic portraits like *Dreamers*, even if their broad-brush interpretations are not too far off the mark, eventually disappoint because they bypass the murky alleys of history, which is where the real insights are to be found. As Malcom Harris, author of *Kids These Days*, a brilliant examination of American millennials, argues, "To understand the consequences of a generational shift, we need more than just the proximate causes of new culture and behavior; we have to pull apart the tangled nest of historical trends where they hatched."

Not surprising, the older generations are quick to judge the "children of liberalisation" as brash, greedy, impatient, immoral, and aggressive. But is it fair to blame them for what they are? Surely, they were not created in a vacuum. They are the products of the political choices made by

EXTRACTING CAPITAL OUT OF YOUTH IS PART OF THE NEOLIBERAL PROJECT

their parents (to be fair, at least the ones who had political power and those who were complicit). What Sarah Jones writes about the American millennials in *The Nation* is probably true of any other youth around the world: "What we are witnessing is a generation suffering not only from the perennial maladies of social change but from a particular set of indignities spawned by an economy that extracts and exploits, an educational system designed to enforce those deprivations, and a set of politicians who not only believe there is nothing wrong with this state of affairs but insist on calling it liberty."

THE KETTLED YOUTH IS THE FUTURE CURRENCY OF POWER

Extracting capital out of youth is part of the neoliberal project that views each individual decision or choice as a rational calculus of costs and benefits. As American political theorist Wendy Brown argues, "The rationally calculating individual bears full responsibility for the consequences of his or her action no matter how severe the constraints on this action, for example, lack of skills, education and childcare in a period of high unemployment and limited welfare benefits."

The trouble is that with the neoliberal experimenton on the brink, its Frankensteins now have to deal with the fury and frustration of millions of young men and women left to their own devices (including, ironically, the smartphone, the ultimate icon of liberalisation).

It hasn't escaped anyone's notice, least of all politicians, that the kettled youth, to borrow the title of a book on violence among British youth, is the future currency of power. The rise of Trump, Modi, and Erdogan, the Brexit campaign and growing traction of right-wing politics in Europe are all portents of what the future game of thrones might look like. Militant outfits like ISIS and spiritual ones like Dera Sacha Sauda too have milked this bottled-up anguish.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

So what can we do if we don't want this generation to be "lost" to the deadly pathologies of religious bigotry, fascism, crime, war, drugs, not to mention social media? The most predictable prescription is to customise education and vocational apprenticeship to the demands of a changing labour market. But this manoevre, critics quickly retort, detracts from the more critical question of whether we want to turn our schools into factories that churn out readymade grist for the mills of the labour market.

Equally, a single-minded obsession with creating more jobs ends up undermining the fundamental questions of political economy, violence, inequality, justice, environment, ethics and cultural diversity. In their angry but incisive *Disposable Futures,* Brad Evans and Henry Giroux argue that what is unique about such attempts is "the constant reconfiguration of the nation-state in the interests of a market that colonizes collective subjectivity with discourses of risk, insecurity, catastrophe, and inescapable endangerments".

And as automation threatens to worsen the crisis of unemployment, Silicon Valley czars, fearing uprisings, have begun lobbying for a universal basic income for every citizen (no questions asked) to take care of their basic needs. Critics, however, dismiss the idea as another clever ploy by neoliberal governments to further abdicate their social responsibility towards vulnerable citizens, especially jobless youth.

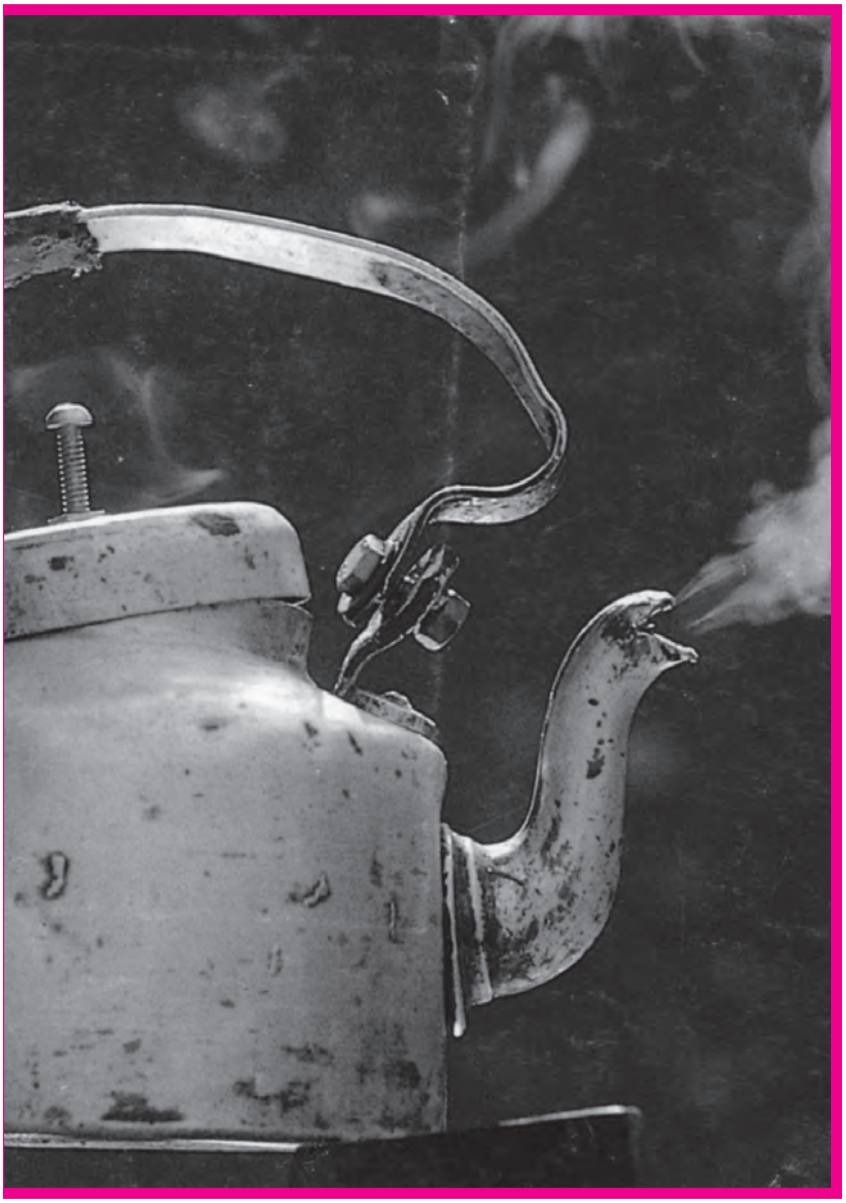
Perhaps it is high time the world junked the discredited neoliberal project and tried something little more radical than capitalism in pastel shades. As economist Joseph Stiglitz contends, "If socialism means creating a society where shared concerns are not given short shrift—where people care about other people and the environment in which they live—so be it. Yes, there may have been failed experiments under that rubric a quarter or half-century ago; but today's experiments bear no resemblance to those of the past."

Radical words for a former chief economist of the World Bank, but the question is how many such voices will it take to bell the comatose cat. ■

27th ANNIVERSARY

From the archives

Politics of interventionism



PRADIP SAHA / CSE

BY THE end of 1992, there was no dearth of Western liberals veering to the view that sovereignty, as a concept governing the interpersonal behaviour of nations, must be limited. It is obvious that the environment is one issue where nations seeking to enhance the welfare of their own citizens often do not take into account the welfare of other nations.

But what is to be done when a nation is unable to deal with the needs and welfare of its own citizenry? This is precisely the situation in Somalia: hungry and desperate people and no semblance of a government in charge. It was undoubtedly an excellent setting to justify foreign intervention. With the UN's authorisation, USA sent in its troops to pave the way for speedy food distribution. India, too, has joined the effort to assist starving Somalis.

As a case, this may be acceptable. But where does this take us? When George Bush (the then President of USA) despatched 28,000 US troops to Somalia, he said his purpose was to "help them live", and added, "We do not plan to dictate political outcomes. We respect your sovereignty."

What does this mean? When is sovereignty to be respected and when not? When is interference justifiable and when not? Who will decide when to intervene and when not? Are there any mechanisms to control the hidden agendas, if any, of powerful nations? After all, the purpose of rules is to ensure the weak are protected against the powerful and to ensure consistency in the actions of nations.

Immediately, the question is raised: why Somalia, and not Bosnia? The answer given by a commentator in the *International Herald Tribune* is that "Bosnia is not doable". The

15 JANUARY, 1993

THERE IS A NEED FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO INTERVENE—COLLECTIVELY AND HUMANELY—IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WEAK AND THE POOR AND FOR THE SURVIVAL OF ALL OF US

commentator goes on to argue: "Television pictures of starving Somalis summon an instinctive desire to do something. A government that is not reckless with the lives of its soldiers must enunciate some logic beyond instinct for risking those lives in a situation that does not remotely engage the national interest. Principle one of humanitarian intervention is: it must be doable. Bosnia is not doable. The mountainous terrain, the heavily armed factions, the history of prolonged guerilla war—all promise not just large losses but military failure. The US will not stand by if another people is dying and there is a way to save it. This may not be the loftiest principle of humanitarian intervention, but it is better than the rest."

What then of a case where intervention is necessary, but the economic interests of powerful nations are involved?

Environment throws up numerous such examples. The carbon dioxide, for example, emitted by one country is likely to affect the sea coast or the climate of another. Who should reduce this carbon dioxide and by how much? Will the reduction be done in a way that gives property rights to all people in the atmosphere, and thus generate market forces that will provide disincentives to the polluters and incentives to the abstemious? Will there be a system of democratic checks and balances so that Bangladesh can block the entry of American cars because their emissions could drown half its land?

The Western nations have steered clear of such issues, even though markets, property rights and democracy are of what they are most proud. They have taken positions that essentially get them off the hook for their past production and consumption patterns and now seek to ram an inequitable system for future global environmental management down the throats of less powerful nations.

Clearly, there is a need for the international community to intervene—collectively and humanely—in the interests of the weak and the poor and for the survival of all of us. But if the old order of sovereign nations is to give over to a new order of a more sovereign "global community", then the new rules of the behaviour of nations must not only be crystal clear, but they should also protect the rights of less powerful nations and be enforceable against the powerful ones. Till then, the arguments for sovereignty must continue to rule.

GENERATIONAL SPASM

TO ADDRESS THE GROWING UNREST ACROSS THE WORLD, WE NEED TO EFFECTIVELY UTILISE THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND

RICHARD MAHAPATRA

EVERYBODY IS protesting everything. Unbelievable in size and in the degree of mobilisation, mass protests have spread across the whole world. The protests are on both sides of ideological boundary—while some are protesting against left-of-the-centre policies, others are protesting right-of-the-centre politics. While in democracies protests are over the decline of electoral influences in governance, in non-democratic set ups, people are demanding electoral rights.

Countries and political formations define "protests" differently and there is no global standard. But according to the International Labour Organization (ILO), which reviewed many surveys and databases, protests surged in 2011-12; reported a lull phase for some time; and, once again became widespread in 2015-17. And they took place in all continents and in equal ferocity.

If to be young is to be restless, these protests reflect the state of global demography. The planet was never so young. Close to 1.8 billion people are between the ages of 15 and 29; more than four-fifths of them living in developing countries. In South Asia and Africa, one in three people is a young person. As economists say, this is the phase of the great demographic dividend for the world. It means, if encashed, the young population can usher unheard prosperity to the world by simply deploying their critical capital of labour and skills. Then why are they restless? Why is the world becoming so volatile?

The restlessness is probably due to two reasons—the fragile state of the economy and the declining


VOTE(?)
NOTE

effectiveness of electoral democracy to address the aspirations of the youth. In between, the planet has a very narrow window left to use the demography dividend.

But there are challenges. The youth account for 40 per cent of the world's unemployed population. A young person is three times more likely to remain unemployed than an adult. The degree of economic desperation is high too: one in four young people is not able to find a job that can earn him/her US $1.25 a day. This figure defines the international threshold of extreme poverty. To enable them to overcome from a low income level and loss of confidence, the world—particularly those in the developing countries—has to utilise this demographic dividend very quickly. Because by 2075, the young population's proportion to the total population will be below 20 per cent. Without interventions, both the young people and the nations hosting them would be staring at an exploding situation.

ONE IN FOUR YOUNG PEOPLE IS NOT ABLE TO FIND A JOB TO EARN US $1.25 PER DAY

As the planet was getting younger, there was a positive development taking roots: there was a growth of electoral platforms for the youth to take part in democracy. In the "Third Wave of Democratisation", which started in 1974, there were only 40 electoral democracies. In just 45 years the number has gone up to 100. Unlike in the 1970s, when democracy was limited to the western world and in a few countries in the southern side, electoral democracy now is the most preferred form of governance across the world.

But does the growing restlessness indicate this democratisation has not mitigated the problems of the young? According to a Gallup Survey, less than half of respondents showed confidence in fair and free elections; in Central Asia and Europe, the respondents found it even less credible. Not suprisingly, voter turnout across the world is declining. In a 1979 survey, 100 per cent elections were free and fair. But this perception dipped to just 59 per cent in 2012. *The World Development Report 2017* observes: "The lack of electoral integrity and a persistent climate of mistrust over time undermine the legitimacy of the political system, fueling protests, mass demonstrations, and, in extreme cases, outbreaks of electoral violence and civil war." It adds that there is a significant increase in the number of countries having a constitution, indicating that countries are adopting principles or laws for governance. In 1940, we had just 65 countries with a constitution. In 2013, the number increased to 196. At the same time, the lifespan of a constitution is just 19 years today. In Latin America and Eastern Europe, it is just eight years. Amendments to constitutions have also picked up after the 1940s.

