



perception

ISSN : 2454-4353

Volume : 11
2019-2020



Department of Political Science
SHRI SHIKSHAYATAN COLLEGE

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Department of Political Science



SHRI SHIKSHAYATAN COLLEGE, KOLKATA

PERCEPTION

Volume : 11: 2019-20
ISSN - 2454-4353

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Published by :
Department of Political Science
Shri Shikshayatan College
11, Lord Sinha Road
Kolkata-700 071
Phone: 033-22626033

Printed by :
PRATIRUP
35, Nandana Park
Kolkata - 700 034
Phone : 2403-7402



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FOREWORD

'Perception' is in its thirteenth year of publication and in its sixth with an ISSN (print). For the Department of Political Science it has since been a vanguard and a platform for addressing, analysing a range of issues germane to the understanding of our existential academic reality.

The past one year, in the midst of the ongoing pandemic, has been unprecedented and tumultuous in ways that have redefined our lives. The Department, in cooperation and assistance with different stakeholders, has innovated and executed academic projects, webinars and interfaces to enable a special teaching-learning experience.

It is heartening to note the spirited participation and exuberance of the students and faculty in embracing the 'new normal'. These have fostered bonds of empathy and compassion for life to move on and for work to continue with new found respect for the value of 'now'.

Writings for publication in 'Perception' have come despite odds in maintaining a work life balance in these trying circumstances. This edition is an embodiment of hope, triumph and resilience of the collective human spirit.

In gratitude for being where we are and for everything we are able to do, my best wishes for tomorrow to the entire Department. May we grow from strength to strength.

Aditi Dey

EDITOR'S DESK

It has been a convention of the Department of Political Science over the last few years to release its prestigious journal PERCEPTION on the date of Belarani De Memorial Lecture, an annual event to commemorate the birth anniversary of the founder member of the Belarani De in the month of September.

This year, owing to the pandemic of COVID-19, regular classes within the premises could not be held. Likewise, the twin events of observing the Memorial Lecture and release of the Journal also got stalled temporarily. Later, with the realization and eventual acceptance of the new normal, we decided to hold the much-awaited Lecture program online but to release the Journal in print as we have been doing since the inception of the same.

The year 2020 marked the bicentennial birth anniversary of Iswarchandra Vidyasagar. As a way to pay homage to the legendary social reformer, educationist and philanthropist, Dr. Mandar Mukherjee, Departmental Faculty has contributed a paper entitled "Swasikahaya-Iswarchandra Vidyasagar" which explores the various aspects of self-learning which the icon practiced in his life.

On the last, Twelfth Belarani De Memorial Lecture, the Department was graced by the presence of Dr. Anindya Jyoti Majumdar, Professor, Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University who spoke on the contentious issues experienced by South Asia in recent times. This volume consists of an Abstract of the same.

Like other years, this time too the Journal endeavoured to be a document of the existing scenario. The ongoing Pandemic and resultant lockdown have deeply affected all walks of life, the educational sector not being an exception. However, after the initial days, we quickly shifted to digital learning. Hence, this time, the student contributors have shared their experiences of lockdown learning, of how lockdown has challenged humankind and how the latter has tried to navigate and overcome the same. Thus while they have articulated the difficulties of online education, they have also appreciated the benefits it brings. Apart from focusing on digital learning, we also have a glimpse of their thoughts on the overall scenario created by lockdown and the situation of refugees in the wake of the same.

This apart, the students have also written reports of important events of the College and Department and reviewed books and web-series, relevant for our contemporary times.

One of the objectives of PERCEPTION has been to enhance the horizon of the reader's vision. With this volume too, we hope to serve the same purpose.

On the publication of this volume, the Department wishes to thank whole-heartedly the Management of the College, Revered Principal and valued Faculty members of the Department of Political Science, Dr. Aditi Day whose constant support and encouragement have been our source of sustenance. I wish to express thanks to all the Faculty members of the Department and the students, who are the editors and contributors of the Journal. The support of Pratikrup Press, our long-time Printer, is also noteworthy.

Wishing sincerely to serve the reader, now and in future.

11.04.2021.

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DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITIES 2019-20

The year of 2019-20 has been unprecedented in every sense of the term from academic to changing ones mindset and orientation. It led to a sudden suspension of all activities that the academic community has got accustomed to taking as granted and could never imagine, even in wildest dreams, to come to a standstill, all of a sudden.

Yet, the unimaginable did happen because of a global pandemic COVID-19 and an ensuing nationwide lockdown bringing academic institutions under its fold as well. As educational institutions are places of congestion, it was deemed unsafe to allow physical classes. However, learning continued and Shri Shikshayatan College, proving its resilience and positive spirit embraced the 'new normal' and adapted to digital learning. So while in the pre-pandemic period, the Department carried out its regular activities like other years, with the onslaught of the pandemic and lockdown, the Department reoriented itself to suit the exigencies of the changed reality.

The Academic Year of 2019-20 began on 01.07.2019, when the College reopened after the summer recess. Shortly after, on 04.07.2019, an Orientation Programme was held for the Semester I students of B.A and B.Sc streams. This is the first introduction of the new students with the teachers of all departments. The Foundation Day of the College was observed on 06.07.2019 where the Department of Political Science had 12 students from the Department as awardees in various fields like academics, curricular and cultural activities and leadership activities. After having this first official introduction with the College, the classes commenced from 09.07.2019 for the Semester I and last batch of IIIrd Year (Annual System students). The classes for the Third Semester started from 29.07.2019. The Department is full once again with Smt. Urmi Gupta having re-joined it after her Faculty Development Programme leave in November 2019.

In the following months, from August 2019 the Department was quite occupied with programmes like Active Learning Day and Departmental Freshers' Welcome, which were organised on 22.08.2019 and 27.08.2019 respectively.

Active Learning Day : A programme designed to take learning beyond the classroom and prepare students to express themselves. This year too the programme witnessed eager participation and teamwork of all three batches. They articulated their views on Mahatma Gandhi. A survey report was presented by the students on election awareness among the first time women voters of the Shri Shikshayatan College and a movie review on 'Art 15' explored the penetrative nature of caste system in India. Anupriya Mukherjee of Semester I was chosen as the Best Speaker and Muskaan Goenka of Third Semester was appreciated for her compering skills.

Departmental Freshers' Welcome : The Departmental Freshers' Welcome is an annual event, whereby the new students are made to feel as a part of the Departmental family with them

introducing themselves to the house. This time, in the programme held on 27.08.2019, the Semester I students were taken through, among other presentations, a virtual tour of their future journey in and with the College and Department.

Belarani De Memorial Lecture : In September, came the most awaited event for the Department, the Twelfth Belarani De Memorial Lecture on 06.09.2019. This year the Department had Dr. Anindya Jyoti Majumdar, Professor, Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University as the Speaker. Professor Majumdar illuminated the audience with his insights on the contours of political and geo-strategic relations in South Asia with special light on India. He enthralled the faculty members and students alike.

Release of the Departmental Journal : The same day of Belarani De Memorial Lecture also marked the release of the Departmental Journal PERCEPTION – Volume 10: 2018-19 (ISSN: 2454-4353) . The Journal was released by the honorary Speaker, Dr. Anindya Jyoti Majumdar, our revered Principal Dr. Aditi Dey and Debolina Mukherjee, Editor and Head of the Department.

Third Year Farewell : Just as the Semester I students were welcomed by the Department, the IIIrd Year students were also given a glorious Farewell on 27.02.2020. After conferring Departmental Awards to the deserving students in the categories of Academic Performance, Art and Aesthetics, Attendance, Creative Writing, Coordination and Leadership, Graphic Presentation and Editing and Public Speaking by the esteemed Principal Dr. Aditi Dey and Departmental Faculty, the students presented a cultural programme following which the teachers and the final year students reminisced about their journey over the last three years.

Ushering of Digital Learning : Since March 15 2020, regular classes could not be held anymore in the College owing to the onslaught of the pandemic COVID-19. However, as imparting of education cannot stop under any situation, the College quickly reoriented itself and the teaching-learning process went digital and continued via YouTube videos where the Departmental teachers uploaded videos there and materials on the College portal.

Career Progression : Owing to the pandemic, the Graduation examination of the final year batch got postponed and was held online in October 2020. It is a moment of pride for the Department that despite such trying times, the students have successfully placed themselves for post-graduate studies in many prominent institutions like University of Calcutta , Rabindra Bharati University, India Gandhi National Open University , St.Xavier's College, Autonomous, Mumbai , St.Xavier's College, Autonomous, Kolkata and Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

PHOTO GALLERY 2019-2020



PHOTO GALLERY 2019-2020



Departmental Award ►
 B.A. Political Science Honours
 (Left to Right)

Sakshi Tewari	Roll. No. 158
Muskan Jaiswal	Roll. No. 167
Shagufa Farook	Roll. No. 171
Madhura Sen	Roll. No. 239
Mahek Didwania	Roll. No. 254
Shireen Gupta	Roll. No. 284



SWASHIKSHAYA – ISWARCHANDRA VIDYASAGAR
 (SANGBAD PRATIDIN : ROBBAR : 'SAWANG' 21.02.2021)

Dr. Mandar Mukherjee
 Faculty, Department of Political Science, Sri Shikshayatan College
 Translation : Smt. Subha Sarkar

No social being can be labelled as completely 'self-tutored' as his appearance on earth is guided by several predetermined factors. Genetic, hereditary and environmental elements play a definite role in his making, during or even before procreation. Mostly, these innate traits start getting honed after his birth. We cannot write-off even a nondescript person as he is protected by the groups with whom he shares his congenital traits. Even then, when we mark someone as 'self-tutored' we actually indicate towards an observer or defender of an avenue which has been laid-out by him; from where he would never deviate.

