

ISSN (Print): 0976-013X

ISSN (Online): 0976-0148

Journal of Management & Public Policy

Vol. 13 No. 1

December 2021

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Journal of Management & Public Policy (JMPP) is a biannual peer-reviewed journal published in June and December every year by Management Development Research Foundation, New Delhi (India).

JMPP seeks to create a body of knowledge around the interface of various functional areas of Management and Public Policy. It is likely to serve as an independent forum for the academia, industry, civil society and the State to carry forward a candid and objective discussion on common issues having a bearing on economy, business, community, environment and the quality of life of the people.

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JMPP is indexed in EBSCO, ProQuest and Indian Citation Index

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Published online by Liberal Press, New Delhi.

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Journal of Management & Public Policy

Vol. 13, No. 1, Dec 2021, Pp. 4-19

ISSN 0976-0148 (Online) 0976-013X (Print)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47914/jmpp.2021.v13i1.001>

eNAM: A Potential Game Changer for Agriculture Marketing in India

Sourabh Ghosh*

ABSTRACT

The electronic National Agriculture Market (eNAM) is a pan-India online trading platform that links Agricultural Produce Market Committee markets to create a unified national market for agricultural produce. However, with the adoption of eNAM by the relevant stakeholders being relatively slow, Government of India has initiated a number of steps to address the issues related to post-harvest infrastructure, transportation of farm produce, etc. with particular focus on small and marginal farmers. This paper positions eNAM in the backdrop of marketing reforms and discusses the key enablers that would result in the successful implementation of this flagship scheme.

KEYWORDS: Agricultural Marketing; Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee; Electronic National Agriculture Market; Farmer Producer Organisations; Small and Marginal Farmers

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING STRUCTURE: A SNAPSHOT

Agricultural marketing in India is characterised by long and fragmented supply chain resulting in high wastages and low share of farmers in the price paid by the consumers. Presently, the farm output is traded through a network of 6,630 regulated Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) markets comprising 2,332 principal market yards (PMYs) and 4,298 sub-market yards (SMYs) (Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (MoAFW) 2019a).

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In addition to the APMC markets, there are 22,941 rural periodic markets (RPMs) out of which 11,811 are under rural local bodies, 1,274 are under APMCs and other government agencies, and 9,856 are under private trusts and others (MoAFW 2019b). These RPMs which lack basic infrastructure serve as focal points for marketing of farm produce especially for small and marginal farmers, who account for 86.1% of all operational land holdings and 46.9% of the total operated area in rural India (MoAFW 2020a).

Government of India (GoI) has initiated development and upgradation of physical infrastructure of the RPMs into Gramin Agriculture Markets (GrAMs) using Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). As per latest figures, physical infrastructure / facilities have been developed in 1,251 RPMs and is under development in another 1,553 RPMs under MGNREGS (Lok Sabha 2021a).

REFORMS IN AGRICULTURAL MARKETING

Reforms in agricultural marketing were ushered in with the adoption of Agriculture Produce Marketing (Regulation) Act, and constitution of the APMCs by various States and Union Territories (UTs) in 1960s and 1970s (MoAFW 2017a). This was aimed to protect the exploitation of farmers by intermediaries who procured the produce at farmgate at low prices. It was envisaged that the APMCs, by regulating the marketing of agricultural produce in notified market yards through licensed intermediaries (traders and commission agents) and with adequate representation of farmers on the committees through fair elections, would facilitate development of efficient agriculture markets in which farmers would receive remunerative prices for their produce. However, in the following decades, it became increasingly clear that the reforms failed to protect the interests of the farmers against non-remunerative prices, high transaction costs, and post-harvest losses.

The reforms failed to address the issue of licensing bottleneck as well. Licensing mandates for trading encouraged rent-seeking behaviour among existing traders and commission agents thereby checking entry of new entrepreneurs and preventing competition (Manjula 2021; Gol n.d.). This too added to the woes of the farmers when it came to getting remunerative prices for their produce.

The APMC markets could not keep pace with the changing requirements of national agricultural trade and marketing. The geographic division of a State into multiple market areas administered by separate APMCs resulted in a highly fragmented market structure with multiple levies on intra-State and inter-State movement of produce, increasing the transaction costs, and post-harvest losses across the supply chain due to multiple handling. Thus, the existing structure of these regulated markets served as the biggest impediment to seamless movement of agricultural produce across the State / country.

To address the above-mentioned issues and as an attempt to introduce competition in agriculture markets for the first time, in 2003, GoI formulated a Model APMC Act and circulated it to the States for adoption. The Model Act intended to bring uniformity in State legislations and suggested several reforms to make agriculture markets efficient and competitive by promoting alternative marketing systems. However, glaring shortcomings were noticed in the adoption of the Model Act across the States / UTs. Even in case of those where the Model Act was used to effect necessary amendments to their Acts, the reforms seemed patchy, sporadic and cosmetic (MoAFW 2017a). Against this backdrop, GoI formulated the Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion & Facilitation) Act, 2017 (APLM Act (2017)). Table 1 shows the status of marketing reforms carried out by the States / UTs with reference to nine key areas proposed by the APLM Act (2017).

Table 1: State-wise Status of Marketing Reforms

States / UTs	Limiting Regulation within APMC Yard	Separation of Powers between Dir (Mktg) & MID, Mandi Board	Private Wholesale Market	Direct marketing (Outside Mandi)	Declaring Warehouse, Silos / Cold Storages as Deemed Market	De-regulation of Marketing of Fruits & Vegetables	Single Unified Trading Licence	Single Point Levy of Market Fee	E-Trading
Andhra Pradesh	×	×	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Arunachal Pradesh	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Assam	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Bihar	No APMC Act								

Chhattisgarh	×	√	√	√	×	√	√	√	√
Goa	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Gujarat	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Haryana	×	√	√	√	√	×	√	√	√
Himachal Pradesh	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Jammu & Kashmir	No APMC Act								
Jharkhand	×	×	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Karnataka	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Kerala	No APMC Act								
Madhya Pradesh	×	√	√	√	×	√	√	√	√
Maharashtra	×	√	√	√	×	√	√	√	√
Manipur	No APMC Act								
Meghalaya	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Mizoram	×	×	√	√	×	×	√	√	√
Nagaland	√	×	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Odisha	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Punjab	×	×	√	√	×	×	√	√	√
Rajasthan	×	√	√	√	×	√	√	√	√
Sikkim	×	×	√	√	×	×	√	√	√
Tamil Nadu	×	√	√	√	√	×	√	√	√
Telangana	×	×	√	√	√	×	√	√	√
Tripura	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Uttar Pradesh	×	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Uttarakhand	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
West Bengal	×	×	√	√	×	√	√	√	√
A & N Islands	No APMC Act								
Chandigarh	×	×	√	√	×	×	√	√	√
D & N Haveli	No APMC Act								
Daman & Diu	No APMC Act								
Delhi	×	×	×	×	×	√	×	×	×
Lakshadweep	No APMC Act								
Puducherry	×	×	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Notes: √ means yes; × means no; The Status of Marketing Reforms is as of July, 2020.

Source: MoAFW (2020b).

From Table 1 it is clear that not all the reforms as suggested by the APLM Act (2017) have been uniformly implemented by the States / UTs. With some States / UTs not having the APMC Act, this only adds to the diversity in agricultural marketing systems across India.

ELECTRONIC NATIONAL AGRICULTURE MARKET

Recognising the importance of well-functioning agricultural markets to increase the returns for farmers and help drive growth in rural economy, GoI launched a scheme for setting up an electronic National Agriculture Market (eNAM) in 2016. The online trading platform of eNAM aims to unify the fragmented markets and provide farmers access to a nation-wide market. By promoting real time price discovery and transparency in auction process, it also helps farmers get remunerative prices for their produce.

Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) under the aegis of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (MoAFW) (earlier known as Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)) is the lead implementing agency for eNAM. Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare (DACFW) is responsible for paying the cost of developing the software and its customisation for the States, and also for providing a one-time grant upto a ceiling of INR 75 lakh per mandi (increased from INR 30 lakh in the Budget 2017-18) to cover the fixed costs related to equipment / infrastructure required for installation of the eNAM platform (Lok Sabha 2017). State Governments are responsible for suggesting the regulated markets which are to be integrated with eNAM. In order to be eligible for assistance under the scheme, States/UTs have to reform their APMC Acts to ensure that they fulfill the following three pre-conditions of the scheme: (i) a single licence to be valid for trading in all the mandis of the State/UT; (ii) single point levy of market fee; and (iii) provision for electronic trading in the mandis.

eNAM was formally launched for trading on 14 April 2016 in 21 markets across eight States on a pilot basis. As of May 2020, 1,000 mandis across 18 States and 3 UTs are live on the eNAM platform (Table 2). As of February 2022, about 1.73 crore farmers, 2.20 lakh traders, and 1.03 lakh commission agents are registered on the eNAM platform (eNAM 2022).

Table 2: State-wise Number of Mandis Integrated with eNAM Platform

States / UTs	No. of Mandis Integrated for Pilot Launch (as of April 2016)	No. of Mandis Integrated (as of March 2018)	No. of Mandis Integrated (as of May 2020)
Andhra Pradesh	-	22	33
Chandigarh	-	1	1
Chhattisgarh	-	14	14
Gujarat	3	79	122
Haryana	2	54	81
Himachal Pradesh	2	19	19
Jammu & Kashmir	-	-	2
Jharkhand	1	19	19
Karnataka	-	-	2
Kerala	-	-	6
Madhya Pradesh	1	58	80
Maharashtra	-	60	118
Odisha	-	10	41
Puducherry	-	2	2
Punjab	-	19	37
Rajasthan	1	25	144
Tamil Nadu	-	23	63
Telangana	5	47	57
Uttar Pradesh	6	100	125
Uttarakhand	-	16	16
West Bengal	-	17	18
Total	21	585	1,000

Sources: Lok Sabha (2016, 2018); MoAFW (2020c).

KEY ENABLERS OF ENAM

eNAM, if implemented successfully, can be a game-changer for agricultural marketing in India and can have a significant impact across the agricultural supply chain. However, it is imperative that the government focuses on the following key enablers in order to fully reap the potential benefits of eNAM.

(a) Developing post-harvest infrastructure

Presently, trade in the market yards is conducted on the basis of physical examination of the commodities and not on the basis of scientific grading and standardisation. However, trading on the eNAM platform necessitates standardisation and assaying of produce. Since eNAM is a virtual market, a lot of its success would depend on the network of APMC markets for the physical flow of commodities. Inadequate back-end infrastructure for grading, assaying, and quality certification would significantly constrain the volumes traded on the front-end eNAM platform. Lack of post-harvest infrastructure in APMC markets is, therefore, one of the biggest impediments to successful implementation of eNAM.