However, as democracies have grown in number, they are confronted with a paradox. Recently, Yascha Mounk, author of *People vs Democracy*, published a research paper that pointed growing support for autocratic alternatives to democracy. For example, his research shows that "the share of Americans who say that army rule would be a "good" or "very good" thing had risen to 1 in 6 in 2014, compared with 1 in 16 in 1995". And this opinion is stronger among young people. The same trend was observed in Europe as well. "It should have us worried," he told *The New York Times*.

On the other hand, for this generation of young people who have grown up with only the free market model, there is less and less confidence over its benefits. The ILO has been debating the rising unrest among young people. One of the important takeaways from these debates is that as young people are in a dire economic state, they would raise the issue of sustainability of the free market economy the world is obsessed about. It also points to larger protests and uprisings demanding fundamental changes in the way we conduct our economies. In 2012, ILO compared the current young employment crisis to that of the Great Depression of 1930s. "There have been serious financial crises, none have been as deep, prolonged, and globally contagious as the current crisis."

Such is the fear among experts and economists that the ILO report says, "The youth employment crisis, in all its manifestations, is not merely a transitory development related to sluggish economic growth, but it may become a structural trend if no significant policy changes are put in place." ■

HOW IT THREATENS DEMOCRACY

SOCIAL MEDIA COULD BE JUST THE START OF A SLIPPERY SLOPE LEADING TO AN ORWELLIAN WORLD CONTROLLED BY BIG DATA BROTHER

KOFI A ANNAN

THE INTERNET and social media were once hailed for creating new opportunities to spread democracy and freedom. And Twitter, Facebook, and other social media did indeed play a key role in popular uprisings in Iran in 2009, in the Arab world in 2011, and in Ukraine in 2013-2014. Back then, the tweet did at times seem mightier than the sword.

But authoritarian regimes soon began cracking down on Internet freedom. They feared the brave new digital world, because it was beyond the reach of their analogue security establishments. Their fears proved unfounded. In the event, most social media-enabled popular uprisings failed for want of effective leadership, and traditional political and military organisations retained the upper hand.

In fact, these regimes have begun to wield social media for their own ends. We have all heard the allegations that Russia covertly used social media to influence electoral outcomes in Ukraine, France, Germany, and, most famously, in the US. Facebook has estimated that Russian content on its network, including posts and paid advertisements, reached 126 million Americans, around 40 per cent of the nation's population.

We should recall earlier accusations by Russia of the West's role in fomenting the "colour revolutions" in Ukraine and Georgia. The Internet and social media provide another battlefield, it seems, for the surreptitious manipulation of public opinion.

If even the most technologically advanced countries cannot protect the integrity of the electoral process, one can imagine the challenges facing countries with less

know-how. In other words, the threat is global. In the absence of facts and data, the mere possibility of manipulation fuels conspiracy theories and undermines faith in democracy and elections at a time when public trust is already low.

Social media's ideological "echo chambers" exacerbate people's natural biases and diminish opportunities for healthy debate. This has real-world effects, because it fosters political polarisation and erodes leaders' capacity to forge compromises, the basis of democratic stability. Likewise, the hate speech, terrorist appeals, and racial and sexual harassment that have found a home on the Internet can lead to real-world violence.

But social media are hardly the first communication revolution to challenge political systems. The printing press, radio, and television were all revolutionary in their day. And all were gradually regulated, even in the most liberal democracies. We must now consider how to submit social media to the same rules of transparency, accountability, and taxation as conventional media.

SOCIAL MEDIA EXACERBATES PEOPLE'S NATURAL BIASES AND DIMINISHES OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTHY DEBATE

In the US, a group of senators has introduced the "Honest Ads Act," which would extend the rules that apply to print, radio, and television to social media. They hope it will become law before the 2018 midterm election. In Germany, a new law, the Netzwerkdurchsetzungsgesetz, requires social-media companies to remove hate speech and fake news within 24 hours or face fines of up to €50 million (US $63 million).

As useful as these measures may be, I am not sure that national laws will be adequate to regulate online political activity. Many poorer countries will not be able to put up such resistance, and enforcement will be difficult everywhere, because much of the data are stored and managed outside the regulating country.

Whether or not new international norms are necessary, we should be careful that in seeking to curb the excesses, we do not jeopardise the fundamental right to freedom of expression. Indeed, open societies should not over-react, lest they undermine the very freedoms on which they base their legitimacy.

But nor can we remain idle. A few major players, in Silicon Valley and elsewhere, hold our fate in their hands; but if we can get them on board, we can address the failings of the current system.

In 2012, I convened the Global Commission on Elections, Democracy, and Security to identify and tackle the challenges to the integrity of elections and promote legitimate electoral processes. Only elections that the population generally accepts as fair and credible can lead to a peaceful and democratic rotation of leadership, conferring legitimacy on the winner and protecting the loser.

Under the auspices of the Kofi Annan Foundation, I will now convene a new commission—this time, with the masterminds of social media and information technology, as well as political leaders—to help us address these crucial new issues. We will set out to find workable solutions that serve our democracies and safeguard the integrity of our elections, while harnessing the many opportunities new technologies have to offer. We will produce recommendations that will, we hope, reconcile the disruptive tensions created between technological advances and one of humanity's greatest achievements: democracy.

Technology does not stand still, and nor should democracy. We have to act fast, because digital advances could be just the start of a slippery slope leading to an Orwellian world controlled by Big Brother, where millions of sensors in our smartphones and other devices collect data and make us vulnerable to manipulation.

Who should own all the data collected by our phones and watches? How should such data be used? Should its use by others require our consent? To whom are those using our data accountable? These are the big questions that will shape the future of freedom. ■

(The author, a former secretary-general of the United Nations and Nobel Peace laureate, is chair of the Kofi Annan Foundation)

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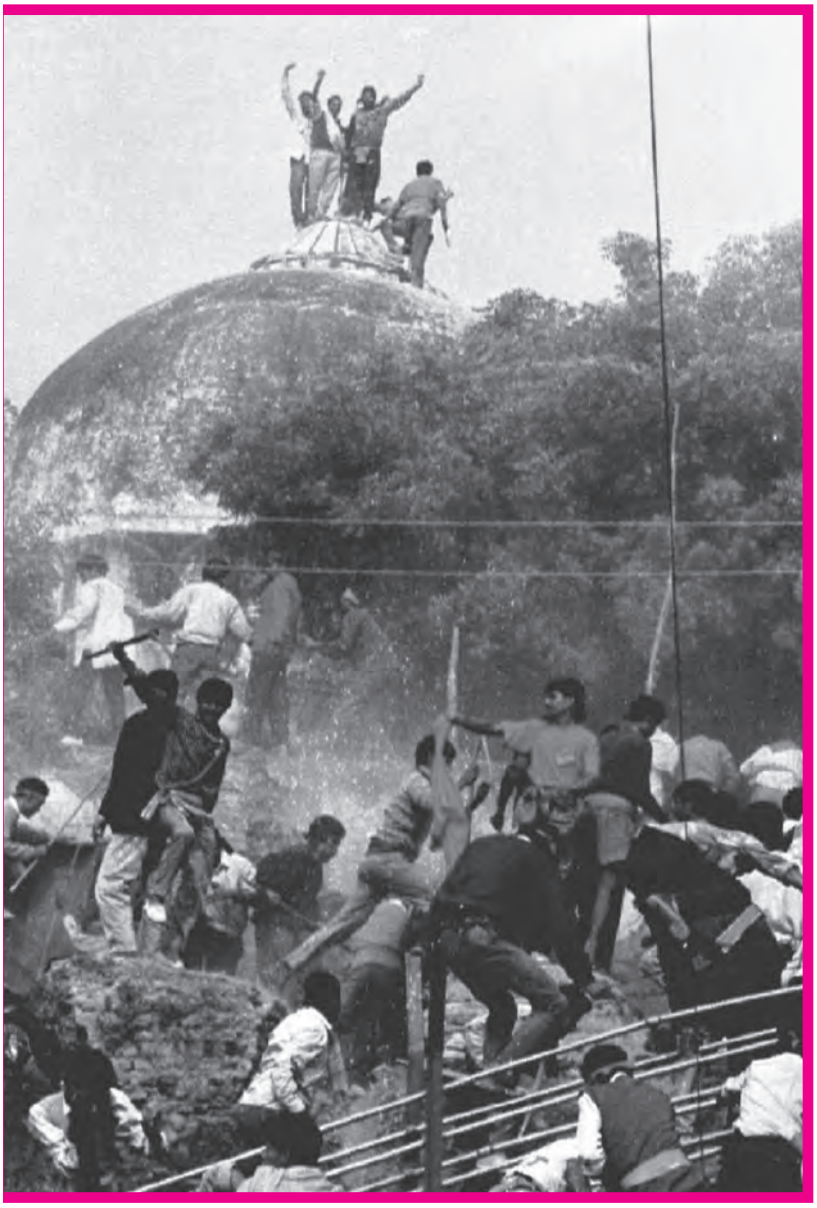
From the archives

How to douse the flames



REUTERS

DURING THE past few months, India has suffered the traumatic experience of being rocked by communal disharmony and large-scale urban violence in the aftermath of the demolition of the Babri Masjid. The country's law-and-order machinery has failed to stem the rioting, which has taken a heavy toll of lives and property. The mindless violence has been widely criticised abroad and shattered India's image of a non-violent nation.

Communal harmony clearly cannot be handled exclusively as a law-and-order problem. In its reliance mainly on the law-and-order machinery, the Indian state has neglected the promotion of community initiatives. It has focused its attention mainly on developing and marshalling its own strength, often at great expense to the exchequer. Nevertheless, in times of crisis, a constant complaint of law-and-order authorities is that their resources are inadequate. Not unlike a forest department that would like to post a guard at every tree or of wildlife agencies clamouring for virtually a guard for every tiger, the police would like to station a picket at every Hindu house in a Muslim-dominated neighbourhood and vice versa. Even if this was not clearly impossible, it still does not guarantee protection because with the communalisation of the political process, there is no guarantee that the law-and-order administration will remain neutral.

Because forest guards alone are no guarantee that a forest can be saved, environmentalists have sought a solution in what they call "social fencing". Their experiences show natural resources can be protected, used and shared in a disciplined and cooperative manner not because of state fiats but through village-level negotiations,

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CULTURAL DIVERSITY IS AS MUCH A LAW OF NATURE AND NEEDS TO BE EQUALLY RESPECTED

discussions and bargaining. And because protection of the environment gives greater economic returns to the entire collective, divisive issues are sought to be resolved through consensus. This is definitely not the "Amitabh Bachchan-Bollywood" approach, which features a superhero who is a lumpen at one level, ever ready to fight and smash, but an angel at another, equally ready to protect and nurture—while everyone else in the film waits and watches.

No wonder then that the Indian state has never attempted to build an intermediary tier between itself and the individual. The neighbourhood, which is the level at which participatory politics can take birth and grow, is the level which allows the individual to participate and negotiate directly instead of as a merely passive voter. It has been consistently neglected in the building of development institutions in the post-Independence period. If community-level initiatives have emerged at all, the state's response has been mainly to limit them sectorally and temporally.

In effect, when a neighbourhood initiative has been taken to preserve communal harmony, the bureaucracy has generally preferred to see it restricted to a single issue and to the period of crisis. Beyond these parameters, a neighbourhood initiative, however powerful, is treated by officialdom as a nuisance and dealt with in a patronising fashion.

The challenge facing India today is in many ways the biggest challenge facing the entire world. Ecological diversity has given rise to an extraordinary cultural diversity the world over. But technological progress has unleashed an extraordinary process of global cultural homogenisation. But cultural diversity is as much a law of nature as biodiversity and needs to be equally respected.

Only social processes can deal with technological progress and absorb it in a way that maintains cultural diversity—with equal respect for all cultures. Proud Hindus must learn to coexist with proud Muslims, just as harmoniously as proud Gujaratis must learn to coexist with equally proud Nagas.

This is not simply a matter of education and knowing about each other's rationality and respecting each other's modes of behaviour. That, too, is important. It is also a matter of live mechanisms that promote dialogue and discussion between neighbours of different cultural, religious and other perspectives, so that mutually beneficial adjustments can be promoted. A million dialogues in a million neighbourhoods will generate far more integration, mutual co-existence and social stability than dialogue amongst only the national political parties. And, furthermore, if dialogue among the political parties fails, it will be the absorptive capacity of the million, neighbourhood-level dialogues that can preserve stability.

27th ANNIVERSARY

Conversations

‘EQUALITY IS NO LONGER IN OUR VISION OF SOCIETY’

Historian Romila Thapar speaks to Rajat Ghai

On caste and anger:
The identity of caste is not based on physical characteristics but on differences that draw on laws of social ordering, occupations and status. There is a hierarchy and the basis of dominance comes from controlling resources and labour. Nevertheless claims of proximity to deity are made for some castes. Similarly a belief in degrees of purity and impurity also governs the hierarchy. Discrimination within the *varna* divisions of caste society also extends in some castes to being present within individual caste groups other than *varnas*, such as *jatis*. Identity comes from birth, but birth is controlled not by physical differentiation but by rules of endogamy and exogamy, by the inheritance of property, and by custom as expressed in distinctive forms of belief, in outward markers and food restrictions.

Caste discrimination therefore includes many more identities and combinations of these than the identities of race. There has been much confusion in colonial writing between caste and race.

On science, its new claims and the polarisation:
When a religious ideology, especially forms of nationalism that emerge not as secular nationalisms but as religious nationalisms representing the religious majority, seek power, they have to claim that their ideology provides them with access to all knowledge, and that it has done so in the past as well. This includes the claim that contemporary scientific knowledge existed in the early past of that particular religious community—even though there is a contradiction here since that which emerges in contemporary times cannot have existed as such in the past. This claim then leads to fantasies that speak of flying machines, stem-cell research, plastic surgery, television, and so on, as having existed in the ancient past of the country. This is a perversion of a claim to science.

