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A Quest for Social Justice: A Colloquium to Build a Network

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INTRODUCTION

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The goal of social justice can sometimes be seen as making a lion's den, a happy zoo. It can also be seen as balancing the competing claims for common spaces, be it in economic, social or cultural domains. But the most contentious situation arises when historically marginalized communities expect past wrongs to be set right through affirmative action. The contestation arises not just on the action the state or the other civil society actors take, or the intentions behind those actions but also on the consequences of those actions. Three spheres of social responsibility could be: Intentions, actions, and consequences. These three spheres are mutually overlapping and the zone where these three spheres intersect is the zone that is of utmost importance to this colloquium. The three spheres are:

- **Intention** – Policies, institutions, and implementation. Rawls and Amartya Sen argue about the centrality of the role of institutions in ensuring justice. Rawls proposes that if we have fair institutions, there will be fair outcomes. The issue that remains less clearly articulated is: From whose point of view should one evaluate the outcome? Similarly, whose conception of justice we are going to take into consideration? When policies are not backed up by appropriate institutions, actions lose their coherence and genuinity of purpose. I have always believed that if there are strong and fair institutions, even weak policies might be incrementally improved. But no matter how strong are the policies, if institutional base is weak, the implementation is bound to lose purpose. Social justice is as much about designing accessible and accountable institutions as about fair norms of resource allocation.
- **Actions** – The legitimacy of Actions will be determined by choice of criteria, procedure, and intervention. The criteria for determining entitlements may influence the fairness of inclusion or exclusion. Criteria for judging fairness in a historical context with unequal capabilities, skills or the ability to use opportunities available poses many dilemma. The procedures for implementing the criteria may be sometimes completely at variance with the procedures to implement

KEY WORDS

Social Isolation

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Role of State

Civil Society

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Inclusive Innovation

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Informal Sector

Partnership Networking

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Quality Education

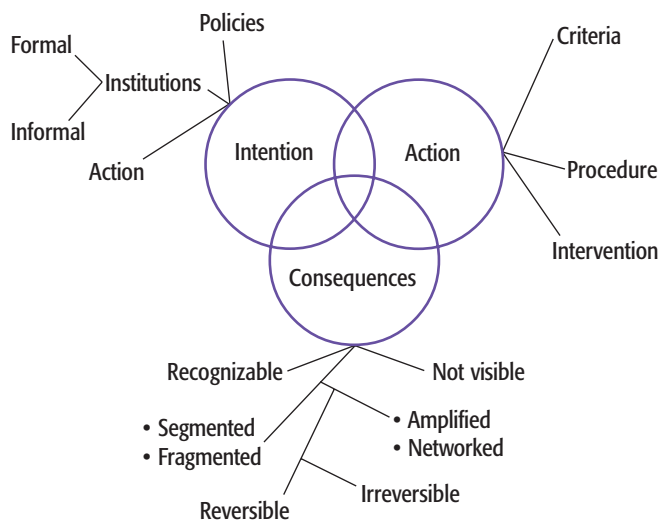
Schooling Governance

the same. Under such circumstances, the interventions will fulfill *letter* of criteria but may lose the underlying *spirit*. When reservation for backward classes and socially disadvantaged groups was introduced, I had raised this issue with the Chairman of the committee set up to decide the criteria. By ignoring the capacity building aspects, benefits reached the second generation youth (the sons and daughters of bureaucrats, technocrats and other privileged people among the socially backward groups, who could afford the available coaching facilities). The first generation learners, that is children of illiterate or less educated families were far fewer if at all. Even among these, those who could not afford coaching could not aspire for admission to elite educational institutions. I had suggested that at least one year coaching be provided by the leading private institutions at public cost so that the prospects for such first generation learners may improve. Justice suffers when we use such criteria rather ineptly or follow procedures which ignore the genuine purpose of the intervention.

- **Consequences** – In the case of social justice, certain consequences are visible/recognizable while certain others are non-recognizable, amplified or subdued, segmented or networked, and reversible or irreversible. The focus on only visible consequences might mean that some of the underlying tensions may simmer and remain underground for long and when they erupt, it might be too late or too disruptive. The consequences of social justice policies and interventions occur in multiple domains but not all are easily visible. During our recent *Shodh Yatra* in Bastar region, we noticed this paradox being faced by the tribal communities under pressure from police and Maoists. The state has acknowledged the historical neglect of the region but by unleashing police action (almost always insensitive, coercive and indiscriminate), there are deeper consequences for the psyche of local communities which can be ignored only at one's own peril.

The trio — policies, institutions, and

Figure 1: Mapping Social Justice Themes and Actions



(Gupta, 2009)

actions — would define the intention. So, the task on hand is to look out for these three factors that will form the intention for the attainment of social justice. Similarly, if the sphere of action is considered, the criteria, procedure, and interventions need to be found out for the attainment of social justice and the same applies to the sphere of consequences. But, the sphere of consequences becomes very tricky to handle because we only look for the recognizable or the visible consequences and thus neglect the hidden, non-recognizable ones. The not-

The sphere of consequences becomes very tricky to handle because we only look for the recognizable or the visible consequences and thus neglect the hidden, non-recognizable ones. The not-so-visible or the non-recognizable consequences are vital to the achievement of social justice.

so-visible or the non-recognizable consequences are vital to the achievement of social justice. For instance, the state declares an emergency when some people die of swine flu but the same state does not care if many of its poor citizens die slowly and out of persistent starvation. This is because hunger deaths are relatively less visible due to their occurrence in the deprived and neglected part of the society which the media and the state often do not find attractive enough for their attention.

This Colloquium was organized by the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA) in partnership with British Council and the Indian Council of Social Science Research

with the the following expectations:

- Lateral learning among different countries: Much of the global knowledge has not been harnessed adequately for local use . For instance, a Mayor of Brazil, while working on the rapid bus transport system, developed gymnasiums, pedestrian pathway, etc., along with it. In India, cities like Delhi and Ahmedabad replicated only the idea of rapid bus transport system while ignoring the development in the other associated areas. So, we would like to see what lessons we can learn from other countries over the years and how to de/contextualize them elsewhere.
- In the space of social management, there is a need to know how to expand that space where people — not just civil society actors but also the people in government and private sectors — take initiatives to create an entrepreneurial solution to achieve social justice.
- Case studies worthy of replication: The practices of the successful case studies in one country could be replicated in another country. Also, sometimes failures teach more than the success and hence these should also be shared.
- Database creation: A multi-media and multi-language database could be created wherein all the case studies, experiences, lessons, etc., of all the involved countries would be shared. This should be something that this network should develop at the earliest. This would enable seamless knowledge sharing and thus enable all the countries to benefit from each other's knowledge base. An example of a unique social innovation from the southern part of India: a school on a boat devised by district education authorities while faced with the problem of teaching the children of the fishermen community. Most of the time they used to be in water for their livelihood and hence it was difficult to educate them through conventional medium of on-land schools. The school or *learning* boat goes along with the fishermen's *living* boat and provides education to the children. During daytime, the

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children learn lessons on the school or *learning* boat and during night, they shift to their parents' *living* boat. To my mind, this is a wonderful example of social innovation and can be implemented anywhere in a similar situation where coastal fishing is popular. Examples such as this are worthy of replication and hence should be shared in the form of a database from which different people can learn and replicate. Similarly, I had the opportunity to put together, along with another colleague, the innovations received by the 13th Finance Commission, chaired by Dr. V L Kelkar, from various states in India. Subsequently, in its recommendations, it suggested that a

District Innovation Fund be created in each District and also a National Centre for Innovations in Public Systems be created. Similar initiatives from different countries need to be pooled so that global movement for inclusive innovations can be strengthened.

I also shared the experience of the Honey Bee Network through which the Society for Research in Sustainable Technologies and Institutions (SRISTI), National Innovation Foundation (NIF), and Grassroots Innovation Augmentation Network (GIAN) are harnessing the grassroots innovations for larger inclusive development at community level. It requires a reflection on why thousands of grassroot innovators and traditional knowledge holders have unhesitatingly shared their knowledge even when the state, markets, and civil society have done very little if at all for

their welfare. Why those who are economically poor but rich in knowledge tend to contribute so much towards public goods? Why are their knowledge and resource rights violated by the outsiders with impunity?

The Colloquium brought together fairly diverse experiences from six different countries, viz., UK, India, Mexico, South Africa, China, and Brazil. Social justice policies and their scrutiny across six countries through an evolving network might trigger a discourse on developmental chain reactions along different directions. ✓

Concepts of Social Justice: State Does Not Matter

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I began my career as an empirical sociologist studying inequality or social stratification in South India, covering different dimensions of social stratification – social, economic and political. Sometime about 15 years ago into my professional life, I was invited to give a talk at the Law Faculty, University of Delhi and while talking about the different dimensions of social stratification, I pointed out at the contradictions between the ideals of equality and the practice of inequality. One of the students in the audience asked me very innocently, “Prof. Beteille, what is your definition of equality?” I had absolutely no answer to the question. I had thought a great deal about different aspects of inequality but I had taken equality for granted. So, later in my life, I tried to devote a fair amount of time in trying to understand what our commitment to equality signifies. Everybody seems to prefer equality to inequality. If so, then why so much inequality continues even today in all the societies across the globe? This is an interesting and fascinating problem. I do not think even those who wish to get rid of inequality and institute equality in the society can afford to completely ignore the complexities and ambiguities that are inherent in the idea of equality.

I will begin with my sense of discomfort about the notion of social justice. Social justice is a broad term. My discomfort arises from my inability to find an appropriate framework in which the discussion can have coherence. A great deal can be said by way of giving different examples of abuse or violation of social justice. What is difficult is to present a framework for having a comfortable discussion on social justice across different countries and continents with wide historical diversity. I will focus on some of the historical diversities that we have undergone in the last 60 years or so.