Huge investments in development of post-harvest infrastructure would be required for effective functioning of eNAM. The APMC markets willing to join the eNAM platform may be mandated to set up a dedicated fund for setting up market infrastructure from the market fees or revenues collected and submit a plan for upgrading existing infrastructure in a phased manner.

GoI has initiated several measures to incentivise the development of agri-marketing infrastructure. For instance, post-harvest storage including cold chain as has been recognised as infrastructure sub-sector eligible for viability gap funding scheme and 100% foreign direct investment has been allowed in trading of food products. GoI has been assisting the State Governments for bringing improvements in the infrastructure facilities through implementing Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure, a sub-scheme under the Integrated Scheme for Agricultural Marketing, and Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MoAFW 2021a).

In view of high post-harvest losses, GoI has recently launched Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) in August 2021 which aims at providing a medium / long-term debt financing facility till 2025-2026 through 3% interest subvention and credit guarantee support on loans for creation of post-harvest management infrastructure and community farming assets. Since the inception of AIF, loans amounting to INR 6,182 crores have already been sanctioned for 8,630 projects across the country (MoAFW 2021a). AIF is also available to APMCs for augmenting their infrastructure facilities (MoF 2021). On the other hand, agriculture being a State subject,

the State Governments themselves can encourage private sector participation in the development of back-end infrastructure.

(b) Facilitating small and marginal farmers’ access

Small and marginal farmers is the most dominant category of farmers in India in terms of number as well as area of the operational holdings (Table 3). According to the latest Agriculture Census of 2015-16, they account for 86.1% of all operational land holdings and 46.9% of the total operated area (MoAFW 2020a). And both these shares have continued to increase steadily over time across Agriculture Censuses from 1970-71 onwards (Figure 1).

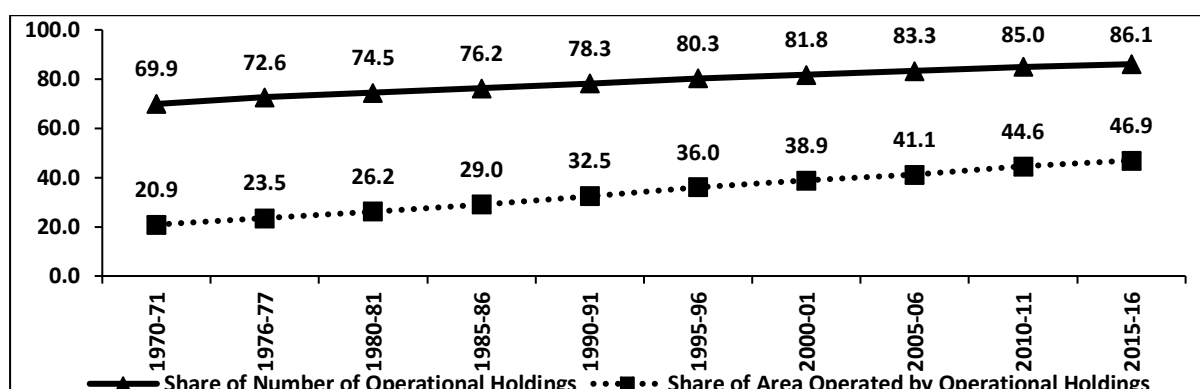
Table 3: Number and Area of Operational Holdings by Size Group

Categories	Operational Holdings		Area Operated by Operational Holdings		Average Size (in ha)
	Number (in '000)	Share (%)	Area (in '000 ha)	Share (%)	
Small & Marginal	1,26,060	86.1	74,074	46.9	0.6
Semi-Medium	13,993	9.6	37,619	23.8	2.7
Medium	5,561	3.8	31,810	20.2	5.7
Large	838	0.6	14,314	9.1	17.1
All	1,46,452	100.0	1,57,817	100.0	1.1

Note: The figures are based on the latest Agriculture Census of 2015-16.

Source: MoAFW (2019c).

Figure 1: Share of Small and Marginal Farmers in Number and Area of Operational Holdings across different Agriculture Censuses (%)



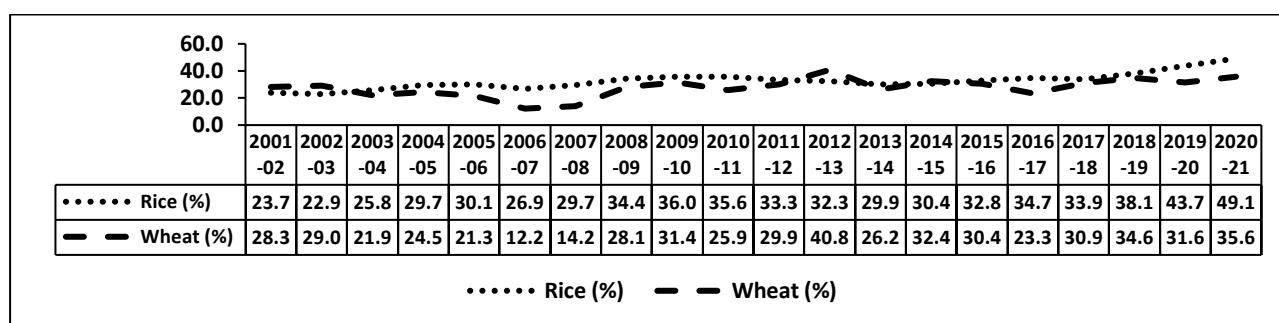
Sources: MoAFW (2019c, 2020).

Therefore, success of eNAM in increasing the farmers’ incomes would, to a large extent, depend on participation of small and marginal farmers in trading on the online platform. Given that eNAM is currently being implemented in 1,000 regulated wholesale markets already, and 1,000 more such markets to be integrated soon with the online platform (MoF 2021), participation of small and marginal farmers can be facilitated by setting up collection centres near farms linked to the wholesale markets and thereby reducing their transaction costs. Currently, the cost of transporting their limited marketable surplus over long distances often compels the small and marginal farmers to sell their produce to village aggregators who collect the produce from their farms and take it to the distant regulated markets. This arrangement denies the small and marginal farmers from getting remunerative prices for their produce.

(c) Linking public procurement

More than 50% of the marketed surplus of rice and wheat is procured by central and State procurement agencies for distributing foodgrains at subsidised rates under welfare schemes and for maintaining buffer stocks to meet any exigencies (Gulati and Saini 2021). As far as procurement to production ratio is concerned, based on GoI’s production and procurement figures, it is estimated that between 2001-02 and 2020-21, on an average, 33.2% of the total production of rice and 28.2% of the total production of wheat have been procured annually by public procurement agencies. Figure 2 gives the annual procurement to production ratio for rice and wheat between 2001-02 and 2020-21. It is clear that there has been a higher degree of fluctuation in the procurement to total production ratio in the case of wheat as compared to rice.

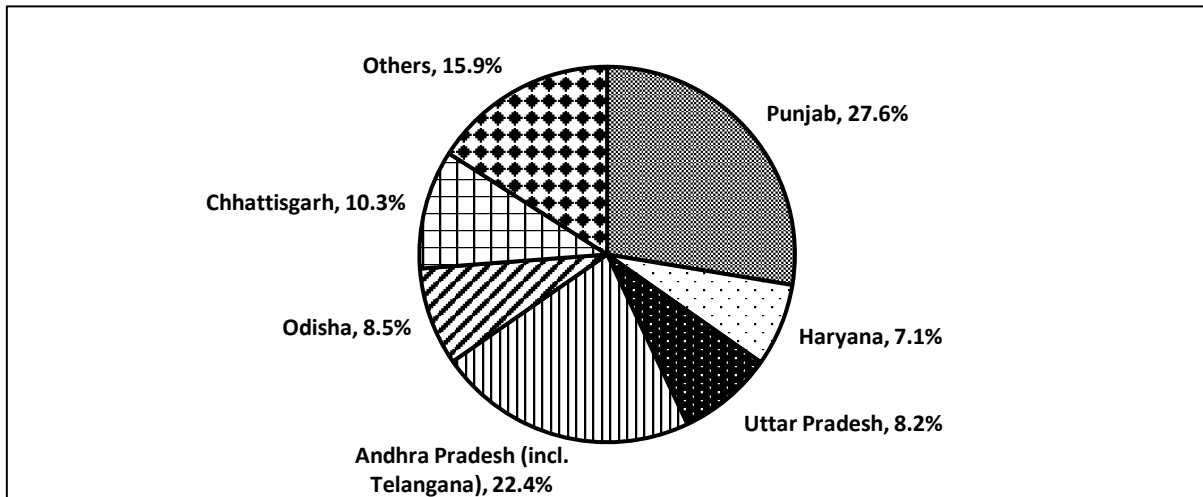
Figure 2: Procurement to Production Ratio for Rice and Wheat (2001-02 to 2020-21) (%)



Sources: MoA (2010, 2012); MoAFW (2017b, 2018, 2021b); MoCAFPD (2020, 2021).

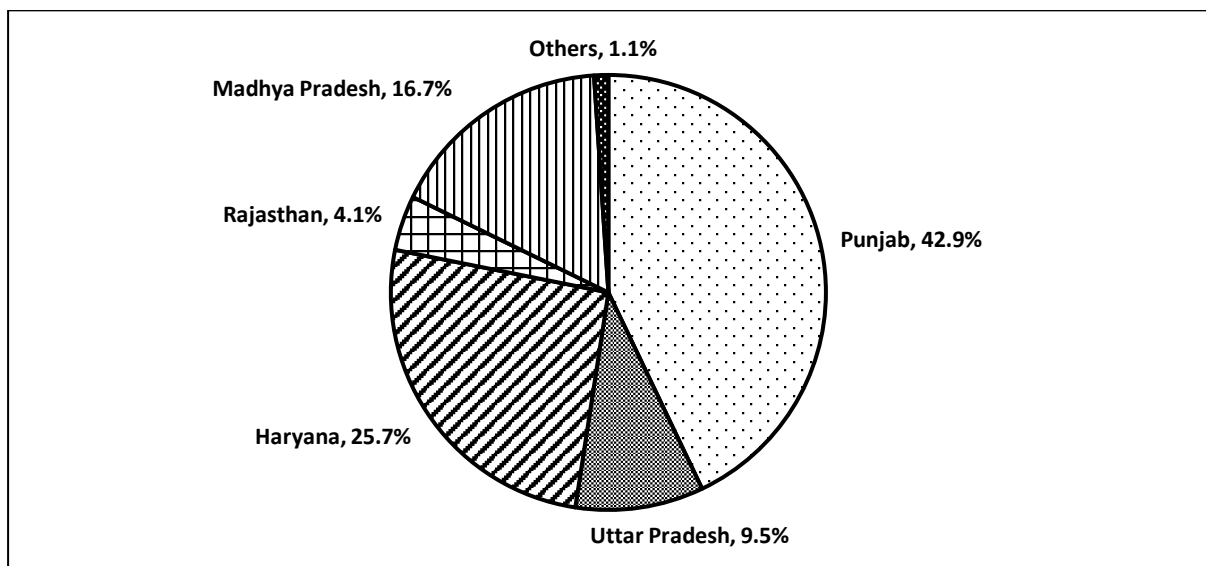
Further, most of the procurement is concentrated in only a few States. Figures 3 and 4 show that between 2001-02 and 2020-21, about 60% of rice procurement has been from Punjab, Andhra Pradesh (incl. Telangana), and Chhattisgarh, while 85% of wheat procurement has been from Punjab, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh alone. This concentrated procurement is highly inefficient as it adds to the costs of distribution to far away States / UTs.