Any scientific invention or discovery has to be backed by the data, questioning, causal analysis, and generalizations that are basic to scientific research. It also has to be understood that science evolves from one form to another and therefore a complicated scientific invention has to be preceded by a series of experimental forms and calculations. If these are absent then the invention is unlikely to have existed. Unfortunately the claims also miss out on doing proper research on what actually were the scientific achievements of early societies. They were obviously not the same as now because scientific knowledge like all knowledge, evolves, and therefore has different forms at different times. It was different from

modern times but had its own importance in early cultures.

On neo-nationalism:
Nationalism is not the same as jingoism with its flag waving and slogan shouting. Nationalism implies a commitment to building the kind of society that relates to the historical change of our times—in other words a society that emerges from industrialisation, capitalism, and in some cases colonialism. Therefore, it is a historical condition of the last three centuries.

To look for nationalism in the ancient past makes little historical sense. There could have been some elements that are now taken up in creating nationalism, but the existence of nationalism is something modern. Nationalism endorses a different kind of society from what existed a few centuries ago, because it is characterised by democracy that requires a secular form of functioning, economic equality and social justice.

These characteristics did not exist in societies of pre-modern times. We are so busy shouting slogans that we forget the real meaning of nationalism which is to build a modern society that has some values that continue from the past but others that are new and have to be inculcated, such as the guarantee of human rights for every citizen and social equality for all. This was the vision we had of the future of Indian society when we became independent in 1947, but these commitments are no longer present in our vision of our society.

On the decline of diversity:
All societies have multiple cultures because societies are not uniform and static. They pulsate and constantly change as they have been doing since early times. Historians study these changing cultures. The presence of many cultures does not imply a melting pot or salad bowl. We do not use these analogies for populations for instance, although the latest DNA research in genetics has proved that the Indian population has been enormously mixed with migrants having entered India at various times over the last 5,000 years.

What the phrase "multiple cultures" means, is that there is a juxtaposition of cultures—of patterns of living. These remain relatively distinct in some activities but get fused in others. The continuous fusing accounts for some aspects of cultural change.

Take for example, language. The language one speaks and the way in which one speaks it can easily segregate one person from another, or it can be, if used in other ways, be a means of expressing a camaraderie among diverse groups. Cultural forms are signals that one person sends to another, or one segment of society gives to another.

Such signals can only be understood if one recognises that society is an entity that is also aware of the differentiations that it hosts. In establishing the well-being of a society, the effort should be to try and annul the negative differentiations but retain the positive. ■

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THE ROAD TO THE GREAT REGRESSION

IN THE 21ST CENTURY, COUNTER REACTIONS TO GLOBALISATION HAVE BEEN TAKING RADICALLY DIFFERENT FORMS

CÉSAR RENDUELS MENENDEZ DE LLANO AND DONATELLA DELLA PORTA

IN 1980, the novelist Martin Amis attended a meeting in Texas with Ronald Reagan, then in the midst of the campaign that would put him in the White House. Reagan liked to end his electoral activities with some audience Q&A. The more personal the question, Amis explained, the more Reagan enjoyed answering.

Question: "Of all the people in America, Sir, why you for President?"

Reagan grins.

Answer: "Well, I'm not smart enough to tell a lie."

Laughter, applause.

Amis relays the exchange:

"But why do you want it, sir?' Reagan flexes his worn, snipped, tucked, mottled face. 'This country needs a good Republican and I feel I can do the job. Why? I'm happy. I'm feeling good.' Here he turns. 'And I have Nancy to tuck me up at night."

Laughter, applause, hats in the air.

ANGER, DISCONTENT AND RESENTMENT

Imagine this anecdote today. Were Donald Trump had asked the same question in 2016, it seems like he may have responded: "Because I'm unhappy. I'm feeling bad. And my relationship with my wife is catastrophic."

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And surely his Republican audience would also have clapped, identifying now not with Reagan's optimism but with Trump's self-portrait of anger, discontent and resentment.

Ronald Reagan, that carefree actor-president, may have been the last US leader to channel Americans' good feelings about the free market. As Robert Putnam outlines in his famous investigation, Bowling Alone, civil society and social bonds in the US strengthened from the early 20th century until the 1970s, when the era of neoliberal reforms began.

At that point, things quickly began to unravel. Historically speaking, the growth of mercantilism, an economic nationalism that seeks to enrich the state through trade and wealth accumulation, has always deteriorated social bonds, though that's not necessarily a bad thing. The market also weakens relationships that are clientelistic, toxic or patriarchal.

Problems arise when mercantilism becomes an expansive, generalised social dynamic, which is precisely what globalisation unleashed starting in the 1970s. After global economic crisis exposed the limits of the Fordist assembly line-style mass production model, the world veered sharply back toward the liberal, unregulated Manchester capitalism that had predominated before the second world war.

NEOLIBERAL BACKLASHES ARE OFFERING NEW SOLUTIONS FOR GLOBAL ELITES TO PRESERVE THEIR PRIVILEGES

'A CATASTROPHIC LEVEL OF SOCIAL CORROSION'

We often make the mistake of thinking that globalisation is a radical new phenomenon, both postmodern and futuristic.

In fact, in his 1944 book *The Great Transformation*, historian Karl Polanyi was already explaining the political and social crises of the inter-war period as a reaction to the failures of the free market.

From his perspective, the whole utopian idea of a self-regulating market was nihilistic and self-destructive, materially incompatible with the variety of human social life of humans.

For the pragmatist Polanyi, the "free market" never existed and could never exist. To begin with, mercantilism as a financial system has always required aggressive state intervention, both to ease the pains of its flaws and to break people's natural resistance to being dragged along by the coattails of their economy.

Practically every government in the world has undertaken this process since the 1980s. In privatising public services, for example, they have created enormous business opportunities for local elites (Argentina being a prime example), stimulated rampant real estate speculation (just look at the UK) and used public resources to rescue the banking system from its own mistakes (remember Spain?). When mercantilism reaches the catastrophic point at which it begins to corrupt all society, Polanyi says, then collective counter-movements emerge. These efforts to reestablish communal living can have radically different political orientations.

The 20th century had the fascists, waging what Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci dubbed "passive revolutions" that aspired to alter the economic and social machinery to preserve elite privileges. It also saw Roosevelt's New Deal, Europe's 1940s democratic socialist movements and Clement Attlee's reformist Labour government in the UK (1945-1951). All these were anti-mercantlist projects inspired by democratisation, learning and egalitarianism.

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ANTI-NEOLIBERAL COUNTER REACTIONS

This history is a reminder that there is an old pattern to these shaky modern times. In the 21st century, counter reactions to globalisation have also been taking radically different forms. Early in the century, Latin America's leftist governments challenged the neoliberal order, rejecting the Washington Consensus and building regional solidarity.

Then, there were the Arab Spring uprisings of 2010 to 2013, which sought to deepen democracy in a region long dominated by dictators.

The former was crushed and the latter has largely waned. But the innovative ideas developed in the anti-austerity protests of Iceland Greece, Spain and Portugal following the start of the European debt crisis in 2009 are still very much alive.

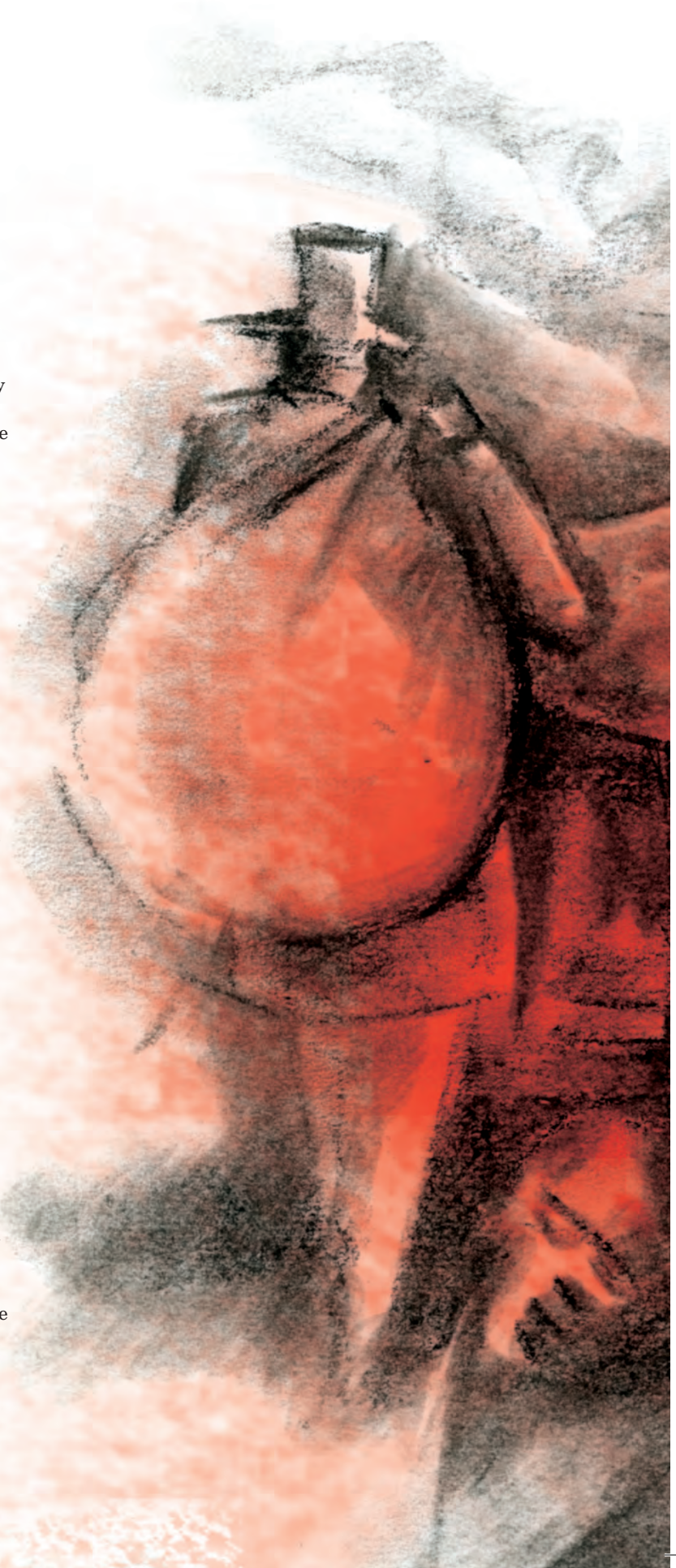
What has everyone talking are developments on the opposite end of the ideological spectrum: Brexit, Trump, the extreme right, Islamic fundamentalism—neoliberal backlashes offering new solutions for global elites hoping to preserve their privileges in a turbulent international economy. It is early yet for an in-depth analysis of the current regressive phenomenon. But we can at least start asking the right questions.

First, did economic discontent really fuel the rise of the modern right, as many claim? Data from the UK and the US indicate exactly the opposite. Not only—not even mainly—blue collar workers supported Brexit and Donald Trump; the rich and the educated did too.

But it is misleading to blame the resentment of the declining middle class for the state of Western politics today.

Money played a crucial role in right-wing victories in the US. Big business and well-funded think tanks, including the tobacco lobby and the billionaire Koch brothers, have funded the US Tea Party for years, and starting in 2015, they richly backed Trump.

To mobilise the traditional conservative base of the Republican Party, cash was injected into media blitzes that spread



simple messages, often lies, appealing to American fear.

Money is not the whole story, but it is an important part of it and it has historic resonance. During Europe's fascist and Nazi movements, regressive counter movements feigned solidarity with the 99 per cent while clearly enjoying the support of the 1 per cent. The market's positive response to Trump's victory may be a clear indication that this is happening again.

So far, the new regressive movements are adopting very different forms to their left-wing recent predecessors in Latin America and Europe. They diverge not only ideologically—with cosmopolitanism on the one side and xenophobia on the other—but also in their organisational models.

On the right, politics today is characterised by strong, personalised leadership: Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Narendra Modi, Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump being prime examples. Recent progressive anti-neoliberal movements, on the other hand, have been mostly been defined by citizen participation. There's no evidence (yet) that regressive movements are necessarily more successful than their progressive counterparts. Rather, in times of economic crisis, left-wing advances such as workers' rights have been met with a powerful, well-funded resistance. The near-constant protests of Trump, Erdogan or Orban confirm progressive counter-reactions are very much alive indeed. But they seem unlikely to put regressive movements out of business any time soon.

IN TIMES OF ECONOMIC CRISIS, LEFT-WING ADVANCES HAVE BEEN MET WITH A POWERFUL, WELL-FUNDED RESISTANCE

ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK

The mainstream progressive response to this reactionary challenge has been, primarily, nostalgia for Keynesian economics: increase public spending to stimulate the economy, boost demand and create employment, redistribute wealth to grow the economy, among other things.

That's a bad alternative. Keynes is dead and he's not coming back. Everything about his era—from the post-second world war international relations system of Bretton Woods and the Soviet threat to the fast clip of economic expansion back then—is unthinkable today.

Only in a few places has the popular response to the failure of the self-regulating free-market been to push for greater freedom and deeper democracy, rather than to retrench or reminisce.

In addition to a timid normalisation of such activism around basic rights such as housing, a universal basic income, cooperativism and feminism, we have Portugal's left-wing ruling coalition, Podemos in Spain and the Syriza government in Greece.

Today, it is evident that Greece is not the European Union's burden to bear but rather part of its salvation. Syriza has proposed an alternative to European financial metastasis by reclaiming fiscal sovereignty, battening down the markets, focusing on democratisation, and seeking continent-wide social solidarity. It's noteworthy that virtually all rights-based anti-neoliberalism has come from peripheral or semi-peripheral nations: first Latin America a decade ago, and now southern Europe. All of them have faced fierce opposition from the rich West.