When one talks about social justice from the viewpoint of a social activist or someone who is engaged in social advocacy, the natural tendency is to be incensed by the violation that takes place in front of his eyes. Women are raped, children are abused, untouchables are torched, blacks are humiliated and so on. So, it is good to think about many instances of violation of social justice that takes place everyday in front of our eyes. One tendency which I find rather unfortunate is to pick up the state and use that as a target for all the misfortunes that the ordinary people face in their everyday lives, most of which emerge from their own society. I do not say that the state cannot do anything. But, it has been the tendency of the people, especially the intellectuals, to blame the state or the bureaucracy for all the misfortunes that is caused to the ordinary people. The larger society in which all these happen cannot put all the responsibility and blame on the state. When the Indian Constitution was adopted in 1950, it is ironical to see that there was too much expectation from the state by every Indian. And, it was thought that all the problems would be solved by the state. If something goes wrong, we go to the government. If we need support for

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a good cause, we go to the government. I think, the people who steered the helm of affairs in the first year of Independence may have been mistaken, though on the whole they have acted on good faith which did not get justified by itself. It was evident later that what was expected by the people was not actually met. So, the pendulum swung to the opposite end. Someone who went to the college in 1950s had a huge amount of expectation from the state to change everything in the society. It was rather the civil society that could have taken these initiatives to create a better world. The turnaround came between 1975 and 1977 with the declaration and after-

math of emergency. It is wrong to believe that we can dispense with the state in moving forward, looking for a better life for the people. If we do, that would be a very serious mistake.

I do want to dwell on what I believe to be the exemplary qualities of the people who met in the constituent Assembly between 1946 and 1949 and wrote the Constitution of India. The chief architect of the Constitution of India, Dr. B R Ambedkar, considered an untouchable, despite being in opposition to the Congress, was appointed as the Chairman of the drafting committee of the Constitution of India. When some of my French friends pointed out about the discrimination against the untouchables in India, I told them that in 1950, if the French were rewriting their Constitution, I can bet that they would not get an Algerian or a Guianacian as the Chairman of the committee. The members of the drafting committee were over optimistic. Ambedkar had the clearest sense of the possible dangers and obstacles to the implementation of the Constitution that they were writing. He said that constitutional morality is not a gift of nature; it has to be cultivated. We must recognize that our people are yet to learn it. It is easy to write the rules, but the ethos and moral framework which is necessary to make those laws effective is a far more difficult thing to create. Ambedkar was not confident that India would meet the kind of constitutional morality which would enable an effective functioning of the Constitution, devoted to equality and social justice. However, the people who wrote the Constitution genuinely believed that everything would be possible as 'we had our own government then.' They had convinced themselves that nothing was possible during the British rule. Although I do not think that British were here

In the independent nation, the makers of New India attributed all the problems of the country to the alien rule; they felt that once that rule came in their hands, they could do anything. They thought they could create equality and social justice. But, in fact that is not how it turned out to be.

Though the British were not in favour of the practice of untouchability in India, they did not want to burn their fingers by getting too deeply into the customs based on religion of the Indian people. So, the British, in fact, did not abolish the practice of untouchability. The first thing the Indian Constituent Assembly did was to make the practice of untouchability unlawful.

to serve our purpose, but even among them, there were good people with good will. In the independent nation, the makers of New India attributed all the problems of the country to the alien rule; they felt that once that rule came in their hands, they could do anything. They thought they could create equality and social justice. But, in fact that is not how it turned out to be. The movement away from great hope in the state to disenchantment with the state and the corresponding movement to a great faith in the people of India built the idea that once the right people are there, all the problems would be solved. It is to the credit of Ambedkar who did not

have that kind of starry-eyed view of the ordinary people of India. He felt that the ordinary people of India needed to be educated and the Constitution would help them to educate themselves. So, it is the state that should take the responsibility of educating people about the constitutional morality. However, when we tried to examine our present predicament, we

found various things that had gone wrong. Following the ideas of Dr. Ambedkar, "Nothing is easier than replacing bad laws with excellent laws but nothing is more difficult than to get rid of old customs and create new customs." What I wish to bring to your notice is that our regulatory rules are all in favour of equality, but the habits of the heart still cling to the old hierarchical practices. Therefore, I think it is not very helpful to attribute the responsibility for all the problems to the state and bureaucracy. We have to take a closer look at the people in the country and see the kinds of changes that are, in fact, taking place and the new contradictions these changes are releasing.

The Indian society has been practising social exclusion for centuries, if


not for a millennia, on a scale which no other society has ever done in the human history. But, this was gradually erased during the colonial rule, particularly during the last 50 years of the colonial rule. But, with a new Constitution and with a new democratic political order, economic planning, higher rates of economic growth, release from economic stagnation and so on, social exclusion has changed its form. Social exclusion is no longer something that can be legally justified. All the rules which are related to social justice have been scrapped or abolished. Though the British were not in favour of the practice of untouchability in India, they did not want to burn their fingers by getting too deeply into the customs based on religion of the Indian people. So, the British, in fact, did not abolish the practice of untouchability. The first thing the Indian Constituent Assembly did was to make the practice of untouchability unlawful.

In the past, social isolation was practised mostly in the form of geographical isolation — like the tribals, who had very little to do with the social, economic and political life of the mainstream people, were geographically isolated into forests and hills. The *dalits* were part of the mainstream society. They were separated from the village communities either through segregation or isolation. The people who did not like to stay with the untouchables in the past, now find different indirect ways of segregating them. Social exclusion has not yet disappeared completely. And, there is a limit to which you can change these things by legislation. Even today, though people live with the untouchables, they find different means and ways of segregating them. The main difference between what

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prevailed in the past and what prevails today is that the people no longer have the legal sanction that they used to have in the past. However, I believe that inequality is decreasing in India. A century ago, women were not even admitted into the universities. Today universities and other occupational spaces are being occupied by women, though not always in equal terms with the men. This is a major change of which we should not lose sight. I know, the women were not allowed in the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford until the 1880s. The first of the two women graduates in the whole of British Empire were two women

from my city of Calcutta. There is no doubt that inequality is increasing, though only in certain forms. For example, inequality in the sphere of distribution of income is certainly increasing. But that does not mean that inequality in every aspect is increasing. There is one particular basis for social exclusion that was practised in the traditional Indian society, based on the opposition between the notion of purity and pollution. The segregation of the tribals was also justified with the notion of purity and pollution. Those rules of purity and pollution have eased quite considerably, though they have not disappeared completely. But, in the process these groups have acquired a kind of political identity which makes them major players in the political arena and which tends to threaten the growth of citizenship, if by citizenship we mean a set of rights and obligations that adhere to the individual as citizens irrespective of birth in a particular caste, community, or race. So, what we find in India at present is a complicated picture and I am sure you will find the same problem across the world as well. 

The State Does Matter

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We cannot talk about social justice unless we factor the state in the picture. I would argue here that when we talk about justice, we do not talk about it as a neutral topic which could be applied anywhere in the world. Here, I would rather talk about social justice in a very contextualized fashion — in a liberal democratic society where justice involves transparency, intersubjectivity, and universality. There is justice in tribal society and other such societies, but we are not talking about those kinds of social justice in

our country, nor do we want to talk about NGOs. When I talk about civil society, I talk about the traditions which began way back with Ferguson, Adam Smith, and Hegel that connected the individual with the state. I do not talk about the NGOs because most of the NGOs in our contemporary society are doing the best to let the state off the hook: “Well, the state does not work, here we are! We will work for you.” That is not the role of the civil society. That is going against and inimical to the thrust of modernity. Ambedkar said, “It is easy to formulate law. Liberty and equality by the way are the easiest things in the world. But what is difficult is the fraternity. You can not legislate fraternity.” This fraternity is the essential corner of what we call social justice today. Without the notion of fraternity, there is no justice at all.

In this regard, there are two examples from India — the terrible ethnic carnage in 1993 in Mumbai and the worst ethnic carnage in 2002 in Gujarat. What I would like to ask is that, “Should we look at Muslims as victims, which is the way the civil society will look at and may tell them to hold hands, sing songs and go for

marches; or should we look at Muslims as citizens?” This would make a major difference.

If it is the job of the state to give the victims justice, it is also the job of the state to take them from victimhood to citizenship.

We all know that democracy is not easy; in fact it is the toughest thing to implement. It is difficult because the laws are of republican spirit, if the state does not implement those laws, people tend to see themselves as victims and that is what we should try to avoid.

I have recently begun my study to understand how the Muslims cope in the society after several years of the carnage. In the course of my study, I realized that when such kinds of incidents happen, we go there, as vultures do, to find out who is doing what, how much and for whom. And, we write about it. Many NGOs do outstanding jobs in providing trauma

counseling, shelter, food, etc., and more importantly they connect the victims to the state by asking for compensation for the victims. But, as time goes by, a new “normal” sets in. A *normal* situation is one which is fraught with the underlying tension. If you read Habermas, you will think that the past was wonderful and there was no contradiction. Only when money and power came in later, all the problems started. But, that is not true. In fact, Talcot Parson once said very tellingly that it is very easy to study conflict and change, but it is difficult to study stability. Sitting on a powder keg of divisive forces,

it is difficult to understand how society remains stable. This is what we should look at. So, the new *normal* which emerges is a normal where again conflict and contradiction persist, negotiation takes place, and people have to tread very carefully not to step on fending stones.

So, in the first round of the carnage, you have the bodily harm where you want shelter, protection, trauma counseling, help for sending children to school again, getting a new job as the old job is lost, getting a new place to live and so on. But, in the fullness of time, if we look at the pictures of

the carnages, we can understand how victims cope with that in the long run. That is when the idea of “justice” comes in and “victimhood” steps out. To find a new job, a shelter, and a suitable school for the children were some of the problems. These kinds of problems, however, were sorted out both in Bombay and Ahmedabad, though not in the best possible ways. But a new normal had emerged. This *normal* was not free from tensions, contradictions, and worries, but yet it was *normal* in the sense that you could tell what you would do tomorrow. But, what hurt the victims is that they were never seen as citizens. And, what they wanted more than anything else was justice. The victims argued that they could find a new shelter, a new job and so on, but what about justice? And that is what the victims do not get. That is why one can put the blame fairly on the state — if it is the job of the state to give the victims justice, it is also the job of the state to take them from victimhood to citizenship.

In fact, there is a fairly orthodox Muslim organization called the *Tablig-e-Jamad*, that teaches the children to lead the life of a Muslim. However, as the Muslims did not like the orthodox ideology of *Tablig-e-Jamad*, they refused to go to its mosque and instead set up their own mosque under ramshackle tents. When asked about the reason, they argued that the mosque clerics do know about what is happening above the ground and below the ground but they do not know about what is happening on the ground. In fact, many of the faith-based organizations

or *madarsas* are not pushing them towards fundamentalism.

However, we need to take a hard look at what we mean by civil society. If we think of civil societies as NGOs, then we would be looking at people as victims and it does a lot good to our ego. What I am trying to point out is that these people should be seen as the victims of injustice and therefore they should be seen as citizens as they too desire a sense of equal participation. If we look at human being as normal people, not Muslims as “Muslims” but as normal people, and if we can put ourselves in their shoes and have that kind of intersubjectivity, then I think justice will be served because you will have universality, transparency, and intersubjectivity.