Figure 3: State-wise Share in Procurement of Rice (2001-02 to 2020-21) (%)



Sources: MoA (2010, 2012); MoAFW (2017b, 2018, 2021b); MoCAFPD (2020, 2021).

Figure 4: State-wise Share in Procurement of Wheat (2001-02 to 2020-21) (%)



Sources: MoA (2010, 2012); MoAFW (2017b, 2018, 2021b); MoCAFPD (2020, 2021).

The online platform presents a unique opportunity to expand the procurement of foodgrains by public agencies to new markets. In order to promote the acceptability of eNAM, it is imperative that Food Corporation of India (FCI) and other State procurement agencies start using the eNAM platform for their procurement operations. This would not only help in developing the market for eNAM, but would also help these agencies bring down their incidental costs and at the same time ensure transparent and efficient price discovery.

(d) Strengthening Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)

FPOs can be looked at as an important institutional mechanism to organise small and marginal farmers. Their services can be utilised to augment land sizes through consolidation of contiguous plots of land. In order to strengthen such FPOs, issues such as working capital, infrastructure and marketing have to be addressed. The FPOs have to be linked to technical service providers, input companies, retailers, and marketing and processing companies. (Rangarajan and Dev 2021).

Towards this, GoI has launched the “Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Producer Organisation (FPOs)” under which FPOs formed and promoted with participation of farmers including small and marginal farmers will get various facilities such as improved technology, better input, credit and more markets to produce better quality crops (Lok Sabha 2021b).

Parallely, encouraging FPOs to trade on the eNAM platform can improve participation of the vast majority of the small and marginal farmers. As a step towards promoting this, MoAFW has introduced an FPO trading module in eNAM whereby FPOs can trade their produce from their collection centres without bringing the produce to APMCs (MoAFW 2020d). As of February 2022, 2,083 FPOs are registered on the eNAM platform (eNAM 2022).

CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

Since agriculture is a State subject, strong political support and active participation of States is crucial for successful implementation of eNAM. Fearing a decline in their revenues, traders and commission agents in many States are resisting the implementation of eNAM. In order to build a truly integrated national market, respective State Governments will have to build

consensus and allay the fears of these important stakeholders, and convince them to participate in eNAM. Further, State Governments can

With a vast majority of farmers belonging to the small and marginal category, their participation in eNAM is of paramount importance for the success of the online platform. There is a need for increasing their participation through various farmer collectives – self-help groups (SHGs), co-operatives and FPOs. These collectives have the potential to mobilise farmers and give greater bargaining powers to the member farmers (Ganguly 2021). In this regard, encouraging FPOs to organise stakeholder education programmes for creating awareness of the benefits of eNAM can improve the participation of small and marginal farmers.

Linking of warehouses and RPMs (post upgradation to GrAMs) with the eNAM portal can go a long way towards enhancing the scale and efficiency of market operations. In this regard, the warehouse-based trading module has been introduced in eNAM that enables farmers to sell their produce from Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority registered warehouses (notified as deemed markets) based on the electronic Negotiable Warehouse Receipt (MoAFW 2020d, 2020e). Further, linking of the upgraded RPMs (GrAMs) with the eNAM portal will provide farmers, especially those belonging to the small and marginal category, the additional scope of selling their produce directly to traders without having to go to the APMC markets, thereby reducing their transaction costs (MoF 2018).

To facilitate inter-mandi and inter-State trade, an enhanced version of logistic module has been introduced in eNAM whereby large transport logistic aggregator platforms have been onboarded. This would help traders to avail trackable transport facilities for transporting the farm produce from mandis to other locations (MoAFW 2020d, 2020e).

eNAM can truly prove to be a game changer for the entire agriculture sector provided it is implemented in letter and spirit with the States / UTs bringing about all the desired reforms in agricultural marketing. State Governments have to play a pivotal role in the implementation of the various schemes launched by the GoI for improvements in agricultural infrastructure, particularly post-harvest infrastructure. They themselves can proactively

encourage private players to participate in the development of back-end infrastructure such as storage facilities. This would lead to improvement in competitiveness and efficiency in agricultural markets ultimately resulting in better price realisation for the producers and lesser price differential between consumers and producers.

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Journal of Management & Public Policy

Vol. 13, No. 1, Dec 2021, Pp. 20-34

ISSN 0976-0148 (Online) 0976-013X (Print)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47914/jmpp.2021.v13i1.002>

A Comparative Study of Women's Participation through MGNREGA Programme in India's North-eastern States of Assam and Meghalaya

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ABSTRACT

This research paper highlights women's participation, various policies, and strategies in MGNREGA's implementation. Gender is an indispensable push factor, and women have always played a critical role in growth and development. The Indian government pursued several initiatives to empower women, and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) is one of them –indeed, a women-friendly enactment because of the provisions it incorporates for the females. Along with providing social security, rural employment, and eradicating poverty, the scheme has played a significant role in rural women's upliftment. The paper is based on secondary data. The qualitative-quantitative mixed-model method is used and explores women's participation in India's North-eastern states through the programme. It analyses the implementation of MGNREGS with a comparative view of Assam and Meghalaya. The study also highlights the current status in Assam, which, despite having the highest number of job cardholders, failed to achieve the desired level of outcomes in the programme and also lagged in women participation. The paper offers inputs for better outcomes in Meghalaya and also suggests measures to overcome the lacunas of the scheme in Assam.

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KEYWORDS: Women's participation, MGNREGA, Empowerment, North-East, Efficiency, India

INTRODUCTION

In the growth and development of a nation like India, gender is an indispensable push factor. Women's role is considered passive, and women have played a significant role in the growth and development since the dawn of humankind. Though they constitute half a portion of the Indian population, women have been facing inequalities and vulnerability in all spheres of their lives. To uplift rural women's lives and enable them to live a decent life, India's Government took steps, and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is one of the women-friendly programmes.

An employment guarantee programme addresses the factors acting as impediments for equality for women in India's context. Along with providing social security, eliminating poverty from the grassroots level, and creating a productive asset, and employment guarantee programme can reduce gender inequalities in numerous ways. MGNREGA has been playing a significant role in bringing significant changes in the lives of women. MGNREGA is empowering women economically and helping them in becoming independent and gain self-esteem (Ramesh & Kumar, 2009). MGNREGS has increased female worker participation in many Indian states like Kerala and Karnataka. However, MGNREGA has not produced a minimum of 33 per cent women participation, the desired benchmark set in all states (Nidhi, 2011).

The struggle for an employment guaranteed mechanism led to a landmark enactment of the "Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act" (MGNREGA) in the Indian parliament. Indian government notified the programme on September 7, 2005, in 200 rural districts in its first phase of implementation, which took effect from February 2, 2006. It extended to include an additional 130 rural districts in 2007-08. The remaining districts were included with effect from April 1, 2008, with a mandate to provide the rural household's livelihood security. In a financial year, every household where adult member volunteers do unskilled manual work is guaranteed 100 days of wage employment. It is a right-based and demand-driven employment programme making it peculiar from the rest other employment

schemes. Besides social inclusion and employment generation, the programme is designed in such a way to help in bridging gender equality and also the development of women. Women related provisions are-

- 1) At least one-third of the beneficiaries shall be women (NREGA, 2005, Schedule II, 6).
- 2) If the number of children under six years of age accompanying women employed at some site is five or more, there is a way to depute one of these women working to take care of the children. (NREGA, 2005, Schedule II, 28).
- 3) No discrimination is permitted solely on the grounds of gender, as maintained by the terms of the Act of Equal Remuneration, 1976 (25 of 1976) (NREGA, 2005, Schedule II, 34).
- 4) This scheme also allows women to plan and implement MGNREGA as Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat members. Women represent not fewer than one-third of the overall number of non-official members of the Central Council (NREGA 2005, Part II, and Sec-3i).

Some other provisions include working within a radius of five kilometres from the house, absence of contractor, flexibility in choosing periods and months of employment made are not solely for men, but those are productive for the women in rural areas (NREGA, 2005). MGNREGA has a positive impact on the employment pattern of women. Women were benefited both at the individual level and community as a whole. Women are empowered in economic terms because they can earn independently, spend some money on their own needs, contribute to family expenditure. The benefits women gained as a community can be understood by the increased presence in the Gram Sabha, an increasing number of women speaking out in the meetings, increasing interaction capacity (Das & Singh, 2013).

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN MGNREGA ACROSS THE NORTHEASTERN STATES OF INDIA

The implementation of MGNREGA in almost every state of India is different. Its result is different across states because of the various state governments' different strategies in implementation. A massive amount of budget is allocated to MGNREGA to enhance rural people's lives, especially women. The performance of MGNREGA in North-eastern seven-sister states has had a deleterious effect in the states of Sikkim, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Manipur. While the states of Assam, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh have not generated 33

per cent of women participation, a benchmark set by the government (Reddy, 2014). India's government has been pursuing and hoping to achieve the scheme's objective by uplifting the rural population's condition. It is evident from the tremendous allocation of budget. The government is trying to develop and enhance rural mass lives and empower them, especially women. Table 1 below highlights the employment scenario of MGNREGA in the region.

Table 1: Employment Status of MGNREGS as on 25-08-2020

States	Total No. of Active Job Card (in Lakh)	Total households worked (in Lakh)	Households provided 100 days of employment
Arunachal Pradesh	2.54	2.03	46
Assam	53.1	15.68	11,297
Manipur	5.77	5.16	3
Meghalaya	6.1	4.15	86,473
Mizoram	2.02	1.89	56,528
Nagaland	4.4	4.18	182
Sikkim	0.85	0.68	8,401
Tripura	6.38	5.77	1,16,090

Source: NREGA programme webpage (<https://nrega.nic.in/>)

The official data in table no.1 shows that among eight states, in Assam highest job card has been issued so far, but the performance of Assam is not on par compared to other states like Tripura, Sikkim, Meghalaya and others. Upliftment, development, and women's empowerment have always been a priority for India's Government for a long. The government has promulgated various schemes for women and made various constitution provisions for women's empowerment, and MGNREGA is not an exception. The scheme has also made various provisions for women empowerment. Table no. 2 below highlights women's participation in MGNREGA among the Northeast Indian states during 2018-19.

