Do you know of any person around you, who moves around in a torn shirt and a torn pant. Lugging about two polythene bags, containing the bare minimum of items required for survival, reciting his own ‘revolutionary’ poetry actively participating in students’ movements, spreading knowledge and staying on campus? This is a glimpse of Ramashankar Yadav for you, who would later become ‘vidrohi’. When I was asked to write about him, the first thought that struck my mind was, how am I to write about someone, a person who never conformed to a pattern and who remained a rebel, his entire life. Someone who was a poet but never wrote anything on paper, someone who hardly had a title to his poems, someone who was a revolutionary in his own existence. How am I to write?

Ramashankar vidrohi joined JNU in 1980 as a student, from the very beginning of his life he actively participated in left student politics, and was rusticated in 1983 during a student’s movement. Since then he stayed and struggled in and on JNU campus for more than two decades. He died on 8th December 2015, and even during his last days, he was actively participating in occupy UGC movement. Vidrohi was the poet of the masses, who, in his poems, always raised the issues of the day to day struggles of the common man. He questioned, almost all social, political patterns around us, and that was the beauty of his words, although he is famously cited as a Left poet but in his writing’s, he even criticized the Left.

Ramashankar vidrohi was not only a poet but also was a ‘philosopher of life’. He was highly influenced by Gandhi, but this side of his life, is not much highlighted. In his own words, “My life began with Gandhi and ended by Gandhi, but this side of his life, is not much highlighted.”

There is a saying in the Quran, “You can seed paddy in the heavens? I reply…..Idiots!!”

A calendar in remembrance of disappeared persons was released by APDP, which contains couplets from the family.

I tremble with fear that I may die, And the angst of heart will not go away. My pleasant faced and comely beloved, how can you ask me to remain quiet? I don’t know how to bear this. I am a farmer……and….. I am seeding paddy in the heavens…… Few people are saying…. Idiots!! Can you seed paddy in the heavens? I reply…. Idiots!!

In my travels, I have been the loving, the beloved, the chosen one, the selected one. I have been the one who was not chosen, the one who was not selected.

And if you can seed God on heavens…

I am seeding paddy in heaven….

Now, only one will happen…

Either God will be removed from the earth….Or….

Paddy will be seeded in the heavens!!!!

---Continued on page 4
"When it's a poem you want to record then we must begin with poetry. What is poetry? It's the farmer's field. It's the poet's child. It's your father's assets. Your mother's cooking. I have a hard time giving my poems a name so most of my poems are nameless. Who takes my poems for their own, may name them as they like."

"Tagore has this great line about modernism. "true modernism is freedom of thought and independence of mind..." So I got it. But you know, after all I'm an Artist. So I interpret it my way... that True modernity is fearlessness of cosmic unseriousness."

"Now if you show me in a jungle, Vidrohi would look like a prisoner of romanticism wandering all his life in the jungle. As if wandering in the jungle is revolution! Labour alone is not Radi..."

"Oh it's a troublesome life, a struggle but a wonderful one. Because it's not like I have limited myself to this I am everywhere... any..."

"Well if a great man does a grand thing, where's the miracle, eh? If a limited man, does a grand thing, now, that's something to talk about. So you must reveal not just Vidrohdi's grandeur but also his insignificance."

"Most stuff, no matter how fine will not last after June. It rots in the rain, which is the point. Next year, someone will give new stuff. There will be other blankets, other shirts. Everything rots, disolves, disappears and yet people keep giving. It might seem as if Vidrohdi's life is ut-tarly anarchic. But in fact no life is more dis-ciplined than mine. I follow a strict discipline with diligence, with beauty. An international discipline. I'm a man of international thought. It's not like this way and that way, a little of this... a little of that. No. Say one thing to you and another to the queen, that's mean-ingless. Whether you see me here or there or at large in the world. You will find the same words, the same colour, the same shades, and the same style."

"The search for creativity, poetry with pain, that's the beauty of romanticism. "Pain ex-ceeds itself thus becoming the tonic," that's Ghalib's injunctions! If you whip a man for twenty years and stop in the twenty onenth year, he will crave the whip, for it has become his companion."

"I'm trying to demarcate some understanding. And also shooting in the dark, hoping I'll find my mark. No matter if this saga of pain continues, but let not the pain become the solution."

"When I write poems, I have an audience that I am addressing. This is my aesthetic – I believe these poems are more of speaking them out, than reading. So I imagine a mass, a public. And I strive to speak in the language that rings true for them. Not one that alienates them."

"There is no God, nor child of God. The story is proceeding thus becoming the tonic," that's..."

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**Poems**

If you hear my siren, you will be filled with regret. If you know my intentions, with courage. Sir, I've just come to tell you. That the day of redoning, is nearly here. I really don't know if God knows, but the people will know, what the deal is. There will be no trial, nor debates. This will be an old feud, passed down from Eden. Your mother's cooking. I have a hard time giving my poems a name so most of my poems are nameless. Who takes my poems for their own, may name them as they like. I say to them... I am the friend you have... it's me! Here! Come recognize me... I am the friend you have... "I say to them..."

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"My friends, come out of your houses into the are-na. Only the staunchest in battle will carry the day. He will be both the sheltered and the refuged. Who has, all his life, been weighed by oppressions. There is no God, nor child of God. The story is Man's. Man will stand up for himself."

"I have no belief in saving and saviours. I have no need to believe, anyone stands above me. "I won't tell you. Because it might give you a fright. That a tiger sleeps in the front pocket of my shirt. But have no fear, I have trained it so well. That boot! A tiger sleeps in my front pocket and you never realized, it's a tiger. But a tiger or two. In your front pocket, Helps in reciting of poems. But I'll share a secret. Since I'm reciting poetry a mongst friends, One tiger in the pocket is enough. But when I'm among enemies, Reciting poems all alone, I make sure to keep two tigers in my pocket. Then I wear, that red shirt you've praised before. The one with two pockets in front. So I keep reciting poems, And the tigers don't sleep. They puff on beedi's, Emanating rings of smoke. It's an excellent tree. Friends, my grandmother was a tree of humanity, Of which I am one leaf. She isn't dead, She's just gone for a swim, In one of those ponds at Mohenjodaro. Her sari is drying on the last step. She has lost her key there, somewhere. She's searching for it ceaslessly. I see she's sowing gram in the Himalayas. Tethering my cow to Everest's peak. I want to clap in joy. But what's this? There's mustard growing on my palms. I want to call out to her. But yogurt has set over my lips. I can see my grandmother. Flowing away in a river of yoghurt. I want to catch her, but I can't. I want to call to her, but I can't. And my body starts to tremble like a leaf. Which might fall any moment, which is just about to fall. My people, My friends, Get up and break, The walls that won't let fresh air in. That keep fresh water out. And fresh thought out. Don't let the walls scare you, Nah, spirits don't reside in walls. And don't be scared of trees, because no, ghosts don't live in them. Oh and don't be scared of temples, gods don't in-habit them. And listen up. The day you get it, That a brick is just a brick, And a stone, is just a stone. Then you'll be the king of your hill. Some may apply to Queen Victoria brand eyeliner or Sadhvi Rithambra brand eye-wash. But kohl made of pure ghee was only Nur Mian's forte. At least my grandmother swears it by. Whenver Nur Mian arrived, my grandmother never failed to buy his kohl. Just a slim line of his kohl in her eyes, and they turned compact like clouds, swirled within like the Ganga and Yamuna. The old women's eyes grew limpid, as the sea, into which, we children, glancing saw it all, gleaming. Oh how she heaped blessings on Nur Miyan, 'it's his kohl,' said grandma. "Makes me prance like a girl, puts thread in my needle," and I'd feel like crying out, 'Granny! You the doe-eyed maiden. Sukanya to

