SPACES and FACES of SATIRE

The spaces and faces of Satire - Who left it? What made people laugh on their own democratic representatives? What permissive liberals did not speak or questioned? The uncomfortable questions! Is satire the only way to pass the oppressed regulation of the state?

Do the liberals have right to question fundamentalist when their silence produce them? Does the background of satirist matter? Whether He is a Politician, Poet, Writer, Comedian, Director, TV anchor or a Cartoonist? Or religious or an Atheist? The comedy is against marginalised or the minority, or it is against majority. Does the contextualization helps in building tolerance of masses? The law of the land and the economy of the state, are they linked to the competitive irrationalities?

Does ability to do satire comes from having a testicle? Aren’t most of recognised one’s males?

"those who do not want to talk critically about liberal democracy should also keep quiet about religious fundamentalism." - Slavoj Zizek

SEARCHING for SUGAR MAN

THE ARMSTRONG of MAHARASHTRA

SugarTrack: Establishment Blues
The sugar scam in Maharashtra run to thousand of crores of rupees. The mills are not only the base of the political existence of parties but also their source of undeclared political funding.

The collusion of public sector banks and board of directors of the cooperatives sold the properties and purposefully made the public company suffer by continuously sanctioning loan which lead to non performing assets in future. The capital kept on exchanging hands from the taxpayer’s money to the private and political entity. The lands of the mills were sold to the individuals at cheaper price than its market value.

Banks provided loan without mortgaging adequate properties neglecting their net values. And, they sold the properties as per private convenience without publishing tenders. The board of Directors did not follow the directives of RBI and NABA RD and State Bank Investment policy while selling the securities.

One of the prominent name is ARMS TRACK. Industries. The literal translation of BHUJBA L. The faces involved are from both the ruling and opposition parties. So the question is who we will probe the scam?

THE SABHA is an initiative to bring narratives of University Students, Proles and Travelers in geographically equitable form. ‘SABHA’ means meeting which is what this newsprint is about. It’s aim is to motivate communities to work together while connecting academic and non-academic space. We also want to highlight neo producers in our peak current era and publish their work giving examples. Are you producing something?

If you want to write for us or subscribe see the details on http://www.thesabha.in or email us at words@thesabha.org

30 years after 1984

Source:
NAPM
Shivaji Pathak
Authorized officer and registrar,
Co-op Institutions and Managing Director,
Maharashtra State Spinning Mills
Corporation Ltd, Mumbai

M.R.P.- Rs 10
Conversion of an ATHEIST : Somebody is gonna get hurt!!

Is it possible to have a secular HICUP?

I am a gaseous atheist, who eats, hiccups, burps many a time. It was just that day outside the university campus, when it came out ‘NARI OM’. I used to use slang earlier to punctuate my gaseous energy, which gradually converted to a hindu chant. I thought somebody in proximity might not like my tamil-deli hair and sister slang, which I used earlier. But my friend became serious and he said that you are not secular. Then I tried uttering Gandhi or Arodkar from my spontaneous internal constitutional energy but could not succeed. May be there is some relation between gas and phonetics of O m, Walekum and Shalihm, which does not go with hi or ar.

I hardly went to temples even after belonging to a Brahmin family and had received some punches from my mother for not being in the religious ceremony and arguing against miracles. But I have been connected stomatically to the religions: Had lados in satyanarayan pooja, saswas in the id festival, wines in Christmas and roti dal in Gurudwara langar. It was also not difficult to consume beef, pork and alcohol either. It was tasty and intoxicating too. I kept on converting till I was thirsty and hungry and needed shelter. I also converted because the other person sounded cool and wanted to follow. I converted for minutes and hours and days.

Whenever I changed my geography I became a minority in some way or the other. I tried converting to my surroundings, as there was always someone getting hurt near me. It was easy for me to make choices and still is, in patriarchal upper caste friendly majoritarian space. In Banks, Post offices, Hospitals, Bureaucracy and even in Media I found there were more male upper caste people. And as soon as they realize where I come from, they gave me more respect than the other person standing next to me. May be it is just a coincidence that they are everywhere, from state position to the media and even in judiciary, after all it is about efficiency. They must have been following the miracles more intensely and dedicatedly than others.

Being an atheist does make life hard in daily lives because you are surrounded by religious spaces around you. And in India, religion can be used to mystify and occupy public spaces. You can show off being religious or have a tattoo of O m for fun. And yes you can bravely walk with a swastik sign in places like Goa, even if you are German.

Most of the ceremonies related to religions are propagated to kilometres from their origin. And why not! They are saying something sacred and holy, which other people should listen to and get purified through their ears. If one counts, these concerts of religion uses more mics and employs more people than any event management company or music festival. They are actually providers of livelihood and sound energy. And you cannot decide to receive which one, you can be just grateful to be there. Just hear, earn or spend.

And if you don’t believe in miracles don’t worry you are not the only one. Google it. Keep converting because some miracles are mere miraculous than others!

Some Facts:
- India is rated as one of the most vulnerable place for atheist, non religious people.
- Freedom of Thought 2014: A Global Report on Discrimination Against Humanists, Atheists, and the Not-on-religious Their Human Rights and Legal Status, was created by the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU). The International Humanist and Ethical Union is the world union of more than 120 Humanist, atheist, rationalist, secular, cultural, and freethought organizations from more than 40 countries. Its mission is to represent and support the global Humanist movement, build a world in which human rights are respected and all can live a life of dignity.
- In September 2014, The Bombay high court has upheld a citizen’s right to claim of “no religion” and asked the government to notify a person’s wish to disown his or her religion.
- The court issued the order while disposing off the petition filed by Full Gospel Church of God which wanted the government to notify that its 4,000 members were not Christians and they belong to “no religion”. The court agreed with the view of the petitioners and said “The state has no religion. There is a complete freedom for every individual to decide whether he wants to adopt or profess any religion or not. He may not believe in any religion. If he is professing a particular religion, he can give up the region and claim that he does not belong to any religion. There is no law which compels a citizen or any individual to have a religion”.
- On August 20, 2013, leading anti superstition campaigner Narendra Dabholkar was shot and killed by two men on a motorbike. Dabholkar was a longtime activist in India’s rationalist movement and a leader of the Federation of Indian Rationalist Association, a member organization of the International Humanist and Ethical Union.
- A pril 2012, the Catholic Church filed a complaint under Section 295 of the country’s penal code against Sanal Edamaruku, president of the Indian Rationalist Association, Edamaruku had reportedly exposed a supposed “miracle” by revealing that a weeping Jesus on the cross was actually the result of a leaky drain. The local police requested Edamaruku turn himself in and face the charges. He now lives in exile in Finland.

The first PIL on the issue was filed in 2012 by a law student Shreyas Singh, who sought amendment in Section 66A of the Act, after two girls - Shaheen Dhada and Rinu Shrinivasan - were arrested in Palghar in Thane district as one of them posted a comment against the shutdown in Mumbai following Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackeray’s death and the other ‘liked’ it.

And just in case you got hurt: “Insult” and “blasphemy” Section 295 of the Indian Penal Code criminalises insult to religion; it allows up to three years imprisonment and fines for “whoever, with deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of any class of citizens of India, by words, either spoken or written, by signs or by visible representations or otherwise, insults or attempts to insult the religion or the religious beliefs of a class.”

In 2011 the Indian M inistry of Communications and Information Technology issued new rules requiring operators of social media networks to screen and remove blasphemous content within 36 hours of receiving a complaint.