Table 2: Women participation (%) in Northeast India during 2018-19

States	Women Participation (%)
1.Arunachal Pradesh	38.69
2. Assam	41.8
3.Manipur	47.41
4. Meghalaya	50.15
5. Mizoram	37.95
6. Nagaland	31.56
7. Sikkim	50.93
8. Tripura	46.19

Source: Gol, Ministry of Rural Development Website. (<https://rural.nic.in/>)

The official MGNREGA data in table no.2 shows that the state of Meghalaya and Sikkim are at the top in women participation amongst the North-eastern states, while the performance of Nagaland is not good enough as it has not achieved 33 per cent of women participation, a benchmark set by Government of India (2014). The government is making a rigorous effort to make the programme efficient and effective and adopt measures to overcome the hurdles and hindrances in its successful implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION OF MGNREGS IN THE STATE OF ASSAM

Alike in other parts of India, the programme implemented in Assam in three phases. The first phase of MGNREGA introduced in seven districts of Assam in 2006-07. The second phase covered six districts in 2007-08, and the rest districts were covered by 2008-09. The state has 32 districts (which was earlier 27, 5 districts created in 2015), 239 blocks and 2673 Gram Panchayats. At present, in Assam alone, 51.95 lakh job cards have been issued, out of which 30.97 lakh job cards are active. The total number of workers is 88.67 lakh, of which 47.29 lakh are active (<https://nrega.nic.in/>).

Hazarika found in his study that Gender empowerment of the scheme in Morigaon and Bongaigaon districts of Assam reflects that almost 70 to 80 per cent of workers taken for the study has had meaningful income other than unpaid family work during the pre-MGNREGA.

A significant portion of the worker has felt that they have a better position to fulfill their own needs and requirement without looking at others (Hazarika, 2009).

MGNREGA has benefitted women worker significantly. However, the implementation process has numerous hurdles which need to be tackled soon. (K. Borah & R. Bordoloi, 2014) The performance of MGNREGA is poor in Assam. In Assam, MGNREGA, if appropriately implemented, can improve the socio-economic condition. After independence, a significant part of the state has been suffering from lack of infrastructure, inadequate health facilities and acute poverty (Saikia, 2017).

MGNREGA intends to provide guaranteed wage employment and rural people's development, but Assam has hardly achieved the goals. Amongst all household that got job cards, only one third has avail 100 days of work. In 2012-13, the Ministry of Rural Development published a report on the performance and implementation of MGNREGA in all states. According to the report, the performance of Assam was abysmally low, which is quite visible in the report. In the financial year 2012-13, the total number of job cards holders were 39,49,587, out of which only 12,10,472 households got work. Among these job cardholders, only 9,780 job cardholders got 100 days' work, 3,21,300 household got less than ten days work, and 6,90,950 households had 15 days' work (Economic Survey of Assam, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15).

Table 3: Women participation in MGNREGA in Assam

Financial Year	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Women participation (%)	36.49	38.5	41.08	41.77

Source: GoI, Ministry of Rural Development. (<https://rural.nic.in/>)

The MGNREGA data in table no. 3 reflects the increasing women participation in Assam but slower. From 36.49 per cent in 2016-17 to 41.77 per cent in 2019-2020. The participation of women in Assam is less than in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and the other Indian States. Even the Northeastern States- Sikkim, Meghalaya, Tripura reflect better women participation in

the programme. The programme's performance is not satisfactory, and the state has not been able to successfully implement the programme even though the state has the highest job cardholders amongst the Northeastern states of India.

Many factors are responsible for the lower and less participation of women in Assam. The reasons are listed below:

- 1) **Lack of awareness:** The village workforce for whom the programme intended to cater are not aware of the programme. There is a shortage of awareness in rural areas of Assam regarding the scheme. The women are not aware of the provisions that are given to them by the Act.
- 2) **Absence of child care facilities:** The scheme provides an arrangement for childcare facilities for women having children below five years of age. However, there is no child care facility at the work-site in Assam, which results in the low participation of women in MGNREGA.
- 3) **Lack of work-site facilities:** MGNREGA guideline lays down that the work-site need to well equipped with proper facilities like-safe drinking water, restroom, proper sanitation, change room, first-aid facilities. However, in Assam, most of these facilities are absent at the work-site. There are no monitoring facilities also.
- 4) **Delay in disbursing payment:** Payment of the workers cannot disburse within the stipulated time. There are corruption and delay in payment and lack a proper payment medium - bank or postal services.
- 5) **Underemployment:** Assam government is unable to employ most of its job cardholders. The works there are undertaken under MGNREGA are not even enough to reduce underemployment.
- 6) **Absence of Social Audit:** The MGNREGA provision of Social Audit by Gram Sabha on works is either not done or flawed, requiring auditing every six months. Unfortunately, most rural masses are not aware of Social Audit because of the absence of a proper medium like Village Employment Council.

IMPLEMENTATION OF MGNREGS IN THE STATE OF MEGHALAYA

In Meghalaya, the scheme was implemented and officially enforced in West Garo and South Garo Hills Districts on May 4, 2006. In three more Districts - Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills and Ri

bhoi the programme was implemented in 2007-08. Moreover, in the last phase, 2008-09, the programme was implemented in the rest of the districts (Sameeksha, 2013). The state has 11 Districts, 46 Blocks, 6332 Panchayats, and so far, 6.1 Lakh job cards have been issued, out of which 5.56 Lakh job cards are active (<https://nrega.nic.in/>).

The women's participation in Gram Sabha and social audit acts as an instrument of women's political empowerment. The Act has promoted the collective strength of women in various spheres of rural life. The most crucial impact of MGNREGA on women is that they came to know each other through their work and helped each other in several ways. (Hirway, 2011) Along with provisions given in the MGNREGA guideline, several legal enactments have come into effect, and the state government took several steps to implement the scheme successfully. The steps taken are as follows:

- The distribution of the wage to the beneficiaries has been made through the postal service and bank.
- In Meghalaya, the rate of 153 Indian rupees is a fixed ceiling for unskilled labour.
- For successful implementation of the programme, new institutions have been formed viz. Village Employment Council, Area Employment Council, Block employment Council and District Employment Council.
- A Register of Works must be maintained by every Village Employment Council or Area Employment Council for work that commencement letters are received for the financial year.
- Village Employment Council and Programme officer are made responsible for organising and executing Social Audit once in six months,
- For the effective implementation of the programme, Vigilance and monitoring councils have been established at different levels.

Table 3: Women participation in MGNREGA in Meghalaya

Financial year	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Women participation (%)	44.28	46.8	50.15	50.51

Source: NREGA programme webpage (<https://nrega.nic.in/>)

The official data of MGNREGA for Meghalaya shows an increasing trend in women participation from 44.28 per cent in 2016-17 to 50.51 per cent in 2019-20. The government of Meghalaya has been trying hard to achieve the objectives of the programme. The various machinery helping in the attainment of MGNREGA goals in Meghalaya are:

The District Employment Council (DEC): The governing body of DRDA has been notified as District Employment Council and invested with Zila Panchayat's responsibilities. It is the principal authority to planning and implementation of the scheme.

Block Employment Council (BEC): Block Selection Committee has been notified as Block Employment Council and is vested with Block Panchayat's responsibilities. It has the authority to approve and finalise a plan that consists of a consolidated shelf of the projects undertaken under the scheme, monitors the projects taken up in the block, and performs all responsibilities delegated to it by the District Employment and State Council.

Area Employment Council (AEC): It is organised at a cluster level comprising villages within a 2.5 km radius. There are one or more than one Village Employment Council under its jurisdiction. The council consists of three elected representatives from each Village Employment Council that are under its jurisdiction. The total number of members in the council should not exceed 20, and 30 per cent of the members must be women.

Village Employment Council (VEC): It is constituted in the village under 'paragraph 7A' of MGNREGS. It is vested with the power and functions of Gram Sabha as it is provided in the Act. The Village Employment Council has played a significant role in providing livelihood and employment to job card holders and women empowerment in Meghalaya. The scheme mainly aimed to empower women by becoming VEC and Area Employment Council members. The VEC is established at the village level and constituted by male and female of each household (Cornwall, 2010).

DISCUSSION

The above discussion about both the states - Meghalaya and Assam show that among the North-eastern states, Sikkim, Tripura, Meghalaya are doing well in MGNREGA. The scheme is

implemented efficiently and effectively in Meghalaya because of the better administrative system. The state has also achieved the benchmark of minimum one-third participation of women in the scheme as given in the provisions (Das & Singh, 2013). There is a wide gap between Meghalaya and Assam regarding women participation, though participation has now increased slowly in Assam women. The administrative set-up in Assam has failed to execute and implement the programme efficiently and cannot change the life of grass-root level masses.

SUGGESTIONS TO REDUCE LOOPHOLES

There are lacunas because of which Assam is not able to achieve the desired goal of the scheme. These are some measures that can reduce the loopholes:

- 1) There is a need to make people aware of the scheme and its provisions. For this purpose, the government should make an advertisement about the schemes in newspaper, Tv, Radio. Banners and Street plays have a role to play.
- 2) The government should provide work-site facilities like safe drinking water and restroom to increase the participation of people.
- 3) Child care facility must be made available for increasing women participation.
- 4) Payment of wages should be paid within a given time, and a record should be maintained properly.
- 5) A social audit should be done accurately, and there should be transparency and accountability.
- 6) To successfully implement the scheme and increase women participation, Assam's government should strengthen the Panchayat Raj System because it is linked directly with the grass-root level.
- 7) The Government of Assam must establish Village Employment Council, Area Employment Council like in Meghalaya for the effective execution of the scheme and for higher participation of women as these organisations keep check which leads to the achievement of the aim of the scheme and the development of the grass-root level of Indian democracy.

CONCLUSION

The Government of India has launched several employment programmes and rural development programmes after independence for rural life's upliftment. MGNREGS is the most extensive poverty alleviation programme globally, described as a "Stellar example of rural development" by the World Development Report, 2014. The programme is unique and acts as a ray of hope to rural households because of providing guaranteed employment to registered workers. The programme has brought revolutionary changes in many rural parts of the country, where it has executed efficiently and effectively. While in Assam, the scheme is facing impediments as a result of which it has become impossible for the state government to achieve the programme's objectives. The state government must take adequate steps in implementing the scheme to reduce poverty, generate employment, and develop rural masses' lives. Otherwise, the story of rural development and the implementation of MGNREGA remains only in pen and paper. Non-Governmental Organisations should also join hand with the government for holistic development; only then we can realise the dream of Developed India.