We all know that democracy is not easy; in fact it is the toughest thing to implement. It is difficult because the laws are of republican spirit, which is actually important. If democracy is all about voting, there would not be difficulty. Thus, if the state does not implement those laws, people tend to see themselves as victims and that is what we should try to avoid. Human beings are naturally bad, what makes them good are the laws. One of our failures comes from the fact that all of us think that we are superior to others and others are trying to come as close to us as possible. Thus, we need the democratic republican law to be implemented properly. The democratic republican law is something which never evolves naturally from the ground, but comes from the mind and we should work accordingly. ✓

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Livelihood and Social Justice

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Any form of livelihood imposes certain kinds of demands on our concepts of social justice. First of

all, I think, human beings need a livelihood - not only a profession but also perhaps some kind of vocation. The

difference between a profession and a vocation is that profession talks of only expertise, competence, and training while vocation in addition talks of a way of life where a particular form of work is seen by an individual as rewarding in itself, that he is doing it not just for the sake of money or earning a livelihood but because it makes sense to him as a human being; it is in tune with his way of life, his values and is also seen by him as being socially useful and something which makes his work intrinsically worthwhile for the society as a whole. For example, no musician can be great if he sees music only as a way of earning his livelihood. Nor can he or she look at music as only a profession, a matter of training or earning money, or being in public eye, or a matter of being a successful stage performer. The musician, somehow or other, must also see music as intrinsically worthwhile. That is why they often trace the origins of their music to certain forms of divine gift. Many others see music as a part of their inheritance, something that they have learnt from their forefathers and *gurus*; music to them is almost a form of worship. And I would suspect that to be the crucial link between social justice and livelihood, social justice must create space for that kind of belief in the intrinsic work. As far as health is concerned, social justice also requires that everybody gets a chance of not only proper access to healing systems or healthcare but also must have a right to choose between different types of healing systems and social justice must allow a person to deny or refuse to accept healthcare when he or she thinks it is unnecessary or not commensurate with his or her dignity. Thus, a terminally ill person might decide not to live on a life support system and be a vegetable for the next twenty years.

I suspect that this absence of transparency in healthcare systems is matched by the kind of traditional secrecy which is also often found in many older healing systems. In

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Education is the process through which we all acquire our concept of social justice.

Ayurveda, Yunani and other forms of folk medicines, we would not really know the basis of the knowledge, the limits of the kind of a particular treatment being given to you and cannot make informed choices. I think social justice demands that each patient gets full information so that he or she can decide what he or she wants to do with the healing system. This also means that the agency must shift from the person who is treating the patient to the patient himself. No doctor has the right to decide on behalf of the patient what is better for him or her.

The issue of education and social justice is open-ended. It cannot be grappled with as easily as in the case of health. As in the field of health, in education too, one should be informed about the options open; whether any particular educational choice is compatible with one's tem-

perament or personal inclination or whether one is being pushed into a professional career because his family is economically insecure. His becoming a doctor or an engineer, though not suitable to him, may be good for the family. Your interest may lie in painting, filmmaking, or mass communication, but the family might think they are too risky to be taken up as a profession. But I do believe that these choices should be read out before a student and the student should be ultimately responsible for the choice he makes and unless that minimum right is given he will be a disgruntled member in the profession and look at the profession only instrumentally. He can never develop a sense of it being a vocation. It will always remain his profession and the attempt will always be to work from 10 to 5 so that he can have a longer leisure period between 5 and 10 that could be used to make more money so that he can get out of that profession in his middle age rather than old age. Also, I think, education is the process through which we all acquire our concept of social justice.

Our concept of social justice is not the same as what it was when we were young toddlers or even later when as a teenager we entered the education system. We should ultimately reconcile these two or often more than two concepts of social justice. My concept of social justice as a student must make sense to the society to some extent for it to be valid and the society's concept of social justice must make some sense to me as an individual to have commitment to the concept of social justice. It is because this commitment is often lacking that social justice becomes a slogan, something that you say for the sake of public consumption, something that you declare on the Independence Day or the Republic Day and forget the very next day, something which becomes a ritual demand, a ritual articulation of certain values and its real substance is lost for both you and those who are listening to you.

I don't think social justice is very salient in the current scenario. I hear a lot about social justice from the Islamic activist groups. That is because in Islam, social justice is a very important concept. Social justice is a relatively more important concept in some of the Semitic creeds. I have heard that in Judaism too, it is of important value. It is relatively less well-articulated in Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain philosophies. That does not mean that the concept of social justice does not exist but the concept of social justice is defined in less absolute terms because it varies with social and cultural location. This makes social justice a somewhat difficult concept to handle because what is social justice for you is not social justice for me. But this also allows you certain kinds of freedom and flexibility that may not be that easily available in the Semitic creeds.

For instance, affirmative action becomes easier because when we say we need affirmative action for the *Dalits* or for the tribals, implying that others cannot have it, it is gulped easily because their idea of space- and

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In democracy, number matters and if you belong to a large caste group, you can influence the political process more directly.

time-specific social justice allows us to reconcile with that. All protests against reservations, as all of us might have noticed, have mostly come from the middle class. Outside the middle class, it is taken for granted that something has to be done for the *Dalits* and the tribals. Actually, tribals have not been that articulate in India. *Dalits* have at least made their demands felt while the tribals have been relatively quiet in this matter and yet the society and the Constitution makers made a commitment for provision of special amenities for these two communities. In the case of other communities, it has been more controversial partly because they are numerically very large. In democracy, number matters and if you belong to a large caste group, you can influence

the political process more directly. Many people fear that affirmative action for these groups will allow them to pump into the political system. And that some people in the social sector who do not have the confidence, may take advantage of the reservation system and using political clout will deprive others of their dues. What is social justice for them will become social injustice for others. But this is only in case of numerically preponderant caste groups and communities which are very large in size, mainly the farming communities such as the large caste communities of traditional farmers, for example, the *Jats* of Northern India, the *Marathas* of Western India, the *Patels* of Western India, the *Reddys* of Andhra, the *Lingayats* in Karnataka and so on and so forth.

These communities, really speaking, are *Shudras*. But these farming communities, because of their large size, wield enormous political clout; they produce major political leaders, ministers and now have a significant presence in Indian public life and perhaps do not even need that kind of affirmative action. But in some cases, certain sectors may need it while the others may not and in such cases, there are controversies and I

can well imagine people objecting to affirmative action. But on the whole, these communities are not controversial. What is controversial is the need for smaller communities just entering politics and demanding affirmative action. But there is always the danger that using their new found political clout, they would use affirmative action and be unjust to other communities. They are often unjust to parts of their own communities which have not acquired the capability to absorb the benefits of affirmative action. So, in these communities, we often find some families corner or monopolize all the fruits of affirmative action. And the students of social justice have to learn to make sure that the idea of social justice is not deployed to ensure the continuation of such lop-sided system of social justice.

However, implementation of social justice schemes can misfire or become a liability. In a country like India, there is employment guarantee scheme and one of the institutions with which I am associated did a study of the scheme in Orissa and found nearly ninety per cent of the money being pocketed by dishonest local politicians, bureaucrats and others who are handling the scheme. This kind of a thing happens but it is not possible to enumerate all possible ways social justice schemes or projects get co-opted or hijacked by the privileged members of the society. This is especially so in the case of those public funds which are meant for the bottom of the society and yet there is no proper monitoring system to ensure that it reaches the bottom. One of our

The democratic system is still functioning. And, it is functioning not because of people like us in the middle class or because of the privileged service sector society, but for the simple reason that at the bottom of the society, there are people to whom political participation means a lot.

Prime Ministers, Rajiv Gandhi, used to say that only twenty per cent of the money targeted for the very poor actually reaches them. I would suspect that perhaps that apprehension still holds true of large parts of India's social sector because of which our attempt to deliver social justice has not often succeeded. But we are probably learning. People are very alert and the democratic system is still functioning. And, it is functioning not because of people like us in the middle class or because of the privileged service sector society, but for the simple reason that at the bottom of the society, there are people to whom political participation means a lot. It is a matter of

life and death for them and that is why the politicians after a point have to be responsive to them. They cannot hope that every time they can go only at the election time and hoodwink the people into voting for them. People are becoming more knowledgeable; in fact from the various surveys we have done on the electoral behaviour, it is pretty clear that the bottom level of the Indian society is at least as much politically knowledgeable as the other sectors of the society and these people have a greater commitment to the democratic system; the legitimacy of the system of democracy is high amongst them and they feel efficacious or capable within the democratic system; they know they can change the government and this feeling has grown over the years. So, ultimately, that is the best check against the misuse of schemes to deliver social justice in this part of the world. ✓

Prioritizing the Poor: Towards Social Justice in Latin America

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I have interest in the way the policies for social justice are implemented. Let me ask myself, how deep is our commitments to social justice? What are the tools avail-

able to us to achieve the ends of social justice?

I have been working on the implementation of several

development programmes in Latin America. We have been hearing time and again that growth helps in promoting social justice, but in reality it did not help us much. Mere economic growth does not much help the deprived sections. For example, in Brazil, around the 1970s, there was a tremendous growth rate (about 12 %), but it never sustained for long. In 1980s, in fact it drastically came down to about -4 per cent. So, the message is that growth alone does not solve the problems. Even if we achieve in terms of quantity, what about the quality?

However, more than 22 per cent of the people lived under extreme poverty in Brazil till 2003. When a strong and committed social reform policy started in 2003, the percentage of poverty reduced fast, from 17 per cent to 8 per cent during 2003 to 2008. During the same period, the poorest eight per cent of the people increased their income at the rate of 10 per cent while the income of the richest 10 per cent grew on an average at the rate of 1.5 per cent per annum. How did it happen? The government decided to take a particular amount of money and give it to the poor. This happened not by discriminating against the others but by prioritizing the needy. Thus, social justice could be achieved not by neglecting the privileged section of the society but by prioritizing the needy and deprived.

In an educational reform programme in Brasilia in Brazil, the government took extra measures to retain the children in school. They gave incentives to the children as well as to the parents to make sure that the children were kept in school.