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Nur Mian's say Chavan. He is your Hippocrates, whose herbs heal your eyes. Your eyes aren't eyes but witnesses, and his kohl... offerings for the gods. And then this Nur Mian went away to Pa-kistan. Wheyer did he leave for Pakistan? They say, because he had no one here. But were we no one to Nur Mian? Wasn't he ours? Then where did he leave for Pakistan, without telling us and our grandmother? Why did Nur Mian go away to Pakistan? My grandmother's life ended. She returned to the banks whence she came. She had married across the river, and was cremated on the other side. When I cast her ashes into the river, I felt as if the river wasn't a river, but my grand-mother's eyes, and the ashes weren't ashes but Nur Mian's kohl and for the last time, I put his kohl in my grandmother's eyes. He asks for his share, oh you! The poor labourer asks for a cake, this time. He asks for a smoke and some stuff. A coffee or tea. That's enough. Oh and a cup and a plate and a snack to go with it. Maybe an omlette. Oh and Mr. Overseer I ask for a fair rate. I am a poet. I'll get to it. What's the rush? One day I'll catch the policeman and the priest. And pres-ent them in a court of women, and debar all the courts besides that. Yes I know all about it, your lineage, and your sta-tus. But when the moment arrives, you'll be miss-ing in action. As for me, dear one, I will search for no cover. Because there's no hand on my shoul-ders. But that there's a bomb. A kick from our blis-stered feet, can dislocate the ground beneath yours, and the veins in your collapsd fists can turn gentle skies to blood, and when one day, from earth to sky, standing end to end, we rend from it will emerge neither Kashyap nor Narainsama. Here! Come recognize me... I am the friend you lost, you love ... you hate ... you envy ... but the only friend you have... it's me! These are days of spring, let us lose our heads. Let us fight for our rights. God, to hell with your world. Let us plant a new world of our own. Where people talk... speak, hear and endure like human beings. I say to them... you hooligans! If god can take root on earth. Then crops can grow in the skies. I demand neither reward, nor acknowledgement. I demand neither alms nor donations. I stand at the crossroads and demand loudly.
In the closing address, Jahnu Baruah, (Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, National award winning, Assamese filmmaker) also pointed out certain issues, that even young film makers were worried about. Baruah said, “Take your films to the larger audience, this generation filmmakers need to know how to connect with the young generation. Those, who don’t have access to these kind of films.” In the closing address, Jahnu Baruah, (Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, National award winning, Assamese filmmaker) also pointed out certain issues, that even young film makers were worried about. Baruah said, “Take your films to the larger audience, this generation filmmakers need to know how to connect with the young generation. Those, who don’t have access to these kind of films.”

The following are a few highlights from the festival. The team of ‘Shitak’ (Masum Muhid, Monir Ali, Shikha Bhat, and Shilpa Mehta) produced a series of five films entitled, ‘A Roof of Aarey’s Mask’. The five films cover a range of themes, including the housing and real estate bubble, the marginalization of the ‘Adivasis’ who live in Aarey Milk Colony, and the lifestyle of the Kharai camels (the only breed of camel’s that can thrive in bad weather, or getting over adversities.”

The 8th Cut.In, the annual student’s film festival (2015) of Communication Arts, University of Western Sydney, took place from 21st to 22nd December. The festival was inaugurated by Anne Rutherford – a senior lecturer in cinema studies at the School of Humanities and Communication Arts, University of Western Sydney. Rutherford emphasized, the importance of one’s ‘freedom of expression.’

Baruah added “This kind of film festivals – has made a straight way into our hearts, as we can also chill and have fun, do our stuff and play. Baruah added “This kind of film festivals – has made a straight way into our hearts, as we can also chill and have fun, do our stuff and play. We can also go through these films for entertainment. A young filmmaker can make films, thinking beyond its success or failure, pour their love, blood, sweat and an indomitable spirit into their films. A young filmmaker can make films, thinking beyond its success or failure, pour their love, blood, sweat and an indomitable spirit into their films. We can also go through these films for entertainment. A young filmmaker can make films, thinking beyond its success or failure, pour their love, blood, sweat and an indomitable spirit into their films. We can also go through these films for entertainment.

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India

On 28th December, near Bandra Collector’s office, people of ‘Akhil Bharatiya Matang Sangh’ demonstrated with a peaceful protest rally. The Mang or Matang (Minimadig in Gujarat and Rajasthan) community is an Indian caste, historically oppressed by forced association to ‘low status’ or criminal profession such as village musicians, cattle castrators, leather curers, midwives, hangmen, undertakers, and criminals. Persons from this caste are one of the most suppressed and neglected in the state.

Their demands were against the backdrop of what happened on 20th of December. They were also dislocated from their earlier position by the police and were pushed into a corner while they tried to fight and claim their rights. They were also dislocated from their earlier position by the police officers. They were also dislocated from their earlier position by the police officers. They were barricaded and encircled by a police force without any specific reason, as claimed by the people of Matang Samaj.

The police not only beat them ruthlessly; but also slapped charges against them. They are demanding the state police to take back the charges. The authority or the administration must provide upto Rs.5 lakhs to the people who were seriously injured during the demonstration - demanded the people of Matang Samaj.

At around 11 ‘o clock in the morning on 28th of December, a group of 40 to 50 people gathered in front of Bandra Collector’s office and started demonstrating their objection and demands through Marathi songs, poetry and some slogans of Annabhau Sathe (A freedom fighter who belonged to this particular caste), Bhem Rao ji and Lahu ji for their fundamental rights to equality and access to basic amenities. Some of the demonstrators held a yellow coloured flags, with an emblem - ‘Jai Bheem’ and ‘Jai Lahuji’. They were barricaded and encircled by 10 police officers. They were also dislocated from their earlier position by the police and were pushed into a corner while they tried to fight and claim their rights.

Power Hierarchy

Matang’s agitation for 8% reservation within Schedule Caste

Student of Diploma in Community Media, in TISS, Mumbai

KASHMIR: Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP)

International Human Rights Day is observed around the globe today on December 10. On this occasion, the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP) pays tribute to thousands of the disappeared persons in Jammu and Kashmir. From 1989 to 2016, more than 8,000 cases of enforced disappearances have been reported in Jammu and Kashmir since 1989 when the freedom movement turned into an armed struggle against the Indian rule. This tribute is a reminder to the fact that we have to keep struggling until justice is not delivered. In addition, while paying tribute we reiterate that memory and resistance is our weapon to fight against power.

As a repository of individual stories of loss and grief, APDP is creating a collective biography of struggle as its members meet and gather the 10th every month in a public space as an act of remembering, commemorating and grieving. “Return our disappeared children” is our collective chant. APDP contains its struggle to demand justice and accountability and to end impunity in Jammu and Kashmir.

APDP demands an acknowledgement from the Indian state that they have committed the crimes against humanity, which will be an important step forward to get an assurance for its non-repetition and for prosecuting those who are guilty.

Enforced Disappearance has been declared as a crime against humanity, that violates multiple rights of the victim and her/his family. The disappeared are subjected to mental and physical agony while looking for their kin and that very well amounts to torture. The rights that are violated as a result include Right to Life and liberty, Right to Justice, Right to know, Right to Reparations, Right to Family Security, Right to be recognised as a person before law, Right not to be subjected to torture, Right to Security. As there is no information from the Indian authorities, this is an excruciating agony to the kin of the victims in management of the land and property and raises legal complexities around inheritance rights of the disappeared.

The members of the APDP have spent much in demarcating the whereabouts of our disappeared kin, but to no avail. Our family life has got adversely affected and in some cases even beyond repair. Yet, we continue searching for our children in the hope that one day our disappeared will come back. One such parent, Mr. Abdul Ahad Bhat whose son was disappeared on 22-6-1991 bears testimony to the agony of our struggle. His disappeared son Farooq Ahmad Bhat was a 10th class student at the time of his disappearance. He also used to assist his father in running a shop. On the fateful day, at about 6 p.m., he was picked up from the shop by BSF (Border Security Force), 102 Battalion of the Indian Army in presence of his father, bystanders and other neighbours in the locality. The disappeared person was engaged at the time of his disappearance and his whereabouts are unknown. He was in-laws waited for 4 years and gave full emotional and psychological support to the family but eventually got their daughter married off elsewhere.

The testimonial of the Mr. Abdul Ahad Bhat clearly shows that the legal struggle is endless and bears no fruit. As he narrates: “There was a complete denial and death was announced in the newspapers. In 1991-92, the other 3 family members were in the BSF. We continued our efforts to prove his death as no information has been received from the administration.”

APDP has been consistently appealing to the international community to act as pressure groups upon the Indian state to take note of the situation and take corrective measures to render justice. APDP has also keenly followed and participated in the meetings of the UPR (Universal Periodic Review), under the auspices of the United Nations for implementing measures that would replace impunity by accountability and criminalize such acts perpetrating by the state in situations of armed conflict.

In commemoration of the day, APDP is releasing press cards and the calendar for year 2016. The thinking that has gone into the making and design of these is to keep the memory of our loved ones alive.
On January 6th, Chetna Andolan held a mass public meeting and competition to celebrate the Ghashiyari - the grass collectors of rural Uttarakhand. In every struggle for justice in the State, these women have been at the forefront. They have fought to protect the forests and environment of the State; to defend their homes against displacement and to assert their dignity and autonomy of their communities. Yet today they, and the forests they so deeply understand and care for, are being shorn and pressed.

The meeting was in Kotiyada, Chamayala, Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand. In order to celebrate and highlight the ghshiyari skills, a “best ecologist” award was presented at the event to the President. For the last month, village level competitions have been held in 112 gram panchayats (encompassing more than 200 villages) to identify 30 finalists who will compete in the final competition on the 6th. The winner receives a silver crown worth Rs. one lakh; the first runner up, one lakh. All expenses for the programme and awards are being borne from local contributions and donations.