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Journal of Management & Public Policy

Vol. 13, No. 1, Dec 2021, Pp. 35-48

ISSN 0976-0148 (Online) 0976-013X (Print)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47914/jmpp.2021.v13i1.003>

Influence of Commercialism on the Contents of the Indian Media: An Enquiry

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ABSTRACT

No one will engage in a dispute that the media have to make profits for survival. Indian media are no exception in this regard. On one hand, it is expected that a media will be sustainable from the stand point of commerce and on the other, follow the path of the interest of commerce considering the profiteering motif only would be unsound and thoughtless for it. It indicates media's bypassing of the social responsibility and commitment to the society. The objectives of the owners of media are to run media as trade and exercise it for satisfying the interests of their other merchandizes and upholding the culture of spirit of trade and commerce. The aims and objectives of this Paper are to enquire about how commercialism has affected the contents of the media in India. The Paper has followed the Observational and Analytical Method for this enquiry. The misleading trend can be reversed by strengthening the institution of internal ombudsman, the internal mechanism of editorial freedom, formulating a code of conduct for journalists from within the profession and taking initiative to ensure that the guidelines of the Press Council of India are adhered to. Above all, journalists should always remember that media is a public utility service and they are unofficial public servants. Similarly, the fact that the primary objective of media is service and not profit should not be forgotten by the media management. While media should be economically viable, the

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profit motive should not blind owners and proprietors of the media to perform their role of the social accountability. Therefore, the success of a media-outlet is determined by a correct blending of economic interests, social commitments and professional integrity.

KEYWORDS: Influence, Commercialism, Contents, Indian, Media, Enquiry

INTRODUCTION

No one will engage in a dispute that media will be profitable for its survival. Besides, it has to reshape maintaining the balance with the advent of modern technicalities. Indian media are no exception in this regard. On one hand, it is expected that a media will be sustainable from the stand point of commerce and on the other, follow the path of the interest of commerce considering the profiteering motif only would be unsound and thoughtless for it. It indicates media's bypassing of the social responsibility and commitment to the society. Therefore, the success of a media-outlet is determined by a correct blending of economic interests, social commitments and professional integrity. The expenditure of setting up of a media outlet is increasing day by day. The media sector of the country witnesses the tough fight among various players. Besides, the ownership of the media is gradually confining within a few influential people. The objectives of the owners of media are to run media as trade and exercise it for satisfying the interests of their other merchandizes and upholding the culture of spirit of trade and commerce.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of this Paper are to enquire about how commercialism has affected the contents of the media in India.

METHODOLOGY

The Paper has followed the Observational and Analytical Method for this enquiry.

Research Questions:

The Paper has raised the following research questions for the study of this enquiry.

1. Which department regulates what will encash the newspaper as far as news is concerned?

2. What are the effects of the dependency of the private television news channels on advertising revenue?
3. Has a large section of media in India witnessed bypassing and depreciating of editorial obligations to sub serve the goals of advertisers and marketers?
4. Are the problems of common mass or of the downtrodden, marginalized people matters of serious concern at all for a corporate media?
5. Has a large section of the mainstream media in the country, directed absolutely by the commercial interests, forgetting the social commitment as its elementary role?
6. Has there been a near collapse of public confidence in certain sectors of the media in the country which pursues commercial values? Have market forces influenced the trustworthiness of the media and done tremendous loss?

MEDIA ESPECIALLY NEWSPAPERS IN INDIA IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE ERA

In pre-independence era, the country witnessed two types of newspapers, journals and magazines. One kind was the supporter of foreign rule and the other was the advocators of the needs and aspirations of the people of the country. Naturally, this section of the newspapers pointed out injustice and oppression faced by the countrymen during the colonial and imperial rule. Draconian laws and other repressive measures were put in action to muzzle the voice of the newspapers. The owners, publishers, editors of the anti-colonial, anti-imperialist press were actively involved in the freedom movement of the country in several ways. Though the hindrances created by administration and technological limitations made the number of copies published or the number of newspapers limited but the effect of this nationalist press was profound, encouraging and inspirational.

MEDIA IN INDIA IN POST-INDEPENDENCE ERA

The initial years after attaining freedom, the press in India exhibited its promise to authenticity and transparency. The ownership of some newspapers transferred from the founders and editors-publishers to commercial concerns during the early years of post-independence. During those days, the editorial policies were determined by the editors. That was the time of the great editors, who dedicated themselves in setting the standards of impartiality and freedom. Objectivity and liberty were an undivided part of the print media.

As time passes, the burgeoning industry of advertising established its firm footing gradually. It poured into newspapers and magazines hefty amount of money. Today, the scenario has changed completely. Nowadays, some newspapers can circulate their copies even without cost. During the era of pre-independence, the chief revenue of the newspaper came from its sale but now arises from advertising and its amount reaches even crores of rupees daily.

A section of Critics is of opinion that marketing division is getting more priority than the editorial department as far as a section of the press is concerned. It has been observed that in some newspapers, the marketing department regulates and tells the last word about the selling of a newspaper in terms of news and how it will implement it.

Initially Television in India was under Government control but gradually it has transferred into private sectors. An exponential growth has been observed as far as the different language news channels are concerned. Private television news channels are not merely news providers. These are entirely dependent on advertising revenue. Advertisers have invested hefty amount of money into those channels based on the high T.R.P. rating. Critics have advocated that this shows dual effects. On the one hand, some news channels have bypassed the truth and on the other hand, others have taken shelter to sensationalism.

Change in the nature of ownership is a characteristic feature of Indian media in post-independence era. A television news channel or a newspaper is now viewed as a profit-making business where advertising ensures the profitability. The number of those newspapers or television news channels which view the 'packaging of news' as an essential ingredient to increase more profit appears as growing gradually. Though profit appears as a motive in the media sector, it should not be the sole criterion as far as the news and views are concerned before the nation. The rising levels of several types of content in the print and audio-visual media are a matter of concern.¹

Gandhiji, a great journalist, considered journalism as a way to serve the people. According to him, the sole aim of journalism should be service. There is widespread concern nowadays over the rising impact of market forces on media. Besides, allegations have arisen that journalism has appeared no longer a social service. In this perspective, Gandhiji's observation is significant. According to him, it is often seen that newspapers publish any matter just to fill

up the space. Most newspapers have their eyes on profits...some western newspapers are so full of rubbish that it will be a guilt even to come in contact with them.²

MEDIA'S FOCUS FROM REAL ISSUES TO NON-ISSUES

Efforts are being made to present news with a blend of entertainment and to hunt for 'Breaking News' and ratings have pull down credibility. Ultimately serious journalism faces trouble. In fact, one can see early signs of this when news gets sensational. Even the responsible and staid mainstream newspapers, regarded as one of the best across the globe, are showing signs of succumbing to this temptation.

The country has witnessed that the Kareena-Saif or the Rekha-Jaya Bachchan stories have been better headline news. Why do the media not instead produce documentaries on the effects of water shortage in the country, e-waste, child labour, oppression of women etc. that will make us a better civil society? What do the audiences view on television channels nowadays? They exhibit film stars, pop music, disco and fashion parades (often with scantily clad young women) or astrology ranging from one channel to another. Is it not an inhumane mockery and insult to the downtrodden, poor people of the country that so much time and money are being spent on these useless things? A large section of media of the country today is not performing their role with responsibility and not serving the general public in their struggle against impoverishment, unemployment and other social evils. What will be the true role of the media? This is an issue of paramount significance to Indian democracy at present. Some television channels show celebrity journalism through the whole day round the clock.

The Roman Emperors used to say if you cannot give the people bread, give them circus. In a nutshell, this is the approach of a section of media. What is important is not the price hike of the daily essential commodities or unemployment or impoverishment or lack of infrastructure of housing in the country or price hike of life saving medicines. What is significant is whether one team has beaten another in T-20 Cricket or whether a batsman has scored a century. Is this not sheer escapism? The role of the media in this today must be to help the people in their struggle against impoverishment, unemployment and other social evils and to build the country a modern, powerful and industrially developed realm.

The media have a social accountability also to monitor that the news being disseminated is true and satisfies the interest of the common mass. The media should maintain a safe distance from any sort of sensationalisation and yellow journalism. Only then media will earn the respect of the audience and will perform the proper role in a democracy. Allegations have been raised that a large section of media often upheld non-issues bypassing the real issues. Instead of focusing on these real issues, the media often try to arrest the attention of the people towards non-issues. For example, if the wife of a film actor or an actress has become pregnant, a section of media appears as curious whether she will give birth to a single child or to twins and so on. Are these the real issues at all?

Allegations have also been raised that a section of Indian media considers only about its T.R.P ratings and business. They are catering tickling entertainment in the name of covering news. Media claim special privileges time to time. In the democracy of India, it appears as the fourth pillar. Obviously the country expects some obligations and commitment from the media. But the sad picture and the bitter reality are that the social conscience and the commitment for the sake of public interest have been replaced by absolute commercialization of a considerable section of the media especially over the last two decades. For example, when Rekha took oath in the Rajya Sabha, the cameras of various television channels kept focusing on Jaya Bachchan's facial expressions. Likewise went the intros of news stories on the first pages of majority of the national dailies of the following day. Even the copies have been written and pad up with the shameless gossip about Amitabh Bachchan and Rekha to make the stories spicier and juicier. Is it an instance of social accountability of media which is expected from the fourth estate in this vast developing country? No doubt, Rekha's swearing-in makes news. But is this the proper way to cover the event?

Earlier, a large section of the media arrested the attention of its audience by providing the story of US talk-show host Oprah Winfrey. The entire Sunny Leone episode was hyped up. The story of birth of Betty B enjoyed similar hype. Are any of these events' real issues at all? According to the Critics, the real issues of the country are crisis in Indian agriculture, problem and crisis in public health and education system etc. A section of Critics is of opinion that while the mothers dying at childbirth and the children facing death at their infants in the country, a

large section of media has made the common people engaged in the non-issues, viewing them the 'Silsilas' of the Rajya Sabha.

In several occasions, a section of Indian media just parrots the opinions of the West. In many cases, a section of the Indian media blindly imitates their Western counter part. It is time for that section of the media to stop treating the common people of the country as idiots who can be fed anything trash. It is the time that the media should make the common mass more aware about the country, its democratic ethos and system and the surrounding world by providing the people the news and information that really matters.

NEGATIVE TRENDS

The negative trends of sensationalism, tabloidization, trivialization, celebrity-worship and so forth are dominant in the large section of Indian news media. Raising voices in favour of freedom without accepting obligations and social accountability would weaken the position of the media in society.³ The country witnesses war regarding price and noxious trend of the market aimed at increasing gradually the share of market and destroying the competition in the press sector. Besides, allegations have raised about the tendencies of manipulation of news, special interest-oriented analysis and information; dominance of advertising and marketing over editorial functions and an increasing trend to sensationalize, and trivialize. Trend of hyper-commercialization tackling the news and the print and electronic media more or less like any other commodity or 'product' is being noticed.⁴

JOURNALISM: A GREAT MISSION

The media's endeavours will have a positive impact on the formulation of policy for the rural economic sector and on its proper application. Besides, informing people about the various schemes and policies of the Government Journalists, especially those with the vernacular media, perform a vital role in the development of the downtrodden and backward sections and in showcasing the issues and crisis of rural India. A responsible and responsive media have a commitment to create awareness amongst the people by catering news and information. This is a necessity for the smooth functioning of a democratic structure and for the cause of good governance. The Journalists, Correspondents, Reporters should participate

in this process with utmost care and sincerity by means of their coverage and factual reporting.