It may be time to start thinking about the Global South not as a problem but as a solution to the great regression. ■

(Llano is professor of sociological theory, School of Social Work, Universidad Complutense de Madrid and Porta is dean, Institute of Human and Social sciences, Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence)

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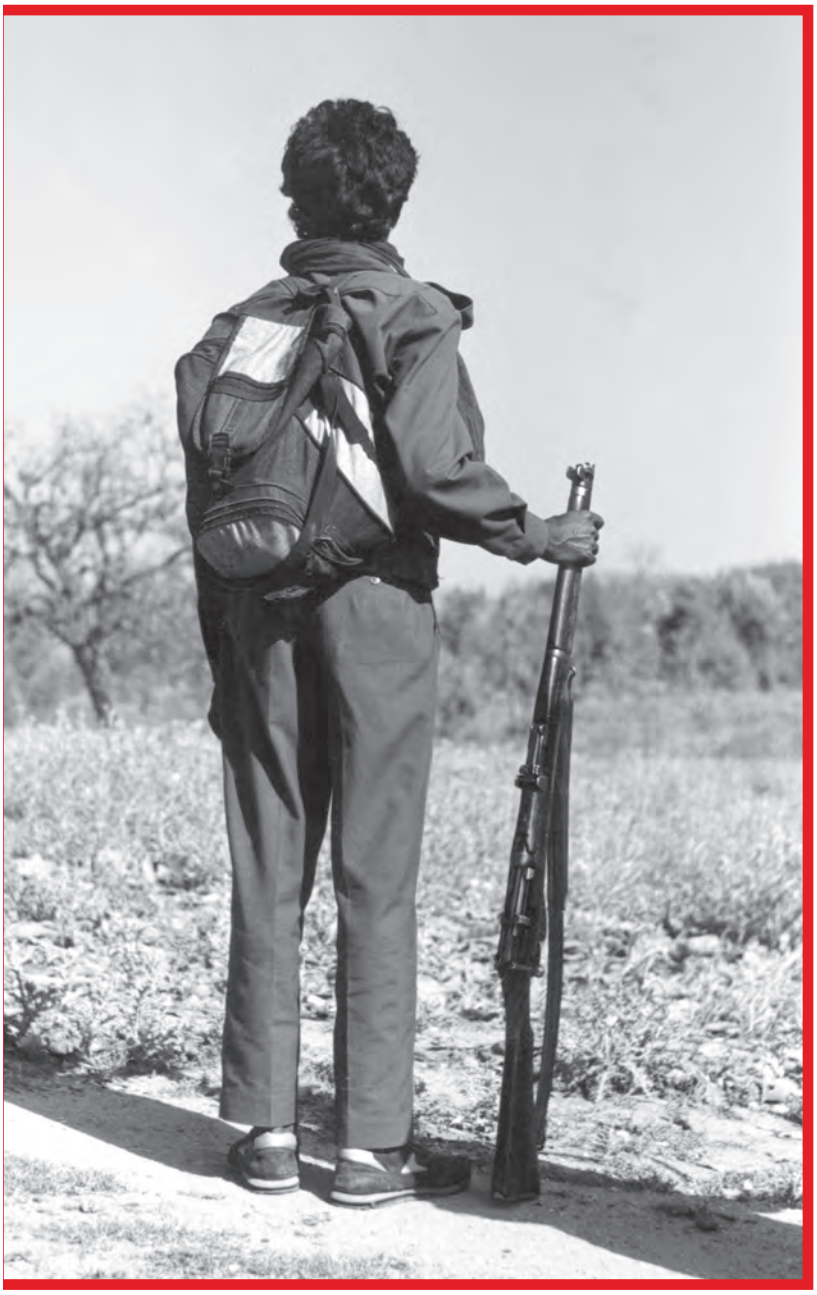
From the archives

Rage and reason



NILMADHAV PANDA

NAXALITES, THE extreme leftist movement tracing their origin to a radical peasant uprising against landlords in West Bengal in 1967 (now called Maoist), today rule India's best forests. Some 40 groups control a region that stretches from the Indo-Nepal border to coastal Andhra Pradesh—an area two-and-half times the size of Bangladesh. And they are spreading faster than forest fires: from a small village to 10 states in just 35 years. Since then, more people have been killed by Naxalites-related violence than in the 10-year-old militancy in Kashmir. Despite the massive police operations, they have continued to spread to new areas. And there is a reason.

By ensuring people's access to forest and distributing forestlands for cultivation, Naxalites have established parallel governments. Willingly or hesitantly, the people too have begun to trust them instead of the government—more for livelihood than for Marx or Mao. The denser the forest, the more is the alienation—tribal people are refused entry into forests; they cannot cultivate lands they believe is theirs. It is simple. People want livelihood, government wants control over forests and Naxalites want "revolution" against this. "Naxalites have put their weapons at people's service in face of such dilemma," says K Balgopal, a civil rights activist in Hyderabad who recently wrote a book on the movement.

On one side is the elected government, which with its misplaced regulations has never addressed people's needs. On the other,

31 DECEMBER 2001

NAXALITES PROFIT FROM PEOPLE'S ANGER AGAINST FOREST LAWS

is a band of armed people knocking on people's doors to solve their problems instantly—at gun point. Caught between the warring groups, the people prefer the latter. "The parallel government is fast, accessible and gives people access to their livelihood sources," admits a senior police official from Chhattisgarh who did not want to be named. For example, courts in the Naxalite-affected areas of Jharkhand have witnessed a drop in the number of cases—from 2,400 in 1996 to 1,600 in 1997.

Is there a way to reverse the trend of the spread of Naxalites? The experience of 46 villages in east Goodavari district and a stronghold of the People's War Group (PWG) may have an answer. These villages managed to stop the Naxalites from entering their areas. Their weapon: a movement based on minor forest produces co-operatives. In 1998, when the Naxalites blasted the storehouse of the state's Girijan Cooperative Society that buys non-timber forest products (NTFPs) from the village cooperatives in Peddamallapuram village, the women came forward and spearheaded the anti-Naxalite movement. "Women are the worst sufferers of deforestation and all the curbs on access to forests as they collect these NTFPs," says Bodeti Lakshmi, a resident of the village.

"Forest rights must be used as a weapon for tackling the problem," says Ravi Rebbapragada of Samata, a Hyderabad-based NGO, who has been a victim of Naxalite threats. History has taught us that Naxalites wouldn't have spread had successive governments learnt from their mistakes: in all the worst affected states, there were massive people's movements for asserting their rights over forest and lands. Governments, instead of addressing the real issue, crushed these movements. As a result, when Naxalites stepped in, they faced little opposition from the people.

Even when governments reacted positively to such an uprising, their commitment never lasted beyond a few years. In the Fourth Five Year Plan, area specific development schemes like small farmer's development agency, tribal development projects, forestry schemes were launched for the first time. But in the Ninth Plan, corruption and bureaucracy made such programmes ineffective. Forestry still remains a state monopoly. The Planning Commission in its observation of the Naxalites problem noted: "The forest departments in Naxalites-affected states do not seem to have any coherent policy." It cites the example of Bastar district where 55 per cent area has been declared as a forest. This has led to the spread of Naxalites.

27th ANNIVERSARY

Conversations

‘TOTALITARIAN MOVEMENTS ARE SELF-DESTRUCTIVE’

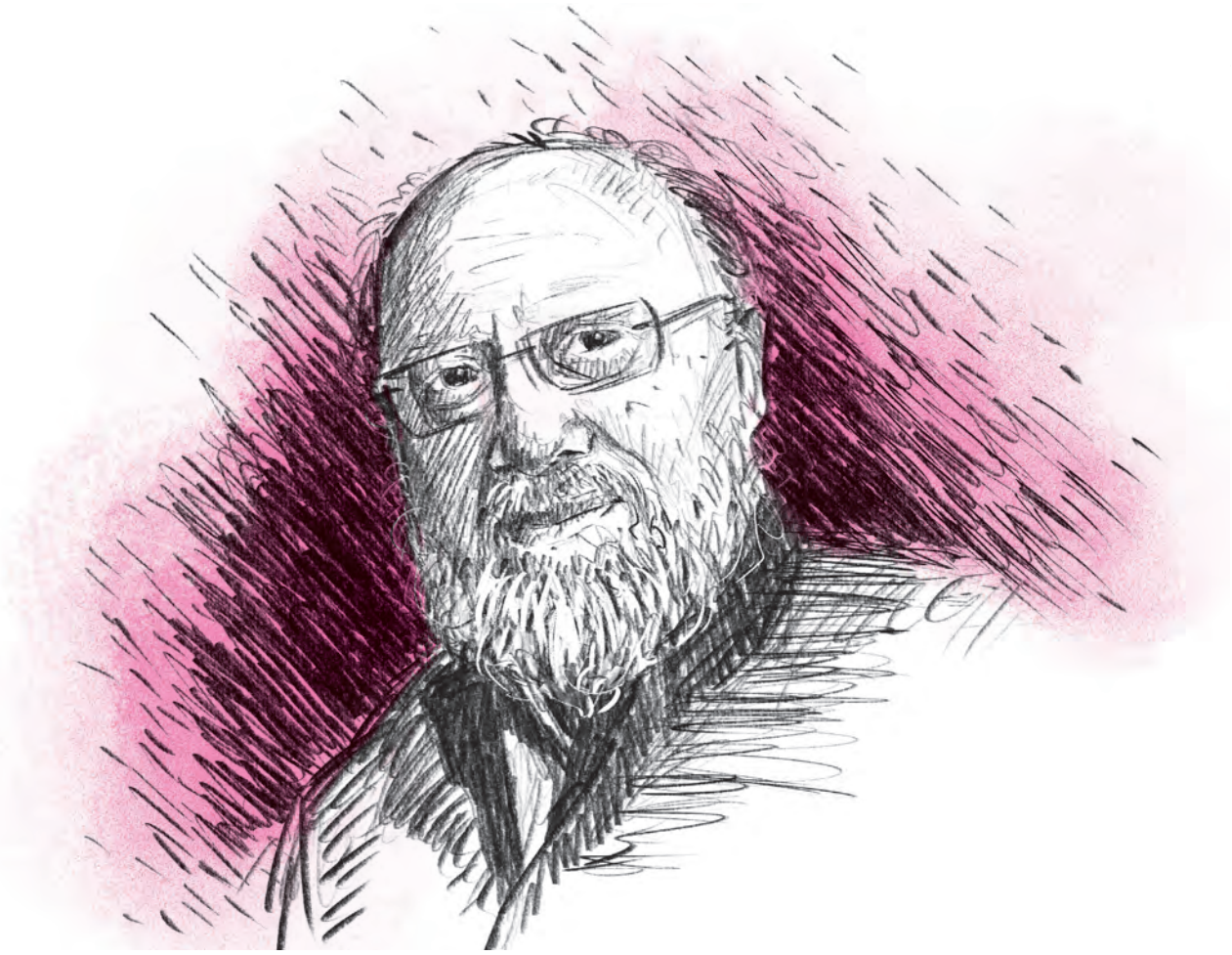
Sociologist Ashis Nandy speaks to Subhojit Goswami

On the jobless youth in India: India is young, and so are Iran, China and the US to some extent. All these countries are feeling the pinch of neo-liberal thrust where jobless growth is a norm rather than an exception. Our country thought that what had once looked like a liability, would become an advantage and we would be able to exploit this huge youth bulge by exporting labour—the cheapest factor of production. But these days, a growing number of countries—especially in Europe, Japan and the US under Trump—are afraid of getting into a situation where they will have to accommodate immigrants to do low-skilled jobs.

A large chunk of India’s youth population is jobless and they are perpetually angry. There is free-floating aggression within them, but they do not know their target of anger. They are looking for targets. This target is usually provided by politicians who know that they cannot otherwise access power. We have to create little more than 8 million jobs every year, but I don’t think we can produce even one-twentieth of that number, especially the kinds of jobs that can absorb the unskilled and semi-skilled people, because the education we provide them qualifies them for semi-skilled work, and not for highly skilled work. I am not very optimistic that we will go very far in alleviating this situation. It will take at least a few years to reorient our policies and the mindset of policymakers to not just focus on the growth rate, but also on employment generation.

On technology taking over jobs: For industries, the introduction of heavily automated processes has its advantages. They do not have to deal with human beings, workers’ union and any of those handicaps. But automation also sparks concerns about potential job losses. Nippon Steel, at one point of time, had about 100,000 workers. Now, I am told, it has less than 100. Maruti is doing the same thing.

As a corollary effect, we see a growing trend wherein the youth is trying to assert its identity. How do you interpret the violent agitations by the Jat community in Haryana or the dalit protests across Uttar Pradesh and Punjab? Jats are a prosperous caste, but some of them have been left behind. They have nothing to fall back on. The fact that young farmers are committing suicide is a clear indicator of the way our agriculture is going. What can the farming community do? They are not identified as OBCs or other backward classes and hence, they do not get those privileges. Similarly, Patels are agitating in Gujarat, because they are facing the same predicament.



On what we can learn from history:
If we go back a few decades in history, especially Europe before the World War II, we had seen regimes where people were hungry and angry. We saw huge mobilisation of jobless youths by both Hitler and Mussolini. In fact, Mussolini's Blackshirts is a direct product of such a bleak situation. Xenophobia and xenophobic violence was used as an antidote to other kinds of frustrations. They thought they had found the real cause for the predicament of the country. They felt that the Jewish population in Germany was not only intellectually dominant but also prosperous. Targeting them was easy.

On xenophobic movements in India:
Unfortunately, in India, we are witnessing a similar kind of mobilisation of aimless, frustrated and destructive youth who are being indoctrinated to Hindutva, which keeps alive the idea of historical wrongs, xenophobia and revenge. Hinduism, today, is shoddily interpreted to fit the ideologies of Veer Savarkar—one of the tallest exponents of Hindu nationalism—who admired totalitarian movements. But all those regimes, we must remind ourselves, did not last long. They were self-destructive.

