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Celebrating 75 years of Indian independence

As India celebrates 75 years of independence, this edition of *Communique* offers a glimpse into the momentous developments of a young, complex nation. We explore facets of the independence movement and how much has changed today. To peek into the socio-political intricacies of India is to comprehend our tales of sports, education, women's empowerment, and protest culture among others; it is also about our affinity with media and the Constitution. We take you through the journey into the notable moments, movements and motivations that shaped the nation and explore what shapes a new India today, 75 years on.

Art in protest permeates through ages

Expression meets resistance as protest art thrives on new media

Gabriella Symss

SwEEPING black brush strokes show a gaunt woman with an empty bowl in one hand and the other placed half protectively, half encouragingly around desperate thin children. The brush strokes change to breezy touches, depicting messy hair falling over emaciated faces. They change again to short, sharp jabs to emphasise ribs on starving bodies. The top right corner of the paper reads 'Zainul 1943'.

This is one among the series of sketches by Bengal School artist Zainul Abedin depicting the Bengal famine of 1943 to which he was a witness. Many artists like him in the colonial era and the spirit of Swadeshi that arose during the time, drew on the everyday political climate to produce work that not only depicted a range of emotions and events but also presented powerful messages of opposition.

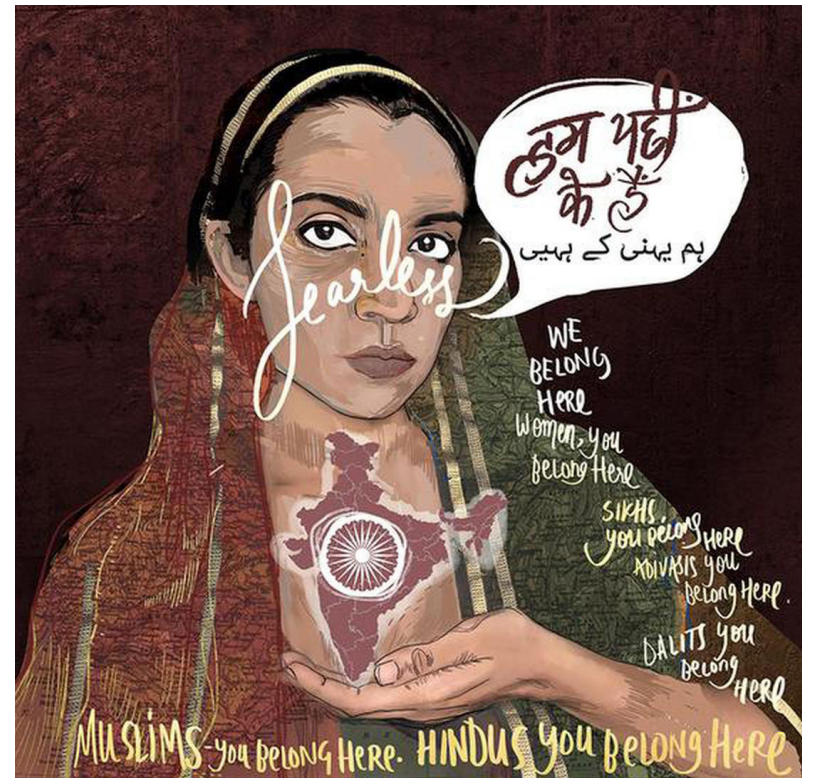
Today, art as a means of protest and resistance has arguably grown even larger with the onset of wider distribution, organisation and technological boom. The sentiments that might have guided Abedin, Abanindranath Tagore, Raja Ravi Varma and the like, still exist in physical mediums and thrive in the digital sphere as well.

Social media has offered a blending of global protest art with local movements as well as the use

of localised forms of expression on highly visible platforms. "It [technology and social media] comes with an unimaginable amount of speed to take your thoughts to different places," says illustrator and designer Ashish Bagchi whose works include digital illustrations that deal with a variety of issues such as the Covid crisis in India and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. But this wide reach has also meant that the online platforms with increasingly polarised debates have changed into heated spaces for artists. "I get extremes of reactions since I'm considered one who is taking sides," adds Bagchi, saying he receives everything from 'adulations and duas' to 'threats and curses'.

The online world's democratic nature of accessibility has meant that a wider range of people can now participate in the production and consumption of art. An intricately sculpted statue depicting opposition to police brutality can exist side by side with the amateur graffiti scrawl of 'SAY NO TO FACISM' on a concrete wall.

Women's voices raised in song at Shaheen Bagh was a form of artistic protest. The Kadak Collective, self-described 'creatives against CAA', produced various posters, designs and illustrated informational material on the subject. Cartoonists such as Suhail Naqshban-



An artwork by Shilo Shiv Sulaiman

thehindu.com

di, from the Kashmir daily Greater Kashmir, and Rachita Taneja, creator of the Sanitary Panels webcomic, are examples of artists who engage in political commentary and protest through their art.

"The obligation to identify and uphold the truth falls on artists just as it does on journalists and activists," says Akib Siddiqui. His latest piece of digital art depicts activist Afreen Fatima, finger raised, mid-speech. The background says 'Stand with Afreen' - her name in

English, Hindi, and Urdu. "Art gives us a possibility to bring people and ideas together, so yes, it can be an effective form of protest."

Protests take many forms, and the evolution of protest art has only grown to include more mediums. Among Siddiqui's carefully curated, digitally drawn Arabic typography and calligraphy, a metallic pink word with gold metal highlights stands out on a black background. The word is 'Shuja' - meaning brave.

Constitutional socialism vs Political socialism

Even as the word 'socialism' takes on different meanings, Indian constitutional socialism stands for equity above everything else

Fiza Ziyad

"The Indian Constitution was always secular and it was always socialist. But due importance was not given (to it) in the preamble of the Constitution which starts with the declaration of what sort of state we are trying to make," opined R Basant, retired judge of Kerala High Court and a senior advocate at the Supreme Court while referring to the addition of the words 'socialist' and 'secular' to the preamble of the Indian Constitution through the Forty-second Amendment.

The Forty-second Amendment was enacted in 1976 during Indira Gandhi's regime. The change to the preamble was only one among the myriad of changes brought about by this amendment that came at a time considered by some as the 'black period of Indian Constitutional democratic history' - the Emergency period. Basant opines

that if one keeps aside the political involvement in the emergency, the amendment brought a new fragrance to the Indian Constitution. Referring to the change made to the preamble, he said, "According to me, it has not added anything to the Constitution, but only given due emphasis for what was always there." He adds that it is a 'myopic view' to think that the Indian Constitution became socialist and secular only after the Forty-second Amendment.

Reflecting on the different dimensions of the word 'socialism', Basant draws a distinction between what he calls the 'Indian constitutional socialism' and 'political socialism'. "Indian constitutional socialism is not the jargon (of) political socialism. Because if socialism is looked upon as a political philosophy, the Indian Constitution could never have (been) bound, for all generations, to any particular



Representational Image

firstpost.com

social or political philosophy because it is a pluralist Constitution," he said.

The word socialism is defined differently by different people. Indian constitutional socialism, Mr Basant says, is unique in its own way and is a reflection of the mor-

al duty of individuals to the planet. "When man was born on this planet, he had certain unalienable rights - a lungful of pure air, a stomach full of food, water and land. The story of human civilisation is a sad tale of the attempt by human beings, groups, and countries try-

ing to arrogate to themselves what belonged to the entire humanity, the entire planet. The Indian constitutional socialism means an acceptance that the planet's resources belong to everyone. Nobody can arrogate to themselves the planet's resources which in turn, in today's context, would mean an equitable if not equal distribution of planet's resources to all concerned beings," he said.

A closer look at part IV of the Constitution which entails the Directive Principles of State Policy would reveal several provisions that lay emphasis on this equitable distribution of resources, he said.

Democracy and socialism are means to an end, not the end itself
- Jawaharlal Nehru

They came, they pioneered & they vacated!

Parsis: The pioneers of Indian Cricket Team

Narayan B



File Photo

Parsis Cricket Club beats England at their own game

wisden.com

If colonisation has made any lasting contribution to the sub-continent, it is the introduction of railways and cricket. Cricket, today, has become one of the religions followed by millions. The Parsi merchants played an integral part in introducing cricket to India. Their tournaments and tours made Mumbai the hub of cricket aspirants.

The rise of cricket in India was termed a slow poison injected by the British into the veins of Indians that could dismantle the peace between communities. This debate occurred during the time of the Bombay

Pentangular- an annual tournament played in the 1930s amongst the Parsis, Hindus, Muslims, Europeans and other minority groups. The Bombay Pentangular became the domestic cricket bravado called Ranji Trophy.

