

2nd
MONTHLY



International
Relations
Scholastic
Conclave
2026



PRAXIS

IRSC NEWSLETTER
July Edition
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JULY EDITION

IRSC MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 19, 2026



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About International Relations Scholastic Conclave

The International Relations Scholastic Conclave, organised by the Department of International Relations at Jadavpur University, is a student-driven academic forum that brings together students, scholars, and professionals to engage with critical global issues. Since its inception in 2010, the conclave has been a pursuit of intellectual exploration, aiming to unravel the complexities of global politics. By convening a diverse group of experts and students, the event facilitates in-depth discussions and debates on key themes in International Relations. It serves as a platform to encourage critical thinking, promote academic excellence, and bridge the gap between theory and real-world practice. Building on the success of the previous edition, which featured distinguished speakers such as Christophe Jaffrelot, Liyaqat Ayub Khan, Alka Acharya, and Esther Brito Ruiz, whose expertise spans areas like Indology, South Asian politics, Sino-Indian relations, human rights, and diplomacy, this year's conclave will further expand its outreach. The upcoming edition aims to enhance student participation alongside international experts, ensuring broader engagement and a more dynamic exchange of ideas. With an anticipated increase in attendance, the impact and reach of the event are expected to be greater than ever. Scheduled for September 2026, the conference is strategically planned to maximize participation from the Organizing Committee, attendees, and esteemed guests from prestigious national and international universities and institutions. This conference will allow IRSC to foster an inclusive intellectual space for students to engage with pressing global problems and nurture a functional understanding of adaptation patterns in international relations.



Theme

Strategic Autonomy and Global Re-alignment : Exploring India's Prospect in a Multipolar World

About Department of International Relations

The Department of International Relations, established in 1956, is one of the oldest and most esteemed institutions in the country for the study of Political Science and International Relations. Over the years, the department has actively contributed to the evolution of political thought while maintaining a strong commitment to diverse and holistic academic learning. Recognized for its distinguished faculty and comprehensive curriculum, the department continuously strives for excellence in education and research. Our dedication and perseverance have earned us the reputation of being one of the most respected departments for International Relations in the country. We focus on equipping students with in-depth knowledge of global politics, national and international affairs, and contemporary geopolitical issues, particularly in political, strategic, and economic domains.

The department houses the Centre for Refugee Studies, a unique research hub in Eastern India, and boasts a well-stocked library with approximately 4,000 books covering relevant topics. Additionally, we subscribe to nearly 56 prestigious national and international journals. A standout feature of the department is the Tarak Nath Das Research Centre, which maintains an exclusive newspaper clipping archive—the only one of its kind in Eastern India—containing around 25,000 files on significant national and international issues.

The School of International Relations and Strategic Studies, set up by the department in 1987, encourages interdisciplinary approaches to advanced study and research in the field of international relations and strategic studies, promotes collaboration among scholars in analysing problems having multi-disciplinary dimensions, facilitates lectures, seminars, and workshops, funding research on issues of international concern.

Vision

The International Relations Scholastic Conclave (IRSC) aspires to emerge as a leading academic conclave dedicated to advancing critical inquiry, research, and innovation in International Relations. Rooted in the intellectual ethos of the Department of International Relations, IRSC seeks to foster informed and rigorous discourse on Indian foreign policy, contribute to shaping India's worldview, and deepen scholarly and public understanding of global politics.

Through high-quality conferences, publications, and research documentation, IRSC aims to promote international relations discourse and ensure its meaningful dissemination and utilisation. It envisions itself as a sustained intellectual platform that meaningfully connects students, scholars, and practitioners, fostering a culture of research-driven dialogue while strengthening academic excellence.

Dates of IRSC 2026

**9th September, 10th September & 11th
September**

HoD’s Note

It is my honour to welcome everyone to the 13th edition of the International Relations Scholastic Conclave (IRSC), organised by students of the Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University.

Established in 1956 under Professor Pritwish Chakraborty and then Vice-Chancellor Triguna Sen, the Department remains eastern India's only dedicated department of its kind, recognised by the UGC across three DSA phases and elevated to Centre for Advanced Studies in 2009. Its research architecture extends through the School of International Relations and Strategic Studies (established in 1987), the Centre for Refugee Studies, and the Hariprasanna Biswas Centre for India-China Cultural Studies, alongside the SAGE-published Jadavpur Journal of International Relations.

The IRSC, supported this year by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), is a flagship program of the Department of International Relations at Jadavpur University and promotes intellectual openness and methodological diversity. IRSC is a unique event that brings together policy experts, practitioners, academics and students to inculcate discourse on diverse academic areas ranging from the most pressing contemporary issues in the world of International Relations to the domestic politics that shape India’s position on the global level. This edition of IRSC, carrying the theme ‘Strategic Autonomy and Global Re-alignment : Exploring India’s Prospect in a Multipolar World’, seeks to analyse the contemporary World Order and encourage a well informed discourse on India’s potential in the same. We expect a highly engaging conference that shall enrich the understanding of all the participants and contribute lastingly in shaping the minds of the young students who shall drive India’s future growth in the Global World Order.

As the Head of the Department, I urge each and every student, scholar and faculty member to ensure their engagement with the conference and meaningfully contribute to making IRSC’26 a grand success.

Dr. Kamaran M.K. Mondal
Head of the Department,
Department of International Relations,
Jadavpur University.



From The Student Coordinators

An academic conclave is often understood through the days during which its sessions take place. For us, however, the **International Relations Scholastic Conclave 2026**, is a journey that began long before those days and will extend beyond them. It has been a process of bringing together ideas, people, and possibilities and of learning what it takes to turn an academic vision into a collective reality.

The International Relations Scholastic Conclave (IRSC) has been a cherished tradition of the **Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University** ever since its inception in 2010. Every edition has carried this legacy forward in its own way, responding to the questions and concerns of its time. As **Student Coordinators** of this edition, it has been a matter of profound honour and privilege to take responsibility for a conclave that has been built and sustained by generations of students before us. At the same time, it has made us conscious of the responsibility that comes with adding another chapter to this continuing tradition.

This year, that responsibility has been guided by the idea of **“Power, Policy, and Possibility.”** Our theme, *Strategic Autonomy and Global Re-alignment: Exploring India’s Prospects in a Multipolar World*, asks us to think about power not simply as something possessed by states, but as something that is constantly being negotiated, redistributed, and challenged. The same idea has shaped our understanding of the conclave itself. The power of an academic space lies in its ability to bring different perspectives into conversation, and its possibility lies in what those conversations can create.

This vision has also received an important institutional encouragement this year through the support of the **Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)**, whose grant to IRSC ’26 is a recognition of the academic and scholarly endeavour that the conclave seeks to foster. This support further strengthens our efforts to create a meaningful platform for students, researchers, scholars, and practitioners to engage with contemporary questions in International Relations.

This is where the vision of IRSC ’26 comes alive most clearly. The conclave is not confined to the sessions that will take place in September. Over the past several months, students have worked across **academic research, editorial, outreach, documentation, creative production, logistics**, and several other areas to build the event together. The introduction of a new vertical structure has allowed these different forms of work to come together within a more organized and collaborative framework.

Our **newsletters** have been another part of this journey. What began as a weekly initiative nearly twenty weeks ago has grown into a continuing conversation around ideas and events in international relations, now extending into a monthly edition. In this sense, our effort has been to ensure that IRSC does not remain limited to a calendar date but becomes a space for engagement in the months leading up to it.

As the conclave draws near, the various events, seminars, and academic discussions will ensure that the process of preparation reaches out into the larger academic environment. However, for the success of this edition of the conference, the true success will be in the number of participants, speakers, or sessions but the conversations they generate, the questions they leave behind, and the connections they create among students, scholars, and practitioners. This experience has been one of leadership, coordination, and teamwork for us too.

For us, the journey has also been one of learning to lead, coordinate, and work collectively. The dedication of every member of the **Organising Committee** has made this edition possible, and the constant guidance of our teacher coordinators, **Dr. Shibashis Chatterjee and Dr. Subhajit Naskar**, has given this process both direction and encouragement.

As we continue towards the conclave, we carry with us the legacy of what the IRSC has been while trying to imagine what it can become.

With gratitude and anticipation,

Kushal Deb
Srestha Naskar
Prapti Sundass
Anurag

Student Coordinators
International Relations Scholastic Conclave 2026
Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University.

			
Kushal Deb	Srestha Naskar	Prapti Sundass	Anurag

কৃতজ্ঞতা স্বীকার

International Relations Scholastic Conclave-এর দীর্ঘ ও গুরুত্বপূর্ণ পথচলায় আমাদের পাশে থেকে নিরন্তর সহযোগিতা, দিকনির্দেশনা এবং উৎসাহ প্রদানের জন্য বিভাগীয় সকল অশিক্ষক কর্মচারীবৃন্দের প্রতি আমরা আন্তরিক কৃতজ্ঞতা জ্ঞাপন করছি। তাঁদের মূল্যবান সময়, ধৈর্য এবং প্রতিটি পর্যায়ে সহযোগিতা আমাদের কাজকে আরও সুসংগঠিত ও অর্থবহ করে তুলতে বিশেষ ভূমিকা রেখেছে। অনেক সময় কর্মচাপ, সময়ের সীমাবদ্ধতা কিংবা বিভিন্ন অনিশ্চয়তার মধ্যেও তাঁরা যেভাবে আমাদের পাশে থেকেছেন, বিভিন্ন সমস্যার সমাধানে সাহায্য করেছেন এবং আমাদের বিভিন্ন উদ্যোগ এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে উৎসাহ প্রদান করেছেন, তা বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখ না করলেই নয়।

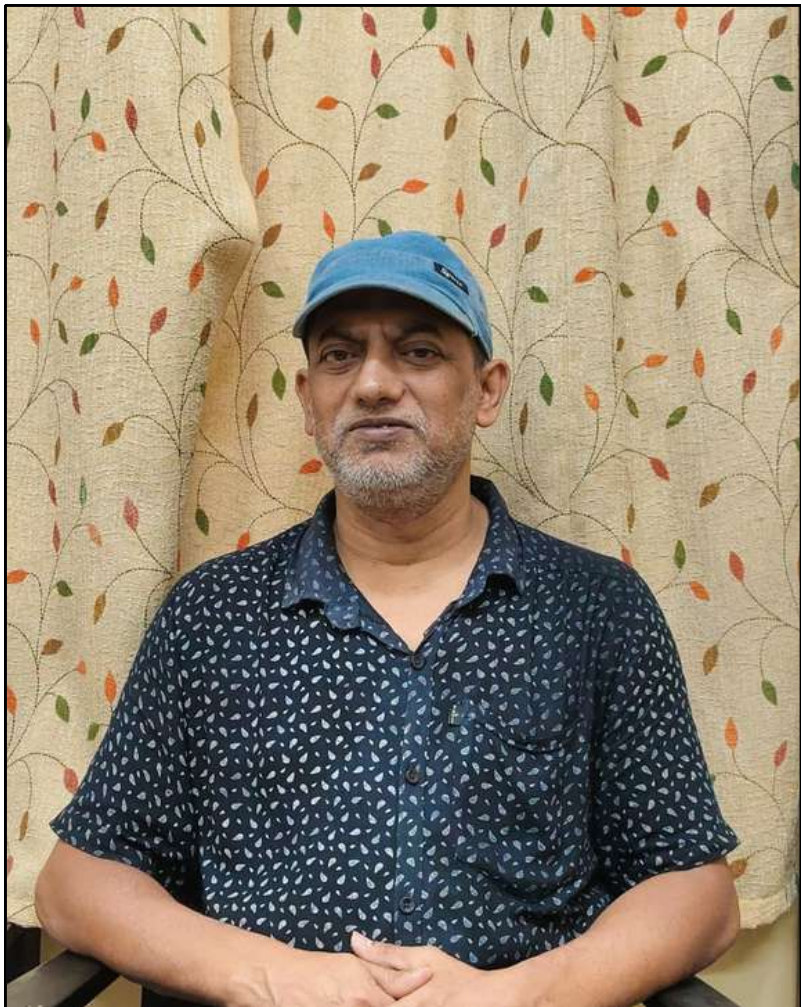
IRSC-কে শুধুমাত্র একটি অনুষ্ঠান হিসেবে নয়, বরং একটি সম্মিলিত প্রয়াস এবং নিজেদের ভাবনাকে প্রকাশ করার একটি পরিসর হিসেবে গড়ে তুলতে তাঁদের অবদান নিঃসন্দেহে স্মরণীয়। তাঁদের সহযোগিতা ও বিশ্বাস ছাড়া আমাদের এই যাত্রাপথ দুরূহ হতো।