Today's media, especially the mainstream uphold the issues of the urban life and the lifestyles of the exuberant and wealthy. The reflection of inclination towards urbanity is noticed in various ways ranging from print to audio-visual media. For such a corporate driven market-controlled media, the problems, issues and the crisis of the common people or of the downtrodden are not matters of serious concern at all. It is noticed that the Marketing Managers decide the policy of many media today instead of the Editors. It is a matter of deep concern. Only the silver line appears when the sensitive and committed journalists work relentlessly for the sake of public interest. Mr. P. Sainath, the Rural Affairs Editor of 'The Hindu', commented that leading media in this country should have a Rural Affairs section covering the problems faced by the unconsidered people residing in those areas.

NEED FOR CULTURAL STRUGGLE

India as a country needs to be industrialized and progressive. Then the country can earn its due respect across the globe. To achieve this aim and objective, the patriotic, modern-minded intelligentsia of the country should fight a powerful cultural struggle. This cultural struggle should be fought against the feudal and backward ideas such as casteism and communalism. Modern, progressive, scientific ideas should be generated among the common people. Media have a significant role in this struggle. But are they sincere about discharging their duties?⁵

A section of the Critics is of opinion that there is hardly a relationship between the media and the mass reality today in the country. The Rural Affairs Editor of 'The Hindu' and Magsaysay Award Winner Journalist P. Sainath delivered a Lecture in the Speaker's Lecture Series in Parliament on 6th September, 2007. In his address, he commented that rural India where more than 70 per cent of the people living is in the midst of the worst agrarian crisis in four decades and this is the reality in the country. Predacious commercialization of the rural area and transfer of all human values to exchange values have created a severe crisis showing damage or destruction of millions of livelihoods. As a consequence, lakhs of peasants have committed suicide and millions of people have compelled to migrate from the rural areas to urban for searching of jobs which are not available there. This hapless and helpless people's status lie neither 'worker' nor 'farmer'. A majority of them have turned as domestic laborers

even criminals. By means of corporate farming, farming is taken out from the hands of peasants and put in the hands of corporates. This process is not done through guns, tanks, bulldozers and lathis rather fixing the high cost of raw materials like seed, fertilizer, power and uneconomical prices making farming unviable for the millions of small peasants, marginal farmers. It is a stark reality that in the list of dollar billionaires India's ranking is fourth but the same country appears 126th position as far as human development indices are concerned. National Sample Survey says that Rs.503 is the average monthly per capita expenditure of an Indian farm household. Out of that amount, 55 per cent is spent on food, 18 per cent on fuel, clothing and footwear leaving little for education or health.⁶

MASS MEDIA AND MASS REALITY

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) shows in one of its Report that from 1995-97 to 1999-2001, several millions of hunger-bit people were added from India than the remaining world taken collectively. An average rural based family now consumes noticeably less than what it was consuming previously. Compulsion has doubled over the past decade. The cost of cultivation has increased many times and income from farming has collapsed leading to peasant's suicides. The irony is while 512 accredited Journalists covered the 'Lakme India Fashion Week', only six Journalists were available to cover the suicides in Vidharbha. The models were displaying cotton garments in that Fashion Show where the men and women who grew the cotton were killing themselves an hour away by flight from Nagpur. No one covered that story except one or two local Journalists.⁷

Is this a proper and responsible way for the media to perform its due duty? Can the media turn a Nelson's eye to the stark economic realities that majority of the people of the country face and concentrate on the fashion show where all is glamour and show biz? Allegations have surfaced that are not the considerable section of Indian media appearing like Queen Marie Antoinette who, when told that the people did not have bread, said they could eat cake? No doubt, sometimes the media have arrested the attention of the audiences towards peasant's suicides in different states, the unnatural price hike of essential commodities and so on. But such coverage constitutes merely 5 to 10 per cent of the total coverage. The lion's share of coverage goes to cricket, film stars, pop music, fashion parades, astrology and so on. Is this

not actually trying to divert the attention of the common mass from the real issues to non-issues?⁸

OBSERVATION AND FINDINGS

The dual impact of cost and commercial competition has led to an undesirable development i.e. national and international monopoly over the media which poses a serious threat to the proper performance and smooth functioning of journalism. Critics argue that since a large section of the mainstream media in India are dominated by a profiteering motive sidelining all other parameters, instead of the Editors and the Journalists, the Business Managers have the right to say the last word. The media are considered nowadays as a saleable commodity like any other and the same commercial practices and values are practised to capture the market. The importance and stress are on design and packaging, sensational headlines and slugs, obscenity, page 3 journalism, celeb- journalism and highlighting non-issues. Allegations have risen that in the process, the media forget its role as a social service institution and its social responsibility. It has thus become lie in the grip of the proprietors, advertisers and the lobbying interests ranging from economic to foreign interests, gradually depreciating the editorial section and its role. Unfortunately, in India today, a large portion of the mainstream media is directed purely on commercial lines and business ethos forgetting that service to the society becomes its primary aim.

In fact, media is a strange business. It is a business whose chief employees, journalists, reporters and correspondents are invested in the notion that their business is not business at all. Does journalism mean mere writing copies, subbing a story, writing a cue and dispatch or piece to camera? No. In fact, the journalists answer to a far higher and loftier calling. Mr. Donald Graham wrote an op-ed in 'Washington Post' warning that Wall Street's single-minded focus on maximizing profits will kill journalism. It was an astonishing piece, considering that Mr. Graham is a businessman himself, and presumably is as interested in profits as any other businessman. But for long years, his family, the Sulzbergers and the Bancrofts all saw their newspapers more as public trusts than business, and this vision provided the quality press with security.⁹

Here, it can be referred back relevantly some of the observations and recommendations of the Second Press Commission (P. 145-146):

1. The profession of journalism is essentially a public trust. "The journalist who betrays his trust is more blameworthy than a dishonest tradesman. Journalism, as the basis of the 'newspaper industry' holds a special position because its raw material is really the public mind and it trades chiefly in moral values."
2. "The newspaper industry in the big business hands becomes involuntarily the cultural arm of other business and industries, and takes a vested interest in maintaining the existing socio-economic system. The newspapers controlled by them may be selective in their presentation of news and views in return for benefits conferred in respect of their business interests..."¹⁰

Without the readers, listeners and viewers the media have no existence. It is, therefore, the needs and interest of the audience's susceptibilities and sensitivities, which have to be catered to by the media. Those who practise commercial norms and ethics cannot claim moral authority to discipline others. The media have therefore, first to decide whether it exists to exercise the right of free speech and expression or of trade and business. To equate the media business with other business, merely because some profits are necessary to run it, is highly improper and goes against the very aims and objectives of the media.

N. Ram, the former Editor-in-Chief, 'The Hindu', pronounced an echoed note of caution in a presentation on "Media Outlook 2011" at a Plenary Session of the Conclave on "Opportunity India" held in Singapore in 2007. Addressing the session exhibiting the country's outlook through the prism of media, Mr. Ram said that the news media in India cannot afford to be complacent, because core values have faced already pressure from the tendency to crease journalism into Entertainment and Media (E & M). It is happening on every media platform, and the pressure is going to enhance. He remarked that considering the trends and pressures on journalism from other factors like hyper-commercialization, delightedness becomes the last thing our press and television journalists need. He also said that the future of Indian journalism will certainly be compromised if it agrees silently the market-driven strategy or if it were to be crease into E & M. In the present context of the news media of the country especially in this complex milieu, he commented that even if it seems, at times, that

journalism, as we have known it, is riding into the sunset, it is our noble professional and social responsibility to protect and maintain its elements. It is essential to preserve the core values and above all the soul of journalism in the country.¹¹

It is also observed that advertisements occupy greater space and time than the news content in the newspapers, magazines, radio and television news channels. The Second Press Commission had a recommendation of quantum of space to be occupied by advertisements of 40%, 50% and 60% of the total space of the big, medium and small newspapers respectively. A large section of the leading metropolitan newspapers, radio and television channels print, broadcast and telecast news on the personal affair of a Hindi film actor or actress, fashion parade, food at costly restaurants, cafeterias and lavish hotels and so on. All it is done for increase of the circulation of the newspapers and TRP rating of the television news channels and that is why endeavors are made to present the media palatable or attractive. Allegations have arisen that a large section of the mainstream media does not concentrate on the other alternative approach of increasing circulation figures and TRP rating through presenting good coverage about substantive content and focusing on the problems of the society like explosion of population, unemployment, deforestation, facility of safe and pure drinking water, addiction of drug, trafficking, illiteracy etc.

The media frame collectively a tasted and successful formula for increasing circulation, listenership and viewership stressing on crime, gossip stories, sex and scandal with boldface headlines, scoops and exclusives. They succumb to sensationalism for their commercial motive. Addressing the National Press Day Function organized by the Press Council of India at New Delhi in 2007, former Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee lamented the manner in which market forces had come to influence the media urging the media houses to introspect. As for television, the former Speaker said that the fierce competition for viewership and advertising was making some channels give up all scruples. He expressed alarm at the growing number of media houses which consider the 'packaging of news' as an indispensable ingredient and essential requirement to earn more money.¹²

There are many media ranging from print to electronic which for the objective of enhancing their advertising revenue accept confusing, detrimental and unethical advertisements of

cigarettes, beverages, astrology and astrologers etc. Faked and feigned advertisements often confuse the audience in the jacket of news items. They openly praise certain products and services providing them the credibility and authenticity of the media. Such biased treatment of certain products without proper experimentation, analysis and evaluation of the other competing products is unethical. A section of Critics is of opinion that several types of news are sowed for monetary or other motives. Every business house worth its name owns directly or indirectly one or more media units not only to make profit but also to promote its other business interest. This has also led to the emergence of the media barons and multi-media barons, both national and multinational. National and international monopolies in the media business are developing at an accelerating pace.

Critics are of opinion that it is because commercial values are being pursued by the media that there has been a near collapse of public confidence in certain sectors of the media in the country. The fame, credibility and trustworthiness of the media lie in its presentation of true and correct information. Sadly, a section of the media often forgets its elementary duty. Market forces have affected the authenticity of the media and have done considerable harm. Modern journalism backed by corporate sector veers more towards sensationalism and shows less respect for privacy than print media once did. A considerable section of the Critics argues that news items about social issues have gradually vanished from the mainstream media. They are of opinion that the Journalists have to oblige to re-examine their role in this noble profession which is a mission for building a healthy and egalitarian society.