Barnd : Housing :: Media : State

I was almost declared a terrorist in centre of Delhi at Connoth Place, on 25th January 2010 by a sitting Police men, because I had a hotel card from Ladaich (I&K), where I volunteered for flood relief. He saw medal hanging in my arse, as I passed by him and the excitement increased with me wearing beard and a card of I&K in my wallet.

I don’t remember anyone other than Tagore, who had a beard and was a good guy in the media. The demise of beard and its negative image in all forms of media does not encourage people to keep it. The head can be held high, with the heaviness of beard too, but the mind is full of fear for the bearded and the imagined weird.

I have been in Mumbay for more than two years. And nd wearing a beard and kurta, makes people think that I follow Islam. When I started looking for a affordable house in Navi bumbai, they rejected me as they thought I was Mulsim. I did not argue or uttered my name, the intolerance and hate in the air was enough to care me. At the same time I have a hindu name and uncircumcised penis. The space was not religious but angry and intolerant.

These spaces are not only result of the policies of the government but also the daily projection of it by media. While the spaces designed by public policies of government force lower income groups and minorities to live in ghettoised community everywhere in the world, where erasing poor from the surroundings and putting them in places where resources are far are common norms, on the other hand, the daily projection of a common image of bad from particular state and feature labels all in the same color.

The recent example was when Sunday Mumbay Mirror and even the local Asaamese newspaper put the headline that 80 O’s killed civilians, where bodo is a tribe and some of the militant were involved in killing. Imagine any bodo person coming to the city and saying I need a house and I am bodo not a terrorist. The idea of North east India and Jammu & Kashmir to media is very much restricted to violence, where in many people have to die to come to news.

From beard to the housing, a space can be disdffusioned by media and state which decides about personal looks and one’s basic shelter.

16-31 January 2014
A meeting took place in Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai on the issues related to media and ageing. The agenda of the meeting was to discuss issues that arise with ageing with stakeholders from media, NGO’s and institutions working for elderly people. Representatives from U.N.P.A, HelpAge, DNA, Sakal, TISS were present in the meeting.

To project ageing process not as a burden but highlight the positives inherent in it was one of the major points raised by NGO’s and institutions. To counter the void of source of knowledge regarding it, TISS has established a centre called M.A.R.G, which will contain most of the information that deals with elderly people. While media lamented that it does not have sources to find issues or stories regarding ageing, it must be questioned how they can have special correspondents for fashion and celebrities. Do the editorial policies of the media houses even think about ageing? While most of them have special columns for astrology and who is dating whom, the no space not for old men and women persists among many. Media apathy to the elderly is visible in all forms of media. They only cater to the interesting and spicy story, where the elderly people does not fit in.

Even if a journalist covers it, the editorial policy of the media house ultimately decides whether it will get published or not.

The participation of feminist journalists, PR consultants, and media activists from Serbia and the Balkan region. A part of the program, Titt JNC (a feminist group from Skopje) will drive through their new project Intimate Maps of Female Cities, a radio show broadcasted live from a moving car, set to happen in all Ex-Yugoslav capital mapping Skopje and Zagreb.

Organized in cooperation with BeFem - Feminist Cultural Center (Serbia), the Space of Media and Culture K-Zone A association (Croatia) and Libela - a portal on gender, sex and democracy (Croatia), members of The Gender and Media Practices Network.

The platform for gender cultural practices is an informal network of organizations dealing with cultural gender practices through media, festival and production networks, with the intention of strengthening the regional (women’s) civil society through exchanging programs and experiences, as well as creating new program contents.

For more information: http://www.ipakcenter.org/summer-school/summer-school-2015

CHAYAGHAR in ShantiNiketan

by Indranil Sarkar, Alumnus Vishwa Bharti

CHAYA GHAR is a platform for myriad art forms by people who are engaged in the field of art but don’t get the opportunity to show their work off to the world. The concept, per se, arose over fumes of tea, and accompanying discussions, at a tea stall among a group of youngsters with zeal to achieve something innovative that would practically build a platform as well. – something which was dubbed Utopian by many, especially at a place like Santiniketan. The journey started with a low-budget yet highly responsive public exhibition at Santiniketan, and is now it has taken itself to the next level, which includes: Photo-walk expeditions, Workshops on Photography, Lectures, Selling points, Public exhibitions, Photo contests etc. People from different parts of the world have connected themselves with the concept and extended their support and interest with the unique concept where each art form gets equal recognition and respect along with an opportunity to mix with each other and create a new form of art altogether.

CGNet Swara: Can we democratisation Communication?

Many of the estimated 80 million members of India’s tribal communities lack access to any mainstream media outlets. This often poses serious barriers to their socio-economic development, as their grievances about government neglect and economic exploitation remain unvoiced. In addition, certain factions (such as the Maoist insurgency) can exploit their frustration and isolation to violent ends.

To address this important problem, Shubhranu Choudhary and his team built and deployed CGNet Swara: a voice portal that enables ordinary citizens to report and discuss issues of local interest. To use it, they call a phone number using any mobile (or fixed line) phone. Callers are prompted to press “1” to record a new message, and “2” to listen to messages that have already been recorded. Once a message has been recorded from the field, professional, trained journalists, who access the system using a Web-based interface, review and verify the report. A praised reports are then made available for playback over the phone. The reports also can be accessed on the CGNet Swara website. The project has helped many villagers report their problem with the contact person responsible for it.

CGNet Swara is a voice-based portal, freely accessible via mobile phone, that allows anyone to report and listen to stories of local interest. Reported stories are moderated by journalists and become available for playback online as well as over the phone (+91 850068000).

From getting hand pumps repaired for schools to the wages under MGNREGA the mobile network has connected rural with urban, as the people who have accessed internet and technologies, pick up the issues and pressure the responsible for it from all over the world. Currently, the project is not sustainable and is receiving funds from various institutions.

On 18th January, Shubhranu Choudhary in a meeting organised in TISS campus with students urged them to be a nodal point of urban and rural void of knowledge and communication.

He also questioned the Indian government hypocrisy, in not allowing community radio to deliver news and its control over the very basic and cheapest medium of communication, without which his model will not sustain. – See more at: http://cgenetswara.org/
Preceding fact finding report on the inhuman murders of Dalits on 20 October 2014 at Jawakhede (Khalasa), Taluka Pathardi, District Ahemadnagar:

On 20th October 2014, in Jawakhede (Khalasa), Taluka Pathardi, District Ahemadnagar, the entire family comprising the father, mother and a son, of Buddhist faith, was killed brutally. On 27th October 2014, the Dalit Atyachar Virdhri Kruti Samiti invited a committee to Jawakhede village on a fact-finding mission to probe these murders. The said committee comprised of Subodh More (social activist and freelance journalist), Jatin Desai (senior journalist), Prence Mithiborwala (social activist), Uttam Jagarid (social activist), Sudhakar Kashyap (correspondent of IBN Lokmat), Arijit Veldurkar (activist), Vinod Shinde (activist), Professor Ranganath Pathare (senior literary person from Ahemadnagar), Bala Shikare (Nagpur), Keshav Waghmare (social activist from Pune).

Jawakhede village is at a distance of 620ms from Ahemadnagar, with a population of about 3000 people. A majority of the population belongs to Maratha and Vanjari caste; while the Dalit, Muslim and Christians live in minority. About 30 households belong to the Buddhist community. The road going to the main village is a tar road, but the road leading to the Dalit residences is an unpaved road. The village falls under Pathardi-Shegaon constituency. Shrimati M Monika Rajale, a B.P candidate ( erstwhile NCP candidate) is the MLA from this constituency.