Unlike in the decades immediately succeeding World War II, today we cannot even expect a sustained protest in the form of literary and art movements against poverty, unemployment and frustration that were the hallmark of those times. Be it the Beat Generation in the US in the 1950s or the rise of the young brigade under the banner of Hungry Generation in India in the 1960s, all these movements were a direct outcome of an era where people were tired of heavy-handed regimes where promises and realities were far apart. The reason such kind of movements or socialist awareness is not possible in the 21st century is that the middle class at that time was primarily dominated by the established middle class. Nowadays, most of them are entering the middle class bandwagon by virtue of their money and not by middle class values. What values do we see in today's middle class who rise in rebellion against the arrest of people who have raped and killed an eight-year-old girl? Unfortunately, the people in power are incapable of thinking through these social problems and there is no real effort to mobilise people who can think for themselves.■

27th ANNIVERSARY

POST SPRING OUTPOURINGS

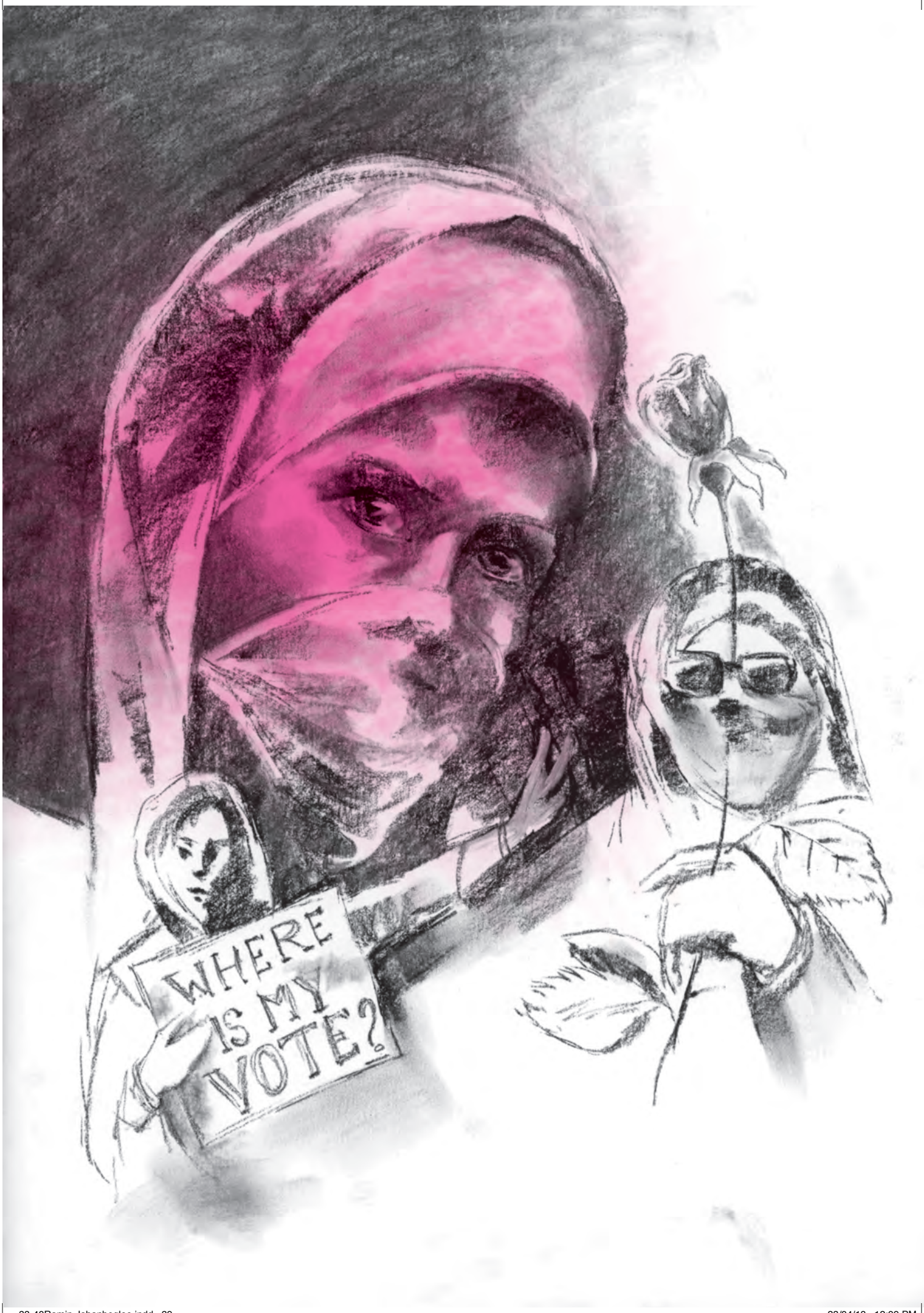
THE SPREAD OF NON-VIOLENT STRATEGIES WILL PROVIDE A MODEL FOR FUTURE EMPOWERMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

RAMIN JAHANBEGLOO

WHEN THE east European youth of the 1980s were struggling against communist authoritarian regimes, they valorised the idea of a democratic space as a horizontal self-organised public sphere that could limit the power of the state. The democratic awakenings of the youth around the Middle East from 2009 to 2012 demonstrated once again that new social movements could help provide the independent space that is needed. What united Tunisian and Egyptian youth in their democratic uprisings, as was also the case with the Iranian youth, was freedom from interference and a struggle against the concentration of arbitrary power. For those young Egyptians, Tunisians and Iranians who gathered for several months on the streets of Cairo, Tunis and Tehran, freedom meant putting an end to the unjust accumulation of power and to demand their governments to be based on public accountability and popular sovereignty.

Though the Arab Spring did not put an end to the process of re-colonisation of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), it is certain that the fall of long-time dictators like Ben Ali, Mubarak and Gaddafi, accompanied by the rise of new civic actors and new social movements around the MENA region, represented a series of encouraging signs that a process of democratisation was possible and ideas of popular sovereignty and the rule of law could be taking hold. Today, seven years on, the Middle East is in tatters and the short period of hope and revolutionary ideals has been followed by new forms of authoritarianism and denial of civil liberties. It is clear that the result of the popular protests has been nothing but chaos, leading either to long-term wars (as in Syria), sectarian conflicts (as in Yemen) or increased repression (as in Egypt). As for Libya, seven years after the capture and execution of Muammer al- Gaddafi, the country resembles a failed state that has plunged into a dangerous unrest.

Talking about the Arab Spring, it would be certainly more correct to talk about "uprisings in the Middle East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and North Africa" instead of using the word "Intifadat al-Arabiya" (Arab uprisings), for the very good reason that we also had an "Intifada al Iraniya" (an Iranian uprising). In all and for all, we can say that the extraordinary uprisings in the Arab world that began in early 2011 had a Persian precursor in 2009, which more than any other civil uprising in this region of the world remains an unfinished project. There are many ways to interpret the Persian Spring of 2009. The young Iranian twitter fans see a social media revolution, the Iranian reformists see a reformist imperative in the Islamic Republic at its core, and Iranian human rights groups see a backlash against routine abuses of the Iranian regime.

But, actually there were a full range of different "drivers of change" involved in bringing about what is called the Green Movement of 2009. Considering the complexities of Iranian society and politics, it is important to highlight the fact that the Green Movement of 2009 was essentially a youth movement, which found deep roots in the principles of non-violence. Without going back too far, we can say that in the last 30 years, Iran has been on the course of a major political and societal evolution since the increasingly young population has become more educated, secular and liberal. As a result, this generational gap divided the Iranian society between essentially money-making and powerful conservatives and young rebels without cause.

Iran became a society divided between Donald Trumps and James Deans. Therefore, it is not strange that the Iranian youth has been at the forefront of support for the nuclear deal because they have suffered the most from unemployment and the Iranian currency devaluation as a result of the sanctions. Whether as internet users or spontaneous demonstrators, the young population of Iran, which represents today more than 60 per cent of the 80 million Iranians around the country, are well educated and believe in gradual change of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Interestingly, over half of Iranians between the ages of 18-25 attend some form of higher education and more than 60 per cent of the entries in the Iranian universities are women. Also, Iranian youngsters are by far the highest per capita users of the internet in the Middle East. The civic rebellion of 2009 was arguably a manifestation of such changing attitudes that have been slowly emerging among Iran's overall young population. These attitudes opened up the options of non-violent discontent among the Iranian youth. This was Iran's Gandhian moment. If there is still an element of non-violence playing in the social attitude of young Iranians, it is about overcoming the ideologisation of politics.

THE GREEN MOVEMENT OF 2009 WAS ESSENTIALLY A NON-VIOLENT YOUTH MOVEMENT

However, two main elements are still missing in such a potential of rebellion: a moral leadership and a determined strategy. In 2009, the movement started strong but soon faced a violent crackdown by the Iranian regime and lost its momentum due to the state's incarceration of protestors and key figures. As a matter of fact, the youth movement of 2009 in Iran was unable to enlist the support of key segments of the Iranian economy, which would have included major industries, transportation and worker unions, government employees, bazaar merchants, and most importantly, oil workers. Certainly, had the movement gained the support of such powerful economic groups, they would have financially weakened the state and possibly made them more inclined to negotiate or engage in some sort of talks like what happened in Poland with the Solidarnosc.

However, the recent wave of social unrest in Iran in December 2017 was more in terms of a shared adherence of the Iranian youth to values of non-violent reforms that are fully compatible with the transformative dynamic of the Iranian civil society. Though it is still too early to speculate about what this transformative dynamic might hold for the future of Iran, one can surely say that the spread of non-violent strategies in the Iranian society would unquestionably be a positive model for the future empowerment of civil societies in the Middle East—this time, of course, free of the shadows of theological revolutions or secular military *coup d'états.* ■

(The author is a political philosopher and teaches at the Jindal Global University, Delhi)

CERTIFICATE COURSE ON

PASSIVE DESIGN TECHNIQUES

India's built sector consumes 30 per cent of its electricity and is responsible for 23.6 per cent of its greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). A more robust energy regime in built environment is crucial to reduce energy consumption and help India meet its energy target as described under Intended Nationally Determined Contributions commitment. 'Passive design' takes advantage of the climate to maintain occupancy comfort in buildings and associated environmental factors and reduce reliance on active lighting, heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems and can increase energy saving potential by about 40%. The government of India incentivizes and mandates these techniques through measures like Energy Conservation Building Code for commercial buildings, (ECBC 2017), energy policy which recognizes building/built environment as key player in associated reductions, integration of environmental conditions in model building bye laws etc.

Anil Agarwal Environment Training Institute (AAETI) offers this course to familiarize participants with the impact of weather conditions on comfortable dwelling, the role building physics plays in designing a built environment, and associated benchmarks. CSE has been working closely with architects and building physicists on sensitizing urban professionals on sustainable building practices and has incorporated all these principles in the AAETI campus construction. AAETI is an ECBC compliant sustainable, state of the art campus. The campus has been selected by Global Environmental Facility, Bureau of Energy Efficiency and UNDP India as one of the 24 Model Energy Efficient Buildings of the country which will be monitored for their energy performance. Participants inhabiting and interacting with the campus building features will enable them to understand the working of all 5 natural elements coming together and acting as a learning tool for building design practices and understanding of energy conservation concepts. The campus has utilized various passive techniques such as decentralized systems (waste water, building waste, renewables, water sensitive design, etc.) which the participants will be made familiar with. (As this involves various hands on exercises, every participant is expected to have a laptop, requisite softwares link will be provided upon registration)

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE TRAINING COURSE:

- Sustainability Development Goals
- The challenge of sustainability
- Climatic conditions and human comfort
- Understanding materials and their properties of insulation, thermal mass etc.
- Understanding the solar path and the role of building orientation and shading devices.
- Understanding building envelope and its components
- Basics of day lighting and its components
- Introduction to passive cooling techniques and low-energy mechanical cooling techniques
- Hands on energy modeling exercise
- Energy-based design of electro-mechanical services
- Introduction to energy-efficient fixtures, controls and service systems, etc.

COURSE FEES
₹21,000 per participant. Student and Group Discounts available. (Course fee includes tution fee, external expert lecture sessions, training materials, **Boarding and lodging**, Transport from New Delhi to AAETI and back)

COURSE DURATION
June 27th-29th, 2018

TIMING
9.30 am to 6 pm

COURSE VENUE
Anil Agarwal Environment Training Institute (Centre for Science and Environment initiative), Nimli (near Alwar), Tijara, Rajasthan

LAST DATE FOR APPLYING
June 17th, 2018

TRAINING METHODOLOGY
Classroom lectures, case studies, class exercises and discussions

WHO CAN APPLY
Architecture, planning and engineering students, architects, academics, researchers, professionals from built sector, urban local bodies and government officials.

FOR DETAILS CONTACT:
Sugeet Grover, Senior Research Associate, Sustainable Buildings and Habitat Programme
Centre for Science and Environment, 41, Tughlakabad Institutional Area, New Delhi-110062
Ph: 91-11-2995 5124 / 6110 (Ext. 283); Fax: 91-11-2995 5879
Mobile : +919818443366 Email: sugeet.grover@cseindia.org

27th ANNIVERSARY

DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE

WHY ARE THE PEDDLERS OF POPULISM PROVING SO POPULAR IN DEMOCRACY?

POPULISM IS everywhere on the rise. Why is this happening? Are there deep forces driving the spread of their style of politics, and what, if anything, has populism to do with democracy? Is populism democracy's essence, as some maintain?

Is the new populism therefore to be welcomed, harnessed and "mainstreamed" in support of more democracy? Or is populism on balance politically dangerous, a cultish recipe for damaging democracy by bringing to life what George Orwell termed the "smelly little orthodoxies" that feed demagogy, big business and bossy power?