Clayton Murzello, a senior cricket writer and journalist, speaking about the Parsi players in international and domestic cricket during the pre and post-independence eras opined, "They have played a contributory role with their prominent players inspiring young cricketers. At one time, Bombay cricket was packed

with Parsi players. Polly Umrigar was probably one of the first batting greats of the game and held many records. There was Nari Contractor who was an inspirational batsman who made a name for himself later for his bravado- coming back after a skull injury and playing the Ranji Trophy the following season. Farokh Engineer's flamboyance was noteworthy both behind the stumps and in front of the wicket as a batsman. Rusi Surti was known as a poor man's Garry Sobers and went on to play for Queensland and then settled in Australia."



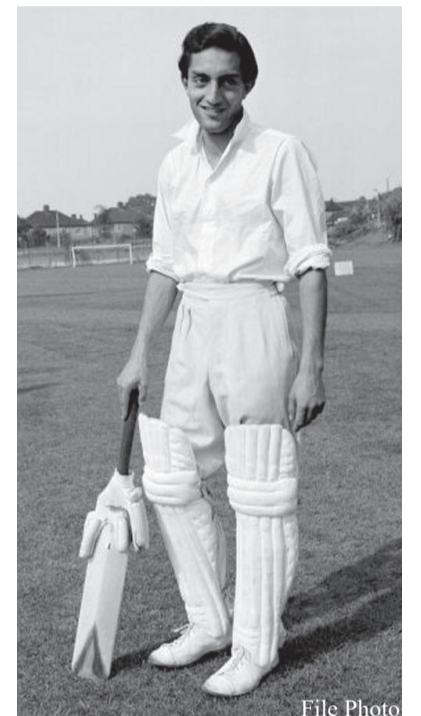
File Photo

A ball that cracked the skull but not the player

espnricinfo.com

Though Parsis were previously a major part of the Ranji Trophy and the national team, the case has shifted significantly. It is rare to see a Parsi playing for India nowadays, Murzello opined. "It's a pity that very few Parsis play cricket in Mumbai. However, there is one - Zubin Bharucha- who is one of the main members of the Rajasthan Royals coaching staff. Their contribution has been massive, and we must not forget that the Parsis made the first trip to England long before India's inaugural Test in 1932."

The competitive spirit between India and Pakistan has been strong since 1947, and sports are no different. Billions tuned in for the broadcast of Indo-Pak sports, which was dominated by hockey, but over time as cricket rose to popularity, the cricket rivalry became one of the biggest ones in sporting history.



File Photo

The Tiger of Indian Cricket: Nawab Pataudi

crimash.com

The marginalised dominate marginalised sports

Narayan B



A cartoon by Satish Acharya

newindianexpress.com

The icons of non-mainstream sports in India are mostly those coming from rural and tribal backgrounds. The abundance of talents in rural areas is obvious looking at the latest Tokyo Olympics, where India bagged seven medals, the highest ever for the country in the Olympics.

Pre-independence India bagged five medals in the Olympics (3 Gold in Hockey and 2 Silver in Athletics), but after the independence, the non-mainstream games stagnated. Naveen Peter, a content

producer at International Olympic Committee (IOC) said, "More than half of the hockey team comes from the rural belt of Punjab, Chandigarh and Odisha. Look at the time they started playing. Sporting heroes today, especially in the Olympics, stepped into the field 20-25 years ago. It was a period when sports was considered a leisure activity, and that's when sports quota became important, especially for people coming from rural backgrounds. When we look at the tribal belt, getting into the sports industry

was a way for them to earn their livelihood, because it helped them get jobs and education."

Peter pointed out that a person growing up in an urban background has more exposure and opportunity in academics compared to rural people. "Two decades ago, access and opportunities were very limited for them (rural people) to match up to those living in the urban belt; they had to give priority to sports."

The norm in the Northeast is different compared to the rural side of other parts of the country. The approach towards sports is entirely different. They do not see sports as a survival rope as rural societies do. India being a forum for diverse cultures has experienced rapid changes in how each community approaches things and sports is no different. Peter added, "Their motive has never been a leisure activity but a part of their overall development as a person. Football is one of the prominent sports in the Northeast, and we have archers like Tarundeep Rai from that region. For them, sports was not a way out of poverty, but a part of their livelihood."

Historically, tribals have been prominent in sports and games but their priorities have changed over time as they have to worry for future generations. Peter emphasised that India as a country cannot make sports its priority because food, shelter, healthcare, and clothing are



Tarundeep Rai

North or East, aim for the target

mykhel.com

of primary importance. Population plays a major part in a country to excel in sports. The USA and Australia are good at sports because of their societal growth. While China and India are compared for having high populations, the comparison cannot be fair as the priorities of the governments are entirely different. Sacrificing basic priorities like food and shelter for sports can be

catastrophic for the overall development of the country. Though sports have taken a backseat in the country it does not hinder the survival of human life. "That is the bargain which you need to achieve and the focus is now on ensuring that these people have a good livelihood, not just for the current generation but for the generations to come."

My village still does not have a playground. Whenever I stay there, I need to practice on a road
- Neeraj Chopra
(Olympic champion in javelin throw)

From the perils of patriarchy: A lasting freedom struggle

Women have fought against patriarchy since colonial times and yet, after 75 years of independence, they continue to be bound by patriarchal norms in social structures that deprive them of the freedom of choice

Blessy Jeremy

When Savitribai Phule fought against oppression in the pre-independence era, she was harassed for educating and empowering women. When Sampat Pal Devi set out to form the Gulabi Gang, she was abused for defending the women facing domestic violence in the Banda District. When women called out their abusers in the #Me-Too Movement, they were given rape and death threats. Today, after 75 years as a free country, women continue to face issues that were prevalent during the time of the British Raj.

“Patriarchy has not gone away anywhere, it is alive and ticking,” states Uma Chakravarti, a feminist historian, filmmaker and author whose work highlights the issues of gender and caste in Indian history.

Uma said that not only did lower caste women like Savitribai Phule face harassment for speaking



Representational Image

feminismindia.com

up but an upper-caste woman was also targeted. “Say someone like Pandita Ramabai was (targeted) because she was a woman and she was also critiquing the patriarchal society and the way women are treated,” she said.

The structure of power has

been traditional for a long time, unchallenged in history, said Uma. “We don’t know who the people who challenged it were. I know that for instance, in the age of Buddha, some women spoke up for women’s rights. But the fact of the matter is that from the 19th century onwards,

there is a way from which you can access that history of women who spoke up.”

Bharat Mata or Mother India, the personification of India as a mother goddess, was created during the late 19th century Indian Independence Movement.

While some see this concept of the motherland as feminist, others find it problematic. “You construct a mother in a particular way and then valorise her. You are putting a trope on her. That iconic function (of a mother), women have always performed. Just because you say Bharat Mata rather than fatherland does not mean you are less patriarchal,” said Uma.



Uma Chakravarti

wikipedia.com

On patriarchal bargains



Tara Krishnaswamy nuals-seminars.com

A patriarchal bargain is no different than any other bargain of the oppressed to escape their current immediate circumstances.

People that are most marginalised, most oppressed and those that have the least agency, if you will, are going to attach themselves to whatever concessions they can hope to gain.

That is a natural human instinct.

Because the oppression is so unbearable, you tend to seek whatever relief you can find.

It is impossible to expect the oppressed to fight for the bigger aspects of justice when they really are just trying to keep their head above the water and be able to breathe under these circumstances

-Tara Krishnaswamy

Author, activist and co-founder of Political Shakti

Casting caste as the protagonist of male chauvinism

Blessy Jeremy

Patriarchy does not exist in isolation but is in conjunction with other institutions like the caste system, says feminist historian Uma Chakravarti. Women are posited in a vulnerable position in society and are oppressed by a combination of caste and gender hierarchies that renders them disprivileged.

Distinguishing between the nature of exploitation of women then and now, Uma said, the harassment that Savitribai Phule faced is different from the harassment one might face today. She was a Mali woman from an Other Backward Class. She took to educating. This unsettled the powers that be, given that knowledge in the Indian context was monopolised by the upper caste and by men. Both the lower castes and women had been excluded from it. So Savitribai Phule was destabilising the structure of both patriarchy and caste, she said.

Uma explained how the caste system ensures that the community will dictate what one does and how one behaves. Gender magnifies that. So at the end of the day, even women of the upper caste will be fighting for their rights because

nothing is easily available to them, she said. “We have a long way to go, but I would still say that we should never think of a woman’s situation as unique; because if you look at the caste system, it makes a large chunk of the Indian society unable to have agency over themselves,” she added.