IRSC-এর পক্ষ থেকে সকল অশিক্ষক কর্মচারীবৃন্দ (সরকারী কাজে নিযুক্ত কর্মচারীবৃন্দ, তারকনাথ গবেষণাকেন্দ্রের পরিচালক এবং গ্রন্থাগারিক) তথা বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখযোগ্য অনুপম দা'র প্রতি আমরা আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ ও কৃতজ্ঞতা জ্ঞাপন করছি। তিনি ক্রমাগত আমাদের অনুষ্ঠান সংক্রান্ত বিভিন্ন মুদ্রণকার্যে বিশেষভাবে সহায়তা করে চলেছেন।

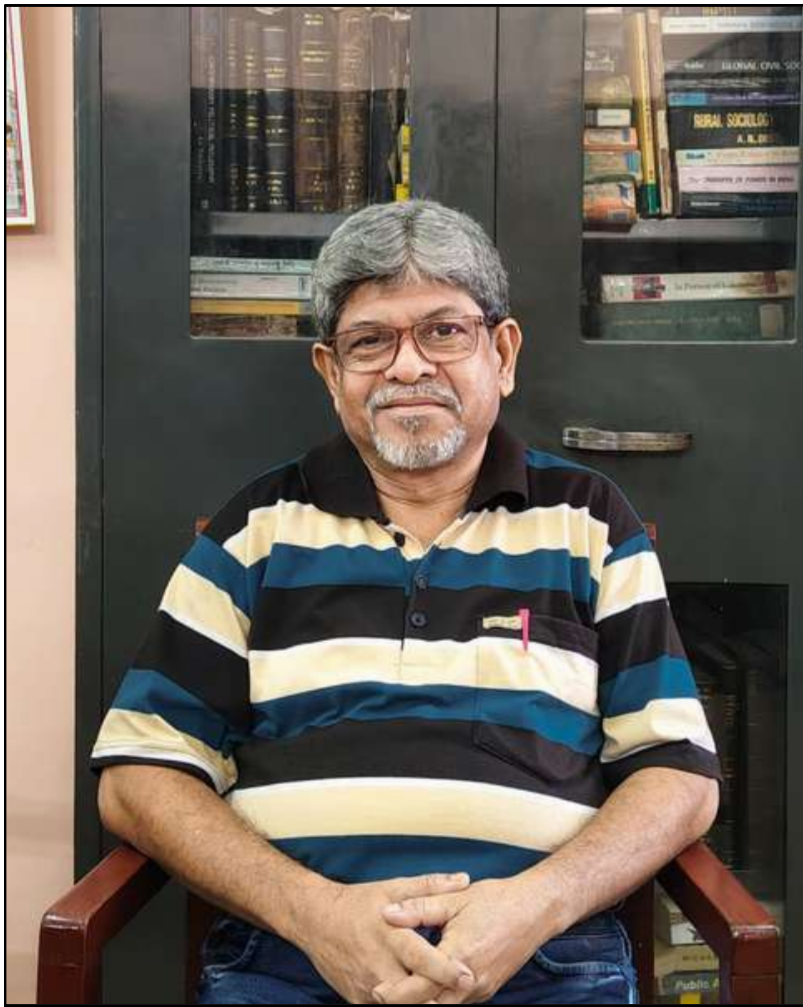
এছাড়াও গ্রন্থাগারিক পার্থদা এবং তারকনাথ গবেষণাকেন্দ্রের পরিচালক হৃষিকেশদা, আমাদের মাসিক নিউজলেটার "PRAXIS" সকল শিক্ষানুরাগী মানুষের মধ্যে পৌঁছে দিতে সহায়তা করেছেন। আমরা আমাদের এই উদ্যোগে সমগ্র বিভাগকে একত্রে পেয়ে আন্তরিকভাবে কৃতজ্ঞ। আমরা বিশ্বাস রাখি ভবিষ্যতেও এই সম্মিলিত প্রয়াস, পারস্পরিক সহযোগিতা এবং প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক বন্ধনের মধ্য দিয়েই IRSC আরও বৃহত্তর পরিসরে এগিয়ে যাবে।

ধন্যবাদান্তে,
কুশল দেব
শ্রেষ্ঠা নস্কর
প্রাপ্তি সুন্দাস
অনুরাগ

ছাত্র সমন্বয়কারী,
International Relations Scholastic Conclave 2026
আন্তর্জাতিক সম্পর্ক বিভাগ, যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়



অনুপম দা



পার্থ দা



দেবু দা



হৃষিকেশ দা



সমরেশ দা



Instructions

- i. Teams of two are eligible for participating.
- ii. A total of 12 questions.
- iii. Star-marked(***) questions carry extra weightage.
- iv. No negative marking.
- v. In case of a tie, star-marked questions and precision of answers will be taken into account.
- vi. Top two teams shall qualify directly for the Semi-Finals.

Visit our website to participate in the Prelims

<http://irsc-juir.in>

Kushal +91 76389 32359

1.The dispute grew into a wider war involving states whose interests extended well beyond the immediate theatre. Much of the fighting took place across mountainous terrain, before an agreement eventually froze the battlefield without settling the political question beneath it.
The division endured, while the conflict itself never acquired a definitive legal conclusion. One of the principal participants declined to formally endorse the agreement that brought the fighting to an end.

What conflict is being talked about here?

Ans. _____

2. A newly seated Asian delegation once brought a grievance to the fledgling United Nations concerning how a fellow member state treated a minority tied to the delegation's own country.

The accused government's foreign minister - a former general who had helped draft the organisation's charter only three years before - invoked the very provision meant to protect states from outside interference in their internal affairs. He lost the vote.

Legal historians now regard this moment as establishing a specific institutional "first" for the Assembly. What "first" is this episode credited with?

Ans. _____

3.A sky-God arms himself with a weapon said to be unlike any other ever made, and sets out to face a dragon so immense it lies coiled across the mountains, its body blocking the world's rivers at their source. Priests and hymns had long promised that this god was destined to be the one who would finally break the serpent's grip and set the world right.

When the dragon finally falls, thunder is said to roar and the earth to shake, but the myth's true climax comes after: the rivers the serpent had swallowed and hoarded come pouring out at last, rushing forth to water the earth for the first time. What epic encounter is being referenced here?

Ans. _____

4. ***Identify the connection between the numbers, the way Georges Méliès would.

- 2410925
- 2413556
- 2425160
- 2427967
- 2443289
- 2450044
- 2455184

Ans. _____

5. One episode of a children's animation aired exactly once, decades ago, and was never broadcast again anywhere in the world. Within minutes, hundreds of young viewers were hospitalized after a strobing on-screen effect triggered seizures nationwide.
The story exploded internationally, unexpectedly giving the obscure children's programme enormous worldwide publicity just as it was beginning its international expansion.

The franchise would go on to become the highest-grossing media franchise in entertainment history, while the incident permanently changed the way animated television handled rapidly flashing imagery.

Name the episode referenced here.

Ans. _____

6.***I crossed into a continent-scale conflict carrying nothing that could kill, attached to no regiment and flying no flag of my own - just a handful of colleagues sent by a movement that could not yet call itself a state. I worked at the same forward hospital already made famous by another foreign volunteer before me, a name history remembers more readily than mine. I outlasted my own countrymen there, stayed on alone, and never went home.
Decades later, the nation I had bled for on someone else's behalf built me into something closer to a national emblem than a footnote - invoked even now whenever two of the oldest civilizations need reminding that they were, at least once, on the same side. Who am I?

Ans. _____

7.***X arrived alongside a famous comet and, by coincidence or perhaps appointment - left when it returned. They once navigated a great river before becoming better known for navigating the absurdities of human nature, while their wardrobe eventually became almost as recognizable as their writing. They wrote about boys, kings, knights, and the darker side of civilization, admired inventors, befriended presidents, and managed to lose a fortune chasing a hopeless investment.
X was a humourist, skeptic, adventurer, and relentless critic of society. Long before one of Japan’s most famous modern literary genre Y took the world by storm, X had already imagined its core premise.
Identify X and Y.

Ans. _____

8.Our name has carried more than one meaning over time. We have spent much of the last decade moving between worlds that rarely share the same stage, appearing before international institutions and speaking on matters far removed from the field in which we first became known.
Our journeys have taken us across oceans under privileges normally reserved for official representatives, while our work has brought recognition from organisations whose membership extends far beyond our homeland. Yet despite all this, one of our more recent honours came not from an international body, but from a country's highest seat of government, where we were welcomed as distinguished visitors and presented with a commemorative plaque.

Who are we?

Ans. _____

9. Long before it was possible, X approached space travel like an engineer rather than a dreamer, reasoning out the launch site, the size of the crew, the design of the vessel, the length of the voyage, and how the travellers would make it home.
Decades later, Y unfolded in reality, matching that imagined journey point for point: the same launch region, a crew of equal size, a comparable timeline, and the same manner of return. Who was X, and what was Y?

Ans. _____

10. X is a two-time Academy Award winner, having first been married to a beloved sitcom icon and later to a co-star from one of the most celebrated spy films in cinema. Y is the lead actress of a long-running medical drama and is famously associated with coining the term “pick me.” Z is the protagonist of an NBC police procedural and holds the distinction of being the longest-running character in an American primetime drama.
All three are connected to A, who received an honorary doctorate from New York University. What is the connection between X, Y, Z and A?

Ans. _____

11. In September 2012, a city on the far eastern edge of the map from a river-side metropolis nicknamed the 'City of Joy', hosted a quiet milestone: a century still remained on a countdown. The two cities share the same initial ‘K’.
What was the celebration?

Ans. _____

12. The father of the child in the picture wrote a play “X” that shares its name with a local festival and a structure. From the aforementioned structure, if you move northward along a riverside, you may reach the Eastern Hemisphere’s oldest mechanised golden-fibre mill, which would have existed in its historical form had it not been destroyed by a blaze in the exact year when the Crown took power.
What is X here?

Ans._____





13TH IRSC | 2026

9th - 11th September



JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF
INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS

PAPER PRESENTATION

TOPIC *Changing Polarity in International System
and the Future of Strategic Autonomy*

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to
be Published in
**Official IRSC
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Mohana: 7384846733

For Registration:
<https://forms.gle/Q7rw44K5e1P7TLQq9>



scan this for details

REGISTRATION

The event is open to undergraduate and postgraduate students (**JUNIOR category**) and research scholars & faculty members (**SENIOR category**) from all disciplines.

A paper can have a maximum of 3 co authors Registration fee for selected abstracts shall be:

- Undergraduate - Rs. 200,
- Postgraduate - Rs. 300
- Research Scholar/Faculty - Rs. 500

Submit your abstract at irscresearch2026@gmail.com

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FROM CLASSROOMS TO CLOSED DOORS: THE SYSTEMATIC ERASURE OF AFGHAN WOMEN

Arpam Ghosh; UG III: The struggle of Afghan women is no longer merely about access to education or employment, now it has become a struggle against the systematic erasure of women from public life. Since the return of the Taliban to power in 2021, the public life in Afghanistan has descended into a disastrous state, and the everyday lives of women have become pathetic. The schools in Afghanistan have become empty of females. Today, Afghanistan tragically is the only country in the world where secondary and higher education are strictly forbidden to girls and women. About 2.2 million women are now prohibited from attending school beyond the primary level due to the imposition of this regressive policy.