Prior to the murder, the family of Sanjay Jagannath Jadhav (42), Jayashri Sanjay jadhav (38) and Sunil Sanjay jadhav (18), were staying in a tin shed on their farm where they harvested millet. Sanjay has three brothers; all the four brothers, after the division of the property became equal property owner of more than an acre of land. Sanjay’s son Sunil was studying Dairy Science in Mumbai. He was visiting the village during the vacation period.

While he was on a college holiday, he and his family were brutally murdered on 20th October 2014. Sunil was cut in two pieces, wad down and his penis was battered. His father Sanjay Jagannath Jadhav was also attacked in the same way. His mother Jayashri Sanjay Jadhav was struck on her head and her ear was cut. A few days before the killing of the family, their watch-dog who watches over the adjacent farm, was killed by anonymous people. The “Wagh” families, which belong to a majority Maratha community live in close proximity as also the Vanjari community.

The said murders, which appear to be pre-planned, took place during the middle of the night. The attackers killed the entire family in the out-house. The murderers tried to hide the ‘bloody’ evidence by putting soil and millet crop at the site of murder. Then the bodies were cut in pieces and wrapped in rugs and gummy sacks and thrown in a well near the Jadhav residence. Sunil’s legs and head was shoved into the borewell a short distance away. Since borewell mouth was narrow, the murderers cut the head and legs into tiny pieces. As per the information given by the locals, the murderers tried to destroy the evidence of the murders. The remaining part of Sunil’s body were scattered all over the village.

The Police took about two days (21st & 22nd October) to find the entire body. The last rites were performed after all the body parts were found. Suresh Jadhav, brother of deceased Sanjay, informed the committee that their family has shared names of a few suspects with the Police. However, they regretted the fact that the Police has not arrested anyone. Suresh Jadhav mentioned that since the suspect “Wagh” family is related to Shri A-nil Karale (Deputy Chief, Nagar District) and Shrimati Monika Rajale, the Police is not taking any action against them. Due to political pressure, the police is not investigating the case properly and the culprits are not being arrested.

It has become the norm to presume an illegal relationship angle in all Dalit murders. This has become evident in Sonai, Kharda, Kewalepada-Bhandara and Khelarjan incidents, prior to this. The committee is of the opinion that such a line of investigation only leads to defamations of Dalits and sympathy for the criminals in the minds of the upper caste community.

The deceased Sanjay Jadhav’s brother, Sunil, and their father Jagannath, also mentioned to the fact finding committee that they have shared the suspects names and evidence with the Police. Once again, instead of booking the murderers, the family members are being harassed by interrogating them. The deceased Sanjay’s father, Jagannath with tremendous disappointment shared with the fact-finding committee that if the Police does not book the criminals, he would have no other option but to immolate himself.

When the committee members met Shrimati M Monika Rajale, she informed the committee that there have been no incidences of communal disharmony in the village. She said that the villagers were extending total co-operation with the Police who were investigating the said murders. However, she could not explain the delay in arresting the murderers till now. The fact finding committee met Add. Police Superintendent Shrimati Sunita Thakare-Suralinkle and inquired why there were no arrests despite the jadhav family provided the names of the suspects. The fact finding committee demanded why no action was taken against the suspects. She informed the committee that due to lack of evidence against the suspects no arrests were made.

Shrimati Sunita Thakare-Suralinkle felt that according to her, the modulus operandi of the murders at Sonai, Nagar in the year 2013 and these murders is similar. She suspected these murders were done out of ethnic pride. The sequence of events, i.e. the killing of the watch-dog just two days prior to the murder of Jadhav family, the murder of the family, throwing the bodies cut into tiny pieces in a borewell, none of the “Wagh” families who stay in the vicinity coming to the rescue of Jadhav family; assumes legsibility of the murderers being locals from the village of someone who is very familiar with the area.

Certain castes and dynasties from Ahmednagar are responsible for the increasing incidents of atrocities; their flourishing economic affluence, their political dominance and the resulting arrogance plus the attitude that “nobody can touch me” is the root cause behind these incidents. Along with the economic growth, there should have been a complementary cultural change, however, there is a lack of empathy for the downtrodden in the society, or such empathy does not reflect in our society.

The Police is suspecting an illegal relationship between Sunil and an adult woman from one of the “Wagh” families. However, the committee feels this direction in the investigation is inconclusive or irrelevant. It has become the norm to presume an illegal relationship angle in all Dalit murders. This has become evident in Sonai, Kharda, Kewalepada-Bhandara and Khelarjan incidents, prior to this. The committee is of the opinion that such a line of investigation only leads to defamaion of Dalits and gathers sympathy for the criminals in the minds of the upper caste community.

When the committee visited Jawakhede, the post mortem report and FIR was not made available to them, hence they are unable to find out the medical reason for the death of the deceased Jadhav family members. However, Lokmat (a daily newspaper in Pune) has reported basis the post mortem report that all of them were first strangulated before the murder.

The committee was informed that after four days of the murders, the police charged the unmarked cars. The Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 (A atrocities Act). However, in the opinion of the said committee, the A atrocities Act is applicable only for Hindus. Therefore, any charges against an unknown person may not be valid as an unknown person doesn’t have a identity, religion, caste or gender. The committee is questioning the inaction by the Police to take any steps against the suspected upper caste people, and suspects that the police are acting under political pressure.

On 21st October, one day after the murders on 20th October, four people belonging to the Pardhi community were physically stoned by the villagers in presence of the Police. This act was committed outside the premises of a Khadivi Gram-Panchayath office in Parner District; and the trigger was “allegation of theft”. In this incident, Rahul Punjaya Chavan and Pichuk Punyasa Chavan died and two other victims were grievously injured and have been hospitalised.

In the last few years, there has been marked increase in atrocities against the Dalit Adivasi Nomadic tribes in Ahemadnagar District. In the year 2013, there were 111 cases registered in this district and in this year, so far, till October about 74 cases have been registered. This includes the murder of three youngweep children from Sonaji village by cutting their bodies into pieces. Nitu Aage’s murder after torturing him. Thereafter, on 22nd June 2014, Aaba Kale a deaf and mute, tiller from...
HOLY desi COW and A2 milk

India is finally waking up to the importance of its native cow breeds. After the Govt provided some funds for the Gokul Mission, Ministry of Agriculture is setting up two research stations for the neglected breeds. One is in Mathura, the location of the other is still not finalized. Rajasthan is the first State to appoint a Minister for Cow Affairs. Haryana Chief Minister M. K. Khattar has signed a MoU with Gujarat under which semen of Gir cows will be made available for developing 100,000 cows of local breeds, including Haryanavi cattle.

A few years back Brazil has become the biggest exporter of Indian breeds of cows, not many could believe that the cows that roam the streets in our country feeding on all kinds of garbage could be the prized possession of farmers far away in Brazil. So much so that in August last year, a prized pure bred Gir progeny bull in Brazil was auctioned in equivalent of more than two Rs. 6 crores.

It is generally believed that Indian cows are low in productivity. It is for this reason that Indian cows are despaired at home. But over half a dozen Indian cow breeds – Gir, Kankrej, Ongole, Sahiwal among others – are doing exceptionally well in Brazil. Milch yield from Gir in Brazil has now crossed 70 litres. It shows that Gir breeders have made excellent progress in the last decade.