Marriage in India is particularly problematic, says Uma, because it is tied up with one’s caste. One cannot exercise a choice in marriage because it destabilises the entire social hierarchy in society. “The moment you choose your partner, it means that you can choose from anywhere, and that is not allowed because if you do that, then the caste system will collapse.”

Caste and gender will be tied together as long as we are upholding the endogamous marriage system, opined Uma. Even advertisements work within the ideological apparatus that we have inherited, she said. “Marriage is a family institution, and family is related to the community; community is related to caste; caste hierarchy controls resources - both material and ideological resources. It just means

that women cannot have agency beyond a point.”

Speaking about endogamy (the custom of marrying within one’s own group/community) in India, Uma said that even the lowermost orders of society continue to practise it. “How many people have read Ambedkar and his classic works on caste and endogamy? It is not a position that is understood.”

“Ambedkar says that breaking the endogamy will be the only way to ending the caste system, but it is not something that anyone has taken seriously. We have patriarchy, but we also have caste-based patriarchy which gives us a double whammy,” added Uma.

Commenting about reservation, Uma said this is not a solution to the ills caused by the caste system. “The real agenda is to finish caste off, then perhaps the gender emancipation would be ultimately possible.”

She pointed out the limitation in how we perceive patriarchy and the caste system today and said, this does not allow us to get to the bottom of the problem. “In fact, we do not even recognise the problem,” she said.



A painting of Savitribai Phule by a Dalit Madhubani Artist, Malvika Raj

feminismindia.com

Shameful past: Anti-sikh riots sickened Congress

Madhu Mitha B S

“When a big tree falls, the earth shakes,” said Rajiv Gandhi speaking of the violence against the Sikhs that marred Punjab after the assassination of Indira Gandhi. The anti-Sikh riot of 1984 gave a different dimension to the communal conflicts. There had never been a similar sort of large-scale genocide against the Sikhs.

“I see it as the beginning of a majoritarian feeling in India. If you mobilise the majority against the minority on any issue, everything becomes easy. This was the feeling which began from 1984,” says S Irfan Habib, an eminent historian. He says that the election after the massacre of Sikhs witnessed the most significant mobilisation of the Indian electorate against Sikh sentiments. A large portion of the Muslim and Hindu communities combined to vote against a particular idea, thus spawning communal feelings. Unlike the Hindu-Muslim animosity, the anti-Sikh sentiment faded when “Sikhs got mainstreamed”.

The other landmark episode after the anti-Sikh riots was the Shah Bano case. “The 1984 riots, the 1985 Shah Bano case and the opening of the Babri Masjid gates were watershed moments in Indian history as these incidents did the following: The 1984 riots punctured the Congress’s pluralistic credentials; the 1985 Shah Bano case showed that Congress was willing to go to any lengths to appease some minorities for votes without



Glimpses of the infamous 1984 Sikh Massacre

caring how the other communities like Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians would look at them. And the opening of the Babri Masjid gates sowed the seeds of a political Hindutva movement, which took shape

in 1989, and eventually lead to the demolition of the mosque in 1992,” said Rohan Anirudh Singh Hans, a historian.

In the 1984 elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party won two seats out

of 514, whereas Congress won 404 seats. Congress’s wrong moves, the Shah Bano case, or that of opening the Babri Masjid gates proved to be a self-goal after which the party never recovered to the 1984 level.

North India has been the laboratory for communal experiments for decades, said Prof Habib. “The medieval past is very conveniently used for their political concerns.”

Be it during the post-partition riots of 1947, (or) 1984 riots, or the 2002 riots, a pattern emerges;...

allegations were made that...local police did not do enough or the police instead of going after the attackers,

went after those of the minority communities who were defending themselves

- Rohan Anirudh Singh Hans

Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the test of our civilisation - Mahatma Gandhi

Diversity is the hallmark of India

Uniformity poses threat to Indian ethos and culture

Madhu Mitha B S

India is a country where every religion finds a home. The diversity in languages, customs, beliefs, and cuisines contributes to India’s vast cultural heritage. There are various theories about the history and diverse culture of India. Among them, the Aryan Migration Theory and Out Of India Theory are some of the prominent ones. However, when Turks, Iranians, Arabs, and Persians arrived in India, their primary goal was to trade.

“India is considered to be a land of religion and culture; the richness of this culture can be seen through the ages. In fact, the concepts of ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’, and ‘Live and Let Live’, play a prominent role,” said Prof N Shaik Masthan, Department of History, Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Central University. “I don’t think at any point in time there was social conflict and division of hearts to this extent. India is considered to be an abode of all cultures and tranquility,” he added.

The dynamic nature of the culture in India is an outcome of the complex interactions between civilisations and could be seen in the art, architecture and cultural traditions. The great temples, mosques, and churches bear testimony to this fact. The Sufis became prominent during the 10th and 11th centuries when Delhi Sultanates were ruling. Prof Masthan, speaking of the Medieval Period, said that Muslim rulers only brought men to the battlefields and hence married the Indian women.

Referring to the views of historian T T Murray, Masthan said, “The swagger of the Muslim conquerors was softened by the Indian women.” This led to the hybridisation of



Embracing the confluence of culture

dreamstime.com

culture in India.

Be it the Gol Gumbaz of Vijayapura, the Virupaksha Hampi Temple, the Golden Temple of Amritsar, or the Mahabodhi Temple in Bihar, all of these have resulted in a beautiful social reformation. “In

the past few decades, history is being twisted to the individual’s advantage. People who have no idea about the history and the way it is written, are propagating fake history about our culture and its rich heritage,” opines Prof Masthan.



A cartoon by Manoj Kureel

socialissuesindia.wordpress.com

Radio and the rebels: The time when radio was up against the high and mighty

Shriangana Pyne



Usha Mehta

nytimes.com

Usha Thakker speaks of the contribution of the courageous and empathetic Usha Mehta, also called Ushabehen, in her book 'Congress Radio and the underground radio station of 1942'. She says that Ushabehen happened to be the only woman under Congress Radio Station and became the official voice of the underground radio.

Thakker writes that the role played by Usha Mehta in 1942 made people realise that the Quit India Movement is a chapter in Indian history brimming with the sacrifice and the suffering of people

determined to achieve independence.

Describing the operation of the Congress Radio, she says, "Presenting an engagement programme on the radio with the "correct news" was the only concern. The Congress Radio attempted to broadcast news from the nationalist/Congress' perspective. The bold broadcasts remain an important source for learning more about the Quit India Movement in various parts of India."

The research paper, 'Media messages and the freedom struggle of India' by Gouri Srivastava, speaks

about Subhas Chandra Bose's initiative in mobilising women from all walks of life and age groups. The women's regiment took an active part in transmitting messages with the help of the radio. The themes on which women spoke on the radio were related to patriotism, their daily routine as soldiers, and the training for taking an active part in fighting the British.

Historian Rohan Anirudh Singh Hans said that the radio was a powerful tool for mobilising the masses to join the freedom struggle during the pre-independence era. He opined, "Whenever a war is waged, propaganda is always spread by the government. So people are convinced. Similarly, the Axis Powers were dispensing their own propaganda to get the people to back their cause. During the Second World War, there was no television or internet. The two biggest means of communication were newspapers and radio. While newspapers had limited reach as the majority was illiterate, radio could dispense information to anyone within earshot of (a) playing radio."

Referring to the Azad Hind radio, he said, "The radio station was a very effective medium through which the message of Indian independence could be sent in order to motivate soldiers to join the INA."



Subhas Chandra Bose

myindiamyglory.com

Tapping Feet



The heart that truly loves to dance

-Akshita

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File Photo

Personnel working at the AIR station

hindustantimes.com

AIR monopolises news segment under the bogey of national security

Shriangana Pyne

As long as Prasar Bharati remains under the control of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the government will not stop using All India Radio (AIR) as a mouthpiece, opines Pramiti Roy, an Assistant Professor of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Amity University.

In her research paper 'Social responsibility of media and Indian democracy', Soumya Dutta states that in India, public service broadcasting was given a profound amount of significance after independence. It was considered a weapon of social change. The AIR and Doordarshan, as public service broadcasters, had the responsibility of providing educational programmes for the public apart from informing and entertaining them. However, the public service broadcasting system in India was closely identified with the state. A monopolistic media structure lia-

ble to manipulation has the risk of turning into a mouthpiece of the ruling elite.