Yes, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar is one such personality, who is not only a path-seller, but also an adamant pilgrim on his own avenue.

Naturally, question arises, in what sense should we call him 'self-tutored', when all through his growing age to attaining his academic title 'Vidyasagar', he was mostly under the guidance of his father Thakurdas, mother Bhagabati Devi and several other teachers and scholars, starting from his village school to Sanskrit College. Therefore, we have to look for that unique quality which made him so distinguished that even Rabindranath had to apply such adjectives like 'inexhaustible humaneness' and 'invincible vigour' phrases, which Tagore did not even characterise his father Debendranath with.

It should be kept in mind that there were several other contemporary scholars who also earned the title 'Vidyasagar'; besides, there were eminent stalwarts like Bhudev Mukhopadhyay, Rajnarayan Basu, Akshaya Kumar Dutta, Dinabandhu Mitra and above all, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. Let it be accepted beyond doubt that Iswarchandra became rather eminent in his lifetime and his fame widely touched both the native and foreign intellectuals, as well as, the illiterates. A contemporary book-store owner even ignores a permanent buyer like Gaganendra Nath Tagore to spend more time with Iswarchandra and allows him free access to sit among piles of books and make his selection. When he returns to his dwelling at Badurbagan after the day, we find him engaged in various domestic chores like a common householder; thereby, often mistaken as a cook or a gardener by strangers. This shows what an 'out of the box' character he was, always clad in *dhoti and chadar*.

Subha Sarkar an alumna of Visva Bharati and a former Head of the Institution of Saroj Basu Smriti Banka Vidyamandir Govt. Sponsored School.

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Whatever wealth he made was completely self-earned. His righteousness was not to be tarnished by the allure of wealth or renown and power. This was a figure, terribly adamant, unyielding, pragmatic and hard-boiling. As a result, starting from the age of twenty one till his demise, this personality radiates strength of character and compassion for humanity.

Now, how could these individual qualities distinguish him as 'self-tutored'? After all, Understanding, Feelings, Empathy, all these are mostly inherent qualities. We do not usually need to acquire. But in his case, he surpasses his own limits through continuous conscious practice, to such an extent, that his ideas and works stand high to over-shadow the actual person. He becomes one with his own values, and in the process, we find him angry, revolting and adamantly adherent to his belief. This is how he becomes self-tutored in his own way.

The foremost element that goes into his making is thorough expertise in all his works. Whichever project he took in his hands, always finished it through gruelling exercise. Vague ideas did not appeal to him. He enlarged his sphere of work through continuous chastening towards perfection. His first book was published before he became an avowed social reformer, in which he made necessary changes in all twenty one subsequent editions. Same is noted in his choice of subjects for his books. As soon as he joined Fort William College as a civilian lecturer at the age of twenty one, he was assigned to write text-books in Bengali. And why did he choose 'Betel Panchabinsati' above all? Was it because they were popular stories of folk-tale nature? Or because he was reminded of king Vikramaditya by the book 'Bairish Singhasan' written by his predecessor Mrityunjay Vidyalankar? It may be the case, he was inspired by the idea of 'guardian class' of Plato's 'Republic', and wanted to bring forward the idea of 'continuous self-improvement' until becoming a perfect soul (Betalsiddha). It is not hard to guess that he was quite acquainted with Plato or Machiavelli and Kautilya through the library books of Sanskrit College. The magazine 'Parthenon' published by the followers of Derozio in the neighboring college must have signaled strong ripples to his alert mind. A continuous process of search and improvement laid the foundation for conscious exercise of intellectual property.

Gains through self-tutelage are his hard earned assets that get reflected in all his subsequent works, social or intellectual. Drafts for reforms like: Hindu Widow Remarriage, Age of Consent Bill, Illegality of Polygamy, all were drafted after thorough comparative study and securing verdict from pundits of Kashmir to Nabadwip. From then on he became the centre of hot disputes and controversial arguments. But this process of dexterous comparative judgement and rejection, yielded a sense of pragmatism. He did not try to bring about any sudden thoughtless reform exercising his fame and position, which will not be largely accepted. That is why he earned eager support from his colleagues when he joined Sanskrit College as the Principal. He sternly removed the worthless Secretary of the college. The rigorous formative process generated such confidence in him, that he claimed that text-books authored by him are superior in quality and should fetch higher price. Success of business of his books turned the readers from Grub Street (Bot-lola) to College Street.

Now, he went for projects like reforming Bengali Language, its punctuations, collection of Bengali synonyms, simplified Sanskrit Grammar Book, Bengali Text-Books on Mathematics,

and introduction of necessary curriculum for learning three languages at the same time. Reforms in the method of education reached him to his field of social endeavours. Here we find him adamantly uncompromising. More reform means the more and more dispute and conflict. This shows not only his strict righteousness, but also his indomitable courage. He did not allow the rulers to use the building of Sanskrit College as a shelter for British soldiers during Sepoy Mutiny. He stood against them when they decided to move all crematoriums of the city to the suburbs. His undaunted courage did not care whether he was confronted by the rulers, the rich or the influential. This courage kept him free from becoming a flag-bearer of any dogmatic religion. He would not fit into any given definition of a 'theist', 'atheist' or 'agnostic'; for, the foundation of his courage was intellect, logic and a deeply humanitarian mind and conscience. He reacted with equal boldness against both the opposite religious stand-point of Radhakanta Deb and Debendranath Tagore.

Instead of securing personal gains from these disputes, he would rather sever his ties with them and become isolated. He used the same yardstick for one and all, leaving no scope for preferential treatment towards any establishment, institution, person or his own family. Remaining so firm to his stance, calls for absolute courage indeed. His forthright stand ignored all criticism and even threat to his life.

At the same time, he rendered his duties and responsibilities impartially towards all and kept paying off the dues all through his life. In spite of earning a havoc amount of money, when he had to bear the burden of debt, he did not seek any respite from his financial duties.

On the other hand, this rigid unyielding figure goes all out to create a circle of like-minded friends for free and spontaneous exchange of ideas. They dedicated books to each other, went to see plays authored by any of them and so on. Initiatives toward personal help of any nature, financial or legal, were mostly led by Iswarchandra.

He realised from the beginning that 'conflict' is a precondition for freedom. A controversial figure like Madhubudan or a disputed one like Kaliprasanna was acceptable to him on the basis of their merit and intellect, but frankly admitted whenever there was a discord.

This immeasurably exceptional personality was doomed to a life of desolate isolation. Abandoning his family, social life, politics, far from everything, he had to take refuge amidst unfailing solitude. Surreptitious flow of political equations had started making way through the process of social reforms. Individual value-judgment was pushed to a back seat by political groupism, where numbers mattered most; 'right or wrong' started being judged from a different perspective.

He took his leave quite formally; wrote letters to all bidding farewell and made necessary arrangements for all dependents. He took along with him only his human values when he sought refuge among the simple tribal folks of Karmatar, a far off place, where he lived an easier life till the end.

Much later, going through the pages by Mahatma Gandhi, it occurred to me that his

cleansing operation was rather close to Iswarchandra's life-long efforts. In a larger sense, this continuous process of discarding debris and dirt is part of cleanliness, after all. We try to keep our clothing, utensils, furniture, rooms, toilets and gardens clean and tidy; likewise, we should cleanse our intellectual faculties by purging the debris. If we don't keep it up as a continuous process, stale and outdated objects and articles will turn the free-flowing river into a stagnant sewer. At a micro level, it is true that when we keep our own mind and self, our social environment clean, our activities turn into a cleansing operation. Likewise, removal of mean and stifling practices from society, is one such programme indeed. These days, when we find undesirable political interference in all matters of life, we surmise whether this apprehension drove Iswarchandra away from urban society!

Perhaps, we should start thinking, how far should we allow politics to pollute our society.

Today, when we go to evaluate him, we either defy him to the level of God or dismiss him as a 'munshi' of Mr. Marshall at Fort William College. Now, when we have reached the bicentenary of his birth, it is time to re-evaluate him from a neutral standpoint, detached from all institutional perspectives, and determine what actually his self-earned asset is. Why did Rabindranath write that he suffered punishment of ultra-consciousness?