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Well, A2 is actually a beta-casein protein in the milk – A2 allele gene – that makes milk healthy and nutritious. O1 to put it simply it is a particular character in some cow breeds that makes it milk qualitatively superior than what you have been drinking. What makes it more significant and relevant for us is that most desi cows and buffalo breeds contain A2 allele gene. In other words, 100 percent of milk of desi cattle breeds contains the A2 allele making it richer in nutrients and much healthier than the milk of exotic cattle breeds.

If you are not drinking A2 milk, the chances are that in the long term you are likely to suffer from allergies, diabetes, obesity and cardio-vascular diseases. While the exotic cattle breeds may be producing higher milk but because of the concentration of A1 allele gene in their bodies, the milk they produce is much inferior in quality.

Studies by the National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBA GR), Karnal, have established the superiority of A2 milk in Indian breeds. In a detailed study scanning 22 desi breeds recently, it found A2 allele to be 100 per cent available in the five high yielding milk breeds – Red Sindhi, Gir, Rathi, Shahiwal and Tharparkar. In the remaining breeds, the availability of A2 allele gene was 94 per cent. Comparatively, in the exotic breeds Jersey and Holstein Frisian, the availability of A2 allele gene is very low.

The economic cost of promoting desi breeds is relatively much higher given the health advantages, especially in a population where diseases, cardio-vascular diseases, allergies, digestive disorders are on the upswing. Since A2 milk builds up immunity, it certainly offers a big advantage over the commonly sold milk. Promotion for A2 milk will help farmers shift to traditional breeds which very well integrate with natural farming systems. Promotion of A2 milk will also make hundreds of gaushalas spread across the State turn economically viable.

source: Devinder Agarwal, blogs. @Devinder_Sharma - A Writer, Researcher, Columnist, Author, Speaker, Commentator, economics global trade food and agricultural policy environment development
BJP's hypocrisy on LAND Acquisition

What Rajnath Singh said during parliamentary debate on Land Acquisition on August 29th 2013?

"Land is not just a commodity. It is just not about economic activity. The issue of land is associated with the emotions and culture of farmers."

"I want to say that one should never take hasty decision in the matter of land acquisition"...

"For all land acquisitions, the Social impact assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment should be mandatory and should be done before the acquisition is made, not after the acquisition is made..." We wish to eliminate clause 9 that gives the right to government to acquire land under urgency provision. All kind of acquisitions must go through prior SIA and EIA."

"We believe that unless farmer gives his consent, arable land must not be acquired. If acquisition happens, we will have huge food security problem"...

**Land Acquisition Ordinance**

The Ordinance to Amend the Land acquisition (RFCTLA RR) Act of 2013 exempts most land acquisitions from Consent, Social Audit and Food Security Audit provisions. The Govt has inserted many other amendments as well, all of them against the interests of the farmers. Some of these are:

1. Earlier the acquisition for private purposes was limited to 'Private Companies' which are registered under the Companies Act. Now it has been extended to any 'Private Entity' that includes proprietorship, partnership, NGO or any other entity.
2. In the name of infrastructure, now the government can acquire land for private educational institutions and private hospitals as well, which were specifically excluded by the original Act (Amendment to Section 1 b (ii))
3. As reported earlier, all projects related to defence have been exempted. The crucial thing is that 'defence' has been defined now to include any project vital to national security and 'defence production'. This definition can include all kinds of infrastructural projects and privately owned projects. (Insertion of new Section 10A)

4. Original Act gave relief to those farmers whose lands were acquired more than 5 years ago but where the process was not completed till now. They were to be given the benefit of compensation under the new Act. Now the Amendment limits this benefit to only those few cases where the delay was not due to any judicial order or pending case (Amendment to Section 24 (2))

5. The original stringent provision about punishment for violation of this Act by any government official has been reversed. Earlier the Head of the Department was held responsible if the violation took place with their knowledge and connivance. The Amendment removes this provision and actually provides special immunity to the Govt officials under Section 197 of CCP.

There won't be any action against a Govt official for violating this Act without sanction from the Govt. (Amendment to Section 87)

6. The original provision of returning the land to original owner if not utilized within 5 years has been removed. Now the Govt can retain the land for longer without utilizing it, if the “period specified for the project” is longer. (Amendment to Section 103)

7. The Govt has given itself the power of “removal of difficulty” for five years instead of the original two years. (Amendment to Section 113)

Basically every positive feature of the original Act (which was passed with BJP’s active support) has been annulled.

This Ordinance must be opposed by all those who respect democracy and who care for the farmers.
OBAMA visit open happiness for Coco Cola?

Media statement by Dr S.Faizi,
Expert member, Plachimada High Power Committee.

The letter from the central Home Ministry to the Kerala government ‘requesting’ it to withdraw the Plachimada Coca Cola Victims Compensation Claims Special Tribunal Bill, 2011 constitutes a glaring act of subversion of the Constitutional process. The reasons raised by the central Home Ministry are an outright repeat of the multinational company’s ‘legal opinion’ it had submitted to the UPA government.

The Home Ministry provides gratuitous advice to the State govt. in line with the multinational’s ‘legal opinion’ - to approach the National Green Tribunal (NGT). This betrays the sad fact that the Home Ministry officials have not even read the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010. Section 13 of the Act requires the petitions for compensation to be filed within a period of 5 years with a grace period of 6 months. The most critical damages to groundwater and toxic contamination caused by the Coca company at Plachimada occurred during 2000-2004, way before the five years and six months time bar set by the Act and therefore this Act cannot be used to redress the tragedy at Plachimada. This is the reason why the Bill was (unanimously) passed by the Assembly. And it may be recalled that the NGT became operational only in May 2011. The Home Ministry officials and their legal advisors should be held accountable for deliberately misinforming a State government.

It is surprising that while the Home Ministry refers to the responses of the Department of Legal Affairs and the Solicitor General that favour the Cola company, it tactically ignores the categorical support to the Bill officially expressed by the relevant ministries long time ago. And these ministries are: the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Food Processing Industries and the Department of Justice under the Ministry of Law. (I have copies of their approval letters). That is obviously a tactics adopted to favour the powerful American company, especially at a time when the US president is set to visit India.

There is absolutely no conflict between the NGT Act and the Bill, primarily due to the difference in the temporal coverage, in fact by filling the time gap, the Plachimada Bill provides an excellent complement to the NGT Act. The Home Ministry repeating the challenge of the Cola company that the State Assembly has no legislative competence to enact legislation to redress the damages in the areas of health, agriculture, labor (loss), animal husbandry, groundwater etc all listed in the State List (II under the Seventh Schedule) is posing a serious question on Centre-State relations, and all democratic forces should be concerned about this.

The Bill does not by any means comes in conflict with the Centre’s powers as provided by Articles 252 and 246, it flows from the State’s Constitutional responsibility to act upon the violation of the Article 21 and has got nothing to do with any international declaration. It is surprising that while the Home Ministry refers to the responses of the Department of Legal Affairs and the Solicitor General that favour the Cola company, it tactically ignores the categorical support to the Bill officially expressed by the relevant ministries long time ago. And these ministries are: the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Food Processing Industries and the Department of Justice under the Ministry of Law. (I have copies of their approval letters). That is obviously a tactics adopted to favour the powerful American company, especially at a time when the US president is set to visit India.

The Home Ministry is subverting the Constitutional process by refusing to pass on the Bill, with the government’s comments, to who it was originally addressed - the President, even after three years and in spite of seeking and obtaining numerous clarifications.