The voices of women are being suppressed. The “Law on the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice,” was introduced by the Taliban government in the summer of 2024. This law prohibits women from speaking in radio or in media, leading to the rapid disappearance of women's voices in Afghan journalism. Since 2021, more than 80% of women working in media have lost their job and have been barred from journalism. This cannot be claimed as a governance measure; rather, it is the suppression of women’s voices, aimed at promoting an orthodox social order and strengthening barbaric patriarchy.

Women in Afghanistan are also facing severe health disparities, as they are being deprived of and prohibited from accessing adequate healthcare facilities. It should be noted that the women in Afghanistan are being prohibited from accessing education and are being removed from their jobs, this has led to a significant decline in the number of women doctors. Furthermore, the Taliban government had restricted women in many provinces from being treated by male doctors. This is worsening women’s access to equal and adequate healthcare facilities. Merely this is no longer an issue of preforming discriminations against women; it is the systematic erasure of women’s existence from society.

The Taliban government had issued a decree, that the men are allowed to beat their wives, so long till they don’t break their bones or leave visible spots. The Taliban says all their laws align with the Islamic Sharia Law and has religious legitimacy. “If a husband beats his wife so severely that it results in a broken bone, or an open wound, or a black and blue wound appears on her body, and the wife appeals to a judge, then the husband will be considered an offender,” the decree says, “A judge should sentence him to 15 days imprisonment.” The punishment for animal abuse holds more severe punishment. Anyone who forces animals like dogs and cockerels, are said to be punished with five months imprisonment.

This systematic oppression and imposition of hyper-orthodox practices upon women is leading to the extreme vulnerability of the condition of women in Afghanistan. Where women are deprived of getting proper education, prohibited to lead a healthy life, refrained from accessing adequate legal aids, denied to speak up, and domestic violence against women are justified, this is the process of the emergence of barbaric society. Therefore, it can be said that the Taliban government is leading the creation of the state to an anti-woman, male centered society characterized by an extreme form of patriarchy.



MORE THAN A CORRIDOR, A CLAIM: WEST BENGAL'S PLACE IN ACT EAST

Aditya Chourasiya; UG III: India’s Act East Policy has endlessly circled around the Northeast - Assam, perhaps Arunachal, or a highway towards Myanmar - and Kolkata being always drawn out of it. In Delhi’s white papers: West Bengal is treated as merely a “pass-point” to somewhere more interesting - to the East. Although West Bengal built the door to India’s eastward ambitions, it remains stranded at the gateway.

Act East Policy is India's push to build strategic and economic ties with the Eastern world, a response to the globalizing, post-Cold War order. It grew out of the earlier Look East Policy and sharpened into Act East in 2014 as ASEAN's influence rose marking a shift from mere formalities to real action with Southeast Asia. And Bengal holds two keys to this ambition: the Siliguri Corridor, a 22-kilometre strip that connects mainland India to the Northeast and onwards to Myanmar and Vietnam, and the Kolkata Port, a “Launchpad” into any eastern action. Every rupee of Act East infrastructure, every BIMSTEC ambition, and every Kaladan project, depends on this chicken-neck holding. That’s why, if the Northeast is Act East's face, Bengal is definitely its spine.



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Yet, Act East has always remarked the Northeast as the “Bridge-Head” to ASEAN, ignoring the fact that nothing east of Delhi can move without Kolkata. Even the former CM Mamata Banerjee called Bengal the gateway to South East Asia, the Northeast and eastern India in the Business & Industry conclave, a claim that both the state and Centre could not disagree on.

While the Northeast rightly received the Trans and Arunachal Highway and new air connectivity schemes, Bengal watched its own Kolkata Port decline for decades, the Kaladan Project stall for year after year, and its claim to the Centre's attention and private investment quietly being pushed aside. Kolkata was the busiest port on this coast - once a beating heart of the Britishers who ran their empire's ambitious trade through it - but by the 21st century, it had lost its significant cargo share from Nepal and Bhutan to Bangladesh’s Chittagong port. A port with two centuries of trading prestige losing its ground to our neighbour’s modernised harbour. Kolkata lost it because of neglect - the same neglect that kept the Kaladan project stalled for over a decade.

For the concluding remark, it is unsuitable for the Indian state to build a corridor and starve the state it runs through, and then call that “strategy”. Kolkata Port needs money and investment, and Kaladan needs an actual deadline. But even all this will not fix the real problem, which is not infrastructure but of attention, focus and importance. Until that happens, Act East will only keep running “through” Bengal without ever running “with” Bengal.

THE PARADOX OF LIBERATION: RESTORATION OF THE PAST, THE EXCLUDED, AND DECOLONIAL ALTERNATIVES IN INDIAN AND AFRICAN THOUGHT – DECOLONIZATION OR DEGRADATION?

Sananda Roy & Manali Moulik; UG III: “Imperialism leaves behind germs of rot which we must clinically detect and remove from our land and our minds as well.” —Thomas Sankara (Former President of Burkina Faso)

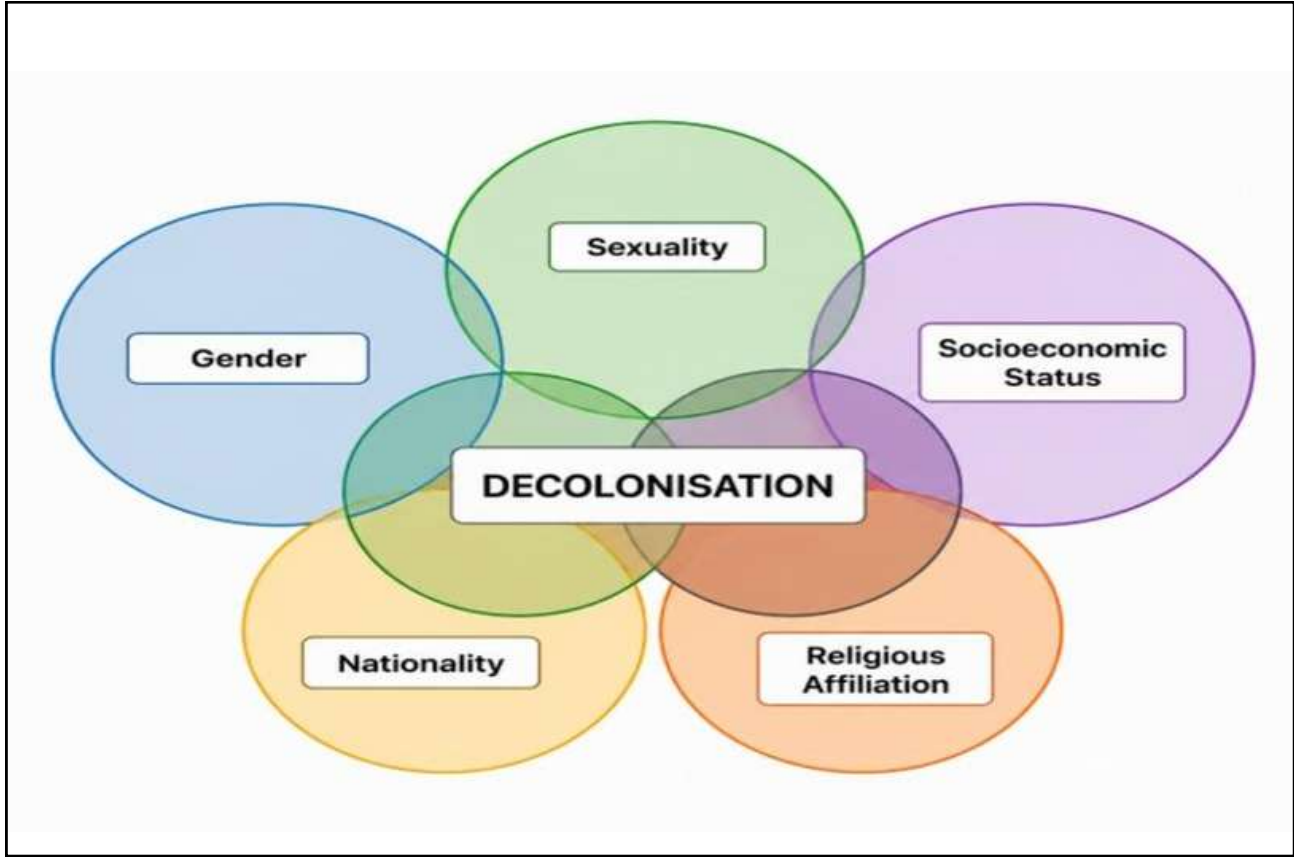
After the end of World War II, new conflict between the liberal capitalist camp and socialist camp took place in global politics. Along with that, another major change happened. It was the collapse of the colonies of European countries. From the 1960s onwards, many new nation-states emerged in Asia, Africa and Latin America. A UN report mentions that in 1939, free nation-state in Africa was only one, which increased to 50 or more just after a few decades. Nationalist armed struggle, international pressure, economic collapse caused by the damage of the second world war, weakness in foreign policy and the military system were responsible for that. Just the establishment of a free nation-state with an independent government, codified constitution, independent judiciary and nationalist philosophy doesn't reflect the real spirit of decolonization. The decolonizing process should run parallely in socio-cultural and economic spheres along with political independence. Imperialist powers aimed to extend their influence into the socio-economic and cultural sphere of a colonized country. This was influential in two ways : to build their own hegemony and to demolish the confidence of the subjugated nation. However, the concept of ‘decolonization’ may refer to the ‘withering away of colonial practices’ , but past glorification and complete elimination of colonial reforms may lead to regression of society. Hence, the debate on decolonization demands to be looked at from an intersectional and scientific lens.

Historical decolonisation was an international liberation project that reached the height of its political optimism in the 1960s and ’70s , that sought to rectify racism and other injustices. However, these connections dissolved as many postcolonial states were unable to provide peace and prosperity to their citizens. Modern discussions of decolonization are largely amorphous, spanning cultural critique, political economy, identity politics, and epistemic debates without a single unifying framework, and are similarly contesting and slippery.

Diverse Discourses and Gender-Class-Caste-Minority questions : Are decolonial alternatives paradoxically exclusionary ?

As Post-Colonial theories highlight, colonial rule reshaped economies, identities, and hierarchies, leaving postcolonial nations with exploitative structures that continue drive elite dominance and neo-colonial inequality. In “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Gayatri C Spivak shows how these forces converge to silence the “subaltern,” especially women, through what she calls epistemic violence : colonial oppression subsuming subaltern voices, patriarchal oppression marginalizing women and inner class/ caste oppression. Homi K Bhaba’s assertion that hybrid identities are formed in the Third Space: an in-between zone where the colonizer and the colonized interact, creating new cultural meanings and identities beyond traditional binaries and John McLeod’s emphasis that “the discourse of colonialism is forever embattled and split by ambivalence and mimicry,” reinforce the idea that colonial authority is never absolute. Para-colonial and Modern-colonial theories criticise the Euro-centric ‘internal coloniality of power’, decolonial theorists like Aníbal Quijano, through his concept of coloniality of power and knowledge and Walter D Mignolo, through Epistemic disobedience suggest Pluriversality- “ a world where many worlds fit” , where no single hegemonic worldview possesses the sole key to understanding, governing, or sustaining the world.