Actually, this super-consciousness is his earning from self-tutelage which has kindness, compassion, hard-toll, honesty, prowess and fire of intellect in all its layers. He is an exceptional individual and also an institution at the same time. Perhaps, this tells us, why we do not find a successor of Vidyasagar, for, such individuals leave no scope for legacy.

SOUTH ASIA : TRENDS IN CONFLICT AND COOPERATION (THE TWELFTH BELARANI DE MEMORIAL LECTURE ABSTRACT)

Anindya Jyoti Majumdar

Professor, Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University

Contemporary South Asia exhibits trends that are loaded with various possibilities. Scholars tend to argue that South Asia is one of the poorest, conflict-prone, least integrated and heavily militarized regions of the world. As a result, security calculations often override issues of democracy promotion, economic priorities and cultural bonds in the region which explains why regionalism has failed to flourish. At the same time, it is pointed out that economic growth and mutual gains depend on a high level of interstate cooperative norms and moreover, impending ecological disasters from climate change might call for unprecedented levels of cooperation among the South Asian states in near future. Within this broader context, the states in South Asia are confronted with new challenges as the world is in continuous flux and the contemporary is always different from the past in terms of the nature of challenges and the responses called for.

South Asia is mired in geopolitical narratives. To borrow the expressions of the Critical Geopolitics School, geography is about power and it is the product of histories of struggle to occupy, organize and administer space. South Asia is no exception. Analysts did always focus on the fact that smaller South Asian states are geographically arranged around a dominant Indian core and that has created either India-phobia or India-mania among them. While the attempt has been made to make geography responsible, it was always entwined with a psychological element of suspicion of how other states perceive Indian intentions, attitudes and policies and how they respond. For example, the incessant India-Pakistan rivalry is taken as constant in South Asian politics. However, changing geopolitical narratives are superseding the old ones. As China emerges as a new actor in South Asia, the smaller states in South Asia today are set to derive benefits from an India-China competition though an intense game of balance could become detrimental to the interests of the smaller states if the price of friendship demanded by the equalizer proved to be costly.

Economic progress and strategic partnerships might not make emerging India a reality unless it organizes and administers the Indian Ocean space. This may not be equated with hegemonic ambitions but needs to be understood as a condition for growth. While India requires a secure periphery and should emerge as the trade and transit core for the subcontinent, within the politico-strategic environment marked by violent extremism and proxy war, change in leadership temperament and increasing Chinese penetration in South Asia, paradiplomacy, sub-regionalism and trans-regionalism are gaining momentum where South Asia as a region ceases to retain its significance as one self-contained geopolitical unit.

ABUL FAZI : A LEGACY FROM MEDIEVAL INDIA

Muskaan Goenka

Semester V¹, Department of Political Science

In a time when the idea about society and kingship were continuously evolving, Abul Fazl 'Allami' Shayk was an exception from the conventional contemporary thought trends because of his liberal attitude and humanitarian approach. When the medieval Islamic thought about kingship was focused only on the pre-eminence of the king and his divine duties, Fazl took the untrodden way in differently defining the duties of the king and emphasizing the importance of the subjects of the same.

Abul Fazl, author, liberal thinker, and secretary to the Mughal Emperor Akbar, was the younger brother of the court poet Fayd and the second son of Shayk Mubarak Nagawri – one of the most distinguished scholars of his age in India and the author of a commentary on the Kur'an Mamba'l Naba'isat-Uyan. He was born on 14th January, 1551 at Agra, where his father had settled as a teacher in 1543. His tremendous knowledge and wisdom could be attributed to his paternal teachings. He owed his erudite scholarship and liberality of outlook largely to the training given by his father. By his 15th year, he had studied religious sciences, Greek thought and mysticism; but formal education didn't satisfy the yearnings of his soul and nor did the orthodox faith bring him spiritual solace. While studying in his father's school, he spent his time in extensive reading, deep meditation, and frequent discussions of religious questions. His pursuits seem to have made him something of a social misfit, however, and by the time he was 20, he had already embarked on a life of ascetic withdrawal. However, he soon fell into depression and was pulled out of the same by his friends.

He was presented at the court in 1574 by his brother Fayd, who was a poet laureate at the court of Akbar. Through his wit and skilful persuasive attributes, he soon gained high favour with Akbar. What brought him to prominence and as an integral part of the study of history today was his scholarly and logical defense against the political clout of the Ulemas. The religious discussion which started in the 'Ibadat Khana' in 1575 gave him the opportunity to do this. His liberal attitude not only helped the subjects but also freed the Emperor from the requirement of having a religious sanction backing his decisions and thus aiding to secularize the then political culture of India. This reduced the political domination of the Ulemas. Fazl was significant in bringing about their ultimate political downfall by the drafting promulgation of the decree (Mahdar) in 1579, which invested Akbar with the authority of deciding points of difference between the theologians. The Ibadat Khana discussions seem to have persuaded Akbar that the Persian-speaking nobility should be familiar with the literary legacy of the non-Muslim cultures. To this, the Emperor established a bureau supervised by Abul Fazl to provide Persian translations of profound works from the Hindu and other religious traditions.

¹ Presently in Semester VI

He regarded all creeds as inherently possessing the same universal truth. Not only did he view the Hindu faith as essentially monotheistic, but he identified the object worship in Hinduism and all other religions, including Islam, as one and the same deity. The pragmatic reason was for the innovation of such a pan-Indian ideology which other religious views had not sought to. Abul Fazl's cosmopolitanism, however, exacted a high cost: though he talked about Islam being universally true, he couldn't prove it to be exclusively true. For this, the conservative Muslim opinion branded him as apostate or heretic. Yet, he remained unperturbed.

Fazl wanted a separation between religion and politics, and this ideal of his was achieved through the preaching of allegiance to Akbar by rising above any religious constraints. At the same time saying that Akbar's royalty was light emanating from God communicated to the Kings without the intermediate assistance of anybody. The ensuing loyalty cult is seemed to have been modeled on the Sufi *pir-murid* relationship in which the disciple pledges absolute obedience and devotion to his master. The chosen among the disciple would be those who attained the 'four degrees of devotion'. It was with this spirit of universalism that Akbar's government had accommodated diverse cultural groups into a stable administrative and military system to ensure representation and peace. These well-articulated and patently thought ideas of Abul Fazl have provided the formational grounds of independent India's secular and fraternal ideologies. Till date, it remains the most far-reaching and accepted principle into use, leaving a legacy.

In 1599, he was deputed to Deccan for settling complex political and military affairs. He proved himself extraordinary by skillfully solving the complexities of the situation at hand in Deccan, a place where the Mughal Empire was planning to expand. Assessing the exemplary capabilities of Fazl, Prince Salim, successor to the throne, plotted to kill him. He was killed on 22 August 1602, to the ageing Akbar's dismay. His severed head was sent to Jahangir and his body was buried.

Abul Fazl served as Akbar's spokesman par excellence, shaping, articulating, and immortalizing the ideals championed by the Emperor, a circumstance consequential of the fateful corresponding political and religious views of the two men. Fazl, with his scholarly background and wise interpretation of systems and behaviour, provided to be the suitable opponent Akbar needed to stand in the face of his difficulties. A firm believer in God, Fazl believed that there could be no relationship between man and God except that of servitude on the part of the latter. Though he regarded formal worship as hypocrisy; he believed that there were many ways of serving the Lord and only the divine blessing could reveal the Truth. His faith in being at "peace with all" involved not only the toleration of all religions but also love for human beings.

In addition to his elaborate and precise immaculate documentation work; Fazl's enduring fame rests on the production of the magnificent Akbarnama and its concluding section Ain-i-Akbari, among others. The influence of his life and work on the subsequent history of the Indian subcontinent has been enormous. As an ideologue, he articulated the thoughts of his patrons but went further: He portrayed Akbar as embodying the Iranian idea of the divinely sanctioned Monarch and the Sufi ideal of the Perfect Man. Since Akbar could provide for the material and

spiritual satisfaction of his subjects, he could be truly regarded as the "Perfect Man", in his opinion. In such a process, he made a legacy for the empire as well as a glory of Akbar that helped the empire sustain through the later generations. As an historian, he broke new grounds by including secular and rational views in the assessment of the past, using widely ranged data sources. Being an exemplary wielder of pen in the art of epistolography, he developed a distinctive style that has been taught in Indian schools for centuries. However, his major importance was as a theorist who developed an ideology not only for the Indian empire ruled by Akbar but for the Mughal civilization in the broadest sense.

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JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN'S TOTAL REVOLUTION

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Total Revolution (Sampoorna Kranti) was the last intellectual intervention of Jayaprakash Narayan, the prolific socio-political activist in his perpetual quest to seek and establish such a socio-economic and political order in the country that would turn India into a democratic, federal, participatory, equitable and prosperous nation in the world. Narayan once stated that Total Revolution is a combination of seven revolutions – political, social, economic, cultural, ideological or intellectual, educational and spiritual; and the main motive was to bring a change in the existing society to make it commensurate with the ideals of Sarvodaya. He had a very idealistic notion of society and it is in this endeavour, he shifted from Marxism to Socialism and later towards Sarvodaya, conceptualised by Mahatma Gandhi as an inheritance from John Ruskin and brought to life by Vinoba Bhave in post-independent India.