There was another programme called Zero Hunger Programme which ensured that all the people had three meals daily. In a scheme called Food Card, a needy person could with-

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While providing money, the government ensures that the family gets sufficient food. For ensuring that the benefits reach the poor, the government works in collaboration with different networks as well as different civil society bodies. What we learnt was that social commitments prioritizing the poor is very important for an inclusive growth and social justice.

draw money from an ATM which he would use for buying food. But people were fond of buying liquids, cigar, and even gambling away with this money. So, there was a lot of confusion and conflict about this programme. The government thus realized that the people did not fully realize its importance and hence government control or regulation was necessary, mostly in case of the government implemented programmes though that may even intrude into the lifestyle of the people. Finally, it was decided that the citizens would bring their purchase slips to prove that they have purchased only food from the money that they had withdrawn using this Food Card. But, it did not work. So, finally in 2003, it was decided by the government not to give subsidy to the poor under various heads but to give a lump sum amount per family that they would spend on their necessities which would be decided by the family, not by the government. Thus, all cash transfer programmes merged into one and the focus shifted to family instead of child, mother, energy, hunger, etc. And interestingly, if there is a woman in the family, government ensures that the card be issued on her name, not on the name of the male head. In all these programmes, both local as well as the federal government take equal responsibilities. The local government collects the data from the people and sends it to the federal government which makes the decision and controls all the programmes. There are also regulatory measures that guide and make the citizens accountable for carrying out their responsibilities. For example, if there is a small child, in the age group of 0-6 years at home, he/she must be taken to the hospital for regular check ups; similarly, a child of 6-17 years of age should be sent to school. If the family does not comply with this, they get the first warning followed by the second

warning from the government. Then they block the benefits from the government and it takes five times to completely block the benefits. The whole idea of the government is not to punish the people, but to ensure that they use the benefits of the government appropriately.

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the family gets sufficient food. For ensuring that the benefits reach the poor, the government works in collaboration with different networks as well as different civil society bodies. What we learnt was that social commitments prioritizing the poor is very important for an inclusive growth and social justice. ✓

Ways of Knowing, Feeling and Doing: Going Against the Grain

Anil Gupta

If for some reason, the state becomes indifferent to people's development, can we still progress? I think, we can indeed progress even when the state is indifferent. However, the progress would definitely be more if the state acts responsively.

It took more than 20 years for our government to recognize the knowledge and potential our people have for solving problems. Even today a large number of institutions and organizations of our country are not convinced about this. National Innovation Foundation has mobilized, with the help of Honey Bee network volunteers, more than 1,26,000 ideas, innovations, and traditional knowledge practices (not all of them unique or distinctive, of course), and cases as examples of creative innovation from 545 districts of our country. But, we have not been able to convince many government departments and institutions about their significance. Thus, mere existence of ideas is not good enough proof that ideas would be taken forward. But we have to carry it forward. How do we do that?

The intellectuals of our country think that by mere production of knowledge, we would solve our problems. But it never happens that way. Though we have produced enough knowledge, we "feel" less for it and "do" (act) even lesser than what we feel. The gap between knowing, feeling, and acting is a paradox that every individual faces in his everyday life. And we should act upon bridging this gap.

Given the philosophy of SRISTI, "Give me a place to stand, I will move the world" – the famous Archimedian dictum, I share the belief that many of us collectively have in the power of knowledge-rich-economically poor people to attempt solutions to many of their intractable problems. Given a little support, innovative knowledge can help us remove poverty, generate employment, and thus help in establishing a fair and just society. Though in our society, there are a lot of customary prejudices

about sharing knowledge, but a lot of people treat their knowledge as an open source. About 95 per cent of the innovators have shared their knowledge with us in good faith without any reservation or restriction.

It is not only in the realm of technology but also culture and craft that local genius unfolds itself in many diverse and distinctive ways. I can cite the examples of innovative painting from Purulia by Bhabi Mahato and

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many other women elsewhere like Ram Tamari Devi from Champaran who used walls, grain bin, and other such places to articulate their creativity. Is it not a disgrace to call such culturally- or knowledge-rich people as unskilled as the national employment guarantee programme tends to look at them? While certain gaps take time to bridge, there are certain other gaps that bridge very fast. For example, within the last six years, more than 400 million cell phones have been sold in the country cutting across different sections of the people. Therefore, it is not true that the state and the market cannot work together. In this case, the state provided the policy and the bandwidth while the market provided the low-

cost technology thus bringing in a revolution in the world of cell phones. So, for bridging the socio-economic gaps, what is important is to understand the right combination of institution, technology, and policy.

Let us take another example — soyabean in Brazil grew by 400 per cent in 15 years. The reason was that the average land holding for soyabean cultivation was 400 hectares (in general, the average land holding in Brazil was about 70 hectares). Irrigation was brought in. However, such a fast growth of soya cultivation was attributed to the scale. It was argued that there is not much difference in productivity between the farmers of Madhya Pradesh, who grew soyabean in 1-2 hectares of land and that of the soyabean farmers of Brazil. The earlier inference that the scale was responsible for growth was misplaced. Like the greenhouse revolution in China, by aligning different institution, technology, and policy, various gaps can indeed be bridged fast. The challenge thus is to find out why similar alignment does not take place for many other social sector policies in different countries.

What Honey Bee Network has been doing, is to follow ABC and DEF.

A stands for access; B for bridge between formal and informal science, and C for creativity, collaboration and compassion – here we find people who are not only creative but also compassionate and collaborative. They are interested in solving not only their own problems but also that of others. In fact, many of the innovations are triggered not by the innovators' own problems but only by the problems of the others. But still there are problems that have not yet been solved, for example, tea leaf plucking, transplantation of paddy, crushing of *Mahuwa* seed, etc., for which we have not been able to find a suitable innovation yet.

D stands for diversity, design and distribution; E stands for energy, ethics and equity – What kind of ethics do we use to bridge these kinds of gaps? What kinds of ethics could make our policy makers more accountable? And F stands for fellowship, fostering partnerships, and

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fabricating solutions —We can overcome mainly three barriers to learning— language, literacy, and localism. People must learn in their own language; they must learn even if they are illiterate; and they must learn not only from local but also from outside sources. Thus the need for multi-language-multi-media databases of innovations and outstanding traditional knowledge. Despite the fact

that first such database was shared by Honey Bee Network at the Global Knowledge Conference in Toronto, in 1997, there are still not many such databases around the world. Similarly, a search on the web would not reveal many significant sources of empirical information on grassroots innovations around the world. Global silence on such vital aspects of social justice indicates a deep-seated pedagogical, philosophical, and policy bias against intellectual participation of people, not just the physical one as often advocated by many.

The Golden Triangle of creativity consists of Innovation, Investment, and Entrepreneurship. The transaction costs of each actor being high, unless institutional mechanisms exist to reduce or eliminate the same, the triangle will not get forged. The innovators do not know where they can find investors who would invest in their innovation; they are not always sure, with whom they can share their knowledge; on the other hand, the entrepreneurs do not know where innovators or investors are. We solved these problems by creating a micro-venture fund:

Creating a micro-venture fund. All the multilateral financial organizations like the World Bank, ADB, IFC etc., would agree that micro-finance is a powerful tool and they would support it as a measure for alleviating poverty. But none of them would talk about micro-venture finance only because the poor people's ideas do not seem

to them to have market. As there is no market for the idea, there is risk and when there is risk, they would need risk fund. That is how the Information Technology (IT) and Biotechnology (BT) revolution started. If venture capital is necessary for IT and Bio-technology, would it not be also helpful for supporting the creative and innovative ideas of economically

poor people? In response to this need, in 2003, a micro-venture innovation fund (MVIF) has been created with the help of Small Scale Industry Development Bank of India (SIDBI). Although the fund provided for this purpose is very small, it is the first step. It is run by the National Innovation Foundation (NIF) established with the help of the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India in 2000.

I have often been asked how do we find innovation. Let me narrate one incident. Once I was in Brazil and we were walking in the slums around the University of Rio. We found a man, Ubirajara, with a cycle having an interesting feature — a stand on the front wheel. This is very helpful for a small businessman who carries and sells small amount of goods. However, India and China, which have the maximum number of bicycles never came up with such an idea. This can actually be a good solution for our poor people, who want to vend things on a cycle.. This is a case of spreading innovations across cultures. Thus it is not necessary that “Innovation would occur where density of enterprise is maximum; they could actually occur on the margins and that could even be global margin.

Similarly, one innovator in Limpopo province in South Africa came out with an interesting innovation. Though he did not hear about Ms. Imelda Marcos who had 500 pairs of shoes, he designed a base of the shoe where one could change just the upper part as per the dress or need. So, one need not buy many pairs of shoes. We should be ready to learn from different cultures and countries, no matter whether they are poor and deprived. Upgradation of a South African donkey cart by Indian innovators is an example of collective improvisation of innovation. But there is a great problem in South Africa. Farmers there are not able to repair their farm equipments due to lack of provision of repairing skills

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and tools. One cannot find almost a single roadside repairing shop. Local traders or mechanics are not encouraged to vend their services in roadside vending shops, whereas in a country like India, we can find all kinds of vending shops by the roadside.

Once a girl in a village in China had a breathing problem. Being a poor farmer, the father of the girl could not afford to keep her in the hospital for

long. The whole community was worried how to keep the girl alive. While thinking of a way out, Jun Hai, Meng Hai and Ma Bao Shun innovated a breathing apparatus using the parts of cycle, washing machine and other small things. They used a small motor to run the machine. Finally, they developed the apparatus that kept the girl alive (the full story is published in *Honey Bee* journal, (2009, 20(2), 7-8). People’s efforts in solving their problems through low-cost innovations, however, have not been given due recognition worldwide. And even the media and NGOs remain shy about it. However, people should be enabled to learn from each other irrespective of their geo-political boundaries.

There are many examples of various kinds of innovations with low cost but having high productivity. For example, there is a cycle that runs both on road and water, hand-run washing machine without electricity, low-cost coffee-making machine designed out of a pressure cooker, machine for climbing coconut tree quickly and safely, herbal pesticides, pollution control device for engines, scooter-mounted mobile flour mill (by Jahangir, in the film, *3-Idiots*), and washing machine (on a two-wheeler). The poor have been at the bottom of economic pyramid, but many of them have been at the top of the ethical, institutional, and innovation pyramid. Language shapes the habit of thought as a linguist said. Thus when we use the term ‘bottom of pyramid,’ it distracts attention away from the resources in

which poor people are rich. Actually, it does not require a lot of money to make these kinds of things possible. But unfortunately, we have not given enough attention to these kinds of innovations. There is a lack of institutional platforms, micro-venture funds, and consumers who would understand and appreciate these innovations. However, all these are possible; in fact NIF has sold products based on grassroots innovations to six continents. So, I can say that G2G (Grassroots to Global) is possible. The philosophy of Honey Bee Network is that while a bee takes honey from a flower, it never impoverishes the flower but nourishes it and further at-

tracts more flowers. Similarly, we should not impoverish the innovators by taking away their ideas, but should enrich them with the help of the fruits of their innovations. We should encourage people-to-people learning, through cross-pollination; ensure that whatever is learned from people is shared back with them in the local language. We should not let creative people be short-changed; their knowledge rights should be respected. If we generate any rewards, consultancies or income based on people's knowledge, a reasonable share should go back to them in a just and fair manner. ✓

Civil Society, Participation and Rights-Based Approaches to Social Justice

Renana Jhabwala

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I would like to focus on the nature of poverty and what civil society means to the poor. I will also deal with the importance of giving them a voice and the changing power relations in our society. The only way to come out of the hegemony of the power structures and not to be restricted by the top down approach is by following a self-motivated approach. I will focus here on the lives of four women workers.