Apart from the proposition that despite the collapse of the colonial empires, the projection of economic and epistemic asymmetries survives colonialism, producing neocolonialism or internal colonialism, decolonisation is a plexus of concrete experiences related to economy, race, gender, sexuality and ability. In his landmark essay on the ‘coloniality of being,’ Maldonado-Torres (2007) argues that coloniality entails multiple dimensions of oppression, permeating culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production, shaping everything from academic standards to cultural norms, societal aspirations, and the self-perception of individuals and they are intersecting in nature, hence requiring multi-dimensional approach. For María Lugones, the coloniality of gender defines the “racialized, capitalist, gender oppression” that can be overcome by “decolonial feminism.” In her foundational 1997 book The Invention of Women, Oyèwùmí challenged the cross-cultural universality of patriarchy. Using the Yorùbá society as a case study, she demonstrated that pre-colonial Yorùbá social organization was based on relative age and seniority, not gender. The Western imposition of a biological, patriarchal binary fundamentally "invented" gender inequality in Africa which is “coloniality of gender”.



Modern scholars distinguish between decolonisation and decoloniality, the former is a historical process, locked in the past while the latter is an ongoing struggle. Decoloniality is the unfinished project of “decolonizing knowledge” - exposing and delinking from Eurocentric matrix of thinking. Many institutional and academic approaches put out calls for resurgence of indigenous knowledge systems to counter colonial matrix of thinking. However, Chen (2010): argued that decolonization aims to “deconstruct, decenter, disarticulate” colonial ideas and “reconstruct and rearticulate new imaginations.” Colonialism was a “cocreation” of colonizer and colonized, so the pre-colonial isn’t pure or untouched - colonial rule already reshaped identities, and one can’t unmix it. Hence, even “critical syncretism” - identifying with other subaltern groups , risks becoming a watered-down, purely theoretical version if it remains outside the imperial center. True liberation is not achieved by building a museum of the pre-colonial past. Here lies one of the biggest theoretical and practical farces and injustices in the name of “decolonisation”.

The talk of decolonisation has become disparate and attenuated from the historical events of decolonisation . The gap between promises and actuality of continued power structures has led to the analytical and political space implying a wide, eclectic and contrasting array of individuals, groups and projects to wield the concept of ‘decolonisation’ to generate support for their endeavours. The Argentine economist and the UN have called for broader educational decolonisation. Again, in response to the Gaza War, critics like Simon Sebag Montefiore condemn decolonisation as an ideology that delegitimises Israeli sovereignty and reframe decolonisation as a “pejorative” rather than a continuation of anticolonial liberation. In India, ironically the Hindu Nationalist government’s focus has been on “ cultural decolonisation”, of the country’s own anti-colonial and nationalist struggles - Nehruvian “ secular modernity “ becomes self-hating colonial hangover , and the targets of decolonisation have become imperial cultural remnants of the English language (the alternative to which, Hindi , is not even the birth-language of most Indians) and the presence of Islam. However, the Indian government does little to divest itself of the tools inherited from the British Empire that they still find useful, like the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act 1958, which has vivid imperial origins. All the above discourses of economic, cultural, educational and ideological decolonisation are not compatible with each other, and do not aim simply for “ liberation”. Cultural mobilisation amongst all represents a change in who mobilises the discourse: from those who resist powerful established governments, to one of those governments itself. Therefore, it is a reconstitution of the history of decolonisation.

Eastern revivalism raises an important question: should texts such as the Manusmriti and the Shariat be embraced as part of the decolonization project? The Katyayana Smriti, for instance, prescribes that a king should pour molten lead into the ears of a Shudra for merely hearing the recitation of the Vedas. Can such injunctions legitimately be celebrated as manifestations of decolonization? In India, exclusionary cultural revivalistic tools framed as “decolonisation” have often been deployed to reinforce majoritarian identity rather than pluralism - sanskritization of curricula, textbook revisions for Hindu civilisational glory, “ reclaiming” temple-centric heritage projects, etc. These “traditional” practices framed as decolonial revival, tactically sideline Dalit, Adivasi, and regional epistemologies, often reinforce caste hierarchies and patriarchal norms.

Case studies from the perspective of two stalwarts from the same continent but different gender (Nogûgi Wa Thiong O and Nawal - Al -Saadawi)



1. Nogûgi Wa Thiong'o, a famous writer of Kenya, described his childhood days very consciously in his two renowned books - “In the house of the interpreter” and “Dreams in a time of war.” He has been a prominent theorist of decolonization since an early period. His world-famous book ‘Decolonizing the mind: The politics of language in African literature’ was published in 1986, his other books like Wizard of Crow, Petals of Blood and Weep Not Child and many more. Nogûgi described their immense struggle against poverty to study in school. When they went to buy uniforms , the 9 year old Nogûgi saw a photo of an Indian leader and philosopher. He was M.K.Gandhi. Many Africans and also Thinong O refused to study in the colonial Kiryere school. Most of them were under colonial ownership. They imposed conditions on all students and employees such as the following :

- I. Genital Mutilation of all the Gikyuyu children (specially girls) must be restricted.
- II. No one related to their institution can't be the follower or member of Jomo Kenyatta (He will be first PM after a few years) or his group Kikuyu central association.
- III. Membership in institutions other than the Christian missionary or government association will not be allowed.

So many Africans took it as an offence against their culture and community sentiments. The female genital mutilation is really a brutal practice among the Africans. He kept his entire faith on the old perspective of the mutilation process. Before colonial rule occupied Kenya, seniors and elders used to decide a single for the mutilation of all the teenage boys. It had three segments i) Preparation ii) Sunnat (genital mutilation) and iii) recovery. In the past, the entire community and all relatives used to attend this programme. The boy, who is going to have this thing, must go to the house of all relatives. Discussion about sexuality goes on openly. In the morning of mutilation day, they used to take bath in ice-cold water which helped the boy not to feel any pain during the process. After the mutilation, he needed three weeks for recovery in a separate room. After that, they should have a sexual relationship with a girl and then get the chance to enjoy it with the elders and work with all of them. Nogûgi mentioned that it is not only a mutilation process for them, but the real empowerment of men and women both depends on education and knowledge. It used to strengthen the identity of individuals and their nation and community. He also mentioned that he feels proud of this practice.

2. On the other hand, we will discuss the view of the famous social scientist, writer and feminist activist of Africa, Nawal-el-Saawadi. She is an Egyptian activist by her birth identity and wrote many books focusing on the concerns of women in the global south pertaining to sexuality, patriarchy, social class and colonialism. She wrote her magnus opus ‘women and sex’ in 1972, she attended Columbia University and earned a master’s degree in public health in 1966. She strongly criticized female circumcision. The book is taken as a milestone of second-wave feminism. The process of female circumcision used to mutilate the clitoris of women and make them sex-toys for their husbands. For her writing, Saadawi was dismissed from her position at the Ministry of Health. She felt a massive importance of feminist ideology and struggle in her very early childhood. She reacted angrily at the age of ten, when her grandmother said, “A boy worth 15 girls at least.... girls are a blight.” She can't agree with it and for entire life she continued this struggle. She started to publish a magazine named ‘confrontation’ from 1981 enriched with her opinions on feminist struggle of African women. It led to her imprisonment by then President Anwar Sadat. Later she said in an interview, “I was arrested because I believed Sadat. He said there is democracy and we have a multi-party system and you can criticize. So, I started criticizing his policy and landed in jail.”

She outright pure oppression of women, exploitation by religion, community based violence and obviously, imperialist exploitation. Her path really confronted the attack over a female voice to protect their human rights. She established ‘Arab Women Solidarity Association’ in 1982. She described this organization as ‘historical, socialist and feminist’. Also Saadawi mentioned feminism is nothing like western imperialism which was imposed upon them. Rather, it has always existed in the regular struggles of African women. The concept of decolonization used to act differently in the view of two stalwarts of different gender. El-Saadawi also mentioned that she is proud to be a black skinned, Egyptian and over all an African woman. She mentioned that she is also proud of her identity like Nogûgi Wa Thiong O. But the dimension used to be changed just for gender differentiation. This proves that decolonizing also does not work equally for all segments of a society.

Way towards scientific decolonization

Famous Marxist social scientist of 20th century, Binoy Ghosh in 1948 wrote in his well-known book ‘বাংলার নবজাগৃতি’ (Renaissance of Bengal) that Hindu-Muslim conflict might raise in the context of so called ‘withering away of colonial practice’. Conscious readers can easily understand that period was such a turbulent time with communal disharmony. The non-scientific explanation of ‘Puspak Ratha’ (Chariot of Ravana) as first aerospace technology or ‘Monomarutgamini’ (A chariot which can run on the speed of mind or wind just by the will of the rider) was another advanced technology – those are just imaginary versions. In that kind of struggle between theory and other aspects of life, Ghosh tried to explain the originality of history and the scientific aspect of decolonization. Our ancient India was too rich in science and literature and philosophical attributes. A true thinker of decolonization would try to revive those traditions. Ancient India had the developed process of Rhinoplasty (recreation of affected nose artificially) because the punishment of adultery was cutting off the nose. Sushrata invented that process which proves that ancient Indian surgery and medical practice was so much developed. But the proposition of Lord Ganesha was an example of the first ‘plastic surgery’ is ridiculous and unscientific. Instead of haphazard glorification of past and communal hatred ‘s spread, Fanon's call for basic decolonization of the mind first is only possible if our past glory could be reconstructed with proper scientific exploration. Otherwise the concept ‘decolonization’ will generate a condition of ‘degradation’.

Conclusion

Decolonization all together involves the political rise of independent nation-states with legal sovereignty and governing authority of the colonized, transition of a colonial economy (catering to the colonizer’s benefits) to economic control and self-sufficiency, and also the collective reclaiming of indigenous traditions, languages, and histories that were marginalized or erased during imperial rule. Colonisation itself was an uneven, complex and variegated phenomenon and owing to its diffused structure, cultural dimension of decolonisation is frequently used by political classes guided by their own inventions. Frantz Fanon’s outright rejection of reparations, implied a future unburdened by colonial grievances, “we are not bound to history, we are not slaves to the past, and therefore any kind of future is possible,” His very concept of difficult universalism suggested that although black individuals may experience alienation and resentment, they must transcend historical wounds to construct an inclusive human world beyond racial divisions. The point here is that Fanon's radical theory of post colonial liberation deeply negated the possibility of any exploitative power-structure, even that of redressal mechanisms, which paradoxically could function as another system of control. Decolonisation isn’t nostalgia, hence, instead of focusing on restoration of the old and traditions as observable in the Indian and African perspectives, it should center on building new systems of knowledge, new relationships between center/periphery, new philosophy that prioritize the excluded, guided by science, reason and due diligence to human rights.

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POLITICS OF CASH TRANSFER SCHEMES: "ANNAPURNA" LURES IN, "LAKSHMI" PUSHED OUT

Koyel Bal; UG III: Setting aside the underlying discrepancies associated with the election outcomes in the recent West Bengal Legislative Elections of 2026, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power with an overwhelming electoral mandate. Institutional erosion, amplification of corruption and widespread controversies regarding job scam and women safety issues under the Trinamool Congress government, necessitated the need for ushering a change. In such a scenario, raising women empowerment and safety concerns have been one of the prime game changer issues raised by the BJP through its electoral campaigns in West Bengal. Despite numerous institutional failures in ensuring women’s safety in other double engine government ruled states, the party’s electoral position was to a great extent determined by the massive sweep of women’s mandate in favour of it. The promise of greater assistance to women belonging to socioeconomically vulnerable communities, through the ‘Annapurna Bhandar Scheme’, brought a greater upsurge to BJP’s women-centred vote bank. Essentially, in the past decade, such Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) schemes have become quite prominent as a welfarist moves by the government in various states, so in Bengal, but it comes about with deeper political motives and socio-economic contradictions.

CASH TRANSFER SCHEMES: WELFARIST OR DEEPER ELECTORAL STRATEGY?