Envisioning a society attempting to guarantee everyone's welfare based on unselfish motives, Narayan worked towards revival of the Indian society. Such societal regeneration was to come via peaceful means. Despite being an active member of Congress Party, Praja Socialist Party and later Janata Party, he later withdrew himself from power politics. This however did not signify abstinence on Jayaprakash Narayan's part while the country had been suffering from growth and downward penetration of social and political degeneration adversely impacting civil liberties and political freedom of the people. In order to improve the then existing situation, despite his age, he embarked on the task of working towards bringing in a complete change in the political and economic life of India.

The concept of Total Revolution was for the first time evolved by Vinoba Bhave during the 1960s. Initially, he tried to organize people and make them conscious or aware of the situation and then appealed to the leaders. However, with no response, he began to organize the youth to save democracy from degeneration and called this revolution as Total Revolution. The momentum to the movement came when there were agitations in Gujarat and followed in Bihar as well.

In 1974, the Bihar agitations spiralled into massive protests by the people to bring about a change in the political, social and educational system. At this juncture, Jayaprakash Narayan announced a fourfold plan of action that aimed to paralyze the administration, introduction of Gram Swarajya and establishing people's government. Explaining the term 'peoples government', he stated that it would be a small unit of democracy at the village, panchayat, or the block level, at all the three levels, if possible. Jayaprakash Narayan's motive behind charging up the students of Bihar was to bring about a complete change in the entire governmental structure and the

¹ Presently in Semester VI

system of Indian polity. It is for this reason he called it a Total Revolution aiming towards a complete overhauling of the system.

Jayaprakash Narayan felt motivated to mobilise people in 1975 to work towards the Total Revolution in order to stem the rot creeping into all aspects of public life and create a whole new world encompassing the basic elements of socio-economic and political order that he had been advocating. The Emergency setting of 1975 compelled by disasters and implemented by the Indira Gandhi Government provided the immediate impetus for his call for Total Revolution. In fact, his call for Sampurna Kranti became the rallying cry for the movement against Indira Gandhi's Government. Through his call for Total Revolution, he called for effecting and deepening an informed consciousness of the masses for ensuring the holistic transformation of the entire system.

Like Mahatma Gandhi, he also experimented with his own beliefs, tested his notions and modified his ideas. The inherent contradictions within parliamentary democracy made him lose any faith he had in it. He opined that democracy gives no assurance for a better life to the people. He opined that only a peaceful revolution could bring about the required changes in society. Hence, in his conceptualisation of Total Revolution, he was firm on reforming the electoral system in such a way that the people can vote in an incorruptible manner and in accordance with their free conscience. Moreover, in such a system, there would be no place for political parties, and the centralization of power would be effectively curbed by having greatest possible diffusion of political powers to various levels of Government. Jayaprakash Narayan was also convinced of the perverse effects of the concentration of economic power in the hands of few in the society. He, therefore, called for total recasting of the economic system of country as well.

Jayaprakash Narayan highlighted the problem of price rise as one of the major targets of Total Revolution, resulting in possible impoverishment and malnourishment of people, keeping in view their inability to pay for the exorbitantly high prices of essential commodities. At the same time, he was also forthright in eradicating the existing social inequality in the country by putting a full stop to the discrimination amongst the people on the basis of religion and caste. Few people tried to take recourse to some sort of violent methods in carrying out the movement for Total Revolution. But Jayaprakash Narayan was firm in his conviction that Total Revolution could be brought about only through peaceful and nonviolent voluntary actions on the part of the people.

Arguing for a mixed economy for India, Jayaprakash Narayan aspired that the economic dispensation of the country must be able to provide for the necessities of people like food, clothing and shelter. His idea of *sampattidanwas* was a call for the sharing of one's wealth and economic resources in such a way that its utilisation would benefit the larger sections of people rather than ensuring affluence for a few. He suggested that the first and foremost task of the Sarvodaya worker would be to decentralise the politico-economic structure.

He laid out a plan for the movement; on how the revolution should proceed towards its destination with the insistence on public education, and constructive programmes consisting of creating consciousness about various social evils pervading India such as dowry system, caste conflicts, communalism and untouchability. He strongly believed that for democracy to be a

lively and effective instrument there is an urgent need for a strong opposition, powerful public opinion, free and fearless press, ideological and moral pressure from the academicians, and trade unions. This required a reorientation of the psyche of the populace and he, in fact, advised the people to revise their thinking and attitude towards democratic functioning in India.

Jayaprakash Narayan's notion of Total Revolution has been conceptualised and presented in a comprehensive manner. His commitment to socialist and humanistic ideas is manifest in the idea of Total Revolution. He was aiming at uprooting of corruption from political and social life in India and all subsequent ill effects associated with the root malady. This apart, he wanted to create conditions wherein the marginalised people, living below the poverty line could be empowered enough to have access to the basic minimal necessities of life. In this light, the Total Revolution was, for him, a device for bringing about a Gandhian humanist version of an ideal Indian society.

'India of my dreams is a community in which every citizen participates in the affairs of the community. It is a community in which the weak are organized and awakened to implement reforms and to keep an eye on the rulers ... it is a community in which the people have a right to an opportunity to bring them to book if they go astray in which office is not looked upon as a privilege, but as a trust given by the people ... in short, my vision is of a free progressive and Gandhian India.' However, his dream remained unfulfilled despite his long struggle throughout his life.

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PANDEMIC AND LOCKDOWN : IMPACT ON NRC REFUGEES

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An unseen and struggling story of 1.9 million people (Assam, January 2021) regarded as 'D-Voters' are in the state of acute deprivation at multifarious levels. It's a recital of the 'left-out' and 'out of glare' National Register of Citizens (NRC) refugees amid lockdown and post lockdown. The wrath of natural calamities seems more cataclysmic than the political and social catastrophe. A ruinous pandemic has succumbed the 'Worldly Citizens' irrespective of its race, caste, class, nation, language, religion, ancestry or culture where 'Worldly Refugees' have become an incredibly vulnerable population who need to get protected, for their own safety as much as for that of the community that hosts them. Hence, it becomes pertinent to give voice to the unheard.

NRC of Assam is a list of Indian citizens living in the state of Assam. The Citizens' Register sets out to identify foreign nationals in the state that borders Bangladesh and also upgrade it to weed out illegal Bangladeshi and neighbouring immigrants. The eve of Bangladesh War, a chaotic geographic-political event which escorted umpteen unregistered crisis, entangling lives of humans across borders where Freedom did not favor the destiny of NRC Refugees, who had been politically victimized and incessantly targeted by various chains of temporal ideological events; be it Nellie massacre or Assam Movement brawling over land rights, linguistic, cultural and social rights and also protection over the state's resources, heritage and bio-diversity.

The process of updating of the Register began following a Supreme Court order in 2013, with the state's nearly 33 million people having to prove that they were Indian nationals prior to March 24, 1971 (analogous to Assam Accord). On August 31, 2019, the final updated list of NRC brought hopes and aspirations to about 2 million people but for 19,06,657 lakh people who were excluded from the total population of 3.29 crore population of Assam, it brought a wave of dismay and existential crisis.

The untold and inexplicable challenges faced by the refugees who needed to prove their citizenship at the time when total lockdown had been declared in view of pandemic situation need to be pointedly mentioned -

- Harsh waves of floods in Assam, torrential rain, water-logging and landslides brought population shift-settlings to high land, leaving their houses. According to Assam State Disaster Management Authority, the most affected areas included BARPETA, Kamrup,

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Kokrajhar, Morigeon, Bongaigaon, Goalpara, etc. which were among the 23 worst affected districts where the refugees reside in more numbers.