I come from an organization called SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association). This is a trade union of women in the informal economy and has been working for the last 35 years. We have paid worker membership of 1.1 million workers in India. The first thing we do is member education. From the studies of ILO, we learnt that there are 50 per cent of the women in the total world population who do 60 per cent of the work in terms of number of hours; they earn 10 per cent of the total income and own about one per cent of the world's assets. SEWA's aim is

to provide everybody with economic justice as it believes social justice can best be served by bringing economic justice, particularly when we are talking about poverty. Thus, we organize women into trade union first and then into cooperatives and organizations.

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As I talk about poverty, power and voice, I would also like to talk about the civil society. There are different kinds of civil society. And I would like to talk about a particular kind of civil society that helps in changing the hegemonic power structure. We have been building what we call the member-based organizations of the people. We bring women in small self-help groups. Making a distinction between member-based organization and an NGO, while an NGO is there to help them get organized, the member-based organization is accountable to the people and to the poor too. This is an important distinction.

The second point about the civil society is that it is important for these organizations to be organized not only locally but also nationally and internationally. SEWA had started as a local organization. But, it is also a fact that the national and international policies influence the organization, particularly if it is not organized nationally and internationally. Thus, when capital becomes global, it becomes necessary for the local organization of the poor also to be global. We work with street vendors, home-based workers, agricultural labourers and small farmers, construction workers and forest workers, domestic workers, waste collectors and others.

Let me focus on the home-based workers. They are the persons who produce goods at their home for the market. By the process, they have been attached to the global value chain. The women, for example, make embroidered articles at home and sell them to the big cooperatives and marketing agents/ organizations that in turn may sell these products even in the international markets. We have estimated that there are 100 million such workers, mostly women, worldwide. The problem is that as these women work from home, their work is not recognized as an economic activity. Even these women do not consider themselves as working. The most important thing the member-based organizations do is to make the workers as well as the policy makers aware about this fact.

We have women workers working on a whole range of things like incense stick, *bidi*, garment, embroidery and a lot more. We have approached the government for giving these women recognition. We had a convention of the women workers in ILO in 1996. However, the most recent recognition of the home-based workers has come from the South Asia region. SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) has given recognition to us as a representative of home-based workers. How have these organizations altered the lives of the poor? When we organize them, the income of these people goes up. By forming cooperatives, they also reach the market directly. SEWA has its own bank that helps the women to save and take loan. We have been lobbying and have succeeded in bringing out a Social Security Act for not

only the home-based workers but for all the informal workers all over the country. We are now looking forward to having health insurance and pension for the home-based workers. All these are possible mostly because of the fact that workers have become aware about their condition and are organizing themselves as an organization.

For the last 20 years, we have observed that people who are better-off are well organized and people who are poor are disorganized. I was chairing a government task force for which I visited many places and found that there are organizations of the employers, farmers, traders, contractors, and government bureaucrats but not of workers. It was an eye opener. I know that 20 years ago, the workers were much better organized than they are now. So, I think that space of civil society also changes. The same thing happens in case of structure of power.

Twenty years earlier, the courts were pro-poor but today they are not. In India, there are things like *suo moto*, where courts themselves decide to take up certain cases. But, generally they do not take up cases of street vendors, waste pickers, etc.

Regarding social security of the unorganized people, I would like to emphasize that the unorganized people really need social security. It is a safety net for them. But, things are becoming much more insecure for

them now. In India, the implementation of law has been very poor. The government pours a lot of money for poverty-related schemes. But, it seems that it passes through a clogged pipe and at the end when one opens the tap, there is nothing. However, the social security act which has come up has promised a lot of schemes for the poor. But, our worry is that if it goes through the same system of government, would the benefits really reach the poor. In India, there are schemes of cash transfer too. We want to carry out a pilot study to find out how the cash transfer system will work, against the cash transfer programme of the government that does not work effectively. In fact, less than 50 per cent of the Indians have a bank account. Of those, less than 70 per cent of the poor hold an account. Of those, only 15 or 20 per cent of the accounts belong to women. Thus, if you want to reach the poor, you will have to have what is now

The government pours a lot of money for poverty-related schemes. But, it seems that it passes through a clogged pipe and at the end when one opens the tap, there is nothing.

called financial inclusion of the poor.

Coming back to social security act, I would like to say that now the government is focusing more on schemes like health insurance in which every worker gets a card

by which he is entitled to medical expenses up to Rs. 50,000 in particular hospitals. This is one of the best programmes for these people, because medical expenses are the main cause of indebtedness for the poor. ✓

Who Controls the Public Space?

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I would like to talk about the informal sector of workers. About 93 per cent of the workers are from the informal sector, and thus do not come under the formal rules and regulations. Of this, agriculture sector would be a very important section. There are 140 million people who work as small farm workers and about 90 million workers are agricultural labourers who do not have land at all. That apart, the urban labourers would be about 100 million. Also we have a small scale unorganized industrial sector consisting of about 28 million workers who do not come under industrial rules and regulations. And, we get 64 per cent of the GDP from the informal sector. As far as rules are concerned, they are treated as outsiders. The attitude of the state towards these people is also the same.

Here, I would like to talk about the street vendors with whom I have been working for sometime. Unlike home-based vendors, street vendors are quite visible in developing countries. The upper class finds these vendors as a problem as they cannot take their morning walks, while others find them useful for getting goods and services at the doorstep. The problem is that the elite class and even the state think that street vendors are not necessary and allowing them to grow in the so-called public place is illegal, even though there is a Supreme Court verdict stating that if guided and regulated, the street vendors would serve a good purpose of the

society. There is the problem of public space for street vendors and waste pickers. The question then arises: Whom does the public space belong to? Who has been controlling the public space? This is one important issue that needs to be considered when we think about the issue of social justice. One of the issues for SEWA was, therefore, to see how to keep the municipality out. Though our constitutional rights guarantee us the freedom to carry out our business, when a street vendor does

Though our constitutional rights guarantee us the freedom to carry out our business, when a street vendor does that on the pavement, it is considered as illegal. The waste pickers face the same problem.

that on the pavement, it is considered as illegal. The waste pickers face the same problem. After collecting the waste, they place it in front of their shanties and the municipality truck comes and confiscates the same on the ground that they are encroaching on public space. Then the real issue is, to repeat again, who controls that public space? The national policy for street vendors states that about two per cent of the total urban population is engaged in street vending. This is not a small number. In Bombay, they will be about 250,000 and in Ahmedabad

about 80,000. According to a rough estimate, there are 10 million street vendors whose livelihood depends on street vending. However, the trend has been to see the street vendors and the waste pickers as the illegal encroachers of the public space. And, these people are made to believe that way too. In the case of street vendors and waste pickers, the municipality confiscates their property any time without giving them any notice and

even without a feeling of regret. The municipality police take their things away and sometimes even destroy their entire belongings. Even when the police raid a known criminal, they have to make a *panchanama* – in the presence of the witnesses and give a list of things they have confiscated from the goon. But, that does not happen in the case of street vendors and waste pickers. Ninety-three per cent of the population in the slums of Mumbai lives in single-room houses. These street vendors pay Rs. four billion annually to the police. However, there was a national campaign for making a law for protecting the street vendors. And although the law got passed in the Parliament in 2004, it

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is yet to be implemented. There are small but powerful groups who can influence such policies. But the entire population that is poor and marginalized, despite suffering from many injustices, fails to have any influence and is hence not able to get justice.

There are several powerful civil society organizations in urban areas, for example, NGOs like City Space and AGNI (Action for Good Governance and Networking in India), both in Mumbai, and run by the powerful elites. They try to keep the city clean and the public space open. So, in this

situation, what is important is to unionize these people to fight against this problem. ✓

Creating a 'Just' Society in South Africa

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I am very happy to note that the process of development is contested across countries. In this forum, I would like to reflect on two things. One, the rating of South Africa on Global Peace Index (GPI) as I believe this has to do a lot in our country as a ray of hope in a troubled world. Secondly, raise voice about the deteriorating scenario in South Africa so that we can secure a kind of future that we have envisaged when we went to the polls in 1994.

South Africa has slipped down 15 places in 2009 GPI, which is an annual rating issued by the Institute of Economics and Peace. We are now ranked 123 out of 144 countries. We scored badly on violent crime, number of murders, use of access to weapons, levels of organized internal conflicts, respect for human rights, perception of criminality, and likelihood of violent demonstrations. A question that worries me is that in this critical situation, when things are looking so bad, how can we talk

about social justice? Though indices should not define nationhood, matters of xenophobic violence that occurred last year, the daily violence against women and children, etc., which has grown rapidly within the last few years, should be given a serious thought. Despite the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which meant that we would be building a nation that cares, we came to realize that the Mandela magic that we rely on should be much more than just magic. Mandela magic should work more and we should work more too.

This year the elections in our country showed that they were more race-based. In fact, in different provinces of the country, different races voted for different parties. Quite interestingly, looking at this scenario of race-based election in post-1994, a group of august people came up with three scenarios that indicated what South Africa was and where it was heading:

- *Work apart scenario:* This tells about the reshuffled elites which lead to the disengagement between the civil society and the state institutions that gives rise to racism.
- *Work behind scenario:* In this scenario, the state thinks that the civil society really does not matter.
- *Work together scenario:* This suggests participatory citizenship, a common national vision across business, government, and civil society.

Most of our citizens would favour the third scenario.