There are numerous government schemes which provide direct cash transfer, aiming at social inclusion, poverty alleviation and promotion of greater welfare among the backward underdeveloped communities. Undoubtedly, direct cash benefit schemes offer cost effectiveness than transporting food and other material subsidies offered for equitable resource distribution and reduces the chances of illegal cost diversion under intermediaries between the government and the beneficiaries. However, the cash grant schemes in the current political scenario has become more viable as a political tool to orient and reorient valuable vote banks from different communities across India, which ultimately sketches the roadmap to the political milieu of a state or the country as a whole. Direct cash benefit offers short term pay offs compromising accomplishment of long-term economic growth and empowerment goals of the intended socially, educationally, economically backward population. It often creates a culture of dependency among the people, discourages skill enhancement and reduces their productive potential. The outcomes of electoral competition between two political parties are to a large extent, determined by the instrumental aspect in which the political parties contesting create their own distinct narratives of societal upliftment and better governance, through various schemes, policies and programs, and put forward lucrative offers for clientelistic transfers. Political clientelism comes into play as an instrument for political conditioning of vote banks to vote in favour, by making strategic minimalistic transfers, enough to turn mass of voters towards themselves. In a developing country like India, with wide gaps between economic and social classes, such personalized benefits targeted towards specific vote banks are much more appealing than long-term organized structural deficiency mitigative policies oriented at overall qualitative and quantitative development.

PROMISE OF ASSISTANCE INDUCES PROMISE OF POWER

Although, BJP has promoted many DBT schemes throughout the country, in specificity of Bengal elections, the BJP’s strategy to consolidate its position in Bengal ran more or less on the footprints of Ms. Banerjee’s political strategy, with some added flavour to it. The former Trinamool Congress government introduced the ‘Lakshmir Bhandar Scheme’ in Bengal, which bankrolled women irrespective of their socio-economic background, with monthly assistance of ₹1000-1200, with slight gap in monetary amount allotted on the basis of the social category. A total of about ₹12,900 crores was specified for the scheme in the previous West Bengal Budget. On the other hand, the current ruling party in West Bengal made a number of promises, the striking one of which remains the ‘Annapurna Bhandar Scheme’, offering direct cash transfer of about ₹3000 per month, in contention with the Lakshmir Bhandar Scheme introduced under the Trinamool Congress, that lured many women belonging to poor socio-economically backward rural households. The recent budget allocations by the finance department of the newly installed government of West Bengal, announces ₹36,000 crores for women’s assistance under Annapurna Scheme, further actualizing the promise made during the election campaign, installing in greater trust of people with the government. The BJP took a step further by augmenting the amount to more than double, promising to meet with the equity standards for such benefits and eliminating the financially well off from the assistance coverage. The rural women belonging to the impoverished socially backward masses were specifically moved by such commitments, as it assured them greater financial stability. This is also a reason that greater women voter turnouts, of about 92.28%, has been noticed in this assembly elections, than their male counterparts which was about 91.07%, as women voters become conscious of their vote counting up to fulfilling their own personal interests rather than what difference their votes can make in an electoral outcome. However, such a direct cash benefit transfer scheme has some deeper implications to overall women empowerment and financial reserves of the country.

SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTRADICTIONS WITH SUCH CASH TRANSFER SCHEMES

Through such eye catching offers, the aspect that is often ignored is, none of the schemes actually aim at empowering the women, by providing them vocational training to enable them to find themselves a job that suits their productive capacity, nor do these parties actually create flexible, remote job opportunities for the women to put into their existing skills in increasing the overall market capacity of the country. Such unconditional cash transfers address no specific social or economic vulnerability that the women in rural households or urban orthodox families are exposed to. These schemes might be beneficial for minimalist immediate needs or interest-based needs, but unable to cover lump sum monetary requirements for various educational and health care prospects, as conditional cash transfers only make a limited coverage. It doesn’t make a woman financially independent of all her basic expenses, neither does it protect them from the discriminatory patriarchal household. Moreover, with reference to the Annapurna scheme, it in fact, reinforces patriarchal standards, when its hyped application form demands details of the head of the family that the beneficiary belongs to, essentially a male head. In most Bengali households, the head of the family is a male member, and the government’s so-called welfare scheme formalises such patriarchal notions through an institutional procedure of elaborate family level data collection. Apart from that, what needs to be taken into further consideration is the excessive detailing about SIR status and CAA applicability with regard to the application for eligibility in receiving benefits under the Annapurna Bhandar scheme. As it has already been seen, how the SIR process has led to mass disenfranchisement of not only the Muslim communities (about 34%), but largely the Matua communities (about 63%) of rural Bengal. Not only that, many legitimate voters have been deleted from the final list of electoral rolls, which excludes many vulnerable disenfranchised residents from the coverage of welfare schemes. Further, taking into consideration the BJP’s communal attitudes and the religion-based parameters within the form, makes it more probabilistic of limited extension of benefit coverage based on sectarian lines. Such unconditional cash transfer schemes have the potentiality to induce gross fiscal deficits restricting investments to critical social and physical infrastructure development. Economic Survey of 2026 suggests that the UCTs primarily improve consumption and short-term income stability, but they adversely affect female labour force participation as they are not paired with employment and skill-building opportunities. They are not sufficient in providing adequate nutritional benefits to women, substantial healthcare and educational benefits, uplift them from their social conditioning into patriarchal standards, or in mitigating security concerns in public as well as private spaces. Conditional cash transfer might encourage building of some sort of social infrastructure and help in the building of self-reliance, but unconditional cash transfers provide no sustained socio-economic outcomes. Such schemes can never substitute investments in health, education, nutrition, childcare, or growth-enhancing public expenditure.

ASSESSING GOVERNMENT’S WELFARE MOTIVES

Hence, an assessment of whatsoever discussed gives the result that such schemes provide empowerment, no individual or societal-level capacity development, but rather function as a form of political clientelism that reinforces patriarchy, dependency, backwardness and drains the overall financial reserves of the country with no potential gains. It could, therefore, be very rightly stated that such schemes are of no welfarist motive but driven by long-term political strategy of coming to and remaining in power. A developing country like India, with immense sociological diversities and complexities, needs capacity development, rehabilitation programmes and active creation of more jobs, since more than half of the population consists of people who are economically backward and socially underprivileged and discriminated against. The recent budget of West Bengal promises job creation and 33% of reservation for women, but question remains how far it will be actualised through proper implementation and to what extent would it make coverage to rural and socially underprivileged populations. Further, least focus has been paid on eradicating sociocultural impediments to women empowerment and investments in skill enhancement and expansion of localised employment opportunities for women in specific.



THE INTERSECTION OF POLICY EFFICIENCY AND MARGINALIZATION: THE DISPLACEMENT OF WOMEN COOKS IN THE TRANSITION OF THE MIDDAY MEAL SCHEME

Bhargab Putatunda; UG II: The Midday Meal Scheme, globally recognized as one of the largest school feeding programs, was designed with a dual socio-economic mandate: to eradicate classroom hunger and to foster local community development. In the state of West Bengal, the recent institutional shift to award the Kolkata Municipal Corporation school midday meal pilot tender to centralized nongovernmental organizations, specifically the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), has ignited significant public discourse. While mainstream debate frequently centres on dietary modifications and administrative efficiency, the more profound structural consequence lies in the immediate displacement of marginalized women cooks. The abrupt transition from a decentralized, communitymanaged structure to a highly automated, centralized kitchen model systematically disenfranchises vulnerable women, undermining decades of grassroots economic empowerment in the name of modernization.

To understand the severity of this displacement, one must examine the foundational architecture of the traditional midday meal system. Historically, the program relied on local Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and neighborhood cooks, deliberately recruiting women from the lowest socio-economic strata, including widows, destitute individuals, and women belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and minority communitie. This localized employment structure transformed school kitchens into engines of social mobility. The modest monthly honorariums provided these women with a rare avenue for financial independence and personal agency within deeply patriarchal socio-economic landscapes. By abruptly shifting the tender to a centralized entity, the state effectively dismantled this decentralized economic safety net, severing a vital source of livelihood for thousands of families who possess minimal alternative employment options due to systemic barriers and a lack of formal education.

Furthermore, the transition highlights a critical ideological conflict between mechanical efficiency and social welfare. Centralized megakitchens employ advanced automated technologies, such as industrial steam jackets and mechanized assembly lines, to prepare tens of thousands of meals simultaneously. While this industrial model optimizes logistical precision and standardization, it inherently displaces human labor. The structural redundancy created by mechanization means that local women are not absorbed into the new supply chain; instead, they are entirely excluded from it. This shift exposes a flawed policy paradigm where institutional modernization is pursued at the direct expense of local labor, converting a community-driven welfare initiative into an automated corporate operation. Ultimately, the abrupt policy shift reveals how well-intentioned administrative reforms can inflict compounding vulnerabilities on marginalized populations when executed without comprehensive social impact assessments. The sudden termination of local kitchen contracts leaves displaced women cooks exposed to severe financial precarity, often forcing them back into deep dependency or exploitative informal labor markets.

While ensuring food safety and logistical reliability for school children is an undeniable priority, a progressive welfare state must ensure that administrative progress does not necessitate the economic erasure of its most vulnerable citizens. True policy efficacy should be measured not solely by the speed or scale of automation, but by its capacity to sustain and protect the livelihoods of the community it serves.



FROM PLATE TO POLITICS: HOW IDEOLOGY WALKED INTO THE TIFFIN BOX



Ritoja Sen; UG II: According to ‘Dr. Fareha Shanam’ - Senior Dietician in the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics at Delhi’s ‘Sir Ganga Ram Hospital’ - plant based sources like lentils, moong, sprouts are nutritious but generally do not provide complete protein on their own as they may lack one or more of the nine essential amino acids. She stated that there was no harm in replacing eggs with Paneer and other milkbased proteins, but cost is a major factor. While eggs serve as an affordable, bioavailable source of protein to combat childhood malnutrition, paneer stands to be more expensive and may be less digestible. Egg meals have served as an incentive that boosted school attendance among children from economically weaker backgrounds. In a state where eggs are meant to be a child’s guaranteed source of protein for the day, one decision just took it off the plate. The West Bengal government appointed the ‘ISKCON’ to serve midday meals in state sponsored schools, switching the protein rich egg meals to pure vegetarian meals, including soya, paneer and other various pulses. Alongside the exclusion of eggs as a non-vegetarian food item, wider sattvik exclusions of onion, garlic and masoor dal - staples of Bengali cooking- have stirred mixed responses from the masses. The old model of rice, dal, curry and eggs once a week stood at 6.78/- rupees per primary student whereas the new model caused 10 rupees per student under ISKCON’s centralized kitchen model, with the rest funded by the donors of ISKCON. The BJP led state government’s recent decision to switch state sponsored schools’ midday meals from non-vegetarian to pure vegetarian, reminds me of the short story “They Eat Meat” by Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar. In the story, a Santhal Adivasi couple moves from Bhuvaneshswar to Vadodara only to find out that they must stop eating non veg food items in order to be accepted by the other neighbours. Even though their primary diet involved chicken, meat, fish and eggs, they had to completely stop cooking such items in their kitchen. This led to the couple purchasing and cooking small quantities of eggs secretly and disposing the shells meticulously so no one could discover their scandalous acts of consuming non veg. The once meat loving couple now had to give up their diet in exchange for public acceptance in a community who looked down upon meat eating folks, considering them as impure and of low caste. This decision significantly illustrates how the “saffron party” based on rigid hindutva political beliefs is slowly entering the private spheres, now even the kitchens. According to certain interpretations of brahminical ideologies, a nonvegetarian diet signifies a person to be impure and of low level or caste, while a pure vegetarian diet is a symbol of purity and high social strata. The direct exclusion of particular food items based on certain Sattvik beliefs makes it clear that the served food can be seen as prasadam which may be seen as a problem since the meals are served to children of all faiths. The involvement of a purely religious institution in the handling of midday meals in state sponsored schools hampers the idea of secularism in itself. This becomes personal as such drastic changes in the midday meals isn’t any abstract policy; it is affecting children’s growth, immunity and development. It is the cost of letting ideology dictate nutrition. When eggs become ideology, it’s the children who are left half boiled.