The government thinks that granting permission to private FM channels to broadcast news and current affairs could endanger national security and public order, Dutta argues. As these stations or channels are run by NGOs or other small organisations and private operators, several anti-national radical elements within the country can misuse them for propagating their agenda. However, the government has recently framed new guidelines allowing community radios to broadcast news items sourced exclusively from the AIR.

In contrast, Shamayita Das, the Transmission Executive of AIR spoke on bureaucratic measures being the reason for barring news coverage by private radios. She stated that the news on AIR is controlled by the Indian Information Services and the Press Information Bureau. The censorship started when a child

went on air and said, "Gali gali main shor hai, Rajiv Gandhi chor hein" on the AIR. After that incident, nothing goes on air without a pre-approved script.

Speaking on why the AIR news has to be broadcasted by the community radio stations, Historian Rohan Anirudh Singh Hans opined, "Information is everything. Opinions are formed or altered by information. People from all social classes including the rural community enjoy the essence of radio. They attain information through AIR news broadcasts mostly, and with the increase in community radio stations, they listen to it too. The news by community radio stations, if they are not curtailed by the AIR, might invoke anti-government elements, especially across the sections..."

He added that this is because radio is a powerful medium for expressing one's point of view in a country like India where a sizeable portion of the population still lives below the poverty line.

"The news by community radio stations, if they are not curtailed by the AIR, might invoke anti-government elements, especially across the sections..."

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Nation's curriculum at 75

Regression under the garb of 'Indianisation', say activists

Sudha Ankita Ekka

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while addressing a gathering at the University of Lucknow in November 2020, said that the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 will be a part of our education system in letter and spirit by the time India celebrates its 75th Independence Day. Little did he know that a wave of opposition would greet the NEP instead.

As India completes its 75th year of independence, hundreds of historians from India and abroad have written to the Parliamentary Standing Committee expressing their dissatisfaction with proposed revisions to the National Council of Educational Research and Training history textbooks. They have pointed out that textbook modification must be

consistent with existing historical knowledge to generate scholarly work. They also stated that rewriting textbooks must not be inclined towards a specific ideology.

"During the renaissance and freedom movement in India, the slogan of a secular, scientific, democratic and universal education was raised by veterans. But the essence and dream behind these words have been assassinated in the (NEP) document. Not even a single trace of the word secular could be found anywhere in the policy," stated the book, 'National Education Policy-2020 - A Critical Appraisal' published by the All India Democratic Students Organisation (AIDSO).

Referring to the saffronisation attempts of the government, Apoorva

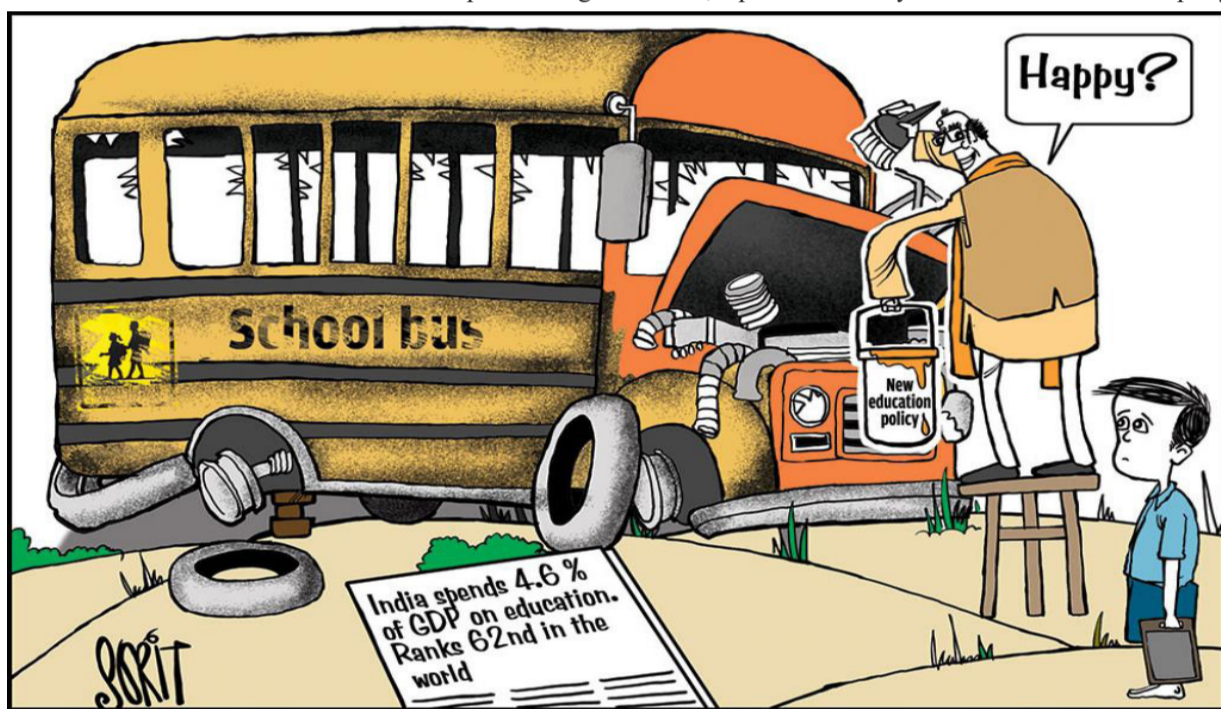
CM, Vice President, AIDSO Bangalore, said that the government is using the NEP to propagate their ideology, particularly the Hindutva ideology. The BJP-ruled states have saffronised education. This is carried out through prescribed books that seek to teach children 'facts' about history, science, geography, and religion, written to propagate ideas, approaches, and outlooks in the name of Indianisation. Indianisation is closely related to religion, she said.

"There are two powerful governments that we have seen. One is the BJP and the other one is Congress. They (Congress) also try to bring in ideas like Hindutva only, but in a very soft way, winning over the minority. But the BJP is one such party



Students protest against the NEP

Subadra Sarath



A cartoon by Sorit Gupto

downtoearth.org.in

that blatantly, very openly, and very crudely damages the (secular) fabric of society. The BJP government had used textbooks as their propaganda tools and their ideological weapons," she added.

She also said that religious ideologies should not be brought into schools, let alone into textbooks. Emphasising the need for education to be scientific, she said, "Our textbooks are responsible to make human beings progressive. However, even in textbooks, we find extremely old concepts presented in a grandiose manner. Educational institutions play a very important

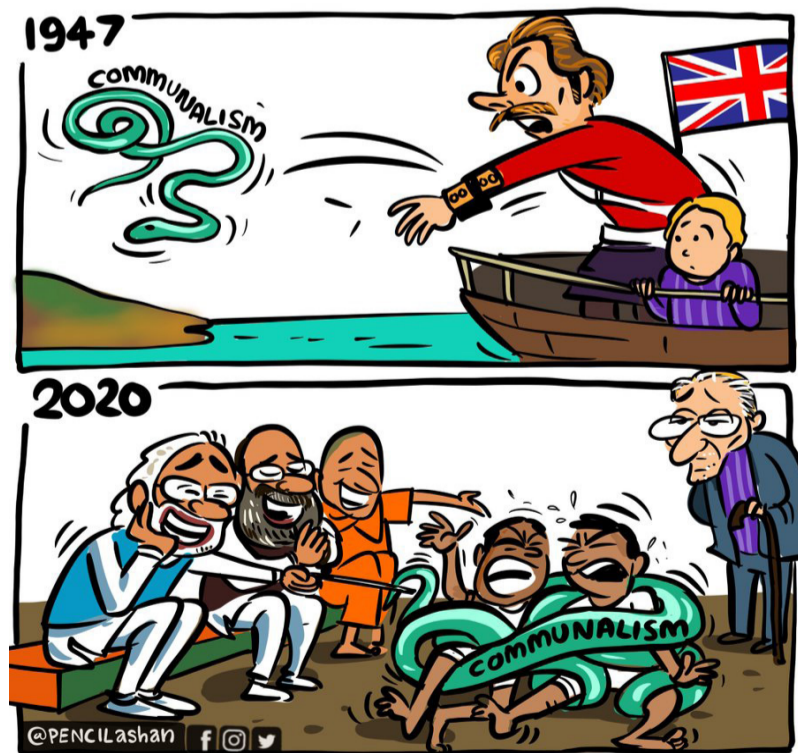
role in our lives but we hardly find teachers and professors with a scientific bent of mind here. Even an ISRO man who is about to launch a rocket would break a coconut just before launching a rocket. How can he be called a scientist when he still follows such superstitious beliefs?"