Azad Maidan : Villagers from Amravati

A group of villagers from Bichhoo Tekdi, a major town in Amravati, gathered to protest in Azad Maidan on 28th December, 2015. For the last 40 years, the villagers of Bichhoo Tekdi are deprived of their basic necessities and rights. They do not even have property cards and thus they cannot even have the authority to sell their property or land. Their demands were to provide them with charges. The Jindals injured scores of people in this public hearing. Violence, against the residents and activists, oppos- ing JSPL project damped the mo- rale of the people. Ramesh Aggarw- al, an activist, was shot.

On 2nd October 2015, Mahatma Gandhi’s birthday anniversary, over 5000 villagers of the coal mining affected communities in Raigarh district, shared their stories and walked from Gare to the banks of the Kelo River to claim their rights over the coal under their lands. For the last four years, people of Gare village have been organising the Koyla Satyagraha.

The controversial public hearing was held for a second time on September 25, 2013 after the National Green Tribunal rejected the first public hearing held on January 5, 2008. The tribunal rejected the findings of the hearing on the grounds that the hearing should have been held at the project site itself or near it. However, in the second hearing the arguments and contentions of the people were not different from that at the first.

Notably, in a path breaking judgement, the supreme court has declared that, “there is nothing in law which declares that all mineral wealth sub soil rights vest in the State, on the other hand, the ownership of sub-soil/mineral wealth should normally follow the ownership of land, unless the owner of the land is de- prived of the same by some valid process” (para 57 of judgement). The court further says the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 only regulates mining activity and “not divesting any owner of a mine of his proprietary rights”. Referring to laws concerning mining of coal such as Coking Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1972 and Coal Bearing Areas (Acquisition and Development) Act, 1957 which are very much applicable to Jharkhand, the Supreme Court says it contain express provi- sions for “acquisition of mines or rights in or over the land from which coal is obtainable” (para 54).
India

Cinema of Resistance, Mumbai Chapter begins

Aditi Munshi
Student of M.A in Social Work in Children and Family, TISS, Mumbai

Subsequent to the advent of the New Economic Policy adopted in 1990s, the government of India has portrayed industrialisation as the only weapon to overcome the poverty in the country. A similar stance has been used for the resource rich Odisha, where the state government has been involved in the process of land acquisition since the early 90s. This mineral rich state has almost 60% of India’s known bauxite reserve, 25% of coal, 98% of chromite, 28% of iron ore, 92% of nickel ore, and 28% of manganese reserves. Most of these reserves are embayed under the dense forests and robust mountains inhabited mostly by tribal communities. Industries, roads, townships can be set up only by uprooting the occupants of this resource rich land. Every such endeavour of the government, has faced resistance from the people. The stronger the resistance, the more is the repression of the government. One such instance, was the police firing at Kalinganagar on 2nd January 2006 which led to the death of twenty tribal people and one police constable.

The resistance of Kalinganagar

The Sukinda and Domagadi blocks of Jajpur district of Odisha, are together referred as Kalinganagar by the Infrastructure Development Corporation of Odisha (IDCO), which aims to make this area a hub of steel manufacturing plants in the area. One of these MoUs was signed with Tata Steel in 2004, to set up a 6 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) plant in Kalinganagar. The estimated cost of this plant is Rs 15,400/- million or approx. US$2.3 billion at current exchange rates.

Land Acquisition

The government acquired 13,000 acres of land for the purpose of developing an industrial corridor in Jajpur district, Odisha. The government acquired land from the cultivators by paying them a compensation of Rs. 15,000/- to 30,000/- per acre. This compensation was paid only to those who had a patta on the land. In other cases, if the government wanted to have a patta on the land; share croppers were also not given any compensation.

In spite of the long history of displacement, the state of Odisha had no rehabilitation and resettlement policy until 2006. In the absence of such policy, the resettlement of the displaced people is guided by project specific administrative circles. The irony of the process, was the fact that, the land was grabbed for private players, but it was not made obligatory for the companies to provide displaced people with jobs.

Run Up to the Main Event

Attempts to begin the construction of the Tata Steel Plant on 5th May 2005 was prevented by the protests of the local tribal who refused to vacate their lands, until their demands regarding resettlement and rehabilitation were met.

On 2nd January the Tata employees along with the locals pelted black ink on the faces of security personnel, who were trying to prevent them from carrying traditional weapons like bow and arrows.

On the other hand the Superintendent of Police had placed a 10 platoon (a platoon typically consists of 15 to 30 personnel) to oversee the process. In an attempt to prevent the construction, the protesters tried to enter the restricted area. In order to scare the protesters the police fired stun shells. This led to the death of 14 people and another 6 succumbed to injuries in the hospital. One police constable was also killed in this process.

Cinema of Resistance

In an era of commercial cinema which focuses on target rating point (TRP) and money than on content; Cinema of Resistance is a wave of change. The festival was started in 2006, by the cultural activists of Jan Sanskriti Manch, filmmakers and journalists in Gorakhpur. The underlying objective of this festival, is to provide a platform to initiate dialogue on actual people centric issues, by presenting movies, based on real life histories of the common people. The movies showcased under their banner are based on movements, such as violations of democratic rights of citizens in Kashmir and Northeast under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), tribal land grab by multinational corporations, killings of innocent civilians by the state machinery, hunger deaths of peasants and unreported struggles of those without voices.

Since its inception, cinema of resistance has strengthened its presence across the nation. It runs solely on the sundry donations from its supporters. This movement has grown on the shoulders of like-minded people who devote their time and labour, for the cause. From Uttar Pradesh, its seat of origin, the movement has expanded to Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Barakhad, Chhattisgarh and Madhyamanchal. Driven by the cause and placing their support behind the Bishnupriya Birodhi Jan Mancha and also the one behind the camera. It provides a vivid scene, which depicts the police brutality that the people had to face in order to protect their land.

Lament of the Niyamraj

This video captures the late-leader of the Dongria Kondh, Dambu Prasaka singing a song on Niyamraj, the king of forest. The song describes the dependency of the tribals on the sustenance of the Niyamgiri forests. For the exchange of Niyamgiri, a large scale agriculture is established between the mountains, vegetation, rivers, livestock and the Adivasis, who rely on each other in order to survive. The Niyamgiri hills replenishes itself with rain and releases this water as streams and waterfalls, throughout the year. Because of the mining, large portions of the hills are cut into, and as a result of which, the rivers dry up during the summer season. This has affected the ecological balance of the Niyamgiri forests.

Dhinki

This short clip focusses on the coastal villages in Odisha against Indian’s largest foreign direct investment (FDI), by POSCO, a multinational steel making company. Dhinki or the hushing pedal, is an important part of rural life in Odisha, where it is worshipped by the women of the community.

The paddy which is hushed through the Dhinki, is considered to be healthier, than the paddy which is cropped by a mechanical machine. In order to revive the use of Dhinki a number of self-help groups have come up. The process stands for two things; self-suffice and the supremacy of traditional over modern practices.

Big Fat Brutal Lie

The film begins with the Chief Minister of Odisha making a statement that he believes in peaceful industrialisation. The other picture brought about in the clip is police officials beating up protesting Adivasis. The strength of this film is that both these events happened simultaneously. Thus presenting the stark contrast between what is being said and done by the state.

The Human Zoo

This video is based on a fair ‘Arts and Craft of Primitive Tribal Communities’ conducted every year on 26th January by the Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes Research and Training Institute. Apart from this, the fair is also a display of tribal art and food; tribal people are also displayed.

This practise was a regular affair until this film came out. It was only subsequent to the release of this video that this process was stopped.

The Displacement Colony

The town of Rationibat is a billionaire by Ve- danta, just outside a colony of displaced people. The violation of rights does not stop at forcibly acquiring land. The process of resettlement and rehabilita-

Shot Dead or Development

A one minute long movie directed by Surya Shankar Dash provides a background to the 2001 Kashipur and Kalinganagar movements where Adivasis were killed for resisting mining. It is an animated movie that presents land grabbing for mining as the reason behind these two movements. The illustrations used in the clip are in Idital, a form of Saura Adivasi art.

Repression Diary

This video recaptures the mining activities by corporate entities in Kalinganagar were subjected to untold misery and violence. The Repression Diary provides an account of one such fateful event in 2010 when the state machinery unleashed para-military troops on the protesting Adivasis. This video is important not only on the account of the violence it presents but also because of the fact that it is created by the inhabitants of the land. “Raghunath” as introduced at the beginning of the film is an active member of the Kondh, Dambu Prasaka, a video activist. The strength of this video is that both the events happened simultaneously. Thus presenting the stark contrast between what is being said and done by the state.

The Human Zoo

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This practise was a regular affair until this film came out. It was only subsequent to the release of this video that this process was stopped.

The Displacement Colony

The town of Rationibat is a billionaire by Ve- danta, just outside a colony of displaced people. The violation of rights does not stop at forcibly acquiring land. The process of resettlement and rehabilita-

Shot Dead or Development

A one minute long movie directed by Surya Shankar Dash provides a background to the 2001 Kashipur and Kalinganagar movements where Adivasis were killed for resisting mining. It is an animated movie that presents land grabbing for mining as the reason behind these two movements. The illustrations used in the clip are in Idital, a form of Saura Adivasi art.