However, the following question remains to be asked. What must be done to achieve the third scenario at a time when our civil society faces constraints on resources brought about by greed, corruption, and global economic crisis? When NGOs face challenges in their funding, business becomes more frugal; civil societies are disengaged; and in the face of the global economic crisis, what major steps should we take to achieve the third step? So, we are talking about a situation where there will be an ineffective state and disengaged civil society in South Africa. Because, we need a civil society that can work together and articulate what its needs are in order to drive progress of the nation and its people. However, in this situation, may I ask how to create a just society? Remember, we do not engage people from our younger generation. We should think about how we can teach and inspire them for creating a just and peaceful world. One of the important things that is coming up in our country is that people wish to build a right-based society and state. However, we should not forget that the use of our rights is something that reminds us of our responsibilities. Rights embody responsibilities.

Also, another important concern of our society is to give space for the voices of the marginalized to be reflected. We need to create space for the voices of the marginalized to articulate what is wrong in our society and then amplify these voices. I just

We need a civil society that can work together and articulate what its needs are in order to drive progress of the nation and its people.

We have a strong belief that the more the state gives, the more it creates a notion of dependency, the more it takes away a sense of agency, the more people think that they have a state which should give them more rather than taking steps for their own problems.

want to touch upon the notion of social grants and child maintenance grants, which is now the biggest scheme in my country. However, our situation far differs from that of Brazil and Mexico. We have a strong belief that the more the state gives, the more it creates a notion of dependency, the more it takes away a sense of agency, the more people think that

they have a state which should give them more rather than taking steps for their own problems. Now one of the things happening in our country is that young women are getting pregnant for the simple reason that they would get grants for their child. They do not think about the consequences of early pregnancy or schooling of the child; they think about what they would get immediately in order to change their family and personal plight. There runs a counter debate where it is argued that the younger generation people are not stupid and they do not get pregnant only because they get economic benefits of the government, but in reality it involves a complex set of issues. But, in the process how the whole notion of agency is being taken away from the people is a critical issue. It is not democracy which has eroded the notion of solidarity. We have democracy but at the same time we have to work hard for solidarity. What brings in change is the fact that people work in solidarity.

Regarding the social rights of the people in South Africa, there was an interesting practice. They allowed the army to be unionized where the situation required. As a matter of right, the army goes to the centre and strikes. What do you do in this kind of a situation in a country where the army that is supposed to take care of such situations, goes on strike? Then, it becomes a debate, how to implement the constitutional rights without showing that responsibilities go with the rights? The important thing here is to learn how to reach the point where we can be like Brazil, where we can roll out social services and people do not abuse that; where we can give people houses as a matter of

their right to shelter, but they do not abuse it. In our country, we give shelter to people who live in shacks. But, we have found time and again that these people would give their houses on rent as landlords and build another shack for their own living. This goes round and round. The government is helpless about how to stop this. The last point I would like to say is education, education, and education; young people, young people, and young people.

We need to give financial education to our people in general and in schools in particular, so that they can learn how to earn as well as manage money. It is important to understand the socio-cultural factors behind the scene.

women are not stupid that they get pregnant only because of money. It is also a fact that in every 35 second, a woman is raped in South Africa. So we do not know what is what. It is difficult to know whether people are not conscious of it, or is it due to the circumstances. I think, we need to give financial education to our people in general and in schools in particular, so that they can learn how to earn as well as manage money. It is important to understand the socio-cultural factors behind the scene. It is

On the one hand, we have a country where there are a lot of young people who are not employed and a civil society that is disengaged. And, on the other hand, the needs are unlimited. Thus, I buy the notion that young

also important to analyse who makes those claims. It is mostly the elites and the powerful having cars and houses who say this without thinking about their responsibilities that they need to do something for the poor. ✓

Supporting, Accompanying and Partnership Networking: Action Strategy from a Civil Cooperation Case

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My presentation has two parts: the role of civil society in China and the action strategy.

Social inequality is generally caused by unequal distribution of resources. Here the resource includes not only physical but also social and cultural resources. If we want to get rid of inequality, we need to ensure participation and access of the civil society. As there are different organizations working for different causes in different situations and places, the access and practice should be the same everywhere.

I would like to talk about the role of civil society in the local context of China. A historical analysis highlights that the country and people are underdeveloped. Earlier, we had the word called “subject” – the people who are governed by the empire. But, now, we have the word, “people” that highlights the collective means, not individual means. The people in China believe more in collectivism and collectivity. But, what is citizen and what

is citizenship? May be we can say people lack perception and notion. On the one hand, our society is weak, but on the other hand, we have a strong government. When I say weak society, it means we have weak mobilization of the civil society with poor strategy, for example, on the score of credit. Thus, people have more trust on government, even if they know that there are many problems in the government and government schemes.

In the context of the civil society in China, there are three officially recognized (legal) organizations:

- Foundation
- Civil non-enterprise – similar to the social enterprising in the UK
- Social group.

Besides these officially acknowledged organizations, there are branches of international organizations and agencies. There are also a large number of grassroots

organizations, individuals, and voluntary teams, but, they are not recognized by the government. From our survey, we found out that there are only eight per cent civil organizations that are recognized by the government; 44 per cent of such organizations are treated as business entities that are a kind of NGOs and they are supposed to give a share of their income to the government. However, these organizations work for livelihood, culture, poverty, healthcare, and disadvantaged groups like women, children, and old people. From our survey, we also found that the highest number of NGOs work on anti-poverty measures followed by education, environment, special group, social development and only a very few work on medicine/healthcare. All of these institutions maintain a smooth relation with the state.

Besides these NGOs, the civil society also consists of companies, individuals, and other participants. It is almost impossible for us to get global data on the score. Last year, we sent 600 questionnaires to individual volunteers asking why should they do volunteering? Out of the 403 responses, 45 per cent of the individuals felt it was their social responsibility to work as volunteers, while for some others, it was the mission of their work units which they had to fulfill; still some others wanted to increase their experience and expand their network.

Now, I will discuss what I call networking, accompanying and supportive strategy. According to the national survey, in 2000, there were 200 million migrants in the country, 96 per cent of whom migrated from rural areas to the city. According to another study, among the migrants, there are 90 per cent of the young families under the age group of 40 years who do not wish to go back to the village again. This causes a huge rural-urban divide. However, there is no proper provision for healthcare, education, etc., for them. In case of migrants, the issue of education stands as one of the important problems especially in terms of access and quality of education. While designing the support mechanism for the organizations, we did two things:

One, resource sharing and two, ensuring that each actor contributed his own strong points. For example, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (SASS) contributed the following:

- Implementation convenience on HR and previous local contact
- Access of policy advocacy
- Experiences of volunteers' training.

How to make a move along with family? It is important to take into consideration the changes in family of the

migrants for designing action plans for implementation. Also, we need to take into account the policy changes. So, the methodology of the accompanying strategy is research-action as well as action-research. However, the outcome of a project does not depend on a single factor. The New Education Law that was revised in 2006 ensures that the migrant children are exempted from paying school fees which allowed them wide access to school education. Similarly, other policies are improving step-by-step along with an increased interest of civil society to work on this score too.

However, the migrants are no more an issue in the rural areas. They are now treated as an issue of the city as well as the nation. So in order to sort this problem out, we have to integrate and bridge the rural-urban gap.

We in China take civil society as an intermediary between the people and the state. Thus the government distributes some of its responsibility to the civil society to distribute the resources among the people. And, inequality is mainly caused by the process of distribution. If the civil society can play the role of the supervisor, then the process will be more open.

So, my conclusion here is that the state or the government plays an important role as far as social development is concerned. The role of civil society is not to kick and fight with the government but to work in collaboration with it. ✓

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How the Voluntary Sector Works in the UK

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I would like to talk about the voluntary sector, which is how we refer to the civil society in the UK.

Our voluntary sector dates back to the Middle Ages. Some charities to this date trace their history back to the 15th century. And, of course, the historic institutions that arose from the Christian Church, including some great educational and care institutions, have even longer histories. Some of them make philanthropic grants and this has remained a vigorous tradition among individuals and corporate bodies into the present. Charitable giving has met all kinds of purposes down the centuries, but the relief of the poor, materially, spiritually or educationally, was the main concern at the beginning. However, over time, especially in the wake of religious changes in the 16th century, we had a great development in charity and trusts for specific purposes. A good number of these are famous and historic schools. Hospitals and almshouses were established too.

The 20th century saw the development of a large number of settled grant-making trusts, whose business is philanthropic, contributing to health, education, social and other charitable causes. The Sainsbury Family Charitable Trust office, in which I work, services 18 such trusts.

They have been created out of a sense of duty to pay something back to the society, after the family made a considerable fortune from the new and efficient operation of a popular chain of grocery shops that grew into a chain of supermarkets and hypermarkets, trusted for value for money and quality of produce. But it was more than wanting to put something back to the customers and their community. There was also a sense of responsibility to do something larger, even to making use of economic power and distributing considerable resources, in order to bring about desirable changes in the society.

Ten years ago, when I started working for the trusts, the working model was that, we as grant-making trusts with a good deal of wealth — though miniscule in comparison to the state — provided our grants to exciting individuals or promising ideas, even when they had little evidence to go on at the beginning, all in the hope that a good case and a good practice could be proved, and it could be recommended to the government and other powerful funders. Thus the work or method could be replicated and translated into wider practice.

And over the last ten years since, there have been good cases, showing how such changes have been achieved. For example, with Jonathan Douglas at NLT (National Literacy Trust) and Shirley Cramer at DA (Dyslexia Action), we have been working on a programme in which we invest resources

on children in the age group of 6-7 years, to ensure that they have the best start in education and get help and support at a vital age in learning to read. This helps not only the children to learn – it can be decisive in saving the children from drugs and going to prison in later life. So, many people in our country, who are homeless, on drugs or in prison, have a history of exclusion from school and no one ever solved the problem of their

learning to read and take part in education. This programme has been a great success and it has been taken on by the government. It is currently being applied more widely across the country, not least because it has been able to show that investing in education at 6 and 7 actually saves massive expenses for dealing with potential problems in later life.