Apoorva further said, "The education system should have intellectuals, experts from an education background, retired professors and principals. They are the most important people and are the real stakeholders of education. And they should be given a chance to select, and to prepare a syllabus."

We want the education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet
- Swami Vivekananda

Tracing the roots of the colonial masterstroke

Madhu Mitha B S



A cartoon by Vishnu Madhav

Twitter/PENCILashan

Communalism has been used as a social weapon for the advantage of the political and business class since colonial times. It all started with James Mill who categorised Indian history on communal lines as the Hindu, Muslim, and the British period, in his book 'A His-

tory of British India'. Glorifying communalism has become a trend to serve political needs.

Dr M Mahabaleswarappa, a historian from Gulbarga said, "Communalism, since the advent of Britishers in India, is a continuous policy with a different dimension.

The concept of Sarvodaya is missing, which is a cause of communalism." If a person has politically left or right leanings, then they tend to refer to people who hold extreme left or right views, he said.

In 1857, the British recognised the threat to the crown posed by Hindu-Muslim unity that led to the mutiny. "When everyone, despite their religion, started raising against the British, which was called Hindu-Muslim mutiny, Britishers understood the power of the people. They realised that if the people are together then it will be difficult for them to continue their power in India," said Prof N Shaik Masthan from the Department of History, Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Central University. Further, the division of Bengal in 1905 was a well-planned attempt of the British and was in line with the divide and rule policy. The partition was an attempt to quell the rural unrest and strangle nationalism in Bengal that grew out of the Swadeshi movement to boycott the British goods. "During pre-independence, nationalism was regarding the national issues to gain independence from the British. Later, the concept of nationalism got divided into Hindutva nationalism and Islamic nationalism," said Dr M Mahabales-

warappa.

Prior to 1905, Hindu-Muslim hostility was a rare phenomenon, and the interests of these two communities were not fundamentally opposed to one another. They did not polarise the people on communal lines. Following the partition of Bengal, polarisation took shape in the psyche of the people. "The colonial perspective of divide and rule was taught through intellectual discourse and that was stated in the book, 'A Forgotten Empire' by Robert Sewell," Masthan added.

The narrow-mindedness of all the communities in general are always exploited by the foreign enemy
- Bhagat Singh

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‘CRS is for the people, by the people and of the people’

Shriangana Pyne

Radio Manasa, a community radio station (CRS) run by the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Mysore, has collaborated on a Covid project with SMART, an NGO that produces programmes for the government. The revenue from the collaboration was used for development of CRS, stated Prof Sapna MS, the Coordinator of Radio Manasa.

“The prime objective of the institutional community radio is to involve the community and do the activities for their betterment,” she said. Community radio stations like Radio Manasa focus on women empowerment, educating the tribal community, health programmes, and promotion of art and culture.

Speaking about the history of CRS in India, she said, “Concept of community radio is new. We started in 2000 but in 2006 we hit it off.” She added that, with time, the number of CRS has increased and that there are 300 plus operational radios at the regional level currently.

Having appropriate human resources is a constraint in CRS, according to Prof Sapna. As there is no job security, people enter the field out of passion and not for money.

Speaking on funding being a challenge, she said that there are community radio stations that have shut down due to a lack of funding. But at present, the government is providing money to a few stations like Udelkhand station situated in a remote area of the State. The CRS



Prof Sapna MS, the woman behind Radio Manasa

speak and spread awareness about topics like climate change, natural disasters, covid awareness and so on. The government should support

such initiatives, she said.

Dr Rashmi Ammembala, an Assistant Professor at MAHE and the Coordinator of Radio Manipal,

spoke about the challenges community radio stations face. “(The) Government must simplify the guidelines and regulations. On one hand,




they are presenting support to set up community radio stations and on the other, they are not giving many advertisements to empanelled stations. CRS is now discarded from the media list.”

She added that the CRS are “for the people, by the people and of the people.”

“(The) Government must simplify the guidelines and regulations. On one hand, they are presenting support to set up community radio stations and on the other, they are not giving many advertisements to empanelled stations. CRS is now discarded from the media list.”

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A journey from confronting the power to servicing the power

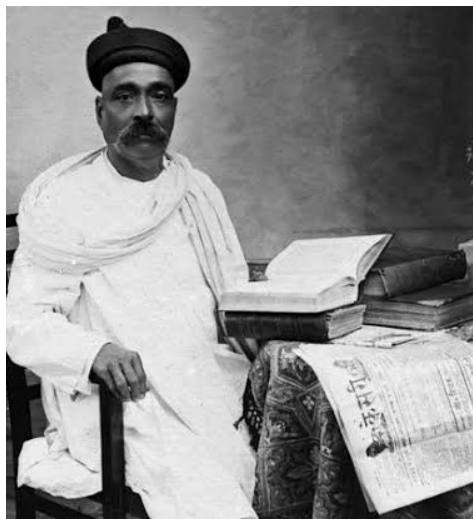
Mythri C & Dolkar Chozom

“The editorial pen brought to light the injustices and wrongs of the administration like the rounds of police brought to light about anything illegal,” is an excerpt from the first issue of Kesari, the Marathi weekly founded in 1881 by Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

With the emergence of the first newspaper the ‘Bengal Gazette’ in 1780, journalism was born in the country to expose colonial injustices. Many newspapers, including Ram Mohan Roy’s Bangadoot, Dadabhai Naoroji’s Rastigufar and Gyaneshun, promoted social changes. After a brief period, they were curtailed by censorship measures imposed by the British East India Company.

Several journalists continued courageously to produce nationalist pieces that openly condemned British rule and urged readers to take action amidst the Vernacular Press Act introduced by the British in 1878.

N Muthumani, Senior Staff Correspondent at Dinamani said, “During pre-independence, the newspapers and the freedom fighters dared to resist the government. The same trend continued for many years. However, that kind of courage is not seen now. Even after independence, when the Emergency was declared, Indira Gandhi was very powerful. Ramnath Goenka of Indian Express dared to oppose her to protect democracy. The media was not there for any political party, it was there for the public and the country. Journalism was



Bal Gangadhar Tilak (left) and the ‘Kesari’ (right)



thebetterindia.com

the voice of the people. But now I don’t think that journalism is doing justice.”

The research paper, ‘Changing face of Indian journalism: Political agitation to economic alliances’ by Mira K Desai, stated that presently journalism means giving visibility to brands and creating an image rather than agitating against corrupt power structures. It concluded that in the 21st century, newspapers in India do not stand for political mobilisation, nation-building, or creating public awareness about vital matters.

Speaking about journalism post-independence, renowned ac-

tivist Ram Puniyani said that communal-minded people have been infiltrating the media since 1977. It all began when L K Advani was appointed as the Information and Broadcasting Minister in the Janata Party Government. Since 2003, the corporates have supported Narendra Modi, and these sections have been buying the media houses. Many unbiased journalists were expelled. From then, the media, instead of critiquing and evaluating the ruling party, started criticising the critics and human rights workers, he said.

In this context, Donna Eva, a reporter at The New Indian Express

stated that there is a shift in journalism in recent times. Accessibility is one of the factors, if not the biggest, that has influenced this shift. Tools like social media are often used by journalists to search for stories because this is where news almost always circulates first, she said.

She added that another factor related to this is digitisation. “It also levels the playing field to allow people to voice their opinions, either anonymously or otherwise, and criticise the government or major players, to hold them accountable.”

“The media was not there for any political party, it was there for the public and the country. Journalism was the voice of the people. But now I don’t think that journalism is doing justice.”