- Damage of Permanent Liability Homes due to the incessant flood and excess release of waterflows from Bhutan's dams in downstream areas affected the denizens majority.
- With the declaration of a nation-wide Lockdown from 25th March, 2020 for the safety of the citizens, brought problems involving in proving citizenship at newly designated 200 Foreign Tribunals within 120 days due to delayed issuance of rejection slip by NRC Seva Kendra which was supposed to form the base for their appeals in future court proceedings.
- Due to high land shift settlings and damage caused to their homes, many might have lost the documents which was intended to provide them with their descendence proofs.
- Insufficient sanitary conditions and pre-existing health issues must have made them more vulnerable, especially the women and diseased. As, in Rahul Karmakar's article published by The Hindu on August 1, 2020, it is stated that how UNICEF on the COVID-19 backdrop and the Assam floods have had provided technical support to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority to address their specific requirements during such emergency especially child-friendly spaces (CFS) were included as an integral part of the relief camp management system like that of Bangladesh's Rohingyas and Kurds of Syria but was that intended to provide to NRC Refugees, that's questionable.
- Next was their socio-economic status that has negatively impacted their ability to take precautionary measures against COVID-19 and get accustomed to the new-normal healthy settlings like guaranteeing availability of sanitizers, gloves, masks, or be it maintaining social distancing in constricted spaces during the peak of viral infection. These added-vulnerabilities were superfluous to their employment conditions, which got adversely affected due to pandemic as most of them, profess as a daily wage earners as a result of which they were compelled to use their savings for their survival in hard times, which were the only future assurance to their legal aids.
- Another challenge was the continuous subjection to xenophobic behavior by the local community. As, it is evident from the Assam's history that Anti-foreigners movement and Bodo movement instigated the intentional political nerves of Assamese against the illegal immigrants which got furthered with communalism earmarking Bangali Muslims, especially after the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019. This act is said to revive an ancient Indian moral code of 'ayamniyahparovetigananaleghuchetasam, udaracharitanamivasudhatvakulumbhakam' signifying the entire world is our home except the people professing Islam.
- Excessive dependence on civil society also marked an unreliable hope for them during the strenuous months which was conditionally stopped due to travel bans and lockdown for avoiding physical proximity.

- Oblivious media coverage was another challenge, as the health reports got mainstream media's attention which subsided their coverage.
- Being constant targets of politicization by different political associations like the nationalist wings within the state boundary (State Govt. of Assam) as well as the national boundary (Union Govt.), they have been used as a topical creature of situational mileage for opposition which caused them to remain in the state of vacuity during hard times.

According to the National Commission of Women's 2020 Report, there has also been a rise in domestic violence cases in India during the lockdown, be it sexual or physical abuse getting worsened by the police apathy to register the cases. If a gendered citizen is not secured then it's difficult to think of a secured environment for 'Doubtful voters' comprising refugee women and their inability to access existing support systems. While the government has set up new helplines to extend assistance to the remotely, but refugee women are typically reluctant to approach the governmental authorities due to their ambiguous legal status and fear of reprisal within their communities.

Furthermore, the tripartite governmental route of Central, State and District administration has assured that the relief packages and supply of essential goods reaches out to the most needful by the application of 'helping hand for all'. The Songbhidhan Sabak (believers of Constitution), NDRF, SDRF, NGOs and volunteers have focused on providing relief to everyone without any discrimination but there has not been any specific reports on how government is tackling their crisis be it taking any positive steps to extend the benefits of free COVID-19 testing or other government-implemented relief schemes (for providing basic amenities) to refugees specifically due to the lack of an identity of being a citizen. To date, there have not been any reports of refugees being infected with COVID-19 in India. However, once restrictions start to ease, it is essential that necessary preventive and precautionary measures are put into place. To achieve this, government must make valuables available across all refugee camps and settlements in India and provide free testing at private/public labs (where the rates are otherwise prohibitive) because their well-being is as important to public health as that of any other section of the population.

According to April 14, 2020 published report by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), the decision of India's Supreme Court to relax conditions for the release of individuals detained as "foreigners" in Assam's detention centers due to concerns with the spread of COVID-19 was welcomed by USCIRF. In response to an application submitted by the Justice for Liberty Initiative, the Supreme Court, ordered the release of detainees held for at least two years and lowered the personal bond amount necessary to secure release from 100,000 to 5,000 rupees, with , alongside other factors , a view to decongest the detention centers. Though, in its 2018 Annual Report, USCIRF highlighted concerns that the implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam "is an intentional effort to discriminate and/or has the effect of discriminating against Muslims, and that the discretion given to local authorities in the verification process and in identifying perceived foreigners to be excluded from the (NRC) draft list will be abused.

In a recent press release, the Chief Election Commissioner, Shri. Sunil Arora had stated that the excluded voters from NRC or 'D-Voters' will have the right to franchise in the upcoming 2021 State Assembly Elections in Assam, since they have not been defined as 'Foreigners'. Now, the 18,06,657 lakh people would now be entitled as the 'Voters' and not the so-called 'D-Voters' though 1.08 million are still D-voters. Then, who is to blame for this vulnerabilities and ictus caused to them ? As a consequence of which battle over clause-6 of Assam Accord has again arrived as a political rhetoric which mentions January 1, 1951 as a cut-off date to prove the nationality which is again contrary to the mammoth exercise of NRC where people spent Rs.7,836 crores for hearings (According to the Article of The New Indian Express by Prashanta Majumdar on August 27, 2019). Though, according to the Assam Accord, the cut-off isn't 1951 but March 24, 1971 which will be detected in accordance with the provisions of Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Foreigners (Tribunal) order, 1964.

Its unfathomable to conclude their vulnerabilities, as it seems never ending and entangled in chains of politico-ideological chaos. The paper ends but their saga continues.

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STUDYING PROCESS IN THE NEW NORMAL

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Human beings, with their ever-resilient nature adapt to circumstances, particularly against dire circumstances. Hence in the last few months, when the world was affected by an unprecedented pandemic in the form of COVID-19, after the initial jolt, mankind started normalizing the bizarre situation giving way to 'new normal'. The learning process, in formal educational institutions could be seen as one area that has undergone significant transformation to adjust to the demands of the changed reality.

The onslaught of the pandemic rendered congregation and specially congregation at enclosed spaces unsafe. The pandemic being a contagious one, maintenance of a safe physical distance termed as social distancing was perceived as an effective remedy. The consequent imposition of the lockdown amidst the rising threats of the pandemic tremendously affected the entire learning structure of the educational institutions. The immediate shutting down of all schools and colleges has caused an indistinct disruption in the students learning process. As per July 27, 2020, 1.725 billion students have been currently affected due to the lockdown.

It is still difficult to predict even after a year when will schools, colleges and universities open and function in the conventional style. In order to keep the students motivated and committed towards their academic goals and ongoing process of learning, at the same time conforming to the social distancing strategies, most of the educational institutions have adopted the on-line mode for education. Many educational institutions have progressed with the help of immediate measures and interactive learning sessions through which students can keep themselves engaged in their ongoing learning process. There are many mobile based interactive learning apps through which students and teachers can interact virtually. In this present crisis, technology has proved to be a major boon for students since it provides a wide range of learning opportunities through virtual platforms. Apart from the on-line virtual classes imparted by the institutions, students also have easy access to a multiple range of on-line study materials, videos and lectures. There are also digital libraries and websites which provide e-books and e-journals to which students can make best use of the lockdown period and which helps to expand the horizons of their knowledge.

Students can also self assess themselves through online mock tests, quizzes and solving previous year question papers and keep a track of their academic and Intellectual progress. This can really help them to determine their strengths, identify and overcome their weaknesses. In the present situation, news and popular media outlets have taken good initiatives to impart subject-wise lessons to each class and telecast them in their news channels especially for the disadvantaged students who are living in remote areas, or who do not have access to internet connectivity or advanced technology.

¹ Presently in Semester VI

This new normal in the field of education has certainly helped a section of the students to quite an extent. Digital lectures play a crucial role in imparting knowledge to students. The students are able to save travel time and utilize it in an efficient manner. With the advancement of technology, learning has become more amenable to the students suffering from physical ailments. Audio-visual and interactive learning through digital platform have made learning more interesting. The teachers monitor their students attendance and performance through various mechanisms.

Education in lockdown has been beneficial to some whereas large number of students who do not have access to smart phone or laptop could not derive much benefit. 24% Indians own a smart phone and only 11% of households possess any type of computer, which could include desktop computers, laptops, notebooks, palmtops or tablets. There is absence of such basic amenities as electricity and proper connectivity. Such problems are primarily faced by students from rural background. Mission Antyodaya, a nationwide survey of villages conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development in 2017-18, showed that 16% of India's household received one to eight hours of electricity daily, 33% received 9-12 hours of electricity, and only 47% received more than 12 hours of electricity per day.

On-line education has its own limitations. One-to-one interactions among peers and between teachers and students are very important for better learning experience. Moreover, in the country like ours where classroom teaching has been order of the day until recently, both students and teachers are still grappling with the digital mode of teaching-learning. Technical glitches during the class hour disrupt the flow of both teaching and learning. Continuous use of laptop and computer for long duration give rise to numerous health problems. Unfortunately it has also been seen that the percentage of boys having access to internet is more than the access available to girls. According to the report by the Internet and Mobile Association, in 2019, 67% men had access to the internet while this figure was only at 33% for women.

There is a deep rooted structural imbalances between the rural and urban, male and female, rich and poor in the digital world. With the existing digital divide, expanding on-line education will push the digital have-nots to the periphery of the education system, thereby increasing more inequality in the field of education unless special care is taken to address the issues faced by the disadvantaged.

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STUDY DURING LOCKDOWN – A NEW CHALLENGE BEGETTING CREATIVITY

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The year 2020 marked the beginning of a phase, bottled up with challenges and uncertainties. People worldwide found themselves amidst unimaginable circumstances. It seemed as if in one moment life was the usual and in the other moment everything upside down. The Novel COVID-19 took over and took a toll on everything and everyone. The only way to avoid the spread of the deadly infection for everyone was to remain quarantined in their respective homes. For controlling the spread of the disease in India, the Government imposed national lockdown which prevented individuals from engaging in non-essential outdoor activities. Educational institutions too were shut down. In spite of that, education and creative minds did not cease to flow.