Repression Diary

This video recaptures the mining activities by corporate entities in Kalinganagar were subjected to untold misery and violence. The Repression Diary provides an account of one such fateful event in 2010 when the state machinery unleashed para-military troops on the protesting Adivasis. This video is important not only on the account of the violence it presents but also because of the fact that it is created by the inhabitants of the land. “Raghunath” as introduced at the beginning of the film is an active member of the Kondh, Dambu Prasaka, a video activist. The strength of this video is that both the events happened simultaneously. Thus presenting the stark contrast between what is being said and done by the state.

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This practise was a regular affair until this film came out. It was only subsequent to the release of this video that this process was stopped.
History reveals that the state of Sri Lanka has a poor record ofabhiding justice for human rights violations. With this being the status quo, on September 24, 2015, Maithripala Sirisena, the newly elected President of Sri Lanka passed a resolution with reference to war crimes to put in place a domestic mechanism to bring accountability and reconciliation. This resolution was passed after the release of the OSRL report which accused the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) – a militant separatist organization, the Sri Lankan security forces and the other militant organizations for committing grave human rights violations during the last phase of the civil war that ended on May, 2009.

Today, the most important question is that does Sri Lankan state (or the dominant Sinhalese Buddhist majority) have the political will to bring out truth and deliver justice to its Tamil minority for war crimes and crimes against humanity?

Sri Lanka had established 32 commissions to inquire various issues such as and human rights violations. The outcomes of most of these commissions have been debatable. For example, the Presidential Commission, established in 2009, which had the findings of most of these commissions, the perpetrators continue to avail impunity from the justice system, and the interference of the Executive and the Judiciary has been consistent.

With this history, on September 24, 2015, a resolution was passed by the UNHRC in Geneva. This resolution was the desire of the recently elected Sri Lankan government and was aimed to initiate a domestic inquiry process (with the involvement of the experts from the Commonwealth countries) to bring accountability and evolve political solution.

The resent resolution was based on the findings of the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) report. The report accuses the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) – a militant separatist organization, the Sri Lankan security forces, and the other militant organizations for committing grave human rights violations during the last phase of the civil war. It highlighted the systemic nature of the crimes committed by the Sri Lankan security forces with them.

For the international community, the human rights defenders (and particularly the Tamil community), it took six long years after the end of the militant struggle to bring to light the war crimes in the island; and to discuss accountability and political solution for the Tamils under the UNHRC.

End of War

The last war of Sri Lanka was war created 282,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) and at one juncture, this entire Tamil population was cages inside a camp named Manik Farm. Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary-General had stated that he was nothing short of anything than he’d seen in Gaza and Darfur; rape and disappearances were rampant.

The international communities had no wish to watch or hear the crisis of the Tamils. They subtly accepted the discourse of the Sri Lankan state, Zero Civilian Casualties, although they knew it was a blatant lie. A leaked cable stated that in the last months of the carnage, about 7,900 to 17,000 Tamils went missing or presumably dead. The estimate of the LTTE varies between 40,000 to 70,000 people. From the side of the victims, a Tamil Catholic Bishop estimates the death toll as 146,670 people. He arrived at this figure based on a population statistics. The state did not care to enumerate the deaths. However, challenges the figures put forward by various sources.

The Channel 4 documentaries The Killing Fields of Sri Lanka, shook the world by disclosing the scenes of the cruel works of the militant struggle. The Tamil civilians were caught in between the LTTE and the security forces. Few civilians were killed by the LTTE to prevent them from moving out of war zone. The LTTE believed that civilians would support their cause. The international community for ceasefire by showing the presence of civilian population but the reality turned the opposite. A vast majority of Tamil civilians were killed by the Sri Lankan forces through their indiscriminate shelling.

International Pressure

Many international countries and human rights defenders alleged that both the LTTE and the Sri Lankan forces have committed war crimes. In early May, 2009, The New York Times wrote an article by showing the presence of civilians killed by the LTTE. The US Ambassador to the United Nations, John R. Bolton, wrote an open letter on his country’s failure to investigate the Tamil civilians who were killed in the recent hostilities as shown in the Channel 4 documentary.

In continuation, the new regime worked diligently convincing the international communities that there would work towards accountability and justice mechanism. There have been some visible changes in the ground such as the passage of the 19th amendment to limit the power of the executive President, civilian governors for Northern and Eastern provinces, and freedom of press. In reciprocation and with the request from Sirisena, the UNHRC deferred the findings of its investigation report to the OSRL report by six months to set the domestic political arena in order.

In an interesting twist to the tale, Mahinda Rajapakse has been given a new life in politics and nominated as the candidate of the UPFA (United People’s Freedom Alliance) in the general election of Sri Lanka on August, 2015. The election result clearly divulged the political clout of Rajapakse. The island was divided into three zones, the UNP took the hill and the wet zones of the central region, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) took the northern purely domestic. The regime speaks one language in the international arena that the state culture.

The road never travelled before

The regime had proposed for a four-tiered structure for accountability mechanism. They are as follows: a National Commission for Truth, Justice and Reconciliation, to be established in consultation with South Africa; an Office of Missing Persons, set up by statute and in line with the international acceptably-accepted standards; what he termed a ‘Judicial Mechanism with a Special Counsel’; and an ‘Office of Reparations’.

In a recent interview, Chandrika Kumaratunga, the former President and the head of the TNP, has said that the Tamil separatist forces with sheer.

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Before the UN resolution on 2015

The U.S. has started structuring the narrative of progress in Sri Lanka since the visit of the U.S. Secretary of State, John Kerry, to Sri Lanka in May, 2015. The government of the incumbent Secretary of State, Nisha Biswal, made her visit to Sri Lanka in August, 2015, to discuss the ongoing political developments in the country. She promised to support the Sri Lankan Government’s position for a credible domestic accountability mechanism.

The release of the OSRL report made the world know the gravity of the sufferings that the Tamils have endured during the last phase of armed conflict. Some of the crucial allegations in the report were that the Sri Lankan security forces have committed war crimes.

In the recent period, the international community has been discussing the creation of a hybrid accountability mechanism for war crimes in Sri Lanka. The hybrid mechanism would be domestic and international, and it would be set up to bring to justice those who committed war crimes.

The domestic inquiry process (with the involvement of the experts from the Commonwealth countries) has been passed by the recently elected Sri Lankan government and was aimed to initiate a domestic inquiry process (with the involvement of the experts from the Commonwealth countries) to bring accountability and evolve political solution.

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Banned and Boycott
Research Scholars of Hyderabad Central University

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Shared Silence

On Ravish Kumar's NDTV India in the prime time show after Bihar's state elections outcome was outstanding senior reporters, belonging to the upper castes, were quoted as saying that how it could be considered as result wrong. One of the hypothesis proposed was that most respondents in the field, who spoke on camera, also belonged to the higher castes. It was also contended that the very public space these sages were offering was not all for the upper castes because only they have the confidence to speak up. The upper castes, it was said, never voice their opinions at the crowded restaurants, hotels, administration building and other common places in groups and are not permitted to speak until and unless they are taken on one to one

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Fact Finding

Five Dalit Research Scholars of the Hyderabad Central University (HCU) have been boycotted for the last many days by the Ministry of Human Resource Development for standing against unilateral action taken against them in the campus. The research scholars have been barred from entering the hostels, administration building and other common places in groups and are not permitted to speak until and unless they are taken on one to one.

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Follow Up

#OccupyUGC: Jaari Hai, Jaari rahega!