Hicky’s Bengal Gazette, the first Indian newspaper

navrangindia.blogspot.com

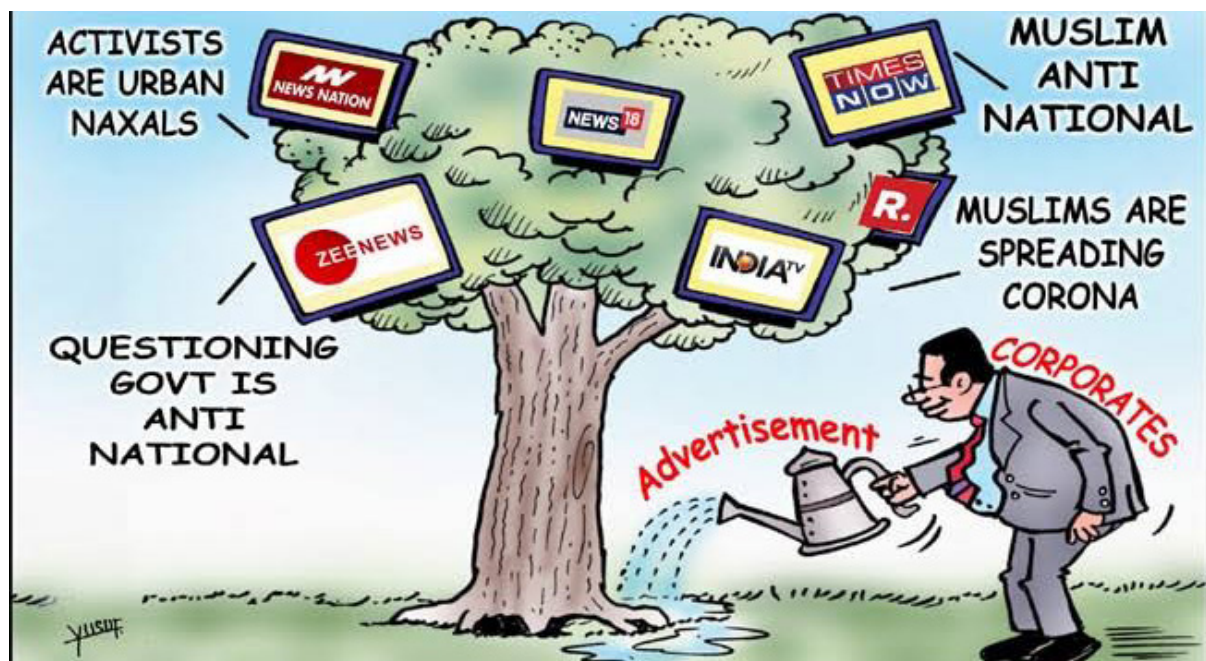
As commercialisation in media kicked in, pluralism got kicked out

Mythri C & Dolkar Chozom

Broadcast media is one of the central sources of news and information in today’s world. It has the potential to shape the opinions of the general population, and is also susceptible to illegitimate control.

Currently, the Indian mass media consists of a plethora of TV channels, newspapers and magazines, radio stations, feature films, and electronic, print, digital, and telecommunications media. Prasar Bharati manages Doordarshan, the national television network channel with 22 channels and the All India Radio.

However, over recent years with the rise of private ownership, most of the country’s leading media companies are owned by large conglomerates that are still controlled by the founding families which not only invest in media but also a vast array of industries. The media has become oligopolistic considering the conglomerates dominating the media.



A cartoon by Yusuf

cartoonmirror.com

Speaking about the lack of diversification in broadcast media, N Muthumani, Senior Staff Correspondent at Dinamani said, “Until the liberalisation in the 1990s, Doordarshan was the only channel that was existing in the country. After the liberalisation, privatisation came into the picture especially (with the arrival of) the multinational companies such as Star TV during the initial days. Initially, we all thought that it would help in strengthening the democracy and pluralistic fabric of our country by diversifying the content. It was so for 10-15 years.”

The media has lost self-control with the new government saddled in power since 2014. It is now under the control of the ruling party’s regime.

“The diversification is slowly vanishing. The minds of the people through the news channels are being poisoned. If this trend continues for another 10 years, journal-

ism will not be a true dispenser of news,” he opined.

Over the recent years, Television Rating Point (TRP) is given more prominence by the news channels which in turn is making them sensationalise the trivia. They now engage in outrage journalism weakening professionalism and media ethics. Numerous media editorial teams have been picking up issues with a focus on TRP through prime-time debates; yet, subjects of national interest and societal importance are underrepresented on TV news channels, he feels.

Commenting on the outrage journalism, he stated that the po-



A cartoon from National Herald

nationalherald.com

“The diversification is slowly vanishing. The minds of the people through the news channels are being poisoned. If this trend continues for another 10 years, journalism will not be a true dispenser of news.”

litical debates in the media try to meddle with the facts and truth. They want to protect their party’s interests, which is dismantling the pluralistic nature of the country. Government should be representative of the nation and not the political party. It should completely refrain from controlling the media and the media should protect the interests of the nation. “I think it is high time for the media to introspect on its working style and come out with a logical and ethical system to protect democracy.”

Commenting on the role of journalists in producing diversified content, Nayana Raj, a reporter at Digvijaya said, “People blame journalists for not covering many corruption cases or some murder stories, but do they know how poor our Indian

law is when it comes to the safety of journalists? Journalists do have their personal life, so though they are obliged to convey the message to the public, they hold it back to save their life. And those who have gone a step forward and covered the news either have got some award or are found dead.”



N Muthumani

Student dissent: The agitations of modern India

Rising tide of student-led protests heralds the way forward for civic activism in the country

Gabriella Symss

During the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC), many of those who took to the streets holding placards and chanting slogans were students. They helped organise food, transport, and aid for many at the protest site. Photographs of students protesting emerged across media platforms, while protests in solidarity sprung up across the country.

Students participating in the political and social movements of the nation is not a new phenomenon. To begin with, movements were focused on the anti-colonial struggle. One of the first cited examples is the burning of an effigy of Lord Curzon, then viceroy of India, by the students of Eden College, Calcutta (now Kolkata) in protest against the partition of Bengal. The current student wing of Congress traces its origins back to the independence struggle during which the All India Student Congress Federation was considered active and integral.

The All India Students' Federation (AISF) is another example; the student platform created a culture of student involvement in civic affairs, often including protests. The AISF was founded in 1936 and remains,



Students throng the streets during anti-CAA and anti-NRC protests

reuters.com

albeit in a changed form today from the time of pre-independence India, the longest surviving student organisation in the country. It was also an attempt at the unification of students to work towards common motives despite the varied views on politics among student groups. However, divisions due to these differing views did eventually creep in. Today, many student groups engaged in politics, civic issues and local matters are aligned with political ideologies.

Students in a post-independent

India have had to contend with the shift away from fighting colonisers to dealing with the formation of a democratic state that had its own socio-cultural dynamics. For instance, the protests in Tamil Nadu against The Official Languages Act of 1963 saw scores of people, many of whom were students, coming together with linguistic and cultural demands.

Similarly, the anti-CAA and anti-NRC protests are the agitations of modern India, no longer tied to

a fight against foreign powers but to issues much closer to home. The youth played a significant role in these protests. According to data published by the National Crime Records Bureau, the student-led protests in the country nearly doubled between 2014 and 2018.

“During the whole CAA, NRC protests, when Shaheen Bagh happened, it was self-sustaining. The Muslim women came, the students came, all community people came there, and they helped the protest keep going,” shares student activist Ujwal K.

There is hope for the future of student politics and activism, he says. However, he admits that students find it hard to make time to engage in these activities. “College life takes up 70% of the time. In that time frame, engaging in activism or politics is hard. I’m not saying it is impossible, I’m just saying that the system makes it harder for them to get involved in these extra-curricular activities.”

Another possible problem that exists for student-led protests and student politics is a lack of collaboration and intersection with other movements, according to Shalom Gauri, a member of COLLECTIVE, Bangalore, a student and youth organisation. While she has seen this trend changing in recent years, Shalom feels it still has some way to go. “I do think that the student movement needs to start working more closely with other movements, especially working-class movements.

“Our protests will have to focus more on bringing an alternative agenda to the conversation.

Rather than always saying that this is not what we want,

I think we also need to start talking about what we do want.”

I think that kind of conversation between working-class movements and student movements which used to happen earlier, say in the post-independence, the kind of movements we saw is not being found today. And I think both the student movement and the working-class movement could benefit from that kind of conversation.”

She believes a lot of protests happen in response to events. “It’s a lot of firefighting and battling symptoms rather than the root cause. And that is necessary; we do have to do that firefighting also. But we do also have to put forth an alternative much more strongly.”

With students protesting several recent moves by the Central and State governments, it is hard to ignore the voice they pose as part of Indian democracy. Over half the population (roughly 52%) is under 30 according to the National Family Health Survey (2019-2021).

The way forward, according to Shalom Gauri, is the one that will consider what students are demanding from this type of world. “Our protests will have to focus more on bringing an alternative agenda to the conversation. Rather than always saying that this is not what we want, I think we also need to start talking about what we do want.”