When we had a Conservative government, it tended to think that it was not the business of the state to be large and all-embracing: it left many jobs that we nowadays see as part of the state's responsibility to voluntary organizations. It may be unfashionable to say so, but this

The 20th century saw the development of a large number of settled grant-making trusts, whose business is philanthropic, contributing to health, education, social and other charitable causes.

is the period when a good number of charities came to birth, partly because of the public's confidence in its own role in civic responsibility, and partly in exasperation that a powerful and wealthy government was not doing enough for social care and development. This charitable streak has grown under the Labour government since 1997 and it has coincided with a much greater interest on the part of the state in being involved in, and shaping, the role of the voluntary sector in addressing the problems and development of the society. With this has come a great deal of government funding in the shape of contracts and grants. On the one hand, this signals a great deal of faith in the grassroots and voluntary organizations. But on the other, it seems as though, in good faith, but in my view, mistakenly, government conceives of these organizations as part and parcel of a civil society that is intimately connected with and inseparable from the government. So, the distinction is blurred and the independence of the voluntary sector, the liberty of civil society, has somehow been reduced and these have been co-opted by the state. Voluntary organizations find themselves as a subset of a great state enterprise, politically-oriented and dependent on political favour. Of course we are "all in this together"; in the society we belong to each other. Although it is true that the voluntary sector and the government share in a great social endeavour, that should be as respectful and distinctive partners. One symptom of what is amiss is how, in order for government to show the society that it is strong, confident and successful, the old economic underclass that seemed to emerge under the 1979-1997 Conservative government, and whose plight we deplored and worked to overcome, has been criminalized and further excluded. Thus we have thousands of new criminal offences created by the present Labour government. And, as we have discussed earlier, once you are criminalized, there is no chance of undoing it and getting a job. It is not really incentivized to work or avoid offending, but punished for under-achievement because the stigmas and barriers to be overcome are actually insuperable.

There is one brilliant example where the state, civil society, voluntary organizations, and charitable trusts worked together in the south-west of England, to promote the rehabilitation and resettlement of prisoners, so that they do not commit further offence and achieve a productive and law abiding life back in their families and communities.

The other side of the nationalization of the voluntary sector organizations, to my mind, is down to the generosity of the state that gives funding for it. There is one brilliant example where the state, civil society, voluntary organizations, and charitable trusts worked together in the south-west of England, to promote the rehabilitation and resettlement of prisoners, so that they do not commit further offence and achieve a productive and law abiding life back in their families and communities. Bringing different kinds of services from different voluntary organizations, churches, etc., together, the scheme

provided vital support to the families of prisoners, well known to be the largest single determining factor in reducing crime and promoting resettlement and the chances of a good livelihood. The responsible regional government agency for justice was so impressed that it asked them to develop a contract for this, so that the scheme could be properly funded into the future. The voluntary organization agreed. The requirements for financial and human resources were calculated. But instead of the government accepting the contract proposal, including the costs for the service to be provided, it slashed the budget available to half and awarded the contract to a completely different organization, one that had no idea how to deliver it. The effect of such action by the government agencies, which is currently notorious in England, is

that the existing and tried and tested expert services are completely uprooted and destroyed, the entire teams of people are dispersed, the vitally important networks of knowledge are wrecked and, more than that, they are replaced by an inferior service, able to do less because less money is available, and because relationships and knowledge are disrupted, the people whose needs they were trying to meet have their interests and prospects harmed rather than improved.

The fate of PECAN is another example. This is another charitable trust developed by a group of black majority and black-led churches in South London to address the problem of why it was that the number of black prisoners was double the number of black students who went

to universities. They realized that the problem could not be solved by the government, but that the answer lay in their own hands. So, they developed an impressive array of resettlement services, with training, education, employment advice, and skills training. The work and its impact with the community of all kinds of people coming out of prison not being able to get jobs as well as the number of young people at risk, from all sides of the community, who were disaffected from school and were not in employment, training or education, was so good that PECAN won a large number of contracts and funding to support their work. But because of the recent drive to have all social funding and procurement covered by commissioned contracts, PECAN's funding supply was put out to tender. It lost. An Australian company, which had never worked on criminal justice, let alone worked in the UK, won the contract not on the quality of what it would offer but on price.

So, PECAN's excellent work was threatened as it lost a huge amount of state income on which it relied and had previously been promised, after years of praise for its services. It fell to us, as a voluntary sector funder, to make a grant to PECAN to help it manage its decline, save itself from collapse, survive and return to its roots in working for people in the South-East London; they found it the most difficult to find their way into work.

I want to end by mentioning something that is hopeful – a sign of learning and success, that also illustrates what is wrong elsewhere and how our civil society and its voluntary sector are operating. As you know, the UK is sort of easing itself out of being a United Kingdom – with England and Scotland going different ways, perhaps. I do not know what the goal is. But Scotland is building a very interesting and dynamic political culture – it is a nation that is very traditional in character, yet at the same time it is doing things in a way that is completely new and different from the way things are being done in Westminster for England and the UK at the moment. England could learn a lot from it. My example is called Inspiring Scotland. Working alongside with the voluntary funders, business donors, and pri-

vate philanthropists, the national Scottish government has committed funds to a programme that provides a comprehensive portfolio of 24 charities, all coming together to address the problems of young people in the 14-19 age group people, who are in danger of drugs, alcohol addiction, prison, homelessness, and long-term unemployment. The array of services covers education, training, employment, mechanics, construction work, forestry, agriculture and horticulture, dance and music, design and the love of life and learning – anything that will give inspiration towards a happy, fulfilled, settled, and productive future life. This is a programme that brings many very different approaches together and provides them with the glue, so that right across Scotland, there is a comprehensive system in which people

can refer across to each other's services and learn mutually and work in synergy. The interesting thing about this programme is that there is only one man in the Scottish government who is supervising the whole programme — in London, for every frontline soldier or sailor, there are two civil servants managing him/her, while this whole programme is supervised by only one civil servant. Does that not tell you something? A few months ago, I went to Glasgow to talk to the Director of Youth Services. I asked him how it was that this vast scheme for Scotland's young people, involving £10m for ten years, was not being tightly managed by the

officials and councilors in all the cities of Scotland and the government in Edinburgh. Why was it that everyone was content to be "hands off" and let it proceed without all the usual micro-management and central control. He said, "Well there is a great team of people managing the project already and we can trust them to make the portfolio work – they know what they are doing in helping the organizations to grow, be more effective and work together. Also, ever since 1945, we in the city of Glasgow, have been trying to build the socialist paradise. We have comprehensively failed. So, we are not going to do that any more. Instead we are going to trust the people who know what they are doing at the riskiest end of the society – the voluntary sector – just to get on with it."

The fact is that when we trust and believe in each other, our voluntary sector, genuinely free, independent but respected and adequately resourced and empowered, can produce a confident civil society, a society of the citizens, not just of the government.

That is the big thing. In the UK, there is massive expertise, altruism, and ability in hundreds of voluntary sector organizations, all full of willing and exceptional people who know what they are doing, what needs to be done, and how to do it. The trouble is, and we have mentioned this again and again in our discussions, that we have a government that is reluctant to believe in them, to let go and trust them, and, more importantly,

to back them and make them resourceful with autonomy and funds that they need to make the difference.

So, the fact is that when we trust and believe in each other, our voluntary sector, genuinely free, independent but respected and adequately resourced and empowered, can produce a confident civil society, a society of the citizens, not just of the government. ✓

Universal Access to Healthcare

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A part of the problem regarding healthcare comes from the pragmatic *versus* ideological issues. In the UK, \$125 billion is spent on healthcare, which is five per cent of the GDP; in India, it is 0.9 per cent. There are three major problems so far as universal access to healthcare is concerned.

1. Universal access to healthcare does not necessarily lead to universal healthy individuals. For example, America spends \$ 600 per person, twice that of Britain; yet the life expectancy of Americans is shorter than that of the citizens of the UK. In the UK, it was said that the access to universal health should be down-played

Universalism is not accepted universally as a positive concept. Rather people prefer to see it in terms of local and regional responsibility.

- in place of self-help and well-being.
2. There is an increasing effort for “well-being” – a concept that provides the core principle for positive welfare. Somebody pointed out that the government is going to introduce 10,000 psychologists into the public sector including schools. However, in my view, it is a sort of victimization of the children, in the sense that they see that the children have psychological problems before they start.
3. Universalism is not accepted universally as a positive concept.

Rather people prefer to see it in terms of local and regional responsibility. ✓

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In Mexico, the Ministry of Social Development is the most important ministry with the largest budget. It is given a high priority. Our concept of poverty is broader. We divide it into three categories.

1. Food poverty – those who are not capable enough to have three meals a day.

2. Capability poverty – those who have to choose among health, education, and food as they cannot afford all of them together.
3. Poverty as such – includes people who cannot afford housing, clothing, and other necessities.

However, 47 per cent of the population, i.e. about 47 million people are in a condition of poverty. In 2000, 60

per cent of the population belonged to the age group of below 30 years. That means we have a young country, which helps in better designing of policies. We thus have a strategy called Vivir Mejor Strategy – living better. It has five components:

1. Capability development – increasing the health standards, education, nutritional aspect, etc.
2. Social safety net – that helps people in all kinds of contingencies including natural disaster, catastrophic illness, etc.
3. Once the people develop their capabilities, we have policies to link them to the economic policies. For example, when a woman becomes capable, we give them jobs that fetch a second income for the family.
4. Economic development policy and economic policies in general.
5. Policies that have to do with physical and social environment – provisioning housing, public utility, public place renovation, etc.

There are programmes in which Social Safety Net related programmes overlap with the capability development programmes. I will mention about two such programmes of the Government of Mexico.

Opportunitas programme is very similar to that of *Bolsa Familia* of Brazil. It is a cash transfer programme, providing a monthly cash transfer of about \$25 million to the people benefiting one out of every four citizens of the country. To receive this, they have to comply with certain conditionalities like taking the kids to school, visiting doctors, attending workshops, etc. This programme involves five million beneficiary families. Because of the recent economic crisis that has a great impact on the lives of the poor, we are increasing the benefit to six million families and are also expanding to urban areas next year. This year, this programme had a budget of \$3.6 billion and the next year we aim to spend \$5.5 billion. This budget is about 65 per cent of the total Federal budget. This shows the commitment

In Mexico, the Ministry of Social Development is the most important ministry with the largest budget.

of the government towards poverty and the poor. But this is one of the programmes of social safety net.

The cash transfer programme consists of a number of headings. For instance, it transfers money for health, nutrition, education (scholarships),

food for the poor, etc. We give one-time assistance to the children of the poor families who graduate from High Schools. We also pay for the senior citizens and energy.

Here I wish to focus on the health aspects. Because of the health programme, people have to visit the doctor regularly. About 60 per cent of our population lives in informal sector. In small places, poor people have access only to small clinics which are not visited by doctors regularly and the supply of medicine is inadequate; and therefore they would not have access to the medicines prescribed by the doctor.