The students agitating against the scrapping of Non net fellowships, fund cuts, increased privatization of higher education assembl- ing at the gates of MHRD to question the government's indecision regarding the non net fellowships today. Even after 85 days of protest the MHRD has not provided any answers to the question as to when the Non net fellowships will be continued. The University authorities for not taking action, the decision to continue the closed enquiry, the revised report, the recommendation to suspend and suspend- in all very clearly point out that the University acted at the behest of ruling political party. Despite the fact that none of the scholars of ASA – HCU, the university on 16th December passed orders for continued enquiry against the students for the objections the for the defamatory comments on the Facebook. The said report, the recommendation to suspend and suspend- in all very clearly point out that the University acted at the behest of ruling political party. Despite the fact that none of the scholars of ASA – HCU, the university on 16th December passed orders for continued enquiry against the students for the objections the for the defamatory comments on the Facebook. The said report, the recommendation to suspend and suspend- in all very clearly point out that the University acted at the behest of ruling political party. Despite the fact that none of the scholars of ASA – HCU, the university on 16th December passed orders for continued enquiry against the students for the objections the for the defamatory comments on the Facebook. The said report, the recommendation to suspend and suspend- in all very clearly point out that the University acted at the behest of ruling political party. Despite the fact that none of the scholars of ASA – HCU, the university on 16th December passed orders for continued enquiry against the students for the objections the for the defamatory comments on the Facebook. The said report, the recommendation to suspend and suspend- in all very clearly point out that the University acted at the behest of ruling political party. Despite the fact that none of the scholars of ASA – HCU, the university on 16th December passed orders for continued enquiry against the students for the objections the for the defamatory comments on the Facebook. The said report, the recommendation to suspend and suspend- in all very clearly point out that the University acted at the behest of ruling political party. Despite the fact that none of the scholars of ASA – HCU, the university on 16th December passed orders for continued enquiry against the students for the objections the for the defamatory comments on the Facebook. The said report, the recommendation to suspend and suspend- in all very clearly point out that the University acted at the behest of ruling political party. Despite the fact that none of the scholars of ASA – HCU, the university on 16th December passed orders for continued enquiry against the students for the objections the for the defamatory comments on the Facebook. The said report, the recommendation to suspend and suspend- in all very clearly point out that the University acted at the behest of ruling political party. Despite the fact that none of the scholars of ASA – HCU, the university on 16th December passed orders for continued enquiry against the students for the objections the for the defamatory comments on the Facebook. The said report, the recommendation to suspend and suspend- in all very clearly point out that the University acted at the behest of ruling political party. Despite the fact that none of the scholars of ASA – HCU, the university on 16th December passed orders for continued enquiry against the students for the objections the for the defamatory comments on the Facebook. The said report, the recommendation to suspend and suspend- in all very clearly point out that the University acted at the behest of ruling political party. Despite the fact that none of the scholars of ASA – HCU, the university on 16th December passed orders for continued enquiry against the students for the objections the for the defamatory comments on the Facebook. The said report, the recommendation to suspend and suspend- in all very clearly point out that the University acted at the behest of ruling political party. Despite the fact that none of the scholars of ASA – HCU, the university on 16th December passed orders for continued enquiry against the students for the objections the for the defamatory comments on the Facebook. The said report, the recommendation to suspend and suspend- in all very clearly point out that the University acted at the behest of ruling political party. Despite the fact that none of the scholars of ASA – HCU, the university on 16th December passed orders for continued enquiry against the students for the objections the for the defamatory comments on the Facebook.
Did you know that Himachal Pradesh has 220 languages? This is not a short list; it is a long list of languages. Why? One reason is that there are about 500 adivasi languages. This is the number of languages that are spoken in the state. These languages are in danger of disappearing. Why? Because there is no literature in these languages. This is a problem because literature is important for the survival of a language. If a language has no literature, it may become extinct. This is why it is important to collect and record the literature of these languages. It will help to save them.

The Akhil Bhartiya Bhasha Akademi is working on this. It is collecting and recording the literature of these languages. They are also trying to create a literature in these languages. This is important because literature is the basis of a language. If a language has no literature, it will become extinct. This is why it is important to create a literature in these languages.

The Akhil Bhartiya Bhasha Akademi is not collecting the literature of these languages. It is collecting the literature of all the languages of India. This is because the Akhil Bhartiya Bhasha Akademi is a national institution. It is collecting the literature of all the languages of India, not just the adivasi languages.

The Akhil Bhartiya Bhasha Akademi is also working on the preservation of the culture of the adivasi people. They are collecting the culture of the adivasi people and creating a literature in their languages. This is important because the culture of the adivasi people is important for the survival of their language. If a language has no culture, it will become extinct. This is why it is important to create a culture in these languages.

The Akhil Bhartiya Bhasha Akademi is also working on the education of the adivasi people. They are creating a educational program for the adivasi people. This is important because education is important for the survival of a language. If a language has no education, it will become extinct. This is why it is important to create an education program in these languages.

The Akhil Bhartiya Bhasha Akademi is also working on the protection of the environment. They are collecting the environment of the adivasi people and creating a literature in their languages. This is important because the environment is important for the survival of a language. If a language has no environment, it will become extinct. This is why it is important to create an environment in these languages.

The Akhil Bhartiya Bhasha Akademi is also working on the protection of the adivasi people. They are collecting the adivasi people and creating a literature in their languages. This is important because the adivasi people are important for the survival of their language. If a language has no adivasi people, it will become extinct. This is why it is important to create an adivasi in these languages.

The Akhil Bhartiya Bhasha Akademi is also working on the protection of the adivasi women. They are collecting the adivasi women and creating a literature in their languages. This is important because the adivasi women are important for the survival of their language. If a language has no adivasi women, it will become extinct. This is why it is important to create an adivasi women in these languages.

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At least 75 people have been killed in weeks of student protests in Ethiopia. The Oromo region and federal authorities have imposed curfews in several towns and deployed troops in cities like the federal capital, Addis Ababa. In a statement on Friday, the U.S. State Department urged Ethiopian authorities to "permit peaceful protest and commit to a constructive dialogue with the Oromo people and the international community.

The protests started on Nov. 12 in Guci town, about 50 miles out of Addis Ababa, by elementary and high school students responding to a call from the opposition. The protests spread to the Federal Capital, Addis Ababa, and other towns. In Addis Ababa, police dispersed protest gatherings with tear gas and live ammunition. Scores of students were arrested and detained. In the Oromia region, police used tear gas to disperse protests in several towns, including the capital, Addis Ababa.

The Oromo people, who make up one fifth of Ethiopia's population, are largely excluded from their own region's economic development, and their cultural practices are increasingly suppressed. The government has a history of arresting and detaining citizens who speak out against the administration. The government also uses its control of the media and communications networks to stifle dissent. The government has a history of using violence and intimidation to suppress political opposition.

Oromo grievances, however, are not confined to the economic realm. Neither is it limited to Ethiopia. Addis Ababa's proximity to Africa, cannot be put out by my friend, because that fire, is fed by a woman's burnt corpse and the scattered bones of human beings. As for these scattered human bones, well they could be of Roman slaves, or Bengali weavers, maybe even Vietnamese, Pakistani, Iraqi kids. What do you expect from empires? Whether Roman or British or the spanking new American Empire? The task is one and the same. For these bones, tombs, pyramids, pillars sunk in bottomless seas. Save me from this fire. You my people from this fire. Oh my people from the west, your wives sold in the market, your lovely fields ploughed by the sword's tip. Your harvests saved me from this fire. You my people from the east. Your ancestors, your women, your children, your land. And when poetry is written, it starts a fire! Oh my people, who for ages have sought greater autonomy, who for ages have stood up against the imperialists' pet mice, the fire of hate that rages, from Asia to Africa, cannot be put out by my friend, because that fire, is fed by a woman's burnt corpse and the scattered bones of human beings. The first man to kill his mother did so at the behest of his father. Jambhatai instructed Parashuram to kill his mother. And he did. And so he became the first man's father. And so came patriarchy. Then father's killed their sons. The river Jhanvi asked her husband, to drown her sons in that river. And so the river filled with sons of men, with the Ganga. But still Shantanu did not become Jambhatai's because a king belongs to no one. Just like the goddess of wealth is no-one's and the way of duty is nobody's. But he who has the power to know, to be fed with the holy book and the first prayer. As for god, he looks after the king's horses. He's a nice fellow, god. Oh, he takes care of all the donkeys and the camels. And you know how long ago. And when he died the king, gave him neither Shroud, nor two yard of ground for a grave. So no one knows where god was buried. But anyway he died in the king's body and the king's soul. So when the historian comes back and tells you that the king died, the king, the queen, even the prince. The king in battle, the queen in the kitchen. The son from too much school. And oh, on the threshold of each civilization, a charred corpse, scattered bones. This corpse is not charred, it has been burnt. These bones are not scattered. They have been thrown far and wide. This fire is not burning, it has been set. The fight did not erupt, it has been started …

But this poem too did not just appear, it has been written! And when poetry is written, it starts a fire! My people from the east. Your lovely fields ploughed by the sword's tip. Your harvests saved me from this fire. Oh my people from the west, your lovely fields ploughed by the sword's tip. And the walls were built. To save me is to save the woman. Whose corpse lies on the last step of the pond of Mohenjodaro. To save me, is to save those human beings. Your from whose blood, the pyramids, the pillars sunk in bottomless seas. Save me from this fire. You my people from this fire. Oh my people of the north whose shoul...
Commons emerge as we attempt to reclaim solidarity, autonomy and possibility through strategies of “bottom-up” resistance. This necessarily implies a confrontation with power.

The following edited text is based on the interview with Max Haiven by the Berlin Gazette on the topic of their annual theme UN/COMMONS.

Let me first say why I am concerned about framing the commons as a “right.” Unless we agree that (a) a right is always taken and defended from below, never given or protected from above, and (b) that the commons is always a process, then we risk delivering the idea of “right to the commons” into the hands of the state. And we have seen how eager the neoliberal state has been to sacrifice our rights to capital on the altar of “efficiency” and “security.” I am not enthusiastic for the state to admit to the commons as a right for this reason. Adorno once told us (to paraphrase) that as soon as one can speak of the word “culture” one is actually speaking of administration — as soon as the concept of “culture” as such gains autonomy it is exposed to autonomy that is lost. So might we say of a “right” to the commons: one worries that, as soon as the commons are articulated as a “right”, their radical character may be lost.