THE PARADOX OF "MAHA ABHIYAN": THE CHITA ANDOLAN IN CHHATARPUR DISTRICT

Ishita Das; UG III: While laying the foundation stone for the Ken Betwa interlinking project in the closing days of 2024, our “honourable” Prime minister termed such a project as "maha abhiyan". Apparently, this "maha abhiyan" promised to provide clean drinking water, better irrigation facilities to the drought - stricken area of Central Bundelkhand.

Behind the mask of such crafted promises lies project of displacing the adivasis in Chhatarpur district, snatching away their right to a dignified life and destroying the environment which have lulled them since childhood.

The adivasis residing in the villages along the Ken River have raised up their voice against such a devastating project. They re-demonstrated their anguish by lying on chitas (funeral pyres), standing in the river with loose nooses around their neck alongside undergoing a hunger strike and the slogan “nyay do ya maar do”. They are demanding fair compensation and fresh surveys regarding adequate rehabilitation. What was the response from this "democratic" government? Coercion. On July 19, the protestors were dragged from the river, women were assaulted, Amit Bhatnagar was forcibly taken away to a hospital. A similar operation had been executed by the Delhi Police in Jantar Mantar on July 18, 2026.

The Madhya Pradesh police attempted to whitewash these atrocities citing "safety" concerns for the villagers since water level was rising. After assaulting the common masses, the police perform the “duty” by dropping them in their homes. Such is the paradox of safety in Neo - Bharat. The materialization of this ambitious project would lead to the submergence of about 24 villages in the Chhatarpur district. Panna Tiger Reserve will be the worst affected since the Daudhan dam will engulf a large section of this tiger reserve including the core and buffer areas.

Ken Betwa Interlinking project is actually a mirage of development. The nationalist government is gradually unfurling it’s shameless and brutal nature. It is attempting to suffocate the adivasis and the toiling masses at large. The brutalities unleashed on the adivasis in Chhatarpur points out the blood-soaked side of this “Bharat”. The adivasis are still continuing their fight against this parasitic democracy. The following lines by Arundhati Roy still looms large -

“There’s really no such thing as the ‘voiceless’.
There are only the deliberately silenced or the preferably unheard”.

ETHANOL BLENDING: A GREEN SOLUTION OR A GROWING PROBLEM?

Pracheta Biswas; UG II: “We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.” – **Lester R. Brown**

This line has always been the logic of sustainable development but the cost of ethanol blending in petrol is unfortunately being met by human security. India imports 85% of its crude oil requirements- whose bill hit \$137billion in FY25.A known fact is that crude oil is not sustainable but, it is not easy to rebuild an entire nation’s motor industry in few years – thus, the Ethanol revolution started in 2003 as a way to improve energy security and support framers by using sugar-industry as products. The government in 2016 planned the usage of Second-generation (2G) ethanol from agricultural wastes which was achieved in 2025 but not with 2G ethanol and implemented in April 2026. This, over the years, saved ₹1.84 lakh crore in foreign exchange; avoidance of 909 lakh metric tonnes CO2 emissions and ₹1.58 lakh crore earnings to farmers.

In reality, this revolution created a certain ‘greenlash’. The cost remains the same for ethanol and petrol: ₹103/L in Delhi. According to a NITI Aayog report, ethanol is hygroscopic and “causes corrosion of metal junctions.” One litre of ethanol from sugarcane (grown in water-stressed land of Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh) requires 3500 litres of water, one litre of ethanol from maize requires 4500 litres of water and finally, ethanol produced from rice requires 10000 litres of water. As demand and price for maize increased in the last four years – India has become an importer from being an exporter and so, poultry and eggs are pricier since 60% of the maize are used for cattle feed. Ethanol push has forced farmers to plant more cereals and sugarcane instead of crops like oilseeds, pulses and cotton which is making India rely on imports of edible oils, pulses and cotton. Government plans to cut the grains distributed under PDS to 10% whereas at present, 25% broken rice has helped 80 crore beneficiaries. The pollution and smell created to produce ethanol is already affecting the local residents around the factories, especially in Meghalaya’s Byrnihat.

The Supreme Court recently ordered a status quo in a matter regarding allocation to oil marketing companies by the Karnataka high court – to which BPCL, represented by Attorney General R Venkataramani, argued that the high court order could destabilise the national policy for E20 and it is an ongoing experiment whose impact will be clearer by next year. But, E20 is creating an added insecurity to the growing water crisis which has led to controversial practices like ‘Water Wives’ are rising where men in drought-prone regions marry multiple women for the sole purpose of fetching water. Thus, a true sustainable transition cannot be judged by only the percentage of ethanol blending into petrol; it requires judgement on food and water security, quality of livelihoods and environmental health.

GREEN vs. GREEN: KUTCH – INDIA'S ENERGY TRANSITION AND THE PROBLEM WITH GREEN GRABBING FORCES

Udatta Gupta; UG II: India wants to stop using fossil fuels and reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2070. To achieve this, India is building solar and wind energy facilities. The state of Gujarat, particularly the Kutch district, is a major focus area for this green revolution. Recently, the Government of West Bengal and Chief Minister Suvenhu Adhikari discussed this issue. A significant part of this green transition is happening in Kutch, a district in western Gujarat. However, this situation raises concerns about justice. We need to ask questions about the impact of this transition on local ecosystems and communities.

For centuries, the grasslands of Kutch, known as the "Banni," have supported pastoralist communities called the "Maldharis." These nomadic people have lived in harmony with the landscape, raising cattle, buffaloes, and camels. The "Banni" is an ecosystem that supports wildlife, including migratory birds, desert foxes, and the endangered Great Indian Bustard. When giant renewable energy installations are built, they change the geography of Kutch. Developers construct fences around solar arrays and wind turbines to protect their investments. However, these fences block the migration routes used by the Maldharis for centuries. This phenomenon is known as "green grabbing," where land is confiscated for environmental purposes at the expense of local people. The Maldharis are being systematically displaced.

On May 22, over 500 people from 16 Banni village groups gathered in front of NTPC to protest. They opposed the project because it threatened the Chhari-Dhand wetland, which is ecologically fragile. According to India Today, NTPC had applied for the allocation of 578 hectares of government land in Fulay village of Nakhatrana Taluka. Sources inform that the local villages have not given their consent for the project to take shape. The villages of Fulay, Tal, Laiyari, Motichur, Burkal, Chhachala, Bhagadiya, Jatavira, and Sherva have filed Community Forest Resource claims over the same grasslands under the Forest Rights Act, 2006.

To transport the electricity generated in Kutch to the rest of India, thousands of miles of high-voltage transmission lines are being built. These wires pose a serious hazard to birds, especially the Great Indian Bustard. The birds collide with the wires, die, or get electrocuted.

We need to promote energy projects such as rooftop solar installations on homes and businesses to reduce the pressure to build giant power plants in fragile rural areas. We cannot save the planet by destroying habitats and traditional cultures. A green future must bring justice, dignity, and survival to the people and wildlife at the heart of the transition.



STRATEGIC MODERNITY AND
ECOLOGICAL SACRIFICE: GREAT
NICOBAR IN INDIA'S
INFRASTRUCTURAL FUTURE

Manisha Ghosh; UG III: Positioned near the Strait of Malacca, one of the world’s most important maritime trade routes, the Great Nicobar has been envisioned as India’s gateway to deeper Indo-Pacific influence. The Holistic Development of Great Nicobar Island project, an ₹81,000+ cr. plan for a deep-sea port, airport, power plant and new cities – epitomises India’s push for strategic infrastructure. Officially, the government claims a sensitive and holistic approach aiming to protect the island’s ecological resources and respect indigenous needs. Great Nicobar is home to dense rainforests, coral ecosystems, and vulnerable indigenous communities, especially the Shompen and Nicobarese. In practice, experts warn the megaproject threatens the remnant Shompen and Nicobarese tribes (PVTGs) and Great Nicobar’s intact forests and reefs. Non-traditional security is front and centre: tribal rights, cultural survival and environmental health could be sacrificed for geo-economic gains. The project received environmental clearance (in November 2022) despite a tribal council withdrawing its consent that same month, after learning pre-tsunami villages and tribal reserves would be de-notified and built over. Experts estimate ~900,000 trees (15% of island forests) would be razed, with over a million coral reefs and mangroves also cleared for ports and cities. Galathea Bay’s sanctuary (home to four Shompen bands) has already lost its buffer zone. A mountain of evidence suggests the island has scarce fresh water and limited power sources, making the sustainability of 350,000 new residents by 2050 dubious. Locally, the impact falls hardest on tribes. Their human security, including food, culture, health – is thus directly imperilled by the forced clearance of forests and land. What makes the Great Nicobar debate particularly important is that it reflects a broader transformation in the meaning of “security.” Strategic infrastructure today is no longer limited to ports or military assets alone, it is increasingly tied to energy corridors, digital logistics, AI-enabled maritime systems, and global supplychain competition. In this framework, islands like Great Nicobar are reimagined not as fragile ecosystems but as strategic nodes within the infrastructure of the digital economy. However, this model risks creating what political ecologists describe as “sacrificial landscapes”, regions where ecological destruction and indigenous displacement are justified in the name of national progress. The National Green Tribunal’s decision to uphold environmental clearances despite sustained ecological concerns has further intensified questions regarding transparency and environmental governance. The Great Nicobar Project therefore raises a larger policy question for India’s developmental future: can strategic growth be pursued without transforming ecologically sensitive regions into expendable frontiers of infrastructure expansion?



FROM REEL HERO TO REAL HOPE: HOW
VIJAY'S CINEMATIC PERSONA SHAPES
POLITICAL IDENTITY

Ankita Sarkar; UG III: Tamil Nadu has always had a unique relationship between cinema and politics. From M.G. Ramachandran and J. Jayalalithaa to C Joseph Vijay, popularly known as ‘Thalapathy’, their roles in cinema became a platform for building political identities. A decisive victory by Vijay's newly formed party, ‘Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam’ (TVK), in Tamil Nadu Assembly elections (2026) challenged the DMK-AIADMK framework. Behind this lies the image of Vijay not as a distant superstar but as a common man who is protesting against corruption through his two-decade-long performances on the silver screen.



In his films, Vijay portrays a righteous youth who is always supporting poor and marginalized people. His characters often evolve as protesters against corrupt institutions. In ‘Tamizhan’(2002), he played a carefree youth who became an honest lawyer and punished the villain without taking the law into his own hands. In ‘Vettaikaaran’(2009), Vijay's character was a student who aspired to become a police officer and later became the target of politicians which resonates with Gen Z's concerns about insecurities in institutional jobs. His movies not only entertained but also addressed the suffering of people. For example, in ‘Kaththi’(2014), Vijay brought attention to the agrarian crisis and the corporate exploitation of farmers. The movie ‘Mersal’ (2017), showed the vulnerabilities of the healthcare system and the profit-driven nature of healthcare institutions. Mersal was released after the youth-led Jallikattu protest to restore Tamil pride. When the film's song ‘Aalaporaan Tamizhan’ (The Tamil will rise to lead) was released, it resonated deeply by celebrating Tamil identity and self-respect. These themes proved Vijay's credibility as a leader and merged with social realities. The film that truly broke through the screen and established Vijay's identity as a leader is his movie ‘Sarkar’ (2018). This film not only portrays the cultural and social problems, but it is also centered around electoral corruption and voter manipulation. In ‘Sarkar’, Vijay's character emerged as the face of political reform who reclaimed the democratic power of the common people. ‘Sarkar’ stood as a symbol of Vijay's transition from a ‘reel’ superstar to a ‘real’ leader. The major factor behind TVK's success is thus the ‘relatable’ situations and frustration experienced by Vijay's characters, which resonated with younger voters. Vijay's victory also reflects Gen Z aspirations, where personality, accountability and constant public engagement matter alongside the policies. Years of fan edits and memorable dialogues have connected him with the larger mass. Whether the image of the ‘reel hero’ can meet the expectations of Tamil Nadu remains a question that only time can answer.