CONCLUSION

The misleading trend can be reversed by strengthening the institution of internal ombudsman, the internal mechanism of editorial freedom, formulating a code of conduct for journalists from within the profession and taking initiative to ensure that the guidelines of the Press Council of India are adhered to. Above all, the journalists should ensure that they work with their conscience intact and are not swayed away by the enticements that come their way. They should always remember that media is a public utility service and journalists are unofficial public servants. These are the very rudimentary and fundamentals of the profession which should always be borne in mind, by them. Similarly, the fact that the primary objective of media is service and not profit should not be forgotten by the media management. While

media should be economically viable, the profit motive should not blind owners and proprietors of the media to the social responsibility of the media. It is essential necessary for all the stakeholders ranging from newspapers to television channels to internet news providers to social media to set a process of continuous introspection to confirm that they remain clear, lucid and honest supplier of information.

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Journal of Management & Public Policy

Vol. 13, No. 1, Dec 2021, Pp. 49-61

ISSN 0976-0148 (Online) 0976-013X (Print)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47914/jmpp.2021.v13i1.004>

Engagement of Constructivism with the Human Security Theory

Tripuresh Pathak*

ABSTRACT

Human Security has developed as an alternative approach to Traditional concept of Security. The traditional concept is dedicated to protecting the state from external invasion and it is focused on preserving the sovereignty and security of the state. The Human Security concept critically enriches the concept of Security by adding the economic, social, environmental, health and identity related issues. Human Security securitizes these issues, i.e., it raises the value of these issues to such an extent that they ought to be treated as Security concerns. It contends that great challenges are present to security in form of crisis in these important dimensions. Constructivism is an approach that contends that Reality is neither purely subjective nor purely objective, but is inter-subjective. Reality is constructed by the interaction of different players, actors and institutions. Constructivism helps us in understanding the concept of Human Security as the latter also constructs the concept of Security in a creative fashion. Human Security is not static as new dimensions of the ever-changing world can be included within its parameters as per the requirements. The paper is an effort to understand the relevance of Constructivism in understanding the dimensions, scope and limitations of Human Security. The approach of Human Security can also benefit the development of Constructivism as the structure of global politics may witness important change if the concept of Human Security finds a place in the perspective of major players and institutions in World Politics.

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KEYWORDS: Constructivism, Human Security, Democratization, Securitization, Referent Objects, Crisis of Prioritization

INTRODUCTION

Human Security is very important approach to Security studies. Security was traditionally defined in terms of securing the national borders against the attack of external enemies. The area of concern was the sovereignty of the state and it must be clearly stated that there was lack of proper demarcation between the state and government in traditional security discourse. This is because of the fact that the origin of traditional theory lies in classics that concerned with rulers who were unelected and practically enjoyed unlimited powers. The concept of rights and duties had not been properly developed. The powers that were believed to cause threat to overall level of security were external states that had great territorial and material ambitions, besides the attraction of prestige that follows every military victory. The expanded concept of security had analysis of internal threats to security of state. The focus was on the internal fractures along ethnic lines, the ambition of regional warlord and other such groups that sought weakening of central power in order to attain higher power.

The concept of Human Security was made famous by famous Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq in context of 1994 UNDP Human Development Report. The concept has been developed and refined by thinkers like Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Ken Booth. The concept of Human Security is very important in the sense that it is in line with major political development that has occurred either gradually or in waves over the course of past two centuries and so; i.e., democratization of political system in many countries in the world.

Democratization refers to the process in which the people are granted powers to elect their government for definite period of time. It has increased the participation of people to unexpected level as compared to the high degree of insulation of earlier political systems from public opinion. The development of democratic form of Government has led to political education of the masses and increase in level of knowledge and consciousness among the

people. This has led to their stakes in government and more than that, the government itself has lot of stake in the aspirations of people. There are free and fair elections at regular intervals of time in democratic government. The government has to satisfy the aspirations of the people, otherwise there is great possibility that it will be replaced with other government in the next elections. This is very important for security purposes as the security concerns are to be linked with the people. It has to be kept in mind that the public does not have great concern for theoretical development of Security. Their concern is directly affected by their perception of emerging threats to their well-being and happiness. This makes their thought very dynamic as new types of problems may develop and assume gigantic proportions.

IMPORTANCE OF CONCEPT OF HUMAN SECURITY

Human Security is relevant as it tries to descend to the common public for understanding emerging security concerns and does not remain confined to the ambitions and fears of political elites. It tries to cover many dimensions of threats to human life, property and well-being. The traditional approach of security was narrowly limited to the military aspect. (Booth:1991, p.318). These dimensions extend to economic, environmental, physical and identity threats besides other threats.

The concept of Human Security is extremely relevant as there is an effort to understand and analyze the different aspects of development of human civilization in terms of threat created by it. There may be different ways in which development of modern era can be critically studied, i.e. historical events in the past centuries; emerging trends in psychology; the scientific developments and associated technological changes; the working of modern economic system with emphasis on creation of large market along with its features; evolution of International Law in modern times; the continuities and alterations in human cultural traits in modern times with anthropological insight and many other paths. The effort of Human Security is to see the dangers inherent in the march of progress that cast their impact in present times. The dangers are not just confined to one field or so, but extend to different fields. Many dimensions have been included under the approach of Human Security like Drug Trafficking, Human Trafficking, Money Laundering and Cyber-Security (Collins:2016, p.9).

The adverse effect on environment with the great increase in consumerist propensities after the dawn of Industrial Era is feared to cause great calamities to human race. For instance, the rise in sea water due to melting of glaciers that is in turn caused by global warming resulting from tremendous release of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, is feared to cause large scale floods in coastal regions. This will cause large number of deaths and destruction of property and compel the people to leave those regions, resulting in large scale migration problem. Human Security approach is focused on such emerging issues. The traditional security was somewhat confined to threats to core values that were caused by definite individual or group or state. The Traditional Approach was skewed towards the state. The Human Security approach includes referent objects other than the State. Referent Objects imply things that are viewed as 'existentially threatened' and have 'legitimate claim of survival'.(Buzan:1998, p.36). Mary Kaldor has developed the concept of New War that deals with the new paper of war that occurred due to disintegration of states in many regions. The demarcation between combatant and non-combatant force and legitimate violence and criminality is not clear under such circumstances (Kaldor: 2007) The Human Security concept has expanded the notion to include all great factors that have potential of causing damage to human life and property, whether they emerge from traditional means or they arise from new modern aspects. Human Security is thus a broad and comprehensive concept.

Human Security can be properly analyzed only after making proper estimate of the massive impact of rapid technological strides. Technology is changing at fast pace or rather in exponential terms. There is rough estimate related to occurrence of technological singularity in the year around 2040. Technological Singularity is the phenomenon where the Artificial Intelligence (the cognitive development of program-based machines) exceeds Natural intelligence in specific terms and it also implies the almost explosion like situation caused by exponential growth of technology, i.e. too much technology that it cannot be understood with human cognitive apparatus. This technological development may increase the comfort of human life, but may also cause large scale tragedy if it passes into the hands of irresponsible and destructive actors and institutions. The constructive knowledge related to technology assumes great significance at this spot. Technology is such a massive phenomenon that it cannot be left to be studied only by the scholars and researchers of scientific disciplines. Those scholars and researchers, no doubt, have first- hand knowledge regarding the

functioning of technology and the evolution possible in the technological field. But, they lack proper expertise so as to understand the impact of technology on human life. Many sub-disciplines have evolved that aim to do justice with the impact of technology like history of technology, culture and technology, technology of mass communication and many other similar topics. Constructivist discourse will help us to understand the different meanings, purposes and objectives that can be associated with technological development. There is pattern in the various types of meanings and values attached to the technological development. The pattern can be located through knowing and understanding the processes related to acquisition, distribution and maintenance of power in the society.

The knowledge of the pattern can be great help in understanding the scope, limitations, advantages and disadvantages of technological process. The technology has been considered as a tool and like every other tool, technology too is used as per the wishes of its master. The construct of tool is very paradoxical construct of great significance. This is because it makes technology very powerful and also reduces the importance of technology. Technology in use is the best instance when the technology will cast its impact upon the people resulting in enhancing the power of technology; while the technology in itself is powerless as the user has great discretion and autonomy to use it for positive and negative objectives. Human Security comes into picture exactly at the same time as the negative consequences of technology are spread over in different fields and the consequences exist in possibilities and probabilities that are lacking in clarity making them to be comprehended and analyzed.

The humble submission is that Human Security is related to the crystallization of such amorphous threats and dangers in a very conceptual and taxonomical manner. Any theoretical contribution in Human Security through creative engagement with technological changes can help us a great deal to understand about the changing threat perceptions to the entire human society in light of massive technological changes in a causal-explanation form. Human Security can help us to understand the relative focus that must be casted on the different aspects of threats depending upon their nature, immediacy and magnitude. If the threat is remote, it may dealt with later but if the threat is direct it must be addressed with best possible strategy as required. The threat that is immediate must be solved quickly and the necessary authority and men, material and other resources must be deployed for the

purpose. The threat that may happen in future must be solved by using the foresight of political experience and medium- and long-term plans may be made in order to overcome the threat.

MEANING OF CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism is a very important approach that developed in International Relations in 1990s. It was first stated by Nicholas Onuf in his book, titled *World of Our Making*. The milestone in development of Constructivism is the book of Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* and his article *Anarchy is what the states make out of it*. Constructivism contends that reality is not objective as Realist and Liberals contend, but is inter-subjective, i.e. shaped by the interaction of different actors and institutions which are both inter-related and inter-dependent. The Realist notions do not give much space to the actors and institutions in the process of creation of reality, as they suggest that players are bound to act as per the existing external reality that exists externally of each player. The relationship between subjectivist and objectivist approach is under-determined in Realist Analysis. (Wendt: 1999, p. 234) Constructivism is opposed to notions of Postmodernism as the latter is highly subjective and fluid resulting in emergence of skepticism regarding the existence of reality. The equal validity of all values that is often the end result of postmodern analysis is feared to cause degeneration of all basic humanitarian norms. Under Constructivist approach, the influence of norms on International Relations acquire significance. (Zehfuss: 2002, p.4) The lack of common meaning in social sciences is bound to raise questions regarding the nature and extent of communication among the relevant players.