The National Student Union of India (NSUI) protests against delay in examination and fee hike

Gabriella Symss

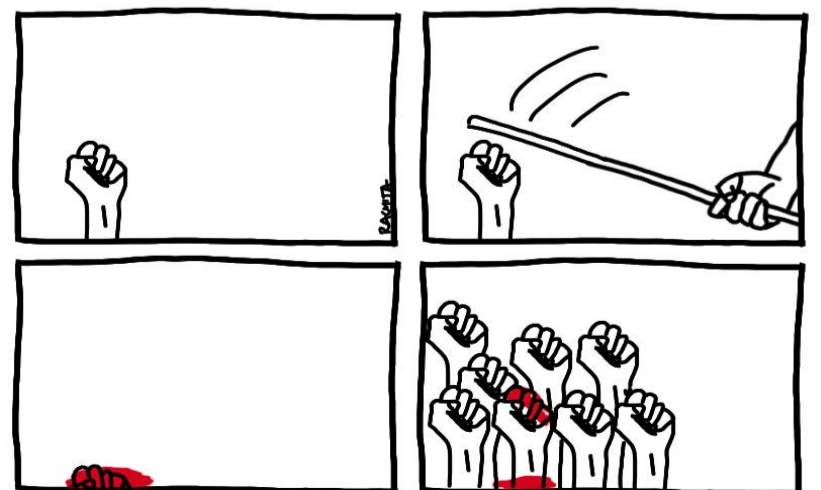
We want to emphasise the lesson often repeated by history, that it is easy to kill individuals but you cannot kill the ideas

- Bhagat Singh



Young protestors refuse to have their voices ignored

Gabriella Symss



Forbes

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A cartoon by Sanitary Panels

forbesindia.com

Let Sedition be relegated to the pages of history!

While other laws under the IPC are aimed to deter the criminals, Sedition is aimed at non-conformists

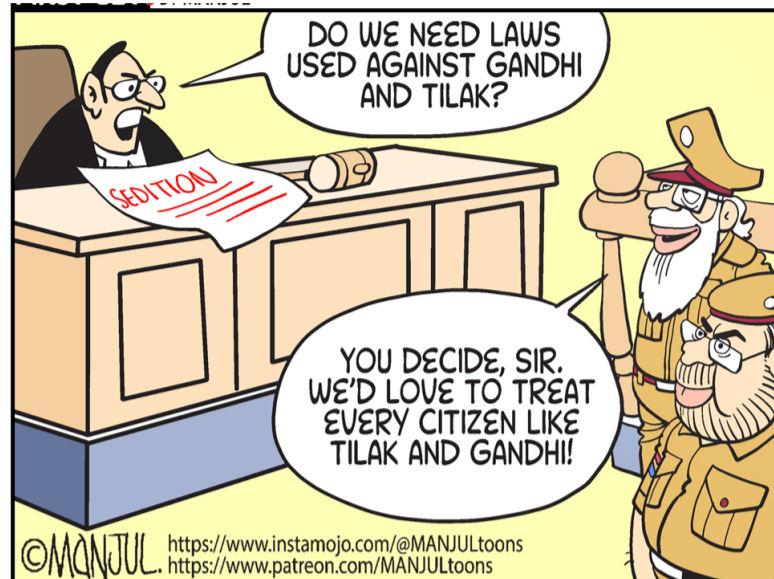
Fiza Ziyad

Sedition as a law was formally introduced in India by the British in the year 1870 – a law that was widely used to suppress anyone who dared to raise their voices against the established regime. A century and a half later, and after 75 years of independence, this ‘draconian’ law was finally put on hold by the Supreme Court of India, earlier this year. While a decision is yet to be taken on whether the law should be abrogated or amended, it has to be noted that those who introduced the law here, repealed the law in their country, years ago. The sedition law has not been in effect in the UK since 2009.

“In India, successive governments have been misusing sedition law for a long time,” said A Hariprasad, retired judge of the Kerala High Court and a senior advocate at the Supreme Court. Considering the size of the population in India, he said, it is more difficult to handle democracy here, which is why the sedition law was

retained. “One may call it political over-smartness,” he added. According to him, the problem lies more in the interpretation of the law than the law itself. Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code states that a person will be charged with sedition if they “bring or attempt to bring in hatred or contempt, or excite or attempt to excite disaffection towards the Government established by law in India.” Since the law is ‘loosely worded’ and therefore subject to problematic interpretations, there is a complaint nowadays that the ruling party is using the law for political gains.

Hariprasad feels it is better to abrogate such an ‘archaic’ law unless it is properly defined. Given the current political climate, the law should mention that any criticism against the government cannot be called sedition. When words like ‘disaffection’ and ‘hatred’ are used to define the law, any form of criticism against the regime will be considered seditious. Instead, the definition should be confined to protecting the national interest



A cartoon by Manjul

Twitter/MANJULtoons

which is the ultimate purpose of the law. “When something lacks clarity, it can be easily misused. Thus, in a democracy like India, if there is a valid reason for having a sedition law, it should be properly worded,” he said.

Laws like the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the National Investigation Agency Act

(2008) have provisions to protect the integrity and security of the nation. Section 121A of the IPC also deals with ‘conspiracy’ against the state including ‘waging war’, all of which are a part of sedition law as well. Thus, the question arises as to whether we need to retain the sedition law in the Constitution when there exist alternative laws. How-

ever, Hariprasad also points out that if existing laws fall short, then why not make a new one that is in line with the present situation instead of clinging on to a colonial-era law.

“When something lacks clarity, it can be easily misused. Thus, in a democracy like India, if there is a valid reason for having a sedition law, it should be properly worded.”

76 ordinances in 8 years: Is India in a state of eternal emergency?

Fiza Ziyad



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With a total of 76 ordinances in eight years, the current government has surpassed the United Progressive Alliance government’s record of promulgating the most number of ordinances. “In the first 30 years of our parliamentary democracy, there was one ordinance promulgated for every 10 Bills introduced in Parliament. In the following 30 years, the ratio was two ordinances for every 10 Bills. In the 16th Lok Sabha (2014-19), the number jumped to 3.5 ordinances for every 10 Bills. In the current Lok Sabha it is, so far, 3.3 ordinances to every 10 Bills,” data published in The Hindustan Times revealed. Even though the passing of ordinances is well within the framework of the Constitution, the question arises as to whether they are passed for legitimate reasons.

As per the Constitution, ordinanc-

es can only be passed if the parliament or legislature cannot be summoned for a discussion. Referring to ordinances as a safety wall provision to accommodate an emerging law, R Basant, retired judge of Kerala High Court and a senior advocate at the Supreme Court says, “During an emergency, the executive can issue an ordinance subject to ratification by the legislature and that is the time given for discussion and accommodation of all counterpoints. Now, what happens is that even if there is no such pressing emergency, ordinances are passed. Therefore, this indiscriminate use of the power to pass ordinances is a fraud on the legislative house and parliament.” Thus, he adds that ordinances cannot be a matter of daily occurrence, but are to be used during “exceptional circumstances”.

“What it (ordinance) significantly lacks is the soul of the democratic

law-making process – law making after discussion, accommodating the views of all concerned - and therefore this power should be resorted to very sparingly,” says Basant. The history of the Constitution reveals that the parliament and state legislatures have often taken the ordinance route to avoid discussions. “Every ordinance is one bereft of discussion. Democracy means the accommodation of different points of view; those points of view have not been heard or considered, but the executive (still) comes up with an ordinance,” he says.

The validity of an ordinance, once issued, is six months after which it lapses. However, pointing to a plausible abuse of this power in recent times, Basant says, “What happens now is that an ordinance is passed and it is revived and renewed by another ordinance and the legislative discussion does not take place.”

TOI LINE OF NO CONTROL

SANDEEP ADHWAR

WE ARE HERE TO CHANGE THE CONSTITUTION, SAYS UNION MINISTER



A cartoon by Sandeep Adhwaryu

timesofindia.indiatimes.com

Constitution is not a mere lawyers document, it is a vehicle of Life, and its spirit is always the spirit of Age
- Dr B R Ambedkar

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Sports & politics make fine bedfellows in post-independent India

Narayan B

India is deeply rooted in politics and the Indian sports milieu is not an exception. Talent and hard work do not suffice to become a sportsperson in India. It is largely about the resources you have like the right contacts, sponsorships, and so on to surpass others.

Daniel George, a senior journalist who has previously contributed to the sports beat said, "There is a lot of politics involved when it comes to Indian sports; you need to belong to a particular religion, you need to have a godfather, you have to have that kind of money. For instance, to get into the league of club cricket in Bengaluru one has to pay an amount. Where is the space for players with talent then? To mention a personal example, I have this friend's son; take a look at his score. He should be playing for Karnataka at this point. He should be straight away selected for the IPL (Indian Premier League) but he has been side-lined all through and the reason... is the politics... involved in the game."

Emphasising the need to de-politicise Indian sports he said that the recent achievements in sports were individual efforts that had paid off. "None of these boys or girls who have been bringing laurels to the country drink Bournvita or Complan. They all ate rotis and came from a humble background."