As USA voted for Donald Trump, and Filipino citizens live with the fall-out of Rodrigo Duterte's populist rhetoric, scholars from China to Brazil to Australia analyse the phenomena behind populism's ascent.

JOHN KEANE, UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Ancient Greeks knew democracy could be snuffed out by rich and powerful *aristoi* backed by demagogues ruling the people in their own name. They even had a verb (now obsolete) for describing how people are ruled while seeming to rule. They called it *dêmokrateo*. It's the word we need for making sense of the contradiction that cuts through contemporary populism.

Populism is a democratic phenomenon. Mobilised through available democratic freedoms, it's a public

protest by millions of people (the *demos*) who feel annoyed, powerless, no longer "held" in the arms of society.

The analyst D W Winnicott used the term to warn that people who feel dropped strike back. That's the populist moment when humiliated people lash out in support of demagogues promising them dignity. They do so not because they "naturally" crave leaders, or yield to the inherited "fascism in us all".

Populism attracts people because it raises their expectations of betterment. But there's a price. In exchange for promises of popular sovereignty, populism easily mass produces figures like Napoleon Bonaparte, Benito Mussolini, Viktor Orbán and Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

And in contrast to the 19th-century populist politics of enfranchisement, today's populism has exclusionary effects. The *dêmokrateo* of it all isn't stoppable by anodyne calls for "dialogue", or false hopes populism will somehow burn itself out. What's needed is something more radically democratic: a new politics of equitable redistribution of power, wealth and life chances that shows populism to be a form of counterfeit democracy.

Once upon a time, such political redistribution was called "democracy", or "welfare state", or "socialism".

WHAT'S NEEDED IS A NEW POLITICS OF EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF POWER, WEALTH AND LIFE CHANCES

BENJAMIN MOFFITT, STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY

If there's one thing we need to do in response to populism's triumphant return to the global political landscape, it is this: stop shaking our heads and feigning shock. Media pundits, mainstream parties, pollsters and experts of various stripes are continually dazed by populists' success—think Donald Trump, Brexit, Pauline Hanson, Rodrigo Duterte—but these are not weird one-offs: these events are happening across the globe.

Why now? There are at least five central factors. "The elite" is on the nose, for good reason, in many parts of the world. The shifting media landscape favours the simple, headline-grabbing, dramatic message of populists. Populist actors have become increasingly savvy and increased their appeal over the past decade. Populists have seized the crisis-ridden moment, and have been remarkably successful at not only reacting to crises, but actively aiming to bring about and perpetuate a sense of crisis. Finally, populists have been very effective at exposing the deficiencies of contemporary democratic systems across the globe.

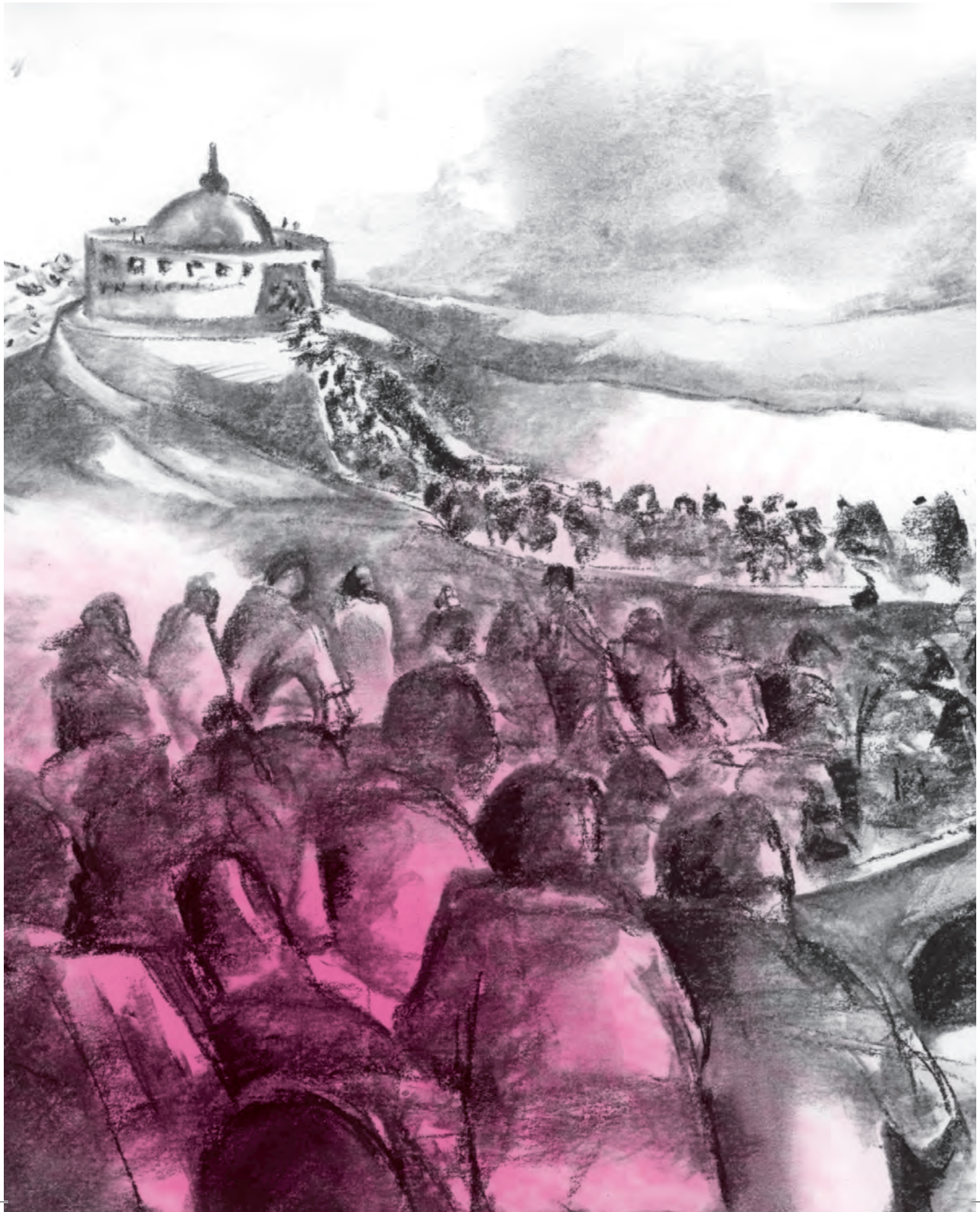
So let's drop the surprise, the shaking of heads in disbelief, the paralysis brought on by continually asking ourselves "how can this be?" It's now time to acknowledge that populism is a central part of contemporary politics.

CRISTÓBAL ROVIRA KALTWASSER, DIEGO PORTALES UNIVERSITY

Whether we like it or not, populists around the world are posing legitimate questions about the state of democracy. Many citizens feel betrayed by mainstream political forces. To a great extent, this can be explained by the growing influence of unelected bodies.

Although elected leaders can take important decisions, their room for manoeuvre is increasingly limited by unelected institutions, which in theory are autonomous and contribute to the provision of public goods. However, nothing precludes that unelected bodies run amok or side with powerful minorities.

Consider the way the US Supreme Court has intensified the role of money in politics, or the failure of the European Union to force the financial sector to pay its fair share of



the costs of the recession.

Populists are real experts in politicising these and other issues ignored by the political establishment. This is why policy makers and scholars need to avoid falling into the populist trap: portraying themselves as the good and smart fighters against bad and stupid populists. The best way of dealing with populists is to engage them in honest dialogue and to propose solutions to the problems they seek to politicise.

JAN ZIELONKA,
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Ruling elites in the Western world have recently identified a convenient scapegoat explaining all their failures: they call it populism.

The future of America, Europe or Australia, they say, would be bright if not for a bunch of populists destroying all the good work done by (neo-)liberals. These distasteful populists propose simple solutions to complicated problems. They use moralistic rhetoric, make unrealistic promises and launch unfair personal attacks on their opponents. They demonise the elite and idealise ordinary people, setting the latter against the former. Populists manipulate the confused and uninformed electorate. They make it difficult for the elite to govern in a rational and effective manner.

The story is too devious to be true. There's nothing wrong with simple solutions if they are just, efficient, and based on democratic procedures. Moralistic rhetoric is used by the ruling elite itself on a daily basis: remember the "axis of evil" on the eve of the 2003 Iraq invasion?

Smearing opponents and making empty promises are the daily bread and butter of mainstream politicians. And what is wrong with implementing the will of the people? Aren't elections a means of defining citizens' preferred policies, and not just a beauty contest of politicians? Mainstream elites, centre-left and centre-right today presume that government is a kind of enlightened administration on behalf of an ignorant

public. Yet their political practices betray their proclaimed liberal ideals: they tolerate rampant inequality, spy on citizens, torture prisoners and invade other countries.

The borders between democracy and autocracy, civility and barbarity have become blurred. No wonder voters are searching for alternatives. Ruling elites should look at themselves in the mirror before blaming others.

WOLFGANG MERKEL, HUMBOLDT UNIVERSITY

From a normative standpoint, things are clear: cosmopolitans who uphold equality, global justice, ethno-religious tolerance and human rights cannot accept right-wing populism. Nationalism, chauvinism, ethno-religious intolerance are incommensurable with the values of an open and tolerant society.

Things are less clear when we try to explain the rise of right-wing populist parties. People who belong to the enlightened, cosmopolitan, middle and upper classes often argue that right-wing populism is the result of a demagoguery that is especially attractive to uneducated people from the lower classes. This explanation is not just inadequate; it bespeaks arrogant ignorance.

Right-wing populism in Europe has three causes: a general discontent with European integration; economic exclusion; and disaffection and fear of a large influx of migrants and refugees. Large swathes of the lower middle class complain of their exclusion from public discourse. The neo-liberal version of globalisation and the general failure of the moderate left to address the distributive question have created feelings of impotence and marginalisation among the lower classes.

Right-wing populism is thus a rebellion of the disenfranchised. The establishment parties have arguably committed serious political errors. It's high time that they leave their fortress of normative arrogance and grant a democratic voice to the non-represented. If they fail to do so, right-wing populists will transform our democracies: they will become more parochial, intolerant and polarised.

YU KEPING, PEKING UNIVERSITY

Both the Chinese government and Chinese intellectuals are acutely aware of the phenomenon of populism, which last flourished here during the Cultural Revolution. In 1996, I urged Chinese policy makers to prevent populism, which always tends towards extreme forms of plebeianism. Plebeian standards are seen as the ultimate source of legitimacy of all social and political dynamics.

In its opposition to elitism, populism ignores, or radically negates, the vital role played by political elites in processes of social and political change and historical development. Populism instead advocates radical reforms, and deems ordinary people the only decisive force capable of promoting these reforms. The hopes, needs and emotions of the people are the origin and destiny of its concerns. By affirming their spirit and capacity for innovation, populism has a positive implication: it teaches us to pay attention to the historical role played by people.

But populism has its limits. Not only does it ignore the role played by elites in making historical progress, by emphasising the need for mobilising the general population, it also calls for absolute obedience to the passions and will of the people.

That is why populism often manages to manipulate and control people in highly centralised ways. Populism can thus easily lead to autocracy, and to anarchy. ■

THE RULING ELITES SHOULD LOOK AT THEMSELVES IN THE MIRROR BEFORE BLAMING OTHERS

27th ANNIVERSARY

CAN MOVEMENT POLITICS RENEW EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY?

THEY ARE PERSONALITY-DRIVEN, WHICH HAS NEITHER MADE THEM MORE DEMOCRATIC NOR INCLUSIVE

JAN-WERNER MUELLER

MANY PEOPLE expected the big political story of 2017 to be about the triumph of populism in Europe. But things didn't turn out that way. Instead, the biggest story was about self-styled "movements" upending or replacing traditional political parties.

Consider French President Emmanuel Macron's La République En Marche, which swept the French presidential and parliamentary elections this past spring. Or consider how, at the end of the year, 31-year-old Sebastian Kurz became Chancellor of Austria after refashioning the conservative Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) into a movement called "The Sebastian Kurz list—The New People's Party."

Across the European continent, more voters have come to see traditional political parties as self-interested and power-hungry. In the developing world, too, parties with well-established pedigrees, such as the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa, are now widely regarded as corrupt. In many cases, traditional parties have become what political scientists call "cartels": they use state resources to remain in power, and, regardless of their policy differences, they often work together to keep out challengers.

Young voters, in particular, seem to have less interest in working for traditional parties, which they view as overly bureaucratic, and thus boring. One is reminded of Oscar Wilde's famous quip about the


MOVIMIENTO

problem with socialism: it takes up too many evenings. Not surprisingly, then, the most innovative political experiments in Europe in recent years have emerged from street protests and mass assemblies that eschewed hierarchical forms of organisation.

For example, Spain's left-wing Podemos was formed after mass demonstrations by the indignados in 2011. Italy's populist Five Star Movement (M5S), which came out on top in Italy's 2013 parliamentary elections and is predicted to do well again in 2018, emerged from large rallies organised by comedian Beppe Grillo against "la casta"—his derogatory term for what he sees as the country's ruling caste of professional politicians and journalists.

Yet something funny happened between these movements' origins as spontaneous, inclusive street protests and their later success at the ballot box. Ironically, even as they have continued to tout horizontal forms of organisation and participatory democracy, their charismatic leaders have concentrated ever more power in their own hands. Podemos Secretary-General Pablo Iglesias, for instance, has drawn criticism from idealistic activists in the movement for his "hyper-leadership" and "online Leninism." In response, Iglesias has declared that, "one cannot storm heaven by consensus."