HUMAN SECURITY THROUGH THE PRISM OF CONSTRUCTIVISM

The close interaction of Constructivism and Human Security is in very nature of both the approaches and this is apparent in any comprehensive analysis of the subject. This is because Constructivism gives lot of importance to agency to shape and mould the reality as per its knowledge set, perceptions and understanding of individual gains and collective benefits. Constructivism implies that construction of an identity can happen in both positive and negative ways. If there is positive development related to enhanced cooperation among the people and there is active search regarding the common values and ideas that are important for all the players; there can also be enhanced conflict related tendencies among the states

that may lead to wars and other violent measures. The violence does not reduce the significance of Constructivism as the approach only contends that there is existence of common language in all major political discourses. The definition of threats and interests determined through definitions of identity have strong implications for National Security Policies. (Katzenstein :1996) Even in case of war and other types of conflicts, we can see the language of coercion that is accepted in the normal vocabulary of International Politics. Human Security also contends that there is inherent power among the political actors and institutions that shape the nature and degree of securitization in the political discourse.

Securitization has been developed by the theorists of the Copenhagen school. Securitization can be defined as a process by which a value becomes so important that its violation or endangering is regarded as threat to human security. The securitization of a given value or norm is dynamic phenomenon. Securitization does not happen in a vacuum. There is very important role of civil society which states the importance of a value to the extent that is considered to be core value. Securitization not only does justice to ever increasing range of threats to human society and thus rising dimensions of Security, but it also develops the correct perspective regarding the process that is related to conversion of value from non-security to security frame in the era of rapid technological change.

The Human Security is related to political threat to human life and property. The Second War has taught many great lessons and one lesson is the limitation to be imposed upon the sovereign powers of the states as the state may act violently against the innocent members of group on the basis of identity of the given group. This was due to great atrocities committed upon the Jewish race by the German state under Hitler and it is also a classic case of advanced technology being used as a tool for the purpose of the inhuman, immoral and old prejudices. The German officials and employees who committed these acts were tried in Nuremburg trials and they were declared guilty and sentenced to punishment by the tribunal as their acts were described as act against humanity. Nuremburg trial evolved the principle that there are basic human values and rights that have to be preserved at all costs and if state against such values and principles, then it is incumbent upon the employees of the State to go against such orders, instructions and laws. The defense of states agent cannot absolve the offender. This very principle led to further resolutions and conventions in the second half of the twentieth

century. There was establishment of International Criminal Court that was set up to try the offenders who are heads of state and have been involved in heinous crimes like ethnic cleansing of an identity or large-scale violence against the political opposition or such heinous crimes. The concept of Human Security and Sovereignty of state is indeed a very tough path to travel as both are crucial in the development of human society. There are practical problems related to the strict implementation of human rights norms. Firstly, there is violation of human rights in every state and there is thus a need to draw guidelines that may help in the evaluation of conditions that really mark the breach of human rights to the extent that there is need for humanitarian intervention. Secondly, there is ample scope of political blackmailing due to the provision of human security clause. This is because the powerful states like United States may selectively apply the provisions of International Law related to intervention in a manner that suits their geo-political and economic interests. This will compel the states to calibrate their policy as per the demands of global powers and this result in large scale erosion of authority. Thirdly, the principles of International Law are not applicable equally to all the states. Thus, there is a great need to strengthen common regard for norms in international society to such an extent that the norms are implemented even in the case of powerful and rich countries. This will reduce the magnitude of uncertainty in compliance that is associated with this process as all the states will be under compulsion to observe laws as much as possible. This helps us to understand the strong relationship between Constructivism and Human Security. Constructivism gives lot of scope to individual actors to shape the reality. One actor may call a given situation as tense but within control while other may advocate full scale intervention. There is thus scope of attaching different meaning to given phenomenon and the process of shaping the meaning is not an innocent process but is an interplay of economic, political and geo-strategic needs of a given state. Moreover, there is also need to know that the applicability of International Law is not a uniform case of implementation, but is complex interplay of forces where powerful states want to gain legitimacy by following many norms of International Law, but violating International Law where National Interests demand it to do so. Even in case of blatant breach of norms of International Law, the players tend to justify their acts. This is destined to send strong message to International Community about their relative in the international scheme of things and also establish their status as an otherwise responsible power.

The scope of construction of identity is very important part of contemporary politics and it can be well critiqued through the Constructivist lens. Constructivism can throw great light on the nature of identity; the amount of flux that exists to the actual functioning of the identity; the heterogeneity and fractures present in given identity and the scope of accommodation and confrontation with other identities in a given identity. The political security aspect of Human Security is very much related to the expression of given identity and the scope for other groups in such expression. Constructivist viewpoint is that anarchy is what states make of it and self-help and power politics are not essential features of Anarchy (Wendt:1992, p. 395).

Another important aspect of Human Security is related to the provision of basic essential goods and services to all the people. These include food, housing, clothes, minimum education and some health services for lot of people in the society. This aspect becomes very crucial as there are still large numbers of malnourished children in the world. Human Security is integrative and not defensive concept as per UNDP Report, 1994 (Human Development Report, p. 24). There has been reduction in number of infant and child mortality rates, but the provision of basic essential items has still not been possible for many poor people in the world in the twenty first century. The concept of Human security has expanded the security threats to include provision of basic necessities to all the people. It is strong critique of the traditional approach that viewed security from the perspective of already rich or influential section of society. The meaning of security has also to be understood from the viewpoint of deprived sections of society who have nothing much to lose, but to gain basic amenities of life. This is where there is need to focus on constructivist analysis of the word called security. The term security is normally taken for granted, but it needs to be problematized, i.e. its features should be questioned and enquired to make deep analysis about its meaning, implication and consequences.

The traditional concept of security assumes that there is something to be protected for which there is need to provide security. Security is not just about protection, but also about the expansion of required amenities among large section of population. The protective approach fails to link the needs and aspirations of poor and deprived sections of society. Security has thus to be framed in such a way that there is provision of happiness and increase in material

and ideational welfare for large number of poor people in the states. The ideational welfare is related to material welfare as only the fulfilment of basic needs gives the energy and confidence regarding development of cognitive and rational faculties of the given individual.

The Constructivist explanation is important in the analysis of referent objects that are regarded as threat to security in the context of international relations. Proper focus on the referent objects is an important part of the development of theory related to Security studies as it establishes relation of the entity like state that is seeking security and the specific entity from which it aims to protect its basic interests. The insecurity is defined in relation to some external actors or institutions that are considered as threat to security of given state. There is need of creative engagement with the dynamics of international relations and constructivism helps in locating the changing perception of a given factor as threat or not. If a given factor is indeed labeled as a threat by state actor, then there is need of formation and implementation of appropriate strategy and deployment of enough amounts of resources to provide protection against the threat perceived by the actor. In order to avoid wastage of resources, it is essential that a level of caution is maintained before labeling any aspect within the field of security issues of a given state.

Human Security also shares an important relation with Constructivism in the area of legal development concerning the promotion of aspects of Human Security through means of law. Constitution is supreme law of the land in states that are governed by Constitutional Government. Constitution does provide for basic rights that are to be enjoyed by all the citizens of the state. This part of Constitution acts as a guarantee for the enjoyment of all the rights and privileges by the people belonging to different identities at an equal level. It acts as a guard against the encroachment of basic rights of citizen by the state and provides for all the necessary remedies in case of violation of his or her rights. Constructivism comes into picture as law, particularly Constitutional Law helps us in evaluating the place of various identities in the state. This is because law is crystallized expression of basic norms and values that are given prominent place in a given society and the political system. If Constitutional Law provides for some special treatment to members of given identity without any rational basis or discriminates against the citizens of other identity, then it implies that the political system is suffering from the undue influence and control of one identity to the extent of

deprivation of other groups and identities. The case of theocratic states like Pakistan is an important instance in this regard. The commitment of the state for the religion of Islam tends to show all the other minorities their place in the system.

It is also true that the approach of Constructivism itself would also be greatly benefitted if the principles of Human Security find a place in the policy making of major states and institutions in the International Politics. This is because Human Security has the potential to greatly alter the viewpoint of states as far as relative importance of different dimensions of contemporary political economy is concerned. The changed perspective might usher in changes in inter-subjective reality that is shaped by shared meanings of different players and institutions. This has potential to cause important shift in the allocation of resources for various sectors of the society.

LIMITS OF HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH

There are limits of Human Security approach. One is related to the very comprehensive nature of field. There are great prospects for Security Studies as it is getting inputs from so many diverse fields. But this also complicates the matter as multiplication of dimensions lead to even greater increase in possible set of permutations and combinations, making it difficult to comprehend the chief characteristics of the theory of Human Security. Secondly, the theory of Human Security has the pitfall of delving deep into the strange new field for a scholar who is not well versed in the given dimensions. For instance, the issue related to food security can be better dealt by the scholar of the discipline of agriculture and a general scholar of Human Security has little specialized knowledge concerning the field. It may however be mentioned that this is a pitfall and an aware scholar can easily avoid such pitfalls by drawing a broad line within which he has to focus upon the field. Thirdly, the problem with Human Security is lack of prioritization of different fields that is present in many works, including the UN Report. This leads to vagueness regarding the manner in which the states ought to deploy their resources. Demarcation between National Security and Human Security can be challenging and problematic (Mcintosh et al.: 2010).

The question of optimum utilization of resources is very crucial one in the field of economics and the relevance of utilization only increases in the case of less developed countries with

Low Gross Domestic Product. The idea of utilization is based on appropriate prioritization of needs leading to the proper preference mapping which can help in adequate allocation of resources in the economy. There is risk of *crisis of prioritization* on the practical implications of Human Security as far as developing countries are concerned. This implies lack of special importance to key sectors as every dimension is included within the parameter of Human Security. The lack of prioritization acts as a roadblock in the formulation of proper policies on the basis of inputs provided by the Human Security theory.

CONCLUSION

The concept of Human Security is very important as it has opened new vistas in the field of Security Studies. It has allowed both vertical and horizontal expansion of the field of security. The concept of Constructivism is relevant as it advocates the role of various players and institutions in the construction of Reality that is stated to be inter-subjective in nature affected by the inter-related and inter-dependent activities of players and institutions. Constructivism helps us in the analysis of forces that accord values to different factors related to security interest of state. It helps in the search of the important factors that determine the securitization process. Constructivism has focused a lot on identity formation and the process by which identity is shaped and changed over a period of time. This helps in understanding the relationship between various different identities and the scope of cooperation and chances of conflict between them.

It also helps us in understanding the role of Great Powers that selectively use principles of Human Security to further their National Interests. The importance of Human Security has been located in the context of rapid technological development and Constructivism can assist a lot in knowing the trajectory of human reaction to the technological development as it can shed light on the formation of identities and interests in changed atmosphere. The Constructivist focus can help us in evaluating the new concept of security as provision and expansion of amenities as opposed to the defense and protection of already held values. Thus, it can be concluded that the very dynamic theory of Human Security has to work in close alliance with insights of Constructivism as Human Security has to considerable extent, applied the basic tenets of Constructivism in the field of Security Studies.

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