It was a tough time but the mankind exhibited the zeal to fight the challenging situation. In these trying times information technology appeared to be the best alternative to deal with the unforeseen situation. Internet connection and digital platform facilitated continuation of work, education and entertainment in this crisis. The virtual education became the new norm. Studying through video calls, live classes, voice notes became the standard norm through out the world.

The Government of India initiated, "Bharat Padhe Online" in order to obtain suggestions for improving online learning. With the launch of the campaign the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) received more than 3700 suggestions for the initiative. National Repository of Open Education Resources (NROER) is an excellent initiative launched by the MHRD where one can get exposure to e-libraries, e-courses and chance to take part in events online and theme-based education.

While the entire world was on a standstill, the virtual platform brought people back on track little by little. It was indescribable how individuals of all ages embraced this new situation. Technology usage has increased manifold times. Learning has not been hampered for all, instead unexpectedly improved with the increased availability of time.

Students and teachers no longer spend time commuting for long hours. Rather they have the opportunity to invest their time to enhance their skills and abilities. It enabled, studying as well as imparting education from the safety and comfort of homes. It fostered independent learning and intellectual growth and development.

¹ Presently in Semester IV

The scheduling of online classes for relatively shorter span of time leave extra time with the students to invest in other academic activities. Apart from regular classes, various types of webinars, workshops are helping students to build their personalities and stay connected. E-learning provides opportunity to communicate via text, voice or video.

E-learning during lockdown has its own disadvantages. There are still a good percentage of students residing in remote areas and marginalized sections who do not own a smart phone and do not have access to internet connection. Therefore, connectivity with such students became difficult. Contrary to the traditional on-campus teaching, online studying requires good time management. The communication between the teachers and the students also seems to be diminishing. The social interaction came to a halt. It is also very difficult for the teacher to keep track of whether the students are focusing on their lectures or are engaged elsewhere. In spite of its disadvantages it is better to continue with the online mode until the pandemic situation comes under control. Today it is one of the most effective mechanisms to continue academic exchange while simultaneously maintaining the norm of social distancing to break the chain of Corona Virus. It has also become a new paradigm for educators in which dynamic courses of the highest quality can be developed.

Humans are surely bound to remain indebted to the information-technology industry through which people continue to remain connected with everyone. The scope and reach of on-line education has expanded beyond imagination. As Elliot Masiea says, "We need to bring learning to people instead of people to learning."

LOCKDOWN : WINGS IN THE CAGE

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Of the varied terms that have become commonplace in the past one year, lockdown certainly makes it to the list. 'Lockdown' refers to a restrictive policy for a group or groups of people or communities that require them to stay in isolation; usually due to specific risks to themselves or to others that might occur if unrestricted movement and interaction is allowed. The term "stay-at-home" or "shelter-in-place" is often used for lockdowns that affect an area, rather than specific locations.

With the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic across the globe, most countries of the world, particularly populous countries observed a severe lockdown in order to restrict free movement and thereby arrest the spread of the novel Coronavirus. The COVID-19 pandemic took a massive toll on people's lives. The total number of people affected by the Coronavirus stands to be 174 million with 3.72 million deaths since the inception of the pandemic in the country in January, 2020.

The Government of India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi ordered a nationwide lockdown for 21 days on the 24th of March, 2020; limiting the movement of the population of 1.3 billion Indians as a preventive measure. Thus, human beings are social animals; but the onset of the lockdown due to the pandemic gave birth to social distancing norms that led to the closure of most public places. Schools, colleges and various other firms were shut down. People's movements were limited to the boundaries of their houses.

The lockdown not only affected the personal lives of people but the economy too. Export of merchandise items by India has declined by 17.53% due to the pandemic caused by the Coronavirus as compared to the corresponding period in 2019; exports from Haryana shrank by 14%, from Punjab by 9% and from the Union territory of Chandigarh by 6%. The Lok Sabha was told that the value of India's overall exports, including merchandise and services, from April to November in 2020 was recorded at \$304.53 billion compared to \$351.83 billion from April to November in the year 2019, thereby showing a drop of 13% during the lockdown. Approximately 71.31 percent of businesses dealt with reduced cash flow. The manufacturing sector of the economy had suffered the worst due to the pandemic.

The lockdown was entwined with its political and humanitarian challenges including widespread unemployment, hunger, an unprecedented migrant worker crisis, and widespread loss of access to healthcare. These crises could have been averted or lessened with the help of proper planning by the government.

¹ Presently in Semester II

Amidst all these times of unfortunate uncertainties, hope and courage did not cease to exist. This lockdown has taught us how to adapt to challenging circumstances and deal with the ordeals. We have clearly observed the increased usage of technology and its expansion among people of various ages, groups and strata in the society during the pandemic. New users are now more open to technology and old users are using it more effectively and efficiently. Digital inclusion is evolving in our society; affecting education, finance and public policy the most.

Schools, colleges, private coaching centres, other training institutions and private tutors have made the use of digital technology extensively to deliver uninterrupted lessons. Though the usage of technology for imparting education is not a new concept, in the changed scenario, it has penetrated the society more deeply. Technology has developed to provide students and academicians with functionality and a user-friendly experience. Students, teachers, trainers and guardians are now accepting it as an essential part of education; in response to social distancing.

People are more concerned about personal hygiene and cleanliness. Not being able to step out of except on essential grounds, at least in the initial days of lockdown, helped us differentiate and prioritise between essentials and non-essential requirements.

The pandemic has had a positive impact on the environment as there is a decrease in pollution because people are forced to isolate themselves at home. The rivers are now more clear and the air quality has improved remarkably. Wild animals are able to roam freely, birds that were rarely seen or on the verge of extinction are increasing in number. The Great Himalayan Range was clearly visible from the town of Jalandhar after 30 years.

The pandemic led to financial crisis and unemployment in many households. Many people, including women came to the forefront and took to digital business. They opened their own little online bakery or shop. We also saw the upsurge in the number of bloggers and influencers on the internet.

There has been some speculation that the post COVID-19 situation will harm the economy of the country. But the leading economists of the country believe that India can learn from countries such as the US and Singapore economies and bounce back. We can become self-reliant and trust our indigenous industries to grow rapidly.

The COVID-19 pandemic accompanied by the lockdown was extremely unfortunate, but it could not stop the people from moving forward. They found wings of flight within this cage, believing that, no matter what 'the show must always go on.

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THE TWELFTH BELARANI DE MEMORIAL LECTURE REPORT

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Semester III, Department of Political Science

Belarani De Memorial Lecture is one of the most important academic events of the Department of Political Science. The Memorial Lecture, instituted in the memory of the founder member of the Department, Late Belarani De is organized in the first week of September every year to commemorate her birth anniversary. The objective of the programme is twofold: to uphold the values held forth by Smt. De and to kindle the minds of young learners with the spirit imbued from departmental culture.

Since the inception of the programme in 2008, the Department has been graced with the presence of several academic luminaries belonging to various branches of social sciences with their insights ranging from political philosophy to contemporary politics. The endeavor has always been to bridge tradition with modernity.

On September 6 2019, marking its cultural tradition for over a decade, the Department held the Twelfth Belarani De Memorial Lecture. The honorary speaker was Professor Anindya Jyoti Majumdar, a great scholar and an alumni of Presidency College who obtained his dissertation degree from the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi, where he specialized in Disarmament Studies. Dr. Majumdar is currently the Professor of International Relations at Jadavpur University, Kolkata. He spoke about the trends in conflict and cooperation in South Asia.

The programme commenced with an inspirational inaugural speech by our respected Principal Dr. Aditi De followed by the 'Lightning of the Lamp' ceremony. Our respected Principal, the honorary speaker, Head of the Department and other faculty members released our Departmental Journal "Perception" (Vol. 10, 2018-2019). Our Guest Speaker Dr. Anindya Jyoti Majumdar delivered a powerful and exceedingly relevant lecture on "South Asia: Trends in Conflict and Cooperation".

The lecture helped in bringing the impressionable minds closer to the discipline and broadened their knowledge on the subject. The lecture was followed by a lively interactive session.

¹ Muskan Jaiswal - Student, Department of Political Science, Third Year, presently student of M.A. in Political Science, St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Kolkata

² Muskan Goenka - Student, Department of Political Science, Semester III, presently in Semester VI

³ Firnaz Khatoon - Student, Department of Political Science, Semester I, presently in Semester IV

ACTIVE LEARNING DAY 2019

Shri Shikshayatan College
Priya Chakravarty and Aastha Vikas
Semester III¹, Department of Political Science

Classroom knowledge is incomplete without committed participation of the students in different kinds of activities. Shri Shikshayatan College has been organizing 'Active Learning Day', an annual academic event since 2007 where the students of each department present their own ideas and observations through their participation in various events.