Interestingly, the sports industry could be compared to the field of politics, equating the sportspersons to politicians, he said. The factors that play a significant role in the making or breaking of both of these professionals remain the same: Caste, religion, money and political clout. George added, "A majority of the members of the sports council come from a political background. I believe that rules and regulations must be formulated when it comes to selecting the heads of any sports organisation. Only a sportsperson



A cartoon by Satish Acharya



Twitter/satishacharya

should be chosen for leadership positions of such organisations, and politicians must be strictly kept out of this. Unfortunately, that's not the case in India; even in the Indian Hockey Federation, there is so much politics involved."

George further feels that it is difficult for sportspersons in India to avail the required facilities or equipment. He mentioned the instance of Hima Das, an athlete, who would write the name of the brand 'Adidas' on her ordinary shoes. "But now the company is making merchandise with her name," he said.

The Indian sports industry is transforming, but the process is a slow one with cricket garnering all the popularity while the other sports are still trying hard to catch the attention of the audience. "But at the end of the day, it is only cricket

that takes up the recognition, no? Bengaluru has some of the finest football players in the entire country but they are all languishing; it is due to the partiality that takes place in the industry," he said.

George criticised the reportage by sports journalists, stating that they are no different as a majority of them are involved in politics. "There is so much controversy in Indian hockey but there is no coverage regarding this issue. It is because these journalists are afraid that they will lose their accreditation and would miss out on those foreign tours. Journalists must be much more ethical and unbiased when it comes to reporting. It does not matter if it is on the political beat or the sports beat. The coverage of the issues must be fair and factual."

"Bengaluru has some of the finest football players in the entire country but they are all languishing; it is due to the partiality that takes place in the industry."

Notional rights vs Substantive rights



Representational Image

idiva.com

Blessy Jeremy

Notional rights enshrined in the Constitution or being listed by the juridical system do not emancipate women or make them independent in a real sense, opined Uma Chakravarti, an author and feminist historian.

Formally, women have a right to speak but structures are such that they are often told not to. It is very conventional for fathers and the older generation to tell women not to cut them off while they are speaking, not to stand up to oppression, she ex-

plains. There is an implication that women cannot voice their opinion because they are not entitled to have one, they are not entitled to have rights, she said. Despite having formal rights such as the right to vote and even the right to education, women still do not have the freedom of choice. They cannot choose what they want to study, who their partner should be, or have a choice over their body. "At the end of the day, who is the head of the family? The father or the husband," she asserted.

Continued on Page 12



A cartoon by Satish Acharya

Twitter/satishacharya

As big media turns lapdog, digital media steps up as watchdog

Mythri C &
Dolkar Choezom

By the middle of the 2010s, the widespread use of affordable internet data on millions of mobile devices and PCs lent momentum to the digital news media, particularly the alternative media.

Alternative media differs from established and dominant media vis-a-vis the content, production

and distribution. It provides content that is not under the control of the government or any big corporation.

ThePrint, The Wire, Scroll.in, and The Quint are just a few examples of the digital-only alternative media platforms that compete with the mainstream media's digital platforms like that of the newspapers The Times of India or The Hindu, and news channels like NDTV that have been around before the decade began.

Speaking of alternative media, Donna Eva, a reporter at the New Indian Express said, "The emergence of alternative media has definitely lent itself to being more reliable. News channels are largely biased due to funding and ownership. Alternate media has flexibility in several ways."

She stated that lack of space and funding are some of the bigger issues that plague traditional media. The lack of space means that in-depth stories cannot be carried on the page. While funding is a problem for the alternative media, most of them are still emerging and do not have to deal with layers of bureaucracy.

"Traditional media like daily newspapers or news channels work faster and put out stories on a daily basis. Longer nuanced pieces that alternate media puts out become old news to dailies; meaning, there is no reason to be held accountable when the storm has already passed," she added.

Speaking about the ideologies and the editorial positions of the digital news platforms, Y P Rajesh, the Managing Editor of ThePrint said, "Media reflects society. News channels and newspapers have a certain line of reporting and (ways to) showcase their content. They have their own ideologies and editorial positions. In a similar way, the alternative media platforms also have their own ideologies and editorial positions. When we look at the big picture, there is diversity in the media. The emergence of alternative media has added to the diversity in Indian journalism.



Y P Rajesh

Twitter/YPRajesh

"The emergence of alternative media has added to the diversity in Indian journalism. We are not there to hold any news channel accountable rather we are there to present our opinions, be objective and do good journalism. Our aim is to add to the diversity."



Representational Image

neerajbhushan.com

We are not there to hold any news channel accountable rather we are there to present our opinions, be objective and do good journalism. Our aim is to add to the diversity."

He says that these platforms shouldn't be considered alternative media. They should be considered as a part of the media. The new digital platforms are independent because they are editorially run and owned by journalists. They do not

have the same kind of pressure that television channels might have. This difference is an advantage to the alternative digital news platforms, he opined.

He added that the government tracks the coverage of these platforms and they respond to stories published on these platforms. Recently, they have also decided to give accreditation to digital journalists.



Representational Image

kathmandupost.com

Continued from page 11

Discussing about the problems of the 'neoliberal' generation, she said that they think they have rights, when in reality, they do not. "Do you think that you're free because you can go to the market and buy what you want? The world is constructed as something that you can

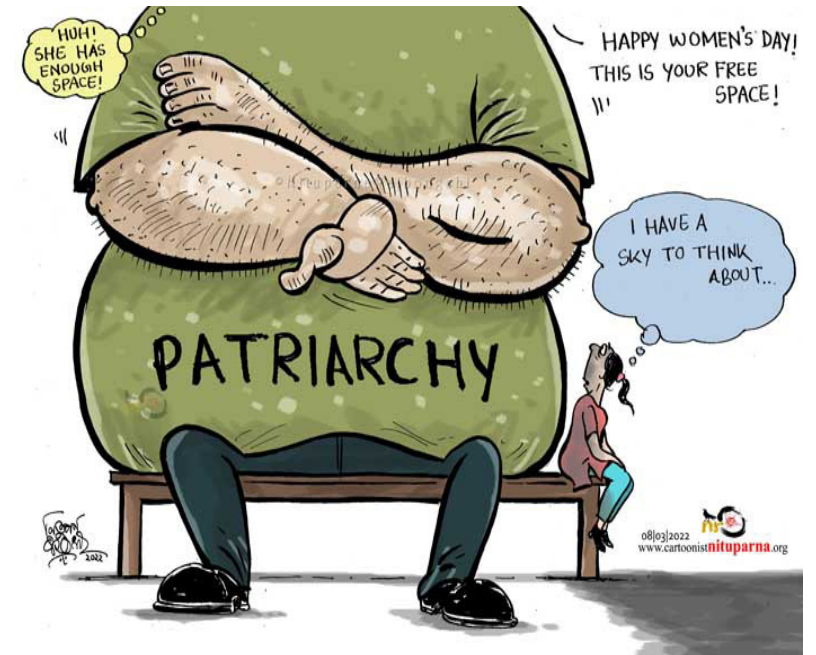
buy; that women can also buy. But in reality, you cannot because there are so many things that remain under the control of an unequal order in which caste is one and gender is one, and gender is a running theme as far as India is concerned."

Even with legal rights, women remain unable to negotiate their lives fully. Giving marital rape as an example, Uma said, "The notion is that the moment you marry, you give the rights over your body to your husband. Part of the social contract is a sexual contract. You don't have a right over yourself - the body is one and the mind is the other."

Uma explains that this is why the capacity to argue is not something that is tolerated very well. "It starts at home; all children are bullied but when you grow up, the young man perhaps can speak but the young woman can't easily speak up."

The formal rights are not the same as the substantive rights. The traditional structure has been dented to a certain extent as few families started earning a double income. The woman is allowed to go to work because she brings in more money, and it is a middle-class dream where the aspirations of the family are fulfilled. Women might even be asked to be surrogate mothers as it brings in wealth. They may even produce children for other people but it is being done for the family that they have created based on the arranged marriage, she said. The children, they beget, are biological bloodlines. "Even your womb is something that is available and nobody sees any harm in that because it is not destabilising the larger structure in which you are located," she said.

Economic or other kinds of agency, have not translated to substantive equality or substantive



A cartoon by Nituparna Rajbongshi

cartoonistnituparna.org

choices that women have, said Uma. We have notional freedom, translating it into actual freedom is a struggle. "Now it hasn't been

given up and it is not likely that any one of us is going to give up. We are going to continue to fight for our basic rights," she said.

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