Let me deepen what I have suggested before: the “right to the commons” is not a finished legalistic thing given from above, but a process constantly animated by struggles from below. Let me say this about the idea below, is one of reweaving the network, of building new non-exploitative collaborations and relationships not only between humans (new forms of cooperation, new forms of collaboration, new political mechanisms, new economic relations), but also between humans and the rest of creation, with new forms of co-habitation and new relationships with the minerals and plants we today reduce to mere “resources” — new relationships with animals and microbes and the atmosphere and rivers. In this sense, can we say that the “human right to the commons” is the right to discover our commons and defend them? Or can it be to create non-exploitative or at least reciprocal commons? Again, this right is more of a promise than a fact.

Let me be more concrete. Let’s think about the Creative Commons licensing movement, which attempts to take intellectual property like music or software or novels or training manuals out of the hands of profiteers and put them in the public domain. Sure, we can demand a human right to data, to knowledge, and I support such efforts. But by whose hands should these efforts be carried out? We need healthy marketplaces, but we also need to create non-exploitative or at least reciprocal commons? Again, this right is more of a promise than a fact.

Here we basically have the impossible adolescent dream of a complete liberation from property, reciprocity, accountability. From a more radical perspective, these technologies matter only to the extent they help us build commons-in-struggle and transform social relations as collective facts. That is, these technologies have incredible potentials to not only transform the economy, but to transform us as subjects, to make us more (not less) common, interdependent, compassionate and morally fearless.

Let us take another example: the struggle against hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking.” We just waged a major struggle against this in my region of Canada, and we won: we achieved a moratorium on the practice, which otherwise could have destroyed the whole watersheds of our region. But in streams, in our drinking water, we might think of this struggle as being for the hydro-commons. But as Astrida Neimanis has noted in her new interesting discussion of water and commons, if we take water seriously, it begins to erode and blend the categories of human and non-human, self and other, individual and community. On the far side of this deconstruction is what might be called the “human right to the commons” — the right to be human in common, commons-based. A human right to the commons as an open and not unproblematic question of responsibility and reciprocity, of what we owe the threat it poses to our water, we are not just fighting for the human right to water as defined by the United Nations of some other top-down body, we are fighting for something much more profound too.

But this does not for a moment render illegitimate or irrelevant the need to fight for our fundamental “human rights” as they are currently defined by the state. Nor does it qualitatively affect such forces as those aimed at defining the rights of “Mother Earth” or of particular rivers or streams, as they are doing in Bolivia today (though in imperfect ways). Rather, it is to say that, if you will excuse the neologism, these are struggles for what we might call a “human right to the commons.” From below, to achieve a bottom-up process, not a top-down process. All the state-afforded human rights we have today are in some ways shards or fragments of the “right to the commons.” They offer us pieces of a puzzle that is always already incomplete. The right to the commons is broken or fragmented because if it were whole it would forbid and undermine the powers that be: capital and the state.

Indeed, were states to actually obey and respect even the human rights they have on the books at the United Nations today, the world would be much closer to the promise of the commons: the right of children to an education, to health and to material abundance; the rights of Indigenous peoples to their lifeways; the rights of humans to migrate; the right to be free of racism; the right to practice one’s identity and body and mind and sexuality; the right to union; the right to assembly; the right to water; the right to justice. The reason these are denied is because member states instead protect corporate and elite interests.

For instance, in Canada the state simply abrogates its international responsibilities to Indigenous people because if they were to abide by them it would prevent resource exploitation. It ignores the rights of youth to university education because it would require raising corporate taxes to pay for it. These paper rights are, when taken in their fullest sense, essentially antithetical to the accumulation of capital.

In a strange way, the only way these paper rights could actually be enforced or respected is through the proliferation and resilience of the commons. The neoliberal state makes its legitimacy on telling us that, later, eventually, if you will, “things will work out” and we have to fight for these promised rights. But the truth is that it never will; it never can. The only way these rights will ever be meaningful is if they are not only demanded but lived from below, from the commons.

Max Haiven is a writer, teacher and organizer based in K'ipakuk (Halifax), Mi'kmak'ik (Southeastern Coastal Atlantic Canada). He teaches cultural studies and political economy at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and is the author of the books Crises of Imagination, Crises of Power (2014).
While Indian media has not bothered to cover it, the western media is only busy in glamorising the news reports on young women fighters of Rojava, a region where Kurds reside in Syria. After the ISIS assault in Syria one and a half years back in the city of Kobani, the self-governed Kurds in north of Syria bravely fought against ISIS. YPG and YPJ fighters, the men and women armed forces of Rojava, together reclaimed the region from ISIS control with the support of US led air-strikes killing around 2200 personnel of ISIS. Fighters were further successful to drive ISIS out from the strategically important city of Tal Abyad. It is widely reported that ISIS, which has indulged in large scale violence against women, fears of being killed by a woman soldier of YPJ and believes it will deprive those killed of a place in heaven.

In 2006, People’s Defense Unit (YPG) was formed with three women in its command but in 2013 women opted for a separate unit of force named YPJ. Formation of YPJ was not only in YPG command but in the Turkish military as well. It must be noted that YPJ is the women’s party from the beginning and an independent political party super-vised by the political Kurdish party PYD. Women fighters now constitute 35% of Kurdish forces in Rojava. YPJ comprise of women of age 16-35 years in its force. Many of these young recruits have not engaged in any physical activities or sports previously. Both YPG and YPJ apart from getting military training, are trained in gender-equality and sensitivity, and democracy issues before getting into the field. Their education also continues. Though the structure of YPG and YPJ are separate, there is no hierarchy known for their fearlessness and dedi- cation, YPJ initially had to fight for their roles at the front command during war. Women in YPJ know that they are not just fighting ISIS but also contributing to the Kurdish cause of autonomy and claim to a homeland and the right to live in peace. They are continuing the legacy of women’s contribution as fighters, activists, politicians, leaders, protesters and prisoners in the decades-long Kurdish struggle. They are becoming a part of the history of a self-governed and equitable society, unwilling to compromise on their rights.

“Appreciation for these women should not only praise their fight against ISIS, but it should also recognise their politics. Those seeking to honour the bravest amongst them will do well to acknowledge their claim to a homeland and the right to live in peace. They are continuing the legacy of women’s contribution as fighters, activists, politicians, leaders, protesters and prisoners in the decades-long Kurdish struggle. They are becoming a part of the history of a self-governed and equitable society, unwilling to compromise on their rights.” – Diril Dirik, Kurdish activist

Kurds and Kurdistan

Once the oldest civilisation in the Mesopotamia, Kurdistan is a geo-cultural land inhabited by 30 million Kurdish population in an area of approximately 175,000 sq. kms. But it is not a country in itself! Kurdistan, ‘homeland of Kurds’, is divided among four nations – eastern and south-eastern part of Turkey (also called as Northern Kurdistan), northern Syria (Western Kurdistan or Rojava), northern Iraq (Southern Kurdistan) and north-western Iran (Eastern Kurdis- tant); a very small area of Armenia is also inhabited by Kurds. The history of this division dates back to 1639 A.D. after the Kar-1 Shirin convention when Kurd- istan was divided into two, between the Ottomans and Persians. Later in 1920, an agreement known as Lausanne treaty was ratified by the nations who won WWI and Ottoman Turkey resulting in the largest ethnic group lacking a nation state. But, Kurds have continuously struggled to gain their identity.

In Iraq, Kurds won semi-autonomy in 1992 resulting in a Province of Kurdistan governed by Kurds and having their own armed forces called Peshmergas. In Turkey, Kurdish Worker’s Party (PKK) has pushed for autonomy of Kurds; PKK has since been listed as a terrorist organisation by Turkey and US. The Turkish government has brutally tried to suppress their fight for autonomy, resulting in destruction of homes and curtailment of civil liberties. Turkey even banned the use of the words ‘Kurds’, ‘Kurdish’ and ‘Kurdistan’ as well as prohibited the use of Kurdish language. In Syria, post the civil war of 2011, the Kurdish region called Rojava, which has three self-declared regions, is governed by locally set up committees of Kurds. While Syrian government agreed not to confront this system, Kurds on the other hand are not pushing for a separate nation.

Ideological Shift, the Revolution

The armed struggle in Turkey for independence of Kurds has seen an ideological shift where PKK is now having political parties and other associations which were independent of Kurdish struggle. They took on the responsibility of organising when male activists were targeted by the oppressive regimes. Women died fighting in the armed forces through women’s organisations like Yekitiya Star, Democratic Union Party (PYD), YPJ etc. alongside Peshmergas fighters. PYD operationalised women’s participation in military as well as in the life of Kurds society through self-governing structures across Rojava.