In the year 2019 the event was organized on 22nd of August. It was compered by Muskaan Goenka, a Third Semester student of the Department. A student of Third Year, Shreya Mally delivered an introductory speech. Presentation on various interesting topics were made by the students of the department.

The students of Third Year made a presentation on the life of Mahatma Gandhi as a tribute to mark his 150th birth anniversary where they discussed his ideologies and various movements led by him.

They also enlightened the audience about the influence of Gandhian ideologies on the contemporary world and the influence of his life on great personalities such as Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr. and Barack Obama.

The Third Semester students made a presentation on a survey conducted on the students of Shri Shikshayatan College about the political awareness of first time women voters in General Elections of 2019.

The students of the First Semester presented a review of the film 'Article 15' highlighting caste-based discrimination and violence in the Indian society and caste-based violence pervading the contemporary Indian society despite constitutional guarantees of equality.

The programme ended with prize distribution ceremony followed by delivery of 'Vote of Thanks' by Suvidhi Gandhi, Semester III student. Overall the programme was a grand success as all the students participated with great enthusiasm.

¹ Presently in Semester IV

DEPARTMENTAL AWARDS 2019-20

Category	Roll No.	Recipient Name
1. Academic Performance	B.A. 167	Muskan Jaiswal (462/800 Part I and Part II and Third Year Selection Test)
2. Art and Aesthetics	B.A. 158	Sakshi Tewari
3. Attendance	B.A. 167	Muskan Jaiswal (Total Three Years 90.99%)
4. Creative Writing	B.A. 239	Madhura Sen
5. Coordination and Leadership	B.A. 254	Mahek Didwania
6. Graphic Presentation and Editing	B.A. 171	Shagufa Farook
7. Public Speaking	B.A. 284	Shireen Gupta
Total	07	

HIRAK RAJAR DESHE : A REVIEW

Allvia Ghosh, Sakshi Kanta Ghisingn and Swastika Chakraborty
Semester III¹, Department of Political Science

Satyajit Ray's satire against state's oppression is one area that has earned achievements in parallel cinema. He set out to write and direct a powerful film against the ever – deteriorating condition of state administration and public welfare in the country. "Ora joto beshi pore, toto beshi jane, toto kom mane" (The more they learn, the more they know, the less they obey). This is one of the many dialogues in the film rather mantras installed in the Jantarmantra (a machine invented for purposes of brainwashing) to brainwash the citizens. And this dialogue is meant for the students, for the farmers there is a different mantra, "Bhor pet nao khayi, raj kor deoya chayi" (Even if you starve, taxes must be paid). For the teacher it was "Lekha pora kore je onahara more se" (The one who gets education, dies of starvation). These were not mere rhetoric on the silver screen but metaphors of the reality. Precisely, the real gets transformed to real under the craftsmanship of the maestro Here Udayan Pandit (Soumitra Chatterjee), the local schoolteacher, is the symbol of rebel, that is why perhaps his dialogues do not rhyme like the others, and The King symbolises the rule of despotism. But why has this film earned such a huge fame? What are the reasons, which keep the youth of today chant slogans comprising of songs of this film during student protest? Why is the film still so renowned?

Hirak Rajar Deshe (English Translation – The Kingdom of Diamonds) was directed by Satyajit Ray and produced by Government of West Bengal. Soumendu Roy who has three National awards for Best Cinematography and one for Best Non-Feature Film Cinematography executed the cinematography. Dufal Dutta who was well known as "Ray's Editor with the magic touch" edited the movie. The film went on to become one of the biggest commercial successes of Bengali cinema. On the year of its release i.e. on 19 December 1980, Hirak Rajar Deshe achieved three awards at the 28th National Film Awards, which were National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Bengali, National Film Award for Best Male Playback singer for "Aha ki aanondo" by Anup Ghoshal and Best Music Director went to the maestro Satyajit Ray for creating a mood of fantasy in a pleasing and harmonising style. In 1984, Satyajit Ray was awarded at the Cyprus International Film Festival Special Award for this stunning work. This 4-decade-old dystopian fantasy science fiction film has an IMDB rating of 8.9/10 and is often used as a metaphor for prevailing politics.

In the film, the now crown princes of Halla and Shundi, Goopy (Tapan Chatterjee) and Bagha (Rabi Ghosh) are invited to the court of Hirak Raja. All the scenes are set in rural Bengal which gives the audience glimpses of the village life. We are then taken to the court of Hirak Raja (Utpal Dutt), where Raja is bewildered by the mystical power of singing of the duo

¹ Presently in Semester IV

Later they get an insight of the tyranny prevailing in the court. The Pandora's Box is opened wide in front of them by the soul enemy of the King, Udayan Pandit. As they get to know the treachery, they start stealing diamonds to bribe the royal guards in going against their King.

The King then with his unproductive ministers closes the school where Udayan Pandit used to teach and burns his home into ashes. Meanwhile, Goopy and Bagha entertain the King masquerading as loyal guests to him. Hirak Rajyo (the Kingdom of Hirak) is petrified with their ruler but lacks the courage to voice their opinion. The citizens who are unable to pay the taxes due to poverty are captured and charged of treason and made to work in the coalmines to extract diamonds under severe circumstances with meagre wages. As Goopy Bagha visits this mine along with King they are surprised to find out that Udayan Pandit has also been a victim of the same torture but he manages to send them a secret message. Goopy-Bagha plans meticulously to overthrow the malaise administration.

On the other side the King captures his fellow citizens and puts them in the dubious Jantarantar, invented by his scientist (Santosh Dutta). In here the victims are made to utter the mantras as are told to them in the Jantarantar. And the dialogues are matched with rhyming eloquence. As the reel rolls, the songs match up the mood of every scene sang by Anup Ghoshal.

And in this very machine did the King capture Udayan Pandit and his students and coincidentally, Goopy and Bagha mystifies the place and puts the King into his own Jantarantar. They then proceed towards the village field to vandalise the statue of the King by pulling the rope tied to it and pulled by an unprecedented participation of the fellow citizens. To their surprise, the King along with his ministers participates in vandalising his own statue by reciting "Dori dhore maro taan, raja hope khan khan" (Pull the rope tied to the statue with all your strength to bring it down).

As "The End" slides in, the audience is left with a cluster of thoughts and arguments. But in the end the varied reactions unify to one point that the film, even if 4 decades old, the film is extremely relevant till date and carries a strong message to defy fallacious promises, to introspect deep into what we are subjected to and have all ears towards competent leadership. This film does not only primarily address the children but also involves thought provoking ideals for the audience at large. It is by far one of the best political satires against state oppression that the Indian film industry has ever produced. Ray highlights several important issues in the film – the tragic 'creation' of terrorists, the danger of state-sponsored scientific advancements, the angst and frustration of talented people in the regime of tyrants, and the importance of education and enlightenment. It is the fight between totalitarian administrative system and debilitated common man. And as we celebrate 100th Birth Anniversary of Satyajit Ray we cherish his works portrayed on the celluloid and admire him as a true devotee of art.

A MOVIE REVIEW ON : SEVEN YEARS IN TIBET

Namrata Khound and Olivia Roy

Semester V¹, Department of Political Science

Jean-Jacques Annaud's "Seven Years in Tibet" is based on a true story, about a man named Heinrich Harrer, who was an Austrian mountaineer. The movie is adapted from a book "Seven Years in Tibet: My Life Before, During and After". It is an autobiographical travel book written by Austrian mountaineer Heinrich Harrer. This aesthetically pleasing film is based on his real life experiences in Tibet between 1944 to 1951.

Bred Pitt stars in the soaring adventure as Heinrich Harrer. The movie is about two characters and begins with a display of arrogance at the root of man's troubles. Harrer is shown as an egocentric man whose thirst for fame leads him to abandon his pregnant wife in order to join an expedition in 1939, to climb 'Nanga Parbat' – one of the highest mountain peaks of the Himalayas. The Second World War that breaks out in Europe then interrupts him and his climbing partner named Peter Aufschnaiter. The two westerners, who were like an enemy alien in a British colony, are taken as Prisoners of War to the British Internment Camp in India.

The movie takes a toll when they both escape and travel over the Himalayas. They made their way into Tibet, contending with treacherous terrain, frostbite, hunger and an interdiction against foreigners. Finally, they reached Lhasa – the holiest city of Tibet. It is considered a forbidden place for foreigners. This is where Heinrich meets the 14th Dalai Lama (who was then a child). Still a boy, tantalized by a little knowledge of western culture and eager for a teacher who will expand his horizons, Heinrich becomes his tutor and his friend; he finds fulfillment, love and meaning in a friendship with the young Dalai Lama. He teaches him about the world outside and offers a potted education in Western history and culture. The movie does embellish somewhat the intensity of the Austrian's relationship with the Tibetans.