I call upon the State government to squarely reject the Centre’s letter, and mobilise political forces with the democratic society to have the ascent obtained. If the ascent is further delayed by the Centre, the State Assembly may pass a resolution on the subject and commence the enforcement of the law, as there is no case of repugnance involved.

The State Government shall not further delay initiating criminal proceedings against the recalcitrant company for which show cause notice was given by the Pollution Control Board in 2007, under the Hazardous Wastes Management and Handling Rules.

There is no justification for the State govt’s delay in registering a case against the Cola company under the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act as recommended by the Plachimada High Power Committee.

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LOSAR in Ladakh

by Deachen Spalzess

LOSAR is 12 day-long celebration considering first three days to be the most special. Bonfire, traditional dance and moreover spending time with the dearest and nearest ones. In a popular saying of Ladakh, ‘lonan gya ba phong, losama dunla sul’ meaning that to forget the past and look forward for the bright and prosperous new year.

Over the year the tradition celebration of Losar has been losing its essence. Modernization has both negative and positive impact on the society. On one hand Ladakh moving into more competitive tourism business providing growth to huge service sector and on other hand slowly was changing its precious value and cultural system. Earlier during Losar, everyone gathers at home, local brew is prepared and moreover ample of time is spend with friends, family and relative, it was a time to get together. Now from Local brew to costly whiskey, vodka and Champagne, Local brew which was changed in every ways. From mud house to concrete cement.

Earlier when Ladakhi society is stable, people who are no one is so rich nor so poor. It was an equalitarian society. With the growing tourism and Ladakh coming into limelight of natural beauty, the people in the main centers overtime became very rich and started opening guest, hotels and markets that serviced tourist. Those who are in village still remain unaffected of tourism. Society got divided into rich and poor, divides like middle class, upper class started creating which was very new to Ladakhi society.

Now to celebrate Losar, only few people are left to mark the Aupiciousness of the celebration.
Hashtags of feminist causes are invoked by social media users worldwide in response to contemporary events and discussions. According to WHO is user and WHO is hashtagging it, they are taken up by newspapers, television, and other media outlets as stories of collective public opinion and, sometimes, further action.

Some of the Hashtags are:
#BringBackOurGirls: A campaign to free 276 Nigerian teenagers kidnapped by Islamic terrorists. This hashtag was picked up by The Daily mail, UK National newspaper, and Michelle Obama and Malala joined campaign later. This was the case when social media activism was picked up by mainstream media and penetrated to larger audience.

#Direnkahkahah : Thousands of Turkish women flooded social media with photos of themselves laughing and smiling in a backlash against a government minister who said it is an indecent behaviour. The hashtag ResistLaugh - climbed to top 10 world trends on Twitter, hours after Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc claimed honest women should not laugh in public.

#MySeahlyfreedom: In 2014, Miah Alinejad, an Iranian journalist based in the United Kingdom, shared a photograph of herself online riding in a convertible without a hijab (a traditional head covering). She encouraged women everywhere, and specifically her home country of Iran, to share pictures of their own “seahly freedom” in an effort to digitally protest hijab laws that punish women for appearing in public without a head covering. In the weeks that followed, #MySeahlyFreedom became an internationally used hashtag on Facebook and Twitter, averaging one million shares per week. The campaign became a success because it was a social movement by women, for women, that encouraged female citizens to become active parts of the political process and challenge the stereotypical obiling image of Iranian women and their bodies. It was a powerful act of protest because of the history of regulation that the female body is traditionally regarded with.

Hash with Feminism

#PussyRiot #BringBackOurGirls #Direnkahkahah #WhyLoiter

Twitter can be considered a space of class division and exclusion, reflecting how “power, privilege and structural inequities remain in an online space” (Park and Leonard in Susana Loza 2014)

Social media in UK: Twitter's user base is small compared to bigger social networking services like Facebook. The research, however, Twitter receives is partly due to the relative ease with which Twitter data (tweets for example) can be accessed (Karin Weller 2013).

Within Twitter’s UK user base, recent data from IPSOS (2014) suggest that over half are aged under thirty-five. Of all Twitter users, 42 percent are women. Among these, the biggest single age group is 16-24 year olds, with use being lower among women in their mid-twenties and over.

Social grade breakdown: Most Twitter users (women and men) are weighted in the higher social grades (A, B, and C1). These three grades combined account for 61 percent of users, compared to 39 percent in social grades C2, D, and E.
ZAPATISTAS
The World Festival of Resistance and Rebellion against capitalism.
Dec. 3 Jan 2013. Zapatista organized a major international meeting in Chiaapas, Mexico, at a time when people all over the world — from the squares of Spain and Greece to Zucotti Park, Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, Mexico and beyond — all turn their gaze towards Chiaapas looking for an autonomous, direct democratic and horizontal system of self-governance from below, while the only alternative we are being offered back home is the same old parliamentary democracy, the Zapatistas respond by saying: “come and we’ll find our way together, without leaders and hierarchical structures.” The Zapatistas (together with the National Indigenous Congress) invited the people of the world to Mexico — to meet, discuss, organize and decide the way forward towards our own emancipation, just as the women and men of Chiaapas have been doing for the past twenty years.

"METROPOLIS": Urban Winter Festival is one of the major multi-art & culture festivals of Northeast India, in terms of quality of work, innovation of vision, and scale and breadth of program. Every year it brings an unparalleled feast of dance, theatre, music, visual arts, workshops, multimedia and outdoor events from renowned and upcoming artists from whole northeast, mainland India & world.

METROPOLIS
We MIGRATE | We COMPETE | We SURVIVE

Protest against Coco Cola Plant in Varanasi
Protest against Coco Cola Plant in Mehdiganj Varanasi took place on 14th January. The cycle rally started from IIT BHU to the Coca Cola plant in Mehdiganj.

Mandali Master from Lok Samiti, a local organisation working in Mehdiganj village and local activists have continuously agitated against the plant citing the decrease in ground water level and the toxic waste dumped by the plant in agricultural land.

Uttar Pradesh pollution board had shut down the plant last year which was stayed by National Green Tribunal on the grounds of restricted and regulated production of bottles from the plant.

BEEDI workers in TELANGANA
Beedi workers held under the banner of Beedi and Cigar Workers’ Union staged a dharna in front of the Collectorate in Karimnagar (Telangana) on Monday (Jan 12) demanding that the government provide dearness allowance of Rs. 1,000 per month to all the beedi workers in Telangana state. The TRS chief K. Chandrasekhar Rao before the elections had wooed the beedi workers with the promise of Rs1,000 allowance per month to every beedi worker and got their votes. Over three lakh families of beedi workers would get benefitted if the Chief Minister kept his promise.

BLACK DAY in CHATTISGARH against JINDAL
On 9th January 2008, in a public hearing organised by Jindal Industries in Khamariya village of Tannar block, Chattisgarh, unarmed villagers were beaten up among whom, 122 farmers, labourers and women were injured. To remember and protest this event, every year villagers celebrate Black festival.

This year also from 1-5 Jan this festival rallied in these twenty villages. The rally involved hundreds of women from twenty villages, and labourers who were beaten up.

Public hearing are generally held for the villagers where the number of police force is huge and yes they only listen to the orders of capital.
Women workers in Afghanistan

Most of the elderly population spend their days chanting prayers, circumambulating the temples and prostrating, as they are more meticulous in their religious practices. The majority of the people in Bhutan follow Buddhism and hence, it plays a vital role in the lives of most people, especially those who belong to older generations.