In 2012, women academies were established and the idea of gender equality was made an important part of the curriculum emphasising that transforma- tion of women leads to transformation in society. In 2013, through the efforts of Yekitiya Star, honor killings, under-age marriages, forced marriages and po- licy of education, justice and economics to maintain democratic and gender-equal society. Parallels have been drawn between the Zapatistas or Mayans in Mexico and Kurdish revolution who instead of fighting for the revolution, focused on creating it in the everyday life by building democratic structures at every level in society – schools, housing, agriculture, governance etc. Kurds also focussed on creating free and self-governing communities based on the principle of power to the people. Rojava is a multi-ethnic and religious society where equal governance now has representation at all levels of self-governing territories. There is freedom to practice and celebrate one’s culture.

In Syrian Kurdistan the people were prepared and knew what they wanted. They believed that the revolution must start from the bottom of society and not from the top. It must be a social, cultural and educational as well as political revolution. It must engage with people who are traditionally marginalized in the communities who have the final decision-making responsibilities. These are the four principles of the Movement of the Democracy Society (Tev-Dem). Credit needs to be given to whoever is behind these great ideas and the efforts being made to put them into practice, whether it’s Abdullah Ocalan and his comrades or anybody else.” Kurdish Anarchist Zaher Baher on the revolution in Rojava

A Revolution in Making - Kurdistan & its Women

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In 2012, women academies were established and the idea of gender equality was made an important part of the curriculum emphasising that transformation of women leads to transformation in society. In 2013, through the efforts of Yekitiya Star, honor killings, under-age marriages, forced marriages and polygamy were ruled out of the Kurdish self-governing society in Rojava. In 2014, through Social Contract new policies were adopted giving women rights to participate in political, social, economic and cultural spheres, rights to organize themselves, rights to run and hold public office, equal pay to divorce, to inherit etc. There is a call to eliminate all forms of discrimination, and violence against women is banned. Co-presidency with one man and one woman is established and representation of women in all institutions is of at least 40% with veto power to women in issues impacting women. ‘Female only homes (safe houses) are established. Further, women committees, shelters, centers and meeting places are formed where women can engage in discourses, get legal and economic support. Influenced by the PKK’s feminist stance, the majority of women in the Turkish parliament and municipal administrations are Kurdish.

Hence, this phase of Rojava Revolution has become a feminist revolution for women by women where participation of women can be seen as invigorating the larger cause of Kurdish autonomy.
The agricultural sector still employs the majority of our population and yet we never seem to have enough food. The ad tells us that it is not because of a structural deficiency that people have to go hungry every year, but because of a lack of information. Individual responsibility is invoked here in two ways. First, we are responsible for enlightening the farmer by letting Facebook provide him with Free Basics. Next, the farmer is now responsible for himself because we have done our part and allowed him access to information. Where is the government? It has receded, because this is now a matter of the market.

The ad tells us that life for the user. All these qualities are questionable. For instance, we can’t be sure Ganesh is capable of using the internet without the required language and technical skills. With the proliferation of spin and fake news on the internet, it is becoming difficult for even the digital natives to find the right information. Then we aren’t sure whether information that is useful to him is even available there. Information on the internet is only available when someone puts it there. The internet is a repository, not a generator of information on farming techniques. The only information the internet generates is of its own use, all the other types of information have to be made available through other means.

So, if we presume that information that is beneficial to Ganesh exists, we have to ask why it is not reaching him in the first place.

Here the role of the government is called into question. What are the myriad agricultural universities all over India doing? The government should be taking care of its farmers, it should be making sure that they are told about the latest advancements in farming techniques. To even get to a stage, where free basics can help a farmer, we have to assume that the government is failing at this job. But even then, how bad was the farmer doing before this? That some information gleaned over the internet doubled his crop yield. Even the actual introduction of new technology directly affecting farming, rarely, if ever, leads to such a drastic improvement. Our farmers must be doing a really horrible job if the internet can bring such a massive change. This also means that their poverty and the food shortages that they chronically face are their own fault. Even though they have been farming for hundreds or not thousands of years, they haven’t been able to make it. But lo and behold, Facebook can help them, let reason and science in, let them be the saviors, let them stop farmer suicides, let them save the natives from their own ignorance.

Free Basics, thus becomes a tool for enlightenment and empowerment against an apathetic government. It is implied that it is the responsibility of the government to support farmers to reach their full potential.

Finally we get to the ‘patriotic’ imperative to help our country progress into the future. “Show your patriotism by supporting Free Basics and help move India forward”. It is a well-documented fact that the Indian middle class, the audience for this ad, is obsessed with progress and catching up with the West. That insecurity is used in this ad to its full effect. The ad tells us that India is not moving forward because it lacks the internet. Moving forward or what is called progress is here equated to the availability of the internet.

The farmers have always been an important part of discourse in India. The agricultural sector still employs the majority of our population and yet we never seem to have enough food. The ad tells us that it is not because of a structural deficiency that people have to go hungry every year, but because of a lack of information. Individual responsibility is invoked here in two ways. First, we are responsible for enlightening the farmer by letting Facebook provide him with Free Basics. Next, the farmer is now responsible for himself because we have done our part and allowed him access to information. Where is the government? It has receded, because this is now a matter of the market.

The farmer was suffering in the market because of an information deficiency and now that the market has corrected this failure, the farmer as an independent producer should be able to produce and sell his wares to eke out a proper living; obviously only if he is willing to work hard and educate himself. The ad is another artefact of our ongoing neo-liberalization and should be read as such. Increase the responsibility of the individual for himself, reduce government responsibilities and let the private and corporate sphere provide commodities and services to pick up government’s old duties and help us be responsible for ourselves.
"Framed, Damed and Acquitted" is the report brought out by Jamia Teachers Solidarity Association last year. It compiled 16 high profile cases of acquittal, in which Supreme Court reprimanded the police for systematic and rampant fabrication of evidences. Needless to say in all these cases, the accused languished in prisons for inordinate years. The report rightly points out that cases fall in courts because they are backed not by evidence but by the belief that the court will be seduced by the hysteria of national security. As per this verdict, protesting against the arrest of Naxalists as a plague. Is the fate of professor, GN Saibaba, whose bail has been rejected by the Nagpur Bench of Bombay High Court on 23rd December going to be any different?

The verdicts that acquit the accused after long incarcerations often point out the 'inefficiency' of prosecutions. But inefficiency of the police is an understatement. This purges the judiciary of its complicity in incarcerating the innocents for unconvincable periods. In fact, an enormous efficiency and planning goes into concoction of evidences especially against those accused of crimes against national security. In none of these cases any representative of State was ever made accountable. Judiciary's more often than not willingness to acquiesce with the version of prosecution in these cases cannot be ignored. The 16 are not the rare cases in which evidences are concocted efficiently. The process of prosecution itself is designed as persecution by the state. It requires enormous ideological affinity with the dominant political thought of our times not to recognize these trends. This is the context in which the case of Saibaba has to be seen.

The court describes the material against the applicant as "collectively describes the petitioner before Bombay High Court, Purnima Upadayya and author Arundhati Roy as 'so called human rights champions'. It may have forgotten the role of public conscious personalities in the history of judicial activism. In fact, judiciary has never been immune to public opinion. A healthy public debate always forces public institutions to take a hard look at the alternative facts and ways of interpretations that cannot be ignored. The court feels that instead of challenging the order before larger bench, the author wrongly chose to write. But the authors are of different kind of advocates. They don't challenge the powerful in judiciary. They tease the executive in the court of ethics. That is not an interference into justice but challenging injustice. The ideas of authors cannot be regimented. The freedom of expression is meaningless if alternative narratives of truth are throttled. They do not need to be eyewitnesses to express moral angst against the perceived injustice.

The court thinks that creating public opinion is an attempt to ban the debate. It felt offended and continued questioning the justness of order that rejected the bail as questioning the sanctity of judiciary. In the same breadth it displayed its contempt for human rights sarcastically come to their rescue as the judiciary in general inclines to drown itself in technicalities. Of course when it comes to issues of national security, our sense of loyalty overrides our faculties. Judiciary, too, is susceptible to this process. The sanctity of judicial orders should flow from the philosophy of justice they are girded in and cannot be protected with contempt orders.

As per this verdict, protesting against the arrest of Maoist leaders and demanding their immediate release is equal to sharing the ideology of the banned organization. Those who believe in constitution and perceive the armed Maoist leaders as unjust also often openly demand their release. Does that make them Maoists?

The court accuses the author of vandalizing and questioning the credibility of the higher judiciary. At least half a dozen retired chief justices of Supreme Court can also be charged with the same accusation as they spoke about the levels of corruption in judiciary, unfor- tunately only at the time of their retirements. On the other hand, we are left to wonder what is the judicial validity of description of Naxalites as a plague.