RECONSTRUCTION OF ‘PURITY AND CULT’ IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH ALONG WITH THE RISE OF RIGHT-WINGS FUNDAMENTALISM: A REVIVAL OF THE ANCIENT CULTURE AND BEAUTY OR A MERE POLITICIZATION?

Manali Moulik; UG III: Recent days political debate confronted a new idea that is of ‘ancient cult’ and ‘purity’. Famous philosopher and historian Hegel once said, “The only thing that we learnt from history is that we learnt nothing from history.” So on this debate in our India, as a prominent global power in the southern sphere, it must be understood what is the real meaning of those ideas? The actual ancient Indian culture used to depict so, or neo-fundamentalism made an assessment of their own ideology? Before going to the concrete discussion, we should have a look at the change of the nineteenth century feminine concept and politics over the female body.

1. Textile prison, modesty and purity of bhadramahila (elite women) and rise of victorian concept.

The nineteenth century Bengal faced a severe change in their socio-political sphere after the conquest of the British. The previous Nawabi culture was demolished and muslims were the biggest enemy of the new ruler. Also they refrain from taking any part in British education of administrative works. Edward Shils mentioned it as ‘deep preoccupation with the previous authority.’ A new tendency became one to reject all the cultural and even aesthetic practices of them. So the use of extremely costly wearing ‘masslins’ were termed as ‘primitive and vulgar.’ A famous piece written in 1860, named ‘Dasi’, described the condition of women's dresses at that time so clearly. That is texted below,

“ In those days, there was a particular rule for women. Whoever became a bou (bride / daughter in law) was to veil herself for an arm’s length or so, and not to speak to anybody. That's what made a good bou. Clothes then, unlike now, were not made of such fine fabric, but were rather coarse and heavy. I used to wear that piece of heavy cloth, and veil myself down to my chest, and do all those chores. And I never talked to anyone. My eyes never looked out from within that cloth enclosure, as though I was blindfolded like the bullocks of the oilpresser. Sight did not travel further than my feet. [Dasi, 1860]

This sort of brutal objectification became common at that period. But after the renaissance in Bengal, women's dress also faced a sort of change. The well-educated women of Brahmasamaja took an active role to prepare a perfectly covered and well fashioned dress for girls. This period was made to inform people that graceful, elite and educated women used to wear that type of dress. Modesty, beauty and grace must be reflected by their dress. But the politics rooted in dress covering and female representation went under the curtain. For the description of the European thought process here, we can discuss Michael Foucault's criticism of Marcus’s ‘repressive hypothesis’. He pointed out the public, discursive nature of privatization of sexuality in nineteenth century Western Europe. The poetry by Coventry Patmore ‘The angel in the house’ also mentioned ‘maternal breast’. He made a clear distinction between maternal breast or which is used for feeding and another for aesthetic use. This misogynistic brutality could not be a sign of civilized Europe. The basic Victorian ideas could not be so helpful for such a country like us, which has a deep and shared civilizational history of its own concepts over female sexuality and other matters related to feminine ideas.

◆ Ancient Indian concept over sexuality and representation.



SThe scholars noted that there is no book on sexuality and gratification of human desire topics more crucial than Kamasutra, by Vatsayana. There is the concept and description of nymphs or Ashara. The influence of serpent worship is still one of the religions of India. It has previously influenced the decoration of many other monuments, especially the Buddhist stupas of Sanchi and Amaravati. The intimate association of the serpent with woman in the mind of all primitive people is not as obvious as its association with the Lingam (phallus). Here the substitution of the serpent for the male organ as suggested. This group appears to illustrate a part of Brahminical belief associated with the apsaras. They were originally spirits of the clouds and waters. Semi-divine nymphs are said to have sprung from the churning of the oceans. The Rigveda also consists of the stories of apsaras and Gandharva's. In the heroic age there are many apsaras and many Gandhara's who form the part of the retinue of Indra, the first as dancers and second as musicians. Another masterpiece on that matter is the book named Anangaranga by Kallyanmalla. It also described the division of male and female beauty along with their counterparts.

◆ European discussion along with ancient India: The author of ‘Sprout of Love’, was a poet named Bhanudatta. It appears from the last verse of the manuscript that he was a resident of the province of Trihoot, son of a Brahmin. The original work is in Sanskrit which gives the description of being made out from their age, description, conduct etc. It contains three chapters and its date is unknown. One work in the English language is somewhat similar to this work. It is called ‘Kulogynomaa’ or this of elements of beauty. Being the elementary principle of that science, by T. Bell M.D. with twenty - four plates as printed in London in 1821. It treats the beauty, of love, of sexual intercourse, of the laws regulating that intercourse, monogamy and polygamy, of prostitution of infidelity...ending with a catalogue Raisanen of the defects of female beauty. Previously discussed ‘kamasutra’ of Vatsayana also dealt with those aspects. Broadly, it has seven aspects.

- i) Sadharana (general topics)
- ii) Samprayogika (embrace etc.)
- iii) Kanya Samprayukta (union of males and females)
- iv) Bharyadhikarika (About one's own wife)
- v) Paradarika (wives of others)
- vi) Vaisika (About curtezans)
- vii) Aupamishadika (on the arts of seduction, tonic medicine etc)

All of these discussions are enough to prove the importance and science of ancient Indian thought process over this matter. In that period, it was not grasped by fundamentalist tendencies.

◆ Depiction of the third virtly, ‘Kama’ ; in the sculpture of ancient India.

Khajuraho temple monuments have so many such depictions. One of them is very famous and informative to discuss here. That is, the scorpion in the mekhla (waist griddle) or thigh of an ancient Indiansculpture in the Khajuraho group of monuments symbolizes intense desire, sudden panic and sting of love (kama). This 10th - 11th century Surasundaries or apsharas are relevant to understand the deep meaning of ‘kama’ or sensual desire in the formation of ancient culture. In ancient Indian iconography, the scorpion represents the sharp, consuming nature of romantic longing and sensual passion. The sculpture captures a playful narrative where a maiden panics after feeling a scorpion crawling up her leg. She hurriedly lifts, loosens or shakes her mekhla (lower garment) to dislodge the insect, allowing the sculptor to elegantly depict the partial nudity and the human form. So the scorpion motif is not just limited to khajuraho, similar iconographic devices featuring ‘poison maiden’ (vishakanya) flicking away scorpion from their dresses can be found on later Hoysala structures (Dakshinaty), such as 12th century Hindu sculptures.



◆ Fundamentalism and aesthetic truth : A conflict still alive

Fundamentalist scriptures like Manusmriti mentioned keeping women under ruthless control. The other mention of instruction for them was also found in different smritishastras. Those didn't have any connection with the real concept of cult in ancient India and its sculptures.Those are Brahminical impositions over women which is still going on in this 21st century as in the form of fundamentalist politics. It is far away from the scientific and beautiful aesthetic conception of our ancient India. A possible starting point for an exploration of the historical evidence on the crucial place of control over women’s sexuality within the larger structure in which Brahminical patriarchy was located thus could be practices and beliefs prevalent among the upper castes as studied by the anthropologists. An insightful essay by Nur Yalman (1962) on the costs of Ceylon and Malabar shows that the sexuality of women, more than that of men, is the subject of social concern. Yalman argues that a fundamental principle of Hindu social organization is to construct a close structure to preserve land, women and ritual quality within it. Same goes for the criticism of Michael Foucault on Marcus’s ‘repressive hypothesis’. It points out the public, discursive nature of the privatization of female sexuality in nineteenth century western Europe. The bubble / bubble of voices on morality and the notion of the appropriately ‘feminine’ (a euphemism for female sensual conduct) make Foucault’s question pertinent to the project on nineteenth century Bengal. He wrote, “Why has sexuality so widely discussed, and what has been said about it? What were the effects of power generated by what was said? What are the links between the discourses, these effects of power and pleasure that was invested by them? What Knowledge was formed as a result of this linkage? The object in short is to define the regime of power - knowledge - pleasure that sustains discourse on human sexuality in our parts of the world?”



◆ Conclusion

The ancient Indian concepts, or its discussion so truly proves that sensual pleasure was not taken as a heinous crime at this time. Along with that, it was taken as a form of a Purushartha (dharma, artha, kama and moksha) which means the gratification of desire and complete development of human life. Brahminical fundamentalism, as discussed earlier, depicts women so narrowly and as the gateway of varnasankara (caste mixture). It will create social instability and the power nexus of Brahmin and Kshatriya will be turbulent. So the 21st century fundamentalism is still going on that route to objectify women in that way. Certain knowledge from ancient Indian scriptures and other iconography could bring a massive change in their concept. It will help others to see ancient India in its multiversal and unique aesthetic way rather than a saffron lens.

FILM REVIEW

Obsession from a Feminist Lens

Vedant Rai; UG III: Independent film maker Curry Barker’s film “Obsession” starring Michael Johnston and Inde Navarrette has been a global blockbuster. This film has not only been a topic of discussion for horror enthusiasts but has also become a deeply debated film between feminists and the manosphere. Behind the engaging psychological horror, the film has been deeply political with questions about the male gaze, female agency and consent and the “incel culture” of the manosphere.

The simple plot unfolds when the male protagonist Bear uses a magical “One Wish Willow” to coerce his love interest Niki to love him. But the obsession turns sinister with Niki losing her bodily and mental autonomy. The film presents it as a literal manifestation of nonconsensual possession. The film is critical of the internet culture’s “nice guy” myth who are performatively harmless. Bear believes his interest in Niki entitles him to her affection, ignoring the fact that the Niki prior to the spell rejects him. There lies a clear critique of male entitlement and what scholars call a “benevolent patriarchy” or the “nice guy” whose patience and emotional suffering is expected to be rewarded with female affection.

Consent lies not only in sexual consent. The film subtly shows how her emotional agency is completely hijacked. Such kind of emotional and psychological manipulation and coercion is symptomatic of patriarchy. The premise of the movie lies in the fact that Niki’s affection for Bear is not a natural emotion but an outcome of sinister supernatural acts. Consent is manufactured metaphysically.

Consent not only lies in bodily terms but also in emotional and psychological terms. Because of the spell, Niki gradually becomes much more obsessed with Bear. The ideals associated with the feminine such being nurturing, self-sacrificing and being there for their partner, these get exaggerated in her until they take a grotesque turn. Therefore, these expectations thrust upon her do not come naturally to Niki but rather what is expected of her by Bear. These are in turn what gender roles women are expected to play in a patriarchy. Niki becomes a manifestation of what is expected from a “perfect girlfriend”.

Films generally cater to the male gaze which objectify women and where women become passive subjects and men are the active participants. The film reverses it where Bear is constantly objectified and is under constant surveillance of Niki. He becomes the passive recipient to Niki’s wild actions. She eventually invades his autonomy to the same extent of how much he invaded her space. The roles get reversed where Bear becomes the victim of a jealous, possessive, “toxic” girlfriend; traits that are generally attached to men.

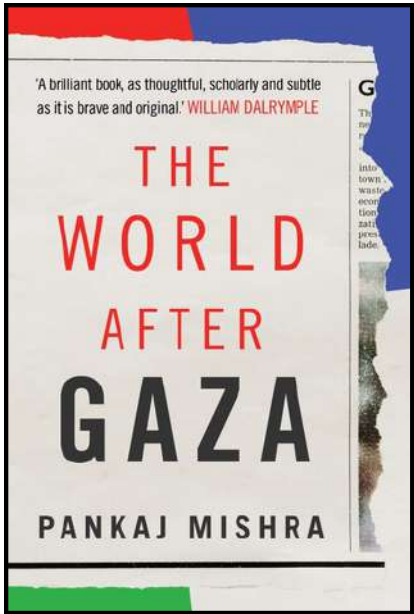
It is a critique of contemporary romantic culture where men who refuse to give up or try to “win” the girl via their persistent actions are often celebrated in the media. The film blurs the line between love and harassment. Obsession uses horror as an effective tool to explore some of the potent questions on gendered power in society and contemporary dating culture. It sharply critiques often normalized online stalking, manipulative behavior and perfoative relationships. Patriarchy entraps not only women but also men expecting them to play certain roles. Bear ultimately faces the consequences of his own patriarchy and his own twisted idea of romance.