Grillo holds no official position in M5S, which bills itself as a "non-association," and yet he owns the blog that has been key to the movement's success, as well as the copyright to its official symbol. He has revoked M5S members' right to use that symbol for supposedly breaking the "rules"—or what is officially called the "non-statute"—of his "anti-party." And those running for public office under the M5S banner must sign a contract promising to pay fines if they violate party principles.

Of course, political movements are not necessarily populist in nature. As the Green and feminist movements have shown, a movement can contest traditional forms of politics without claiming to represent "the real people" or the "silent majority."

But today's political movements also tend to be less pluralistic than the large parties that have dominated post-war European politics. This makes sense, given that "movement" implies not just dynamism, but also a presumption that all members are in complete agreement about the path forward.

The problem is that when everyone supposedly already agrees on where they are going, there seems to be no need for extensive democratic deliberation. Thus, the movements that have emerged in Europe in recent years—on both the left and the right—have focused on strengthening their respective individual leaders, rather than empowering their rank-and-file members, even when they emphasize participatory democracy.

TODAY'S MOVEMENTS ARE LESS PLURALISTIC THAN IN POST-WAR EUROPE

In the case of Macron and Kurz, each leader has tapped into the sense of dynamism and purpose that is usually a key feature of single-issue movement politics. Kurz, for his part, has bent the entire ÖVP to his will. In addition to giving it a new name, he has reorganized its internal structures and changed its official color from black to turquoise. Still, the party's conservative platform has hardly changed at all, suggesting that Kurz's moves are about marketing and asserting his personal authority more than anything else.

In the end, Podemos, La République En Marche!, and Momentum, the youth movement that helped Jeremy Corbyn reshape the British Labour Party's platform, are not important because they are movements per se. Rather, they are important because they provide more political choices for citizens, especially those frustrated with prevailing duopolies—political systems dominated by two long-established parties offering nearly identical policy prescriptions.

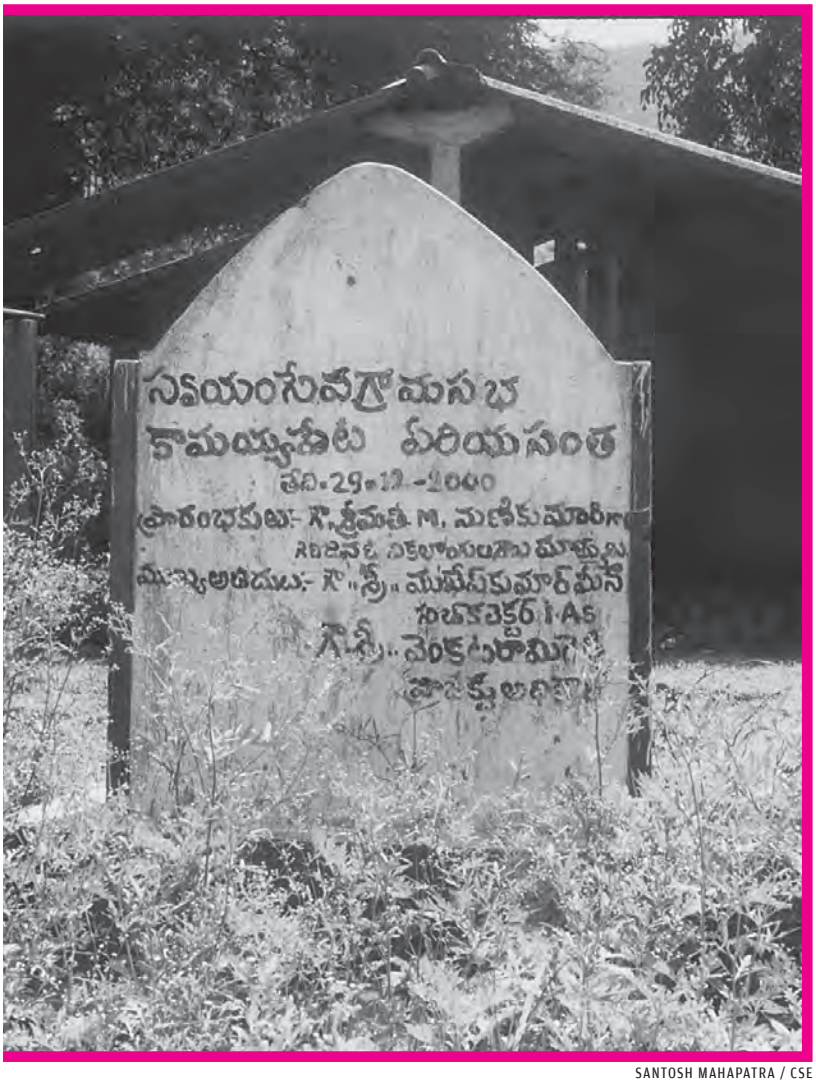
In Corbyn's case, movement politics could reestablish Labour's progressive credentials, and reverse what many saw as an embrace of neoliberal policies under former Prime Minister Tony Blair. But it would be naive to think that movements alone will make European politics more democratic. If anything, they could operate even less democratically than traditional parties, owing to their strong plebiscitary forms of leadership. ■

(Jan-Werner Mueller is a professor of politics at Princeton University. His latest book is What is Populism?*)*

27th ANNIVERSARY

From the archives

The second Independence



SANTOSH MAHAPATRA / CSE

ONE FINE morning in March 1999, an innocuous stone slab appeared at the entrance of Kamyapeta, a village in Andhra Pradesh (undivided) 's Visakhapatnam district, declaring it a self-ruled republic. "Since then, our writ runs large," says Manmad Rao, a resident who now visits other villages to propagate self-rule.

In their first meeting, the villagers asked the government to construct a bridge and give up control over what they believe is their resources: thick forest, land and numerous water sources. Within three years, the state government started constructing the bridge with a budget of ₹2.5 crore. Though the government still doesn't acknowledge these villages, officials never dare to miss any summon from the gram sabha (village assembly).

In fact, Kamyapeta has gained independence for the second time. Home to the legendary tribal freedom fighter, Marie Kamaya, it joined the freedom movement to save its forests and land from British logging companies. Marie's land and house were confiscated and the village was declared 'criminal'. When India attained independence, Marie thought the village's traditional governance system would be restored.

"But nothing changed. Earlier we were exploited by the British, now it is the forest department," says Marie Ramana, son of the freedom fighter. "When we declared self-rule, my father's dream came true," he says. Kamyapeta's second independence is, in fact, a realisation of Mahatma Gandhi's cherished dream of gram swaraj (village republic).

The stone slab, a symbol of the 25 villages'

31 AUGUST 2002

ABOUT 1,500 VILLAGES ACROSS THE COUNTRY HAVE DECLARED THEMSELVES "VILLAGE REPUBLICS". THEY TEACH INDIA A FIRST-HAND LESSON IN GOVERNANCE

republic status, is also making appearances elsewhere in the country. Mostly in villages scattered across India's poorest regions and yet untouched by the fruits of the first Independence. A conservative estimate based on different reports shows that close to 1,500 villages have declared themselves village republics. In these villages, residents control their natural resources—forest, land, minerals and water sources.

They have also formed effective institutions to manage these resources. They plan, execute and resolve all affairs inside the village. Government officials and programmes are accepted only when the gram sabha approves them. In many such villages, the forest department, the police and other officials are just restricted to executing programmes chalked out in village meetings.

Interestingly, most of these self-ruled villages are located in the scheduled areas. Traditionally and constitutionally, these villages are entitled to autonomous status. For these villages, December 24 is more auspicious than August 15. "After the Panchayat (Extension to Schedule Areas) Act (PESA) came into effect from December 24, 1996, we have a new lease of life," says Kushal Horo, a resident of Masmano village. This act is a radical piece of legislation, which gives virtual control over all the resources to the communities in the scheduled areas. These villages have adopted PESA and merged it with their own traditional systems of governance to manage village affairs.

In all these villages, there is one formal institution—the gram sabha. And without waiting for the governor's definition of a village, people have drawn their village map. The result: even a small hamlet comprising a few households now has its own gram sabha. While the gram sabha has become central to such republics, what keeps them united is the issue of livelihood. While in comparatively new villages with self-rule the gram sabhas directly monitor village affairs, older villages like Seed in Rajasthan and Mendha in Maharashtra have formed different committees to look after different resources in the village.

"In these villages, natural resources and their equitable distribution form the core of governance," says Bhagwan Majhi, a leader of Kucheipadar village in Rayagada, Odisha which has declared self-rule. Many of these villages have chalked out their development road map. Due to direct intervention of the gram sabha, many villages have evolved innovative solutions to local problems. For example in Kucheipadar, villagers have a community labour participation programme for cultivation in private lands to tackle labour shortage.

27th ANNIVERSARY

IMPRISONED STEREOTYPE

DALIT YOUTH ARE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO SUFFER FROM THE COGNITIVE BURDEN OF DISCRIMINATION THAN OTHER GROUPS

D SHYAM BABU

ONE ASPECT of globalisation is universal: this is an aspirational age. Its flip side is that it is also an age of anxieties. We should remember that youth unrest, as manifested in several outpourings like the Occupy-Wall-Street movement, is taking place at a time when poverty levels everywhere are coming down. While the youth today have inherited their parents' legacy of expecting permanent jobs, the global economy has set the stage for a different world where people will be changing jobs and places of work several times during their working life.

Dalits are confronted with hurdles to pursue their aspirations, over and above what other "normal" groups are confronted with. This is also true of Muslims and other groups who suffer from the stigma of negative stereotypes.

There are two aspects that further complicate the life of dalits. One, a little over three-fourths of them live in rural areas. Two, their share in the population of badly governed states with less urbanisation is higher than their national average.

These aspects have several implications. They tend to go to government or government-aided schools, which means that they end up studying in non-English medium. In any case, their social and economic conditions merely enable them to get a modicum of education (in social sciences or humanities) which may be appropriate for generalist jobs in government, such as civil services.

Thanks to affirmative action, most educated dalits from a couple of generations after Independence were able to secure government jobs. This was also the period when the government was expanding. The shrinkage of jobs in government for some time now may be contrasted with increasing literacy and educational levels among the community.


A DISEASE OF MIND

In the future, the key to making it in life will require education in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Given that dalit students are fewer in STEM subjects forces one to draw a bleak picture. But academic Pratap Bhanu Mehta diagnoses a different aspect of the problem when he writes, "Almost all words that designate any collective identity—Hindus, Muslims, dalits, Indian, or even categories of gender—are almost casually used to imprison people than recognise them." The dalit identity is entirely ascriptive in that dalits had no role in its construction. Since their very identity remains their prison, even solutions (like affirmative action) that are aimed at helping them more often end up not helping them. For example, under the quota system the quid pro quo is, to get an economic benefit (such as jobs) a dalit must admit his social inferiority by having his identity certified.

It is undeniable that the Constitutional scheme to help them has had a very positive impact. However, one aspect of the dalit identity has to a large extent been ignored: the cognitive impact of discrimination. Dalit youth are more susceptible to suffer the cognitive burden of their very being due to their broader awareness. Increasingly, college and university campuses are becoming the locus of discrimination, contestation and violence. Here, dalit students face a double whammy. In addition to facing discrimination at the individual level, they also internalise the condition of the whole community.

In Canada, the US, and the UK, cognitive impact of discrimination suffered by minorities has been studied well in social epidemiology, psychiatry and social psychology. The insights that these studies provided became critical inputs in policymaking to help minorities process their environments better.

Consider the case of Rohit Vemula, a dalit student at the University of Hyderabad, who committed suicide a couple of years ago. A more just and positive campus environment would not have pushed him over the edge. But, more importantly, this could have been avoided had the university officials put in place policies that address cognitive burden of discrimination, along with a professional counselling service, which is a routine in more "advanced" counties. One doesn't even have to be a psychiatrist to notice extreme emotional stress and despair displayed in the letter that Vemula wrote to his vice-chancellor.

In India, there are hardly any studies on the problem, rendering public policy that much poorer in serving the dalit youth. However, in 2006, one seminal study was published by two World Bank economists, Karla Hoff and Priyanka Pandey, which established the existence of the so-called "stereotype threat". A group of sixth and seventh grade dalit and upper caste students were given simple skill tasks. In a setting wherein students were neither conscious of their own caste(s), nor aware of other students' caste(s), there was no caste variance in the performance of students. However, when students were made aware of their respective castes, the performance of dalit students declined considerably (almost 20 percent decline).

THREE-FOURTHS OF DALITS LIVE IN RURAL AREAS IN BADLY GOVERNED STATES

The findings of Hoff and Pandey validate the stereotype-threat hypothesis with regard to dalits. This should have resulted in more studies and prompted the government to unpack the policy implications of the study in contextualising discrimination and discourse on discrimination. The challenge is two-fold: one, to create an environment which does not perpetuate negative stereotypes against dalits; and, two, to formulate policies and coping mechanisms to help dalit students process their condition better so as to insulate themselves and safeguard their morale.

Is this the proverbial silver bullet? Maybe not. A complex and centuries old problem like the caste system requires a thousand remedies, and no remedy is too small or trivial.

By the way, B R Ambedkar called caste "a disease of mind". The disease operates in one manner in the minds of the perpetrators, and in another manner in the minds of its victims. At least the victims can be helped to develop self-awareness that, despite myriad material manifestations of caste, it is also a trick on their minds. ■

(The author is a senior fellow, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal)

27th ANNIVERSARY

Conversations

‘AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICIES ARE UNDER THREAT’

Dalit leader Prakash Ambedkar speaks to Jitendra

On restlessness among dalit youth:
Both dalit and non-dalits are restless in terms of the unavailability of effective employment. Yes, the young population is growing, but the population of the Scheduled Caste community has been stagnating at 15 per cent as compared to other communities.