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In any case being judgmental is not just the monopoly of judiciary. While anybody could be players of truth, the writers as the teasers of the truth do irritate those who exercise power. British writer of Indian origin, Hanif Kureishi has described intellectuals as vio- lence against the banned organization. Those commanding their immediate release is equal to sharing the ideology of the banned organization. Those who believe in constitution and perceive the armed Maoist leaders as unjust also often openly demand their release. Does that make them Maoists?

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Law & Justice
Seminar on Police Reforms & Human Rights at GLC

On 10th of December, 2015 as the world celebrated Human Rights Day, The Government Law College Mumbai, along with Hurt Foundation and the centre for Criminology and Justice, Tata Institute of Social Sciences Mumbai, organized a seminar on ‘Police Reforms and Human Rights’. The program was divided into 3 sessions:

1) which was about “Police reforms and its Dimensions.”
2) pertained to “Police as the protectors”
3) had an open discussion forum, as well as, outcomes from this workshop.

In the inaugural speech, Justice S. R. Bannurmath, Chairperson of Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission (former Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court) addressed the audience, on how police reforms and human rights are of a symbolic need - the police as a protector, have a major role to play in society, i.e. prevention, detection, and maintaining public law and order. Especially by respecting other individuals, as well as, themselves. Every society needs some respect of policing. And requires a proper enquiry committee to be set, and for the guilty to be punished, as well as proper action to be taken at the right time. The police have an active network within the law - a huge democratic setup on its own, to strike a balance between law and society.

He added, “The police’s priority will be to reduce pending cases. If the complaints remain pending for a long time, it will be a violation of human rights. At the same time, there must be a proper check of public servants, in terms of machines they are using. There must be a balance between the citizen and the police force and also between the police force and the machinery - both in an association and through combined efforts, have to guard human rights. The main idea is to provide justice at the doorstep, so that people of different districts and villages, can primarily lodge their complaint(s) or demand for any basic enquiry, at any nearby police station(s). Even after death, one’s existence can be questioned on the basis of human rights.

Sometimes, the police uses third degree torture to extract necessary data of the crime - again this may not be applicable to all (but done not the less is a violation of human rights/law). But, if we see closely, then we will notice that these people are related to crime, or in turn are the prime suspects, or such methods are employed for collecting important data. Then, there are cases of illegal registrations too. So, whenever an attack or a death has taken place, the first thing that needs to be done by the police is to actually ‘Register’ it. Bannurmath, also pointed out to the specific role that the media plays in reporting human rights violations.

In the key note address, Harbha Justice Hosoboth Suresh, pointed out to the fact that yes! Police have rights too; and Quaiser Khalid (Deputy Commissioner of Police) addressed the audience, on the role of the police as defenders of human rights.

Justice Suresh began by saying, “we must know, whose obligations, are human rights?” The obligation to achieve progressively in full realization, is a central aspect of the States’ obligations, particularly in connection with the economic, the social and the cultural rights of the people, under the international human rights treaties. He added, “in order to clarify the meaning of ‘States’ obligations,’ these obligations are sometimes put under three headings: to respect (refrain from interference with the enjoyment of the right), to protect (prevent others from interfering with the enjoyment of the right) and to fulfill (adopting appropriate measures towards the full realization) of economic, social and cultural rights. All human rights are fundamental rights, that they need to be protected.”

If the police force has that kind of authority to use human rights and exercise it properly in our modern day to day life, then surely they can take that kind of a charge in their hand. Police officers often bring up the issue of their own human rights, during human rights training, because they do not feel as if they are properly trained. Justice Suresh added, the objectives that the police force needed to acknowledge, “gain an increased acceptance of others human rights, through the acknowledgment of their own.”

It is tough for the police to also maintain their own dignity. Since they are always available to demolish a crime against humanity, but who protects their humanity? Recently we have seen, a Haryana minister misbehaving with a lady officer. There are several laws in our country, enabling the functioning of the economy and accountability of the police force. Still, the police do need a voice of their own, and one which supports them. They do need certain laws that can stand for them. So can’t we evaluate the kind of work that the police does? Or the kind of support it provides as an individual body?

On the contrary, the atrocities of human rights by police need to be checked constantly. Police forces are working rigorously at the ground level, while maintaining a balance between the police machinery and the people. Thus the abiding of law and requirement of justice, in terms of equality comes into the picture.

The kind of police reforms that are needed is an increased support than what they have here. The Police Act of 1861 still guides and governs our police system. There were several acts and reforms made post independence, in order to make police force independent from government. Still, Police force remain as the ‘subjects’ of Parliamentarians and legislators – with an allegiance towards ruling party. Till now, most of the states follow the archaic Indian Police Act 1861 with a few modifications.”

On the concluding, students of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, brought home the point, on how society had refused to give credit to the police force. Society neglects to understand that the police, many times, have to work for long hour shifts, do excessive paper work, have many commitments to fulfill, have external pressure and have diverse job profiles, and at the same time maintaining duties and priorities towards their families. Simultaneously, many do not get any recognition or awards instantly. Thus it is difficult for society to even think of the incredible patience, they keep in terms of dealing with much worse conditions than that could be imagined.

When talking about human rights, the most prominent consideration, is the relationship between private persons and the state. The first consideration is that the police are acting as state agents, and are therefore, obliged to respect and protect the rights of the people. Police officers themselves, however, often raise the question to their colleagues, “why are they doing so?” The answer to this question, which somehow, they also deny to acknowledge, is a simple ‘yes’.

Though we have a fairly accommodative constitution, police friendly acts are yet to be introduced. Where the police will not be working alone as a separate ‘unit’ (only having a tag of a certain ‘state’s) with the misconception, where the people, see them as a malicious body of this society, and instead as a helping hand to reach out to.

(The event was organized by Rajeev Yadav, a criminal justice fellow at TISS, Mumbai who works on cases related to Substance abuse with seven police stations in Mumbai.)
Jan Chetna Manch, Chattisgarh

Eliz Lakra
Student of Social Work, TISS, Mumbai

Jan Chetna is a people’s organization started by Mr. Rajesh Kumar Tripathi and other like-minded people like Mies Savita Rathe in 2004. It started by taking up issues of migration and displacement in the District of Raigarh, Chattisgarh. It has also worked for Water Shed program and has taken Food Security concerning the farmers on a serious note. As stated by Mr.Tripathi, they focus on improvement of production of food grain rather than the implementation of the govt. schemes related to food security. It is also very important to stop the govt. from acquiring land from the farmers who provide food for the entire country’s population. It is the mother organization of other community based people’s organizations like Mazdoor Kish Kisan Ekta Sangathan, Gare and Bhoomi Bachao Andolan Last. It is fully funded by the local community and some well wishers.

Jan Chetna works in three stages:
1. Organization of people
2. Documents study
3. Technical help to bring the issues on court level

It is a right based organization that does not work for various projects but takes up the issues that are from the community and by the community. It initiates an involvement only when people come to them with their felt needs. According to Mr.Tripathi, “जब भी प्रश्न पेश किया जाता है तो हम जवाब देते हैं। यदि हमारे साथ लोगों के साथ हमारे साथ आते हैं तो हम उनके साथ आते हैं।”

Jan Chetna has always been involved at the community level. It organizes them to fight for their rights more effectively. When the Government and company are not fair to the local indigenous people, it brings the people together to confront and pressurize the government and such companies for justice. Initially after being guided by JCM, all the activities that take place in the community are organized by the people themselves. All the financial constraints are also met by the community people themselves. And they also practice Community donation, wherein each household brings together food products according to their ability and is served as community meal. The meal is served to all and some money is collected from each household after every meetings for their use. According to Ms.Savita Rathe ““पूरे वर्ष में धार्मिक और सामाजिक अवसरों के लिए दिए गए और छुपे रहने का कोई जोड़ नहीं है।”

Although the organization does not work on one permanent issue, it works according to the needs of the people. The focus area of JCM changes pattern as time and situation has required to. Presently they focus on the following activities:
- Providing platform for the affected mass to voice out their issues
- Providing guidance, and share resources for the people come with their needs
- Equip people with skills and empower them through various training programs.

JCM & Koyla Satyagraha Gare

Koyla Satyagraha Gare is known as model for all other states specially for the ones who are facing the same problem of losing their land and natural resources rights. Now this movement is spreading worldwide. It is completely community based movement as it was started by people of the Gare village and not by any others. Though JCM has been great support in terms of organizing people and sensitizing them about their rights over their land and resources under their land and this prepared them to be organized and voice for their lands right. And now at present many other nearby villages have joined Gare village in supporting this movement. This movement is inspired by Namak Satyagraha Andolan by M.Gandhi. Koyla Satyagraha is against Koyla Kanoon that is Coal mining which is being done from their own resource. Based on this argument Tripathi says if Namak Satyagraha was legal though salt was produced not from their own resources then Gare Koyla Satyagraha wouldn’t be illegal because mining is done from their own land.

Although some of the households have sold their land to find out but the awareness of the consequence in doing that to their future has made many to not sell their land. This awareness has come through regular meetings initiated by Jan Chetna Manch with other villagers, affected by mining.

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