BOOK: THE WORLD AFTER GAZA

AUTHOR: PANKAJ MISHRA

PUBLISHER: JUGGERNAUT BOOKS in INDIA and PENGUIN PRESS internationally.



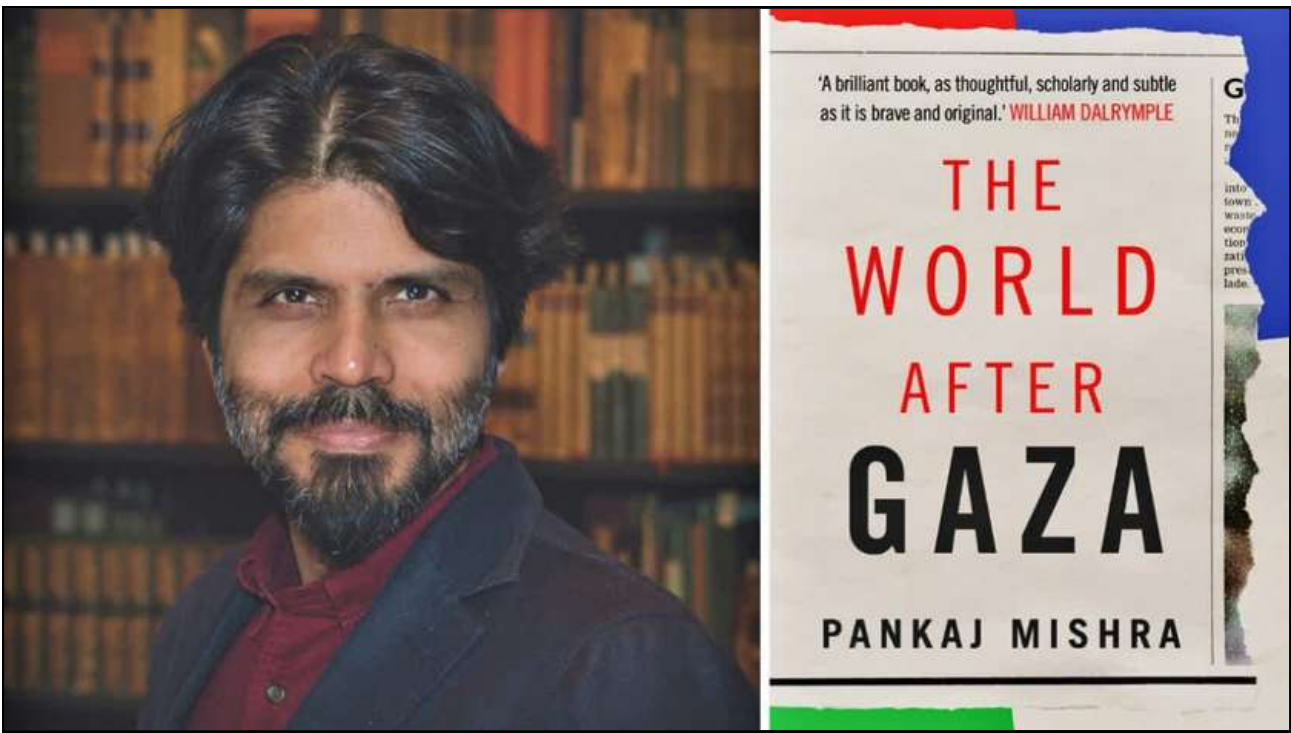
Sananda Roy; UG III: “..it is Gaza that has pushed many to a genuine reckoning with the deep malaise of their societies.”

“Never again for anyone” was the slogan of the brave young activists of Jewish Voice for Peace. Yet, our peculiarly “modern evil” proves how it doesn’t take much for yesterday’s victims to become today’s victimizers. It’s known, that like a shape-shifting chameleon, capitalism thrives by re-writing its rules, but so does more vehemently, its core genesis - human self-interest, rapaciousness and naked predation.The poets may disagree, but in lived-realities, hate outshines love - it is primordial, immediate, much more addictive, subversive and catastrophic in its escalation, its beguiled shelter dooms the proponent with a rage of righteousness - one that burns through his veins, successfully desecrating his capacity for remorse, his ‘human’ness. Doubt love as a creator; however, hate definitely triumphs as a devastator. Of life, civilization and faith. Faith on humanity, on self.

Turning the last page of this book didn’t quite feel like conquering a heavily erudite read, especially that of an impeccably researched geopolitical non-fic as it is, rather the feeling settled down to be a scathingly urgent non-victory of being, thinking, citizen-ing. One does take a deep breath. Do we truly reckon what we are witnessing? Some crush, some perish, some parasitize, some remain “vexed bystanders”. The author writes that; the profound rupture we feel today is a final rupture in the moral history of the world since the ground zero of 1945.

Formidably incisive and critically prolific, Mishra, throughout his career has been iconoclastic, unforgivingly prescient. He doesn’t theorize; he dismantles. Drawing on Shoah literature of Hannah Arendt, Primo Levi, Amery- all of them affirming the dynamic emotional and political ‘orchestration’ of a collective identity, finally inducting, that “Israel is not an inheritance of Shoah”, Mishra analyses its anachronistic colonialism in the 1970s and altogether, the innate genocidal potential of a modern bureaucratic state. He writes of the debates of the infection by the pathologies of the ‘brute logic’ of survivalist nationalism, antagonising memory cultures, the propensity of modern-day “atrocitiy hucksterism”. It is increasingly challenging to rescue visions of justice and solidarity in the zero-sum contests of recognition and identity - the palpable minorities are immolated in the face of imagined “marginalisation” of groups. Mishra highlights how conventional histories have always excluded such conjectures, where people break-free from the comforting affiliations of nation, race, religion to acknowledge a mutual vulnerability with those very same histories, as their ‘others’ - European Muslims who saved Jews from Nazi oppression are lost stories now. Ethnic-racial prejudice, flourishes on all sides of the colour lines European Jews, Asians and Africans of yesterday; Muslims and immigrants of today.

The Janus-faced modern sinister mercurial politics presses on moral defeatism than moral progress - development and retrogression, freedom and enslavement, barbarism and civilisation become entangled, not opposing terms. The book doesn’t merely document the political history, it interrogates each and every buried incident it exposes. At once a work of geopolitics, cultural history, nationalism, and memory studies, the book refuses each one of these to be understood in isolation, especially where morality collapses, and victim and perpetrator bleed into one another, in a world that mistakes power for truth.



RISE OF AFRICAN AND POST-COLONIAL NATIONS OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH IN RESHAPING THE WORLD CUP

Adrija Bhattacharjee; UG III: The World Cup has had a trend of revealing coloniality not as a thing of the past but as an existing system of border contentions that does end up reflecting the talent pipeline and national myths on a more competitive level. The history of international sport demonstrates that global competitions have never existed outside the political forces that shape the modern world. The FIFA World Cup has long reflected a supposedly pre-set international order where European and South American powers have dominated both the sport and its narratives. Matches such as France vs Senegal and England vs Ghana have even been dubbed as ‘colonial derbies’, where a wealthy excolonizer nation has the financial means to pick and choose from a broad, globally sourced talent pool, which includes players who might just be descendants of migrants from the competing erstwhile colonized nation. The irony for the longest time? Football teams have only been benefiting from the very migrations their countries have long demonized, with the next generation of postcolonial migrants only emerging as national assets on the pitch, while many with similar backgrounds are often cast off as social plagues off the pitch.

In the postcolonial order, does playing for the popular European and South American teams signal ‘making it’? Historically, while it has been true, the FIFA World Cup this year, however, has marked a remarkable shift in pitch politics. Although the seeds of this shift had already begun to rise in the 2022 series, where Morocco’s historic semi-final run marked a watershed moment by defeating former colonial powers Spain and Portugal, Egypt beat New Zealand 3–1 and tied with Belgium, and Ghana shocked the world when they tied with England at 0–0, symbolizing a disruption of long-standing assumptions of who belongs among the circles of the world’s elites.

The World Cup has never just been about football. It's loaded with centuries of history, politics, and national pride—a time that comes once every four years when countries that have historically been subjugated seize the chance to prove their growth and resilience, taking back power by themselves, for themselves. A potent example of this? Cabo Verde. This West African nation entered the World Cup for the first time this year and rose to international fame after their goalkeeper, Vozinha, stopped seven attempted goals by Spain, causing an unexpected 0–0 draw. The resilient rise of African nations, dominating the field across all 48 teams, is just a signal that power is now more dispersed as globalization has democratized expertise. The monopoly of the elites, essentially enjoyed by European and South American football associations, is gradually weakening. For decades, Western media has frequently portrayed African football through various degrees of stereotypes, which have only been decisively challenged and questioned through recent tournaments that highlight the tactical adaptability and defensive resilience these countries have brought.

While ensuring food safety and logistical reliability for school children is an undeniable priority, a progressive welfare state must ensure that administrative progress does not necessitate the economic erasure of its most vulnerable citizens. True policy efficacy should not be measured solely by the speed or scale of automation, but by its capacity to sustain and protect the livelihoods of the community it serves.



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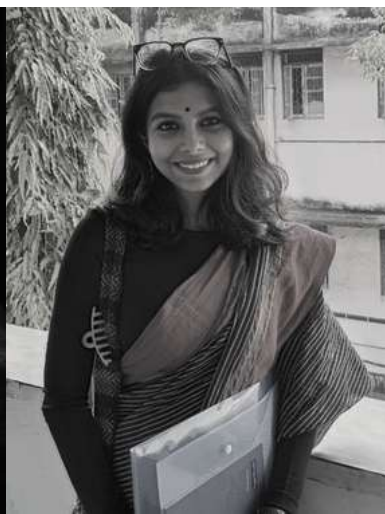
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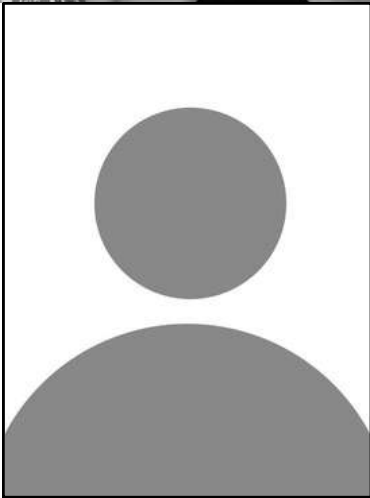
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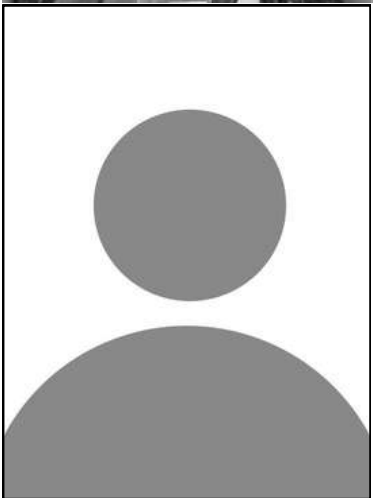
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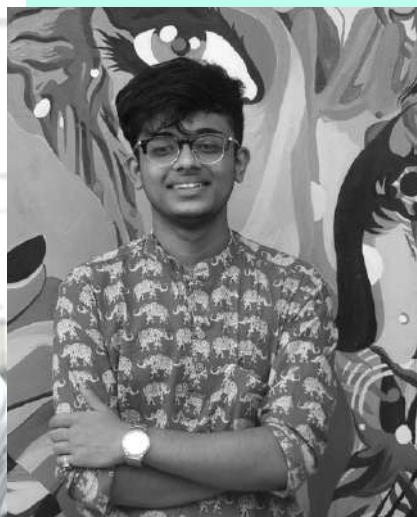
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