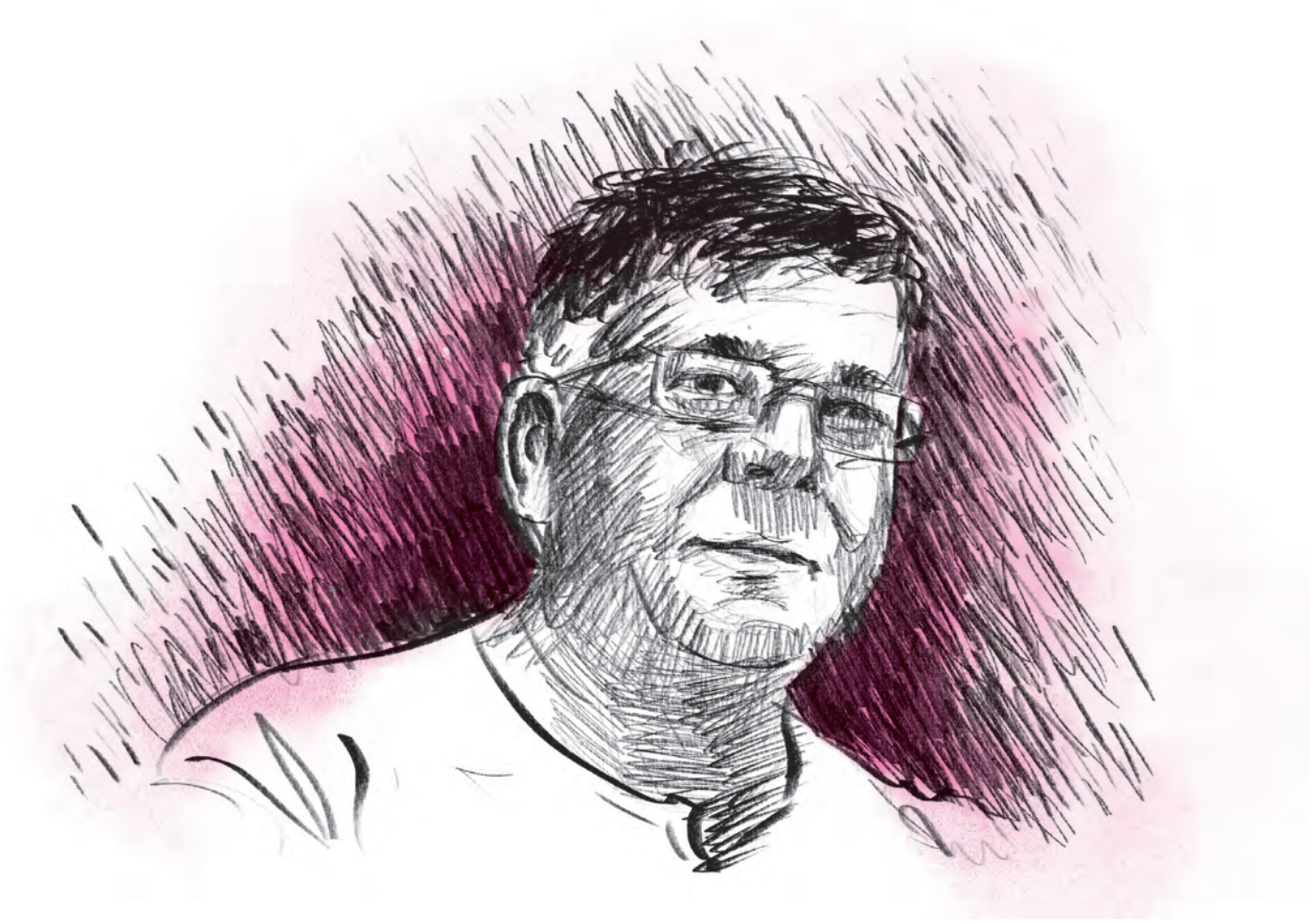
As far as cornering new jobs, non-dailits benefitted more after the boom in the IT sector. Earlier, the non-dalits got both preferential treatment as well as a fat pay. As dalits and other communities started joining the sector, it became competitive—now there is neither preferential treatment nor a fat pay as companies are getting work done at a lesser cost. When Western countries started to cut down on off shore jobs, the ones who joined late, the dalits, were the first to face the axe. So they became the first victims of unemployment.

Worse, there are no new employment sectors emerging that can employ these large numbers of social groups. That’s because the national leadership is intellectually bankrupt to address the situation.

We must remember that restlessness among dalit youth is higher than in other groups because they are twice victimised—they were traditionally left out of the mainstream and now the present government is keeping them at bay. The mechanisms that were created in the past for them to join the mainstream are today under threat.

On affirmative action:
The constitution has given us some protection which is under attack by both the administration and the judiciary. The government should get a clear message from millions of dalit people who came on the streets on April 2 to protests against the dilution of affirmative action policies.

I am all for taking stock of affirmative action policies because for the last 70 years, neither poverty has diminished, nor has there been any improvement in the financial condition of the dalits. Practically these policies might be nothing to dalits, but there is a class of people who



want to take away even these rights.

On movements in university campus:
Universities are the enlightened class. Protests are inevitable. I don't think universities should be blamed for the shrinking of space for dissenting voices. It is the government which should be blamed. These universities are just implementing the government's agenda. Today, you may land up in jail for just criticising the government. This fundamental change needs to be looked into. Earlier, the government paid heed to criticism. The government has not been looking into the issues raised by students. That's why campuses across India are on a tipping point.

On global politics and the youth:
Europe as well as USA is becoming conservative. They are living under fear psychosis because they don't have enough younger and working population. And they are afraid that foreigners might take away whatever jobs are left there. In fact, many countries have started giving benefits to citizens to have more children.

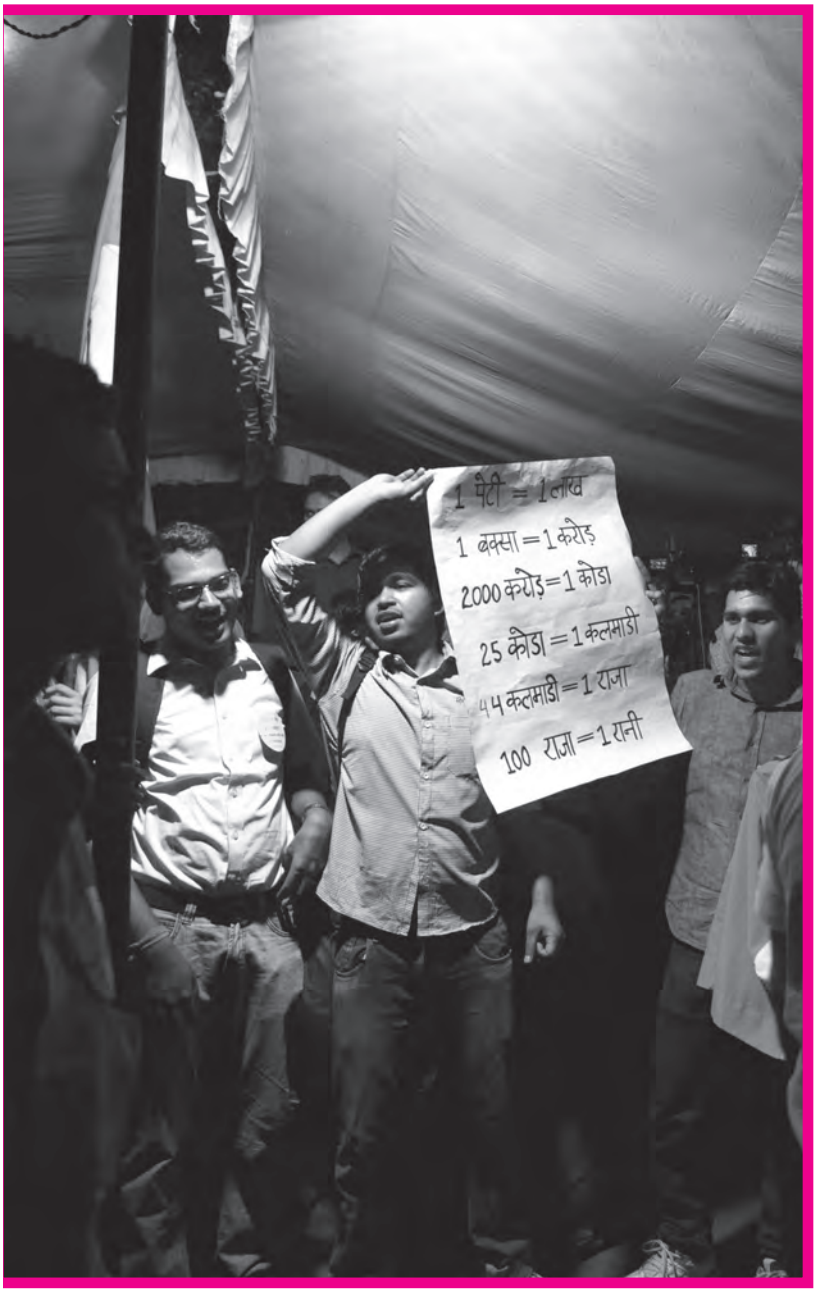
Yes some parts of the world are facing restlessness. In these countries, the population is increasing at fast rate or is stable.

On de-globlisation:
In 1990s, Western countries pushed globalisation, thinking it was in their favour. Now they realise that they do not have much to gain. That's why they have started erecting economic barricades. Globalisation favours intermingling of populations, but this created cultural fears among Western nations. In India too, the Vedic Hindu religion barred the mingling of caste groups. If we want to come up as nation, we have to give up the Vedic religion—which propagates caste system—to mingle with the many cultures of India. ■

27th ANNIVERSARY

From the archives

Civil *vs* political

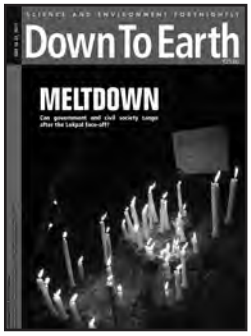


SAYANTONI PALCHAOUDHURI / CSE

JUST OVER three months ago, Jantar Mantar became the epicentre of a nationwide frenzy against corruption. Social activist Anna Hazare was on a fast-unto-death over his single-point demand of enacting a stringent Lokpal Bill, which would establish an institution to deal with cases of corruption in high offices. Hazare was joined by thousands of supporters at the venue, while millions across the country endorsed his fight. Within four days, the government gave in and announced formation of a 10-member joint drafting committee to script the proposed legislation. Hazare was to nominate five of these members as representatives of civil society. The other five were to be ministers.

In the weeks that followed, the drafting committee held nine meetings but the atmosphere at most of these was far from cordial. Both sides stuck to their guns on contentious issues like bringing the prime minister, senior judges, members of Parliament and the bureaucracy under the ambit of the Lokpal. The situation reached a flashpoint on June 22 when the two sides declared that they had failed to achieve consensus on a single draft of the Bill.

The government has cleverly manipulated the anti-corruption campaign and turned the public debate into a battle between civil society and Parliament. Leaders of almost every political party have questioned the legitimacy of civil society in drafting a bill. “Small groups comprising three or five people cannot claim leadership on



31 JULY 2011

ANNA HAZARE'S CAMPAIGN FOR THE LOKPAL BILL HAD AN UNEXPECTED TWIST: ATTEMPTS WERE MADE TO BRING CIVIL SOCIETY TOO UNDER SCANNER

such issues," says Congress media head Janardan Dwivedi.

India has around 3.2 million registered non-government organisations (NGOs). Indians have more per capita NGOs than hospital beds. The Central Statistical Organisation of India states there are around four NGOs for every 1,000 people in urban areas and 2.3 NGOs for every 1,000 rural population. Their work spans a wide spectrum, from judiciary to legislatures to media. There is hardly any ministry that does not support or engage an NGO. Due to its wide reach it is often called the third sector.

The government-civil society relations appear to have hit the nadir. The political class termed the five civil society members of the Bill's joint drafting committee "unelectable tyrants". But civil society groups argue that despite being self-appointed, the work of NGO leaders is more open to public scrutiny.

In this context, the assertion of advocacy NGOs cannot be missed. These groups have confronted the government and the political class the most. They are also linked to international campaigns and networks which provide them instant global acknowledgement.

The changed scenario has prompted the government to set new conditions while engaging with NGOs. The government does not want civil society to have any say in formulating rules. For instance, its views are not being taken while drafting the land acquisition and right to food legislation.

This has created division between NGOs that take support from the government and "activist" groups which adopt aggressive policy postures. Community-based organisations and people's movements also look upon both kinds of NGOs with suspicion. "Liberalisation has split us on the ground of money. Movements do not have money, but they form the core of any campaign for change," says Madhuresh.

Already, there is an attempt to create a regulatory mechanism for NGOs. A task force constituted by the Planning Commission has suggested a statutory body called National Accreditation Council of India. NGOs oppose it calling it a government control mechanism. They argue the body cannot be "self-regulatory" as it will have significant government representation. The body will have 51 members, of which 20 will be from the non-government sector. The rest will be nominated by government and industrial houses.

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Centre for Science and Environment recognises Social Impact Assessment (SIA) as an important tool to inform decision makers, regulators and stakeholders about the possible social and economic impacts of a development project. To be effective, SIA requires the active involvement of all concerned stakeholders. CSE has developed a five-day training programme aimed at giving practical exposure to participants on SIA with specific reference to infrastructure, mining and other industrial projects.

The programme is designed based on the new Act, "The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013".

The objective of this programme is to build a cadre of trained professionals who can conduct and review SIA reports. The programme will also impart understanding of the issues and challenges in land acquisition, enhance skills in socio-economic surveys, consultations, data collection, planning land acquisition and rehabilitation and resettlement plan. The course would also discuss applicable central/state laws such as Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), The Forest Rights Act, 2006, and the Companies Act, 2013 and their significance to the overall process of SIA.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS WILL LEARN?

1. Land conflicts, land classification, land rights and governance
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