After the movie was released, news revealed by a German magazine had said that Harrer had been a sergeant in Hitler's Party. Although Harrer certainly lamented the Chinese takeover of Tibet, his previously held beliefs is harder to ascertain. He issued a statement that read in parts: "my personal political philosophy grew out of my life in Tibet... and (it) places great emphasis on human life and dignity..." The renowned explorer Heinrich Harrer is a more interesting figure than the movie character. The octogenarian Mr. Harrer has devoted a lifetime to exploit much more gruelling than those seen in the movie. The Dalai Lama also writes in his autobiography, "Freedom in Exile", that Harrer had a wonderful sense of humour and that as he began to know him better, he became forthright and greatly values this quality of him.

Heinrich's seven-year idyll ends abruptly when the Chinese invaded Tibet in 1950 and forces the Tibetans to sign an agreement surrendering their sovereignty. The film understandably simplifies events by leaving out instances like unheeded pleas for help made by Tibet to India

¹ Presently in Semester VI

for seeking asylum. But overall, the movie is fairly accurate. The movie also showcases the startling act of cowardice by Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, a Tibetan minister in charge of defending the town of Chamdo – who not only abandoned its people but also ordered the destruction of ammunition supplies before he left.

Moreover, the film's foreshadowing of Chinese atrocities reflects the historical facts all too well. It highlights the history when Tibet is engulfed and tormented after Mao Tse Tung's pronouncement that Tibet is a Chinese province. Harrier feels the deep pain of the Dalai Lama as these peaceful people who reject violence as their principle are killed and their monasteries, cities are destroyed. He describes Tibet as "a peace loving nation vainly attempting to create a military".

Towards the end of the story, the egotistical mountain climber who returns home is now a gentler and more sensitive man – tempered by his contact with Tibetan Buddhism. He misses his wife and longs to know his son who he has never seen. He drops a music box – a gift from the Dalai Lama – in his son's bedroom. They later bond and in fact also goes climbing. The Nazi flag of the opening scene has become a Tibetan one, which they place on the summit.

However, the embarrassing omission committed by the movie is that it failed to mention the fact that Harrier had been a sergeant in Hitler's SS, as reported by the German magazine Stern, which surprised the cast and crew. Brad Pitt said in a press conference that when we talk about 'Nazis' several connotations like concentration camps emerge, which should not be the case as Harrier as an athlete had spent the entire war in Tibet. Director Jean-Jacques Annaud had made subsequent changes. For instance, we find in the beginning of the film that Harrier leaves Austria with an expedition party for the Nanga Parbat, where a journalist acknowledges Harrier as "a distinguished member of the National Socialist Party," in the year of 1939, while someone else hands him the Nazi flag to be placed at the top of the peak.

The end of the movie witnesses how Pitt's Harrier beholds the totalitarian Chinese takeover of Tibet, which apparently makes him "shudder" to recall that it had not been long enough that he had believed in the same ideals. Although Harrier regretted the Chinese takeover, but whether he renounced his own original beliefs or not, is somewhat unclear. Only after the Stern article, Harrier had claimed that it is his life in Tibet that gave birth to his personal political philosophy; the same that he asserts to have led him condemn the horrible Nazi crimes. As far as the movie is concerned, it was quite easy for the filmmakers to incorporate the revelation by the Stern as Harrier had been portrayed as an unappealing egotist. So eventually, the movie became an outlet of Harrier's extent of transformation. For some people they believe, *Seven Years in Tibet* to be more of a personal epic than a historical drama, as it focuses on how Tibet changed a European's philosophical construct. It is an ambitiously beautiful movie yet it makes the same mistake of focusing on the protagonist's adventures and explorations than intensifying their discoveries.

Overall, the movie is historical and educational. It reflects about how a long forgotten land (Tibet) was captured and disrupted. This film is a great watch for all those who want to know about the Tibetans history and culture. It covers many cultural aspects with the region - from attire, to prayer and ceremonies. This gives the viewers a context into some of what makes Tibet such an unique and an interesting place. Thus, we highly recommend this movie to all who are interested in learning about Tibet's recent history and its culture in an artistic setting. ■

REVIEW OF WEB SERIES – UNORTHODOX : THE SCANDALOUS REJECTION OF MY HASIDIC ROOTS

Alivia Ghosh, Sakshi Kanla Ghising and Swastika Chakraborty

Semester III[†], Department of Political Science

Unorthodox is a Netflix mini-series loosely based on the 2012 memoir by Deborah Feldman. It is a German-American drama. The show has the language switching from English to Yiddish to German. Unorthodox has been written by Anna Winger and Alexa Karolinski who is also the producer of the show. The director, Maria Schrader has been truthful and authentic in her portrayal of the "Satmar Jewish community." The series has been filmed in New York, USA and Berlin, Germany.

This series in four parts is a stunning story of Esther Shapiro's escape from the overbearing and oppressive life of Brooklyn, New York into a secular world. Actor Shira Haas in the lead (as Esther) is utterly mesmerizing. Amit Rahav as Esther's husband (Yanky Shapiro) looks visually impressing as a Hasidic Jewish man.

The Ultra-Orthodox Satmar Jewish community emerged after World War II, to replenish the six million Jews lost in the Holocaust. The community believed and propagated to the future generations that the only way to save the Jewish nation was to live apart from society. Hence, the community lived self-imposed isolation and believed that any assimilation with the Europeans would be punished by annihilation.

The Hasidic Judaism is a practice that establishes control in ways such as they have a fixed code of dress; the men are supposed to only read the Torah (religious scripture) and have side curls; a woman's primary job is to have babies and make her husband 'feel like a King'. They remain completely alien to any form of modern technology and are not allowed to receive any formal education.

The show is based on a true story. It sensitively and authentically deals with not only the Ultra-Religious Hasidic community but also introduces the audience to how the survivors of the 1942 holocaust painfully lived with the horrors & consequences of it. The community is extremely closed-knit as the history of Holocaust still haunts them. For a person of political interest, this show is a necessary watch as it deals with several socio-political aspects.

The writers and director have made strategic use of analepsis (a literary device in a narrative in which a past event is narrated at a point later than its chronological sequence). Like, in the first episode, when Esty (short for Esther) removes her wig to swim in the lake, the audience is taken back to the point when after her marriage, she has her hair shaved to signal the surroundings that she is married and complies with the notions of propriety. This scene is accompanied by a moving instrumental track, which symbolizes that Esty (by removing her wig) now rejects her "Ultra-Orthodox Hasidic roots."

[†] Presently in Semester IV

The traditions and customs of the Hasidic community have its roots connected to patriarchy where even in an orthodox community, women face the worse of it. They have no bodily autonomy and their only job is to produce children and re-build the community. Hence, Esty's inability to produce a baby dominates her life and taints her character as a woman. Moreover, she becomes a victim of malicious gossip among her in-laws. A year later when Esty finds that she is pregnant, she plans her escape with the help of her music teacher to Berlin, Germany, which is ironic. The fact that she escaped to Germany comes as a shock to her family. This is followed by a family meeting with the "Rabbi" (religious and spiritual head of the community) and they decide to bring Esty back but not for her own sake but because they had a sense of entitlement towards the child.

Even in the present-day, the struggle to achieve bodily autonomy persists. Feminism continues to be a subject of debate and equality between men and women is a utopian dream for many feminists. Esty, the protagonist, had been brought up by the belief that 'marriage and making a family' are inherently important roles for a woman. After this, she enters into a dysfunctional marriage at the age of 17 and finds herself struggling to comply with the rigid traditions. It would be hypocritical to say that only Hasidic women live in such tightly defined spheres. If we are to uncover the parallels between Netflix's *Unorthodox* and the world of 2020, we will realize that the struggle is the same, only the voices against are stronger and now in numbers. Esty's story is compelling because she was the first within her community to break the shackles. It is a story of hope, freedom, and indomitable fighting spirit in an ocean of apprehension, doubt, and pain.

If we draw a parallel between the lives of women during that time and in 2021, the major difference would be that women of today are more empowered and they recognize their role & ambition beyond household chores and making a family. They have embraced their identity. In an era where the male members of the Hasidic community were the heads and senior female members ensured that those values were implemented, Esty's escape symbolizes bravery, heroism and determination.

The final nail in the coffin is when Yanky, Esty's husband, unaware of her pregnancy asks her for a divorce. Divorce in the community was very rare as women accepted everything as a commandment of God. As of today, divorces are not uncommon because women have realized their worth and are capable of providing for themselves. Esty's escape might have been a rebellion within her community but in hindsight, she is way ahead of her time. She finds her passion in music and applies for a music scholarship at an academy in Berlin. She uncovers the ways of a modern and secular life with a glee in her eyes.

There is a constant tension between self-expression and the orthodox beliefs internalised in her. Her tale is both a tragedy and a triumph. The mini-series has received Emmy nominations eight times. It has been well received by both the audience and film critiques. The series provides a window into a world not many of us know about or can fathom about. *Unorthodox* is one such harrowing tale of repression and self-discovery through the eyes of a woman who "scandalously" rejects her Hasidic roots.