In Bhutan, as elsewhere, elderly people have traditionally been held in high esteem for their wisdom, their role as head of the family and as an effective mediator in conflict resolutions. They are placed higher in society and given due respect. This practice is evident in most communities and a large number of senior citizens live a dignified and satisfying life. However, due to modernization, urbanization and exposure to western countries the aged members of society have become vulnerable due to altered family structures, an increase in migration, and changes in living arrangements. This has become a grave concern to many decision-makers and the elderly cohort of population of Bhutan.

With the increasing migration to urban areas, elderly people are often left behind in the villages to defend themselves. In urban areas, the extended family system is more diluted and the nuclear family norm is becoming increasingly visible. This trend disrupts the age-old cohesive family structure leading to the exclusion of the elderly. This way they become more vulnerable and often have to depend on others for their livelihood. The journalist Gyembo Namgyal said, "although we live in a compassionate society with GNH (Gross National Happiness) as the ultimate goal based on the principles of equity and justice, there is still a small section of society that continues to be left behind, needing more support than the rest. In most cases, elderly people, even in the villages, will continue to be respected and taken care of, but in extreme cases, a legal basis implemented in the local administration could be the only answer to give some dignity to the weaker section of society when they most need it."

There are numerous civil society and non-governmental organizations working for the welfare of senior citizens in most of the countries in the world including India. The 2007 Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act of India provides supplies for the welfare and maintenance of the elderly. This includes food delivery, shelter, clothing and medical treatment. However, this is not the case in Bhutan. There are a few organizations working on some projects to benefit the elderly population, but there aren’t any organizations which work for the protection and security of senior citizens in Bhutan.

People are living longer with food and shelter for these needy senior citizens. Since the problem of senior citizens here in Bhutan is a new phenomenon, there are not many planned programmes and policies in place for them.

While talking to some people, there was a mixed response regarding the need to establish old age homes in Bhutan. Those in favor of old age homes said there is an urgent need for old age homes, whereas others argued that the increase in the number of homeless senior citizens and their pleasures. For this it is essential to address the issue of abuse, although such cases have not reached an alarming number yet. Having old age homes would help provide sufficient maintenance, ensure financial support, dignity and safeguard the vulnerable elderly citizens.

On the other hand, some said that Bhutanese people are compassionate beings who can take care of the elderly population and their country has not reached a point where there is a need for old age homes. Bhutan is still a caring society where everyone is guaranteed a decent living and respecting parents is one of the most important aspects of Buddhism. The truth is that things seem to be changing.

Source: IRIN news
CHUGGERS in Christmas Market of UK

My perspective is limited to a view through an approximately 3m x 1.2m rectangle window of the market stall I work in. Day by day I observe this piece of public space with the unimpressive and static background consisting of Santander bank, E mobile store and branded stationery up to fellow trader’s pick-and-mix sweets stall. I watch the people pass by, walking up and down on Sheffield’s pedestrian high street in rain and shine, slleet or hail. Here we are, this is the Christmas market on the main shopping street of the English city. Santa Claus comes only once a year but Christmas still lasts for two months.

Here I also enjoy the regular extra entertainment of musicians busking: played-to-death guitar ballads and sickening X-mas tunes. Bagpipe-man can play for 5 hours without a pause and he is just not running out of breath, cares little of my opinion that his instrument would be only appropriate for a hilltop well isolated form any human settlement. He goes on and on as if he was in charge of making all the revenues of Help for Heroes, a charity organization supporting wounded army personnel.

He is just one of the many who use the space in front of my chalet to collect donations for a good cause. The ones who fascinate me the most are the so-called chuggers (from charity muggers), the infamous face to face fund-raisers who appear as common obstacles on UK high streets. Their method is to stop people passing by and engage them in conversations about the campaign of the NGO they work for – like Oxfam or Friends of the Earth – and ask them to sign up to donate a certain amount monthly via direct bank transfers. Most of the chuggers are in their early 20s and have been recruited and trained professionally. They are shiny, happy and possess an immense amount of energy.

A curious phenomena which I follow with varied attention, the many different strategies of these hyper youngsters. Initially I would think theirs is the worst job possible with the amount of refusal they have to cope with per minute and I expect them after they are turned down. They all strike a different note: there is polite chugger: “Hi Sir, may I speak to you 30 seconds?” reaching out for a handshake. There is emotional blackmailer: “Do you ever think about doing something for charity No? HAVE A GOOD DAY!” There is trickster chugger: “Hey you! I’m so glad you’ve come to see me this morning!” and flirtater: “Wow, I like your jumper! Where did you get it from?” and even flirty chugger who looks deeply in your eyes and says: “You look ravishingly beautiful today.” These guys are shameless. They try everything to meet their target which is often as modest as getting 8 people sign up to donate £5 a month, that is less than the price of two cups of coffee in town. A few years ago the chuggers still carried folders and paper forms. Now they are flashing tablet computers which can be drawn from their backpack any time to demonstrate with images and easily link to the registration procedures.

I watch sceptically as their objective seems mission impossible to me, the most people I ask – as if it was not obvious enough to see – are fed up with the chuggers and they would never stop. But I am wrong again, obviously I have no business instinct: street fund-raising is in fact the most important revenue for the biggest non-profit organizations. In the UK they register 600,000 new regular donations per year, making £220m annually. It allows them to plan their campaigns ahead, while many of the chuggers move on to make a career in the charity sector.

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Palestine to join International Criminal Court

The court will be empowered to prosecute war crimes committed by Israelis or Palestinians. The court’s prosecutor can now initiate cases on her own.

Various government has condemned the move made by Palestinian government from Washington, Ottawa, Paris to London and obviously Tel Aviv.

Indian government is at its best in being silent. As its diplomacy favours both receiving weapon from Israel and relations with Palestine. Israel government has started lobbying to cut the funds for the ICC, may be it will make difficult for them to drag criminals to the court.

Will the ICC, a U.N. institution will focus excessively on Israel?

Unlike political bodies composed of governments, such as the U.N. General Assembly or Human Rights Council, the court’s investigations and prosecutions are led by an independent, professional prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda of Gambia. She has earned a reputation as a sober, dispassionate, non-nonsense lawyer with no evidence of anti-Israel animus.

-W. A. European Migrant Worker

-"A last Euro migrant worker"
No political satire please! We're Italian

by Francesca An Italian waitress

Italian ex-Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi has been accused of suffering a sense-of-humour failure after his media group sued a comedian for spreading ‘lies and insinuations’.

Today, instead of broadcasting her stand-up political satire act on state television as planned, Italian comedian Sabina Guzzanti is preparing to decamp to a concert hall in Rome, disappointing the two million viewers who tuned into the first edition of her show last week.

Since Berlusconi’s media group Mediaset took legal action against the comedian, the state television company Rai has shelved the show temporarily, citing legal reasons.

In the first instalment of the show, called RaIoT (pronounced ‘yiot’) - Weapons of Mass Distraction, Guzzanti tore into almost every figure in Italian public life, including the Prime Minister and the state television director. She also touched upon issues such as the public display of crucifixes and international support for Israel.

‘Nowadays comedians have to say serious things... if you have a Prime Minister who tells jokes, what else can you do?’, she asked, dressed up as Uma Thurman, one of the Deadly Viper Assassination Squad in the bloody venefugal film Kill Bill.

‘Italy ranks 53rd in a worldwide index of media freedom, after Benin, Ghana and Bolivia’, she said, referring to a list drawn up in 2002 by the campaign group Reporters Without Borders.

‘Did you hear anything about that in the news? No. But then again, if you had we would not rank 53rd, would we?’

She also impersonated the Prime Minister media tycoon addressing television networks, sitting at a massive desk against a backdrop of huge gold-coloured curtains.

One feature of the show - a graphic which showed Mediaset winning hands-down in the advertising war with the rest of the country’s media - raised the wrath of Berlusconi’s billionaire media group, which saw shares drop on the stock exchange after the show.

‘The idea is to talk through an issue,’ Guzzanti explains. ‘Saying things that you don’t hear on TV we are taking on the job of filling that gap.’

A Mediaset statement accused the comedian of disseminating ‘lies and extremely serious insinuations’, which harmed the honour of a company registered on the stock exchange. The company complained that the programme was particularly offensive, since it was broadcast on state television, a direct competitor of Mediaset.

More than 100 opposition MPs have signed a petition calling on Rai to run the show as scheduled. ‘I am determined to see this through,’ Guzzanti told journalists. It is a serious precedent for freedom of expression. It’s like asking a journalist to write today’s newspaper for publication in three months time.

Political satire is increasingly becoming a site of contestation. In mid-February 2014, for example, Maurizio Crotza - known for his satirical imitations of politicians - started his performance with an unflattering imitation of a Silvio Berlusconi trying to buy the Italians’ votes. At the end people shouted that he should leave the stage, and that there should be no politics that night, making it apparently impossible for the comedian to continue.

Although Crotza seemed affected and offended by the attack, and nearly walked off stage, necessitating the intervention of host Fabio Fazio, it is likely that the entire scene was set up so as to boost audience ratings. Nevertheless, it shows how important satire has become in debates about politics, and in society as a whole.

Satire mostly surfs the web, though. One comedian in particular has drawn advantage from this, creating his own, grassroots political movement which communicates and organizes itself primarily on the web, completely knocking over traditional politics. His name is Beppe Grillo. After a career in commercial television and (initially) without any apparent political conviction, in the early 2000s Grillo began traveling across Italy, performing in theaters and out on the streets where he unloaded his anger over ecological issues, warfare and Berlusconi. In 2005, he created the “5 star Movement”, the Beppegrillo.it blog. In 2007 and 2008 he organized the so-called V-day (where the ‘V’ stands for ‘vaffanculo’, the Italian F-word), an unofficial protest day against traditional politics - from left to right - that took place across Italy. Yet, there is a big downside to the “5 star Movement,” and to Grillo’s character. His blog, for example, is not really a blog, as Grillo himself admitted: it is mostly a site of communication and propaganda, with no interaction between Grillo and his followers. Nor did the two highly successful V-days originate “from below.”

Similarly, Grillo’s political rallies - which are often filmed and put online - are more a one-man show, which, again, do not promote interaction but simply reproduce the stand-up comedian format of television. Accordingly, people who attend these meetings are spectators rather than demonstrators. His activities, therefore, represent no more than a shift from television to new media. Things apparently change, but are essentially the same.

Grillo’s success also shows how traditional politics are being affected ever more by the power of satire and democracy via the web. In a way, this is not very surprising, as Italy has been run for nearly 20 years by a man many consider a clown, and who has indeed built much of his popularity on the Italians’ (bad) sense of humor.

TWEETS

Heba Aly @HebaJournalist Jan 12
Beyond #CharlieHebdo: Acc to @prosafeedom, 61 journalists were killed in conflicts and targeted attacks last year.

@ianbrommer political scientist, author, prof at nyu
Killed by Boko Haram in Nigeria 2009: 700
2010: 75
2011: 600
2012: 1650
2013: 3000
2014: 7700
Last week: 2000+

Rupert Murdoch @rupertmurdoch
Maybe most Moslems peaceful, but until they recognize and destroy their growing jihadist cancer they must be held responsible.

J K Rowling @jk_rowling
I was born Christian. If that makes Rupert Murdoch my responsibility, I’ll auto-excommunicate.

Michael Monan @MichaelMonan1 @rupertmurdoch In the same way that you must be held responsible for ordering the hacking of the voicemails of dead school children?

Adam Hills @adamhillscsi
Oh good, Rupert Murdoch has waded into the Charlie Hebdo debate. I was wondering what an outdated, bigoted, sociopath might make of it all.

Middle East editor or IRIN news
Five permanent UN Security Council members (UK, US, France, China & Russia) account for 75 percent of world’s arms transfers, 4 percent of UN peacekeepers.

I "ta" stupid people...
This is a Man's World
by Almudena (Activists in Madrid, Spain)

This song by James Brown, which was played for the first time in 1966, never expires. It is certainly a man's world, in India, in the North and South, in every nation... it is a man's world.

In Spain 54 women died in the hands of their partners or ex partners last year. Sadly, this is just the tip of a huge iceberg.

-Honor killings of women continue to take place, however they are not regarded as such and are rarely prosecuted. Each year 5000 honor killings take place internationally, 1000 of them occur in India, according to Honor Based Violence Awareness Network.

-Genital mutilation of young girls still exists. A World Health Organisation report states that this practice exists mainly in 29 African countries and also in Middle East countries like Yemen, Kurdish communities and Saudi Arabia. A according to the UN, Islamic extremists in Iraq ordered it back inside their country this year.

-In Afghanistan women have to wear burka and find it hard to study or even learn how to read or write.

-It is illegal for women in Saudi Arabia to drive, they also need a male guardian to travel, for medical procedures, to ask for permits and even walk in the streets.

-One-third of the girls in developing world are married before the age of 18 and in 9 are married before the age of 15, according to the International Centre for Research on Women.

The list of such questions is endless. This is just the psychological and social context. According to the United Nations, 70% of women worldwide have suffered physical or sexual abuse from their partner. These are official figures. Extra-officially things always get tougher.

Not all is lost. Everywhere we see women who are changing history. Feminist women who want to put an end to this and be treated and regarded as they should be. Right now, the Kurdish women's resistance army, fighting against sectarian fundamentalism in Iraq, is a great example of this. We can also have the famous Pussy Riot collective, who fight for women's rights in Russia or the Gulabi Gang, Indian women in pink saris armed with sticks (there are now more than 400,000).

Regarding transsexuals, lesbians and gays, they too have had it hard, and will still do, because society needs to preserve the imaginary of men and woman united together. This way they can conform a traditional family to keep all citizens of society controlled, each assuming their gender role and identity. Using this social structure it is easy to target consumers, it is easier to manipulate every ones thinking because we all relate to the privileges and struggles of our imposed roles.

So, every gesture counts. Here in Spain we take pride in the two Indian women who recently defended themselves from men harassing them inside a bus. No society can be just without women being free and empowered. This is a long process, but it is not only up to us women. Men have to become feminist too, realise that they are oppressors without even noticing it if they don't defend women's voices, and rights, if they do not let them become strong. If they leave them space to grow, break stereotypes and sum up to their efforts, certainly that would make society civilized. Because with woman treated like this, it is not.

The second is the tax-exempt status that is given to organisations in the United States which are directly involved in the occupation and in significant attacks on human and civil rights within Israel itself, like the Jewish National Fund. Take a look at its charter with the state of Israel, which commits it to acting for the benefit of people of Jewish race, religion and origin within Israel.
WOMAN Truck drivers in South Africa

The road freight industry is essential to Southern African economies, and South Africa, the largest economy and port of entry and exit for the majority of goods coming and going to the region, has a shortage of trained, quality truck drivers.

Far from feeling forced to adopt traditionally ‘male’ qualities, women in the road freight industry are being specifically recognized as having desirable differences in relation to some of their male colleagues. Certain characteristically ‘feminine’ traits, such as cleanliness, risk aversion, and cautiousness are cited by employers, not as barriers to employing female drivers but as a positive motivation for employing more women.

“When men see you on the road, they get like ‘Ah, a woman driving, and she’s so young!’ ‘Hi, how are you? Teach me how to drive. Do this. Do that.’ And you’re like, ‘Hey…’”

Usually the man would droop up his eyes. It seemed that blood was dropping from his eyes. The man kept laughing looking at “This world, this place is ugly, I am ugly here. I don’t want her to see this side of me. It’s too late for me to go back. But I will never let my daughter be dragged into this hell.”

The blood dripping through her thighs. Then he told her that she was only worth a fuck! That she belonged to him, and that she was his bitch. The animal kept biting and feasting on her for many months. One fine day, he travelled with her to Kolkata. She was sold to a brothel owner in Sonegachi for Rs. 15,000. The man returned to his first wife. And thus started another journey of agony and pain.

Bano ran away from Kolkata and came to Mumbai (Kamathipura) 3 years ago. She doesn’t trust anybody and says, “Yahan koi kisi ka saga nahin” (In obdo belongs to nobody here). She earns for herself and her daughter who lives with one of her friends in Kolkata. She doesn’t want to bring her here. “This world, this place is ugly, I am ugly here. I don’t want her to see this side of me. It’s too late for me to go back. But I will never let my daughter be dragged into this hell.”

A point of no return is what she calls her predicament. Having cut all ties from the outside world, Bano has slowly slipped away into oblivion. Nobody is welcomed in her heart anymore. She has never loved a man. The only emotion she feels for them is despire. She has learned it the hard way that it’s a man’s world and she has to either fight or quietly surrender to the fake male dominance. She has built an impermeable wall around herself which cannot be breached by any living soul, let alone her daughter.

As I climbed down the stairs, I wondered how many Banos lived in these dark, sex stained by-lanes. How many more would I meet? And how many more will continue living the life of seclusion as if they never existed.

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A point of no return is what she calls her predicament. Having cut all ties from the outside world, Bano has slowly slipped away into oblivion. Nobody is welcomed in her heart anymore. She has never loved a man. The only emotion
There are lots of good people in India, who you can trust and be friends with but you can’t be friendly with people who offer themselves blatantly to you. As a single woman, I was constantly amazed by the beauty and chaos and raw humanity of this incredible country. India will cut to the core of your soul and overwhelm your senses in a way like no other place on earth. It may not be the easiest country to navigate alone, but it will certainly be one of the most life transforming experiences you ever have. If you can keep your heart and mind open and have good sense of humor, then this is a destination you won’t want to miss.

I have had my share of the good, the bad and the ugly, so here are some helpful tips I picked up along the way to help you have the most positive experience. But European and Indian culture about women are totally different: we can smoke everywhere, man and woman, is not forbidden in most cases except inside public places. We can be married or not at 30 years old (in most cases we’re not) we can work like man, be policeman, doctor, surgeon, we can drink a beer in a pub completely alone, BUT we are not “easiest” than yours women and if I have a tattoo and I travel alone, no, it doesn’t mean that we can have sex. A totally not. This is a big topic of discussion in India if you are a woman traveling alone. When locals find out you aren’t married, be prepared for a lot of different feedback. I have been asked to walk around a temple nine times to find a husband. I have been sent to astrologers. I was even pulled over by a policeman and berated, not for driving my motorcycle without any papers, but for not being married. I often wear a simple band around my finger just to keep unwanted questions and interest at bay. If you are already married then you’ve got it made.

India is still a very conservative country. Despite the heat and perpetual sweating, make sure to always carry ashawl to cover your shoulders, wear knee length or longer pants along with tops long enough to cover your bottom. Some of the most comfortable attire to travel the country in are the traditional Kurtas - cotton tunics which are flowing, breathable and beautiful. These are readily available at any market place or shop and look fabulous paired with loose pants, jeans or tights. Tank tops and tight fitting clothing will solicit unwanted attention and is considered disrespectful at sacred sites and temples. Bikinis or being topless are not synonymous with any part of Indian culture and are not safe or appropriate on beaches (Indian men line up for glimpses of beautiful women in places such as Goa and Kerala). You will get harassed. As much as we all like to feel appreciated and beautiful, you don’t want these packs of men blowing you kisses and stalking you through the streets. If you are a woman and you travel alone, take help and advice from people who are modest and intend to help you according to your interests rather than their own vested interests and first thing first, do make it a point to understand the Indian way of thinking.

A certain section of men here like to stare at women in a strange manner. On the contrary, there are men who don’t even look straight in your face! They look down in respect. So, if you get some derogatory gestures or remarks, you also get a great amount of respect from several men in India. As a foreigner, you can ensure that you dress modestly and don’t get friendly or smoke in public places. Hold your purse strings in other things like food, transport and shopping, but never let a cheap hotel stay ruin your case you need to travel by a taxi, make sure that you build a rapport with the cabbie. Talk to him before your journey begins and suggest him that your safety is his responsibility too. Solo travel in India isn’t as unsafe as it’s made out to be.

India is a beautiful country both geographically and culturally, thus a traveller should feel free to visit it, explore it and embrace it. You may be on a pilgrimage, the globe to this country of paradoxes and chaos, you will need a sense of humor. Nothing here is as it seems. India is one of the friendliest, happiest places on earth, but if you are used to structure, punctuality, and what you see is what you get, you are in for a big surprise. India is a country of color and contradiction, “yes” means “no”, “no” means “maybe”, “10am” means “noon” or “tomorrow”, 100 rupees can turn into 1000, and directions to one place may lead you to a totally different place. Smile, breathe and take your time because India will demand it of you. Laugh, cry and just go with the flow. Take care of yourself, be alert, open and take everything with a grain of salt. This experience will transform your life and truly speak to your soul.

Photo - Lucia Patoprasa

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Room Foundation, A TISS
alumnus.

Anticlock wise:
Children painting the
thewall in dharave,
The first wall painted,
A boy playing in the
colorful environment,
showing off, people
passing by and
wondering, cat and the
mural wall

Eight months back we started
muralswallahs, a project that
aims at making people work
together to beautify their
communities and giving others,
especially children in
neighbourhoods undergoing
forceful change, a unique
hands-on experience in which
they are guided to successfully
create a large-scale work of art
that they can visit time and
again. Today it is changing the
face of neighbourhoods our
kids live in, one wall at a time.
This project creates a voice for
the inhabitants, influence public
opinion and media, helps
change perception and remove
stigma.

In an attempt to transform city
spaces, authorities import a new
way of life and a top down
policy in transforming many
existing functional spaces
without any consultation to the
people about how they want to
live or what is important to
them. In our earlier projects,
we have worked alongside
community residents to learn,
develop and strengthen their
hold of their neighbourhood
and the transformation of their
environment.

Our focus has been art,
creating is a form of play, it is
a sensing of the possibilities, it is
a free speculation, a learning to
be ourselves. we use art as a
medium to create a platform
for all to express, create,
understand, learn, participate, engage
and share their understanding of
where they live so that they begin
taking an initiative in making
decisions about transforming
their environment and
neighbourhoods into places
they really want to live in.

For more information on our
work with communities living in
neighbourhoods undergoing
forceful change, please contact:
+91 9773612431

Facebook: dharavartroom. Join
us in making more impact, all
contributions made via
www.orangestreet.in/projects/m
uralswallahs are eligible for tax
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Section 80G) of the Income
Tax Act.

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