A popular health insurance programme was started in 2004. Though the government claimed to have a universal healthcare coverage as there were small clinics for the poor, the reality was different. But after 2004, with the implementation of this scheme, we aim to have universal coverage of healthcare by the next year. It is a huge effort by the government with a \$7.7 billion budget, and is the single largest programme in the country. This scheme consists of a bundle of services, like a universal catalogue of health services, catastrophic expenditure

In the present scenario of economic crisis, it has become difficult for the government to provide enough funds for healthcare for all. It shows the commitment of the government that thinks of closing four ministries in order to have sufficient funds for universal coverage of healthcare.

protection fund, and medical insurance for the new generation programme. It also teaches the people of self-help healthcare – how to take care of themselves, how to feed themselves better, how to protect themselves from ill health, etc. This is important because we have a gap of 20 years in life expectancy between the rich and the poor. Among the poor, there also exists the problem of high mother mortality rate and we have been trying to bridge these gaps. Also through this programme, we are trying to bring doctors from the cities to the rural areas for certain kinds of surgery that require specialized skills. However, in the present sce-

nario of economic crisis, it has become difficult for the government to provide enough funds for healthcare for all. It shows the commitment of the government that thinks of closing four ministries in order to have suffi-

cient funds for universal coverage of healthcare. It reflects the efforts of the Government of Mexico to help the poorest to have a good and just life like the rest of the society. ✓

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I would like to debate about the issue of universal access of healthcare. Though I have no formal background in health policy, I have been working as the Governor of one of the best children's hospital, Rainbow Children's Hospital in Cleveland, USA.

The history of universal access to healthcare started in Germany in 1818. This was taken up in the UK in 1911 and was further widened in July 1948. In fact, universal access to healthcare came into being after the Second World War as that was the time when the citizens of the countries across Europe needed it. At that time, universal access to healthcare was provided to all based on Article 29 of the Universal Declaration. And since then, it has become a human right. This is compulsory in the UK. The citizens of the UK think that it is their right and that they are entitled to universal healthcare service as tax payer citizens.

As we have been discussing, different governments across the globe have been trying to provide universal access to healthcare facilities as widely as possible by setting minimum standards. We must therefore think about what should be the minimum standard for providing universal healthcare.

How to implement universal healthcare system? It can be done through legislation, regulations, and taxation. Interestingly again, the Constitution of National Health Service says that our health service is available to all irrespective of age, gender, disability, religion, race, sexual

orientation, and belief. So, access to healthcare is a clinical need.

For the last twenty years, a lot of money is pumped into the healthcare practices in the UK. But can we say that all the money was spent wisely and effectively? The health needs in the UK are met by the public healthcare system. Only four per cent of the healthcare system is being provided by the private sector. So, funding of

healthcare is an important issue. What is the future of NHS in the UK? I would say, people have both emotional as well as physical attachment with the programme. If a politician wishes to close a hospital, for example, the people come together in a movement to protest against it. Thus, they think universal access to healthcare is their birth right. So, all political parties in the UK give their support to the NHS programmes. I find it interesting when people say that universal healthcare access is compatible with the conservative principles.

In USA, it has been a massive failure on the part of the government to provide universal healthcare to all the citizens of the country. They think it is the family who should take care of the health of the individuals.

In USA, it has been a massive failure on the part of the government to provide universal healthcare to all the citizens of the country. They think it is the family who should take care of the health of the individuals. Now, 57 per cent of the Americans are ready to pay high taxes for provision of healthcare services to all. Actually, in USA, one has to pay a very high amount of health taxes. For example, if one buys a care scheme in USA, he has to pay about \$900 to \$1,400 towards health taxes depending on the size of the care. USA spends about \$286 billion (24 % of the GDP) on paper work per year. ✓

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Universal access to healthcare is a deeply political, social, and philosophical issue. I would like to start with a historical background of the universal access to healthcare system in India.

About 400 years ago, the Swedish Queen then had a very difficult delivery. So, the king had to call good doctors from France as there were no good doctors in Sweden to help the queen in delivery. The people of Sweden felt ashamed about the fact they had no doctors or skilled midwives to help in delivery. So, they established schools for midwifery to teach the women the medical techniques of how to deliver a baby. During the same time, in India, Mumtaz Mahal, a famous queen, died during the delivery of her 14th child. What did the Indian king do? Shah Jehan, the husband of Mumtaz, built Taj Mahal in the memory of his wife!!

We feel great that we built the Taj Mahal. But, since we could not establish schools of midwifery, today we have no midwives. When we got the New Indian Nursing Council Act, it merged midwives with the nurses; the nurses dominated and midwives died. Today, either we have traditional birth attendants, who are untrained or inadequately trained, or obstetricians. So, we have caesarian section deliveries going up. For example, going by the Brazilian or the American way, in Kerala, 40 per cent of the women give birth to their babies by caesarian operation. On the other hand, we have states where only 2-3 per cent of the deliveries are through caesarian operation and so, many women die of obstructed labour. Thus in my view, the issue is highly political and social; it all depends on how a particular state builds its healthcare system.

However, the present government has shown its commitment to health sector by increasing the spending on

health sector from the existing one per cent to close to three per cent of the GDP. The question arises, "Why should government look after the health of the people?" Some 400 years ago, a German social philosopher named Rudolf Virchow argued that the role of the king or the government is to protect the properties of the rich as they have properties that need to be protected. But, what should the government or the king do for the poor? Virchow argued further that the only property the poor have is their ability to produce labour. And hence it is the duty of the king or the government to protect their health, because if they are sick they would not produce their labour and hence would not be in a position to earn their livelihood. So, governments have a universal role of protecting the health of the poor. Universal access to health-care is in fact necessary.

Universal access to healthcare can be achieved only by a coalition of people, institutions, and political parties. While in the UK, there is an emotional attachment to the national healthcare system, we in India are emotionally attached to building temples and breaking them but we have no emotional attachment to healthcare programmes of the people.

We should also think about the role and responsibility of the government, civil societies, private citizens and other stakeholders. Health is such a complex issue that none of the stakeholders can provide everything to all the citizens universally. This also links to the role of the professional societies and professionals linked with the healthcare system. Are the professional societies and health professionals protecting their income or the health of the others? The power they have should be balanced for taking care of the society as well. Health leads to freedom. Much of the freedom, opportunity, and equality we talk about depend, to a great extent, on the person's ability to move about and work for which good health is very vital. If we have to gain universal access to healthcare, we have to learn from what our military people do. The Indian Defence Ministry is going to buy the advanced model of F16 aircrafts and other military hardware from USA spending some 15 billion USD within the next five years. But,

if in a rural area, there are no schools or health centres, policymakers and administrators do not hesitate to say that patients can be treated under the tree or students can be given education under a tree. If there are no doctors, a health worker will do. If there are no health workers, ASHA may somehow manage. But if there are no F16 fighter aircrafts, it would not be possible to manage with older versions or without it. So, Indians are used to ignoring statistics and reducing the world standards even to half for setting the standard for their own country. For example, while by the world standard, poverty is defined as people earning below USD 2 daily, we would say that it is very high for Indian standard and take 1 USD or even ½ USD per day for defining the standard. We had a debate with the Government of Gujarat. In 2006, about 3,000 people died in an epidemic of a disease called Chicken Gunya, but the government kept on denying it, giving different reasons for their death. Instead of trying to understand the basics of public health, what they did was to try to solve the problem by changing the definition. I strongly feel that universal ac-

cess to healthcare can be achieved only by a coalition of people, institutions, and political parties. While in the UK, there is an emotional attachment to the national healthcare system, we in India are emotionally attached to building temples and breaking them but we have no emotional attachment to healthcare programmes for the people. When three vultures died in the IIMA campus, there were environmental activists who wrote continuously for three days in newspapers analysing the reasons for their death and raising fingers at the government. But, when people died of Chicken Gunya in large numbers in Ahmedabad, even the Registrar General of Birth and Death did not know the reasons. The basic consciousness about public health seems to be missing in our country. In fact, I feel, India is lying 300 years behind Western Europe as far as public health is concerned. There is no life table of any city in India, while the records of death and birth rate of the UK are available on the Net. Unless we think of having political and social commitment to healthcare, we will not be able to achieve universal access to healthcare. ♡

Universal Access to Quality Education

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Social sector development remains as much a challenge for a high-income state in India as for a poor state. Punjab, one of the richest states of India, highlights how quality of education is not a function of physical infrastructure alone but principally of the dysfunctional and non-transparent systems of delivery. Moreover, the availability of private options has meant that it is the poor with no choice and little voice who are left to learn in government schools.

Punjab has the least percentage of poverty that is 8 per cent against the country figure of 28 per cent. Also Punjab is a state where 29 per cent of the total population, the highest in the country, is Scheduled Caste (SC) and 70 per cent of the poor are from the SC. What happens here is that the political power lies in the hands of the upper caste, mostly *Jats*. So, those who are left behind in the educational scenario are the poor SC children, the

ones who cannot afford to go to private schools. So, it is democracy at work but in bad way.

Through my research on Punjab's education, I have found that the relative failure of Punjab rests in the area of public action to ensure effective delivery of education. Politically-driven appointments and transfers as well as union-driven demands of the teachers come in the way of delivering good education. Even the regulatory bodies in the education sector are subject to heavy political interference. Since the accountability of teachers is to remote authorities, the practice of subcontracting is common. Also inadequate attention to the development of the course content and high incidence of teacher absenteeism contributes to the poor learning achievements in Punjab. I would like to propose that aspects of education other than physical infrastructure should be taken into consideration so far as learning

achievements in primary education are concerned.

Regarding the importance of languages, I strongly feel that along with English, students of primary schools should learn other languages. Personally, I have benefitted from learning Bengali, Hindi, and English all at the same time in primary school, and Punjabi at home. I find this a tremendous asset in my ability to understand the environment around me. We are not talking here about English *versus* other languages. But we are talking about English as a second language.

In the context of teaching students values, I feel that family is the place which teaches children different virtues that we value and quality education begins at home. Children should be given education which combines the best in our heritage with the best that the world has to offer us. An open mind and respect for the alternative view-point is essential for developing the right approach to learning.

On globalization and culture, I feel that there is nothing wrong in globalization of cultures. Local cultures are getting their place in global set up. Punjabi wedding songs are being played in the night clubs of London. In response to the question of teaching students values, I feel, family is the place which teaches children different virtues that we value and quality education begins at home. Children should be given education which combines the best in our heritage with the best that the world has to offer us. An open mind and respect for the alternative view-point is essential for developing the right approach to learning.

People often ask why the government schools do not hire good teachers from private schools. They assume that there is rational deploy-

Social sector development remains as much a challenge for a high-income state in India as for a poor state. Punjab, one of the richest states of India, highlights how quality of education is not a function of physical infrastructure alone but principally of the dysfunctional and non-transparent systems of delivery.

For the last five years, the central government has been emphasizing the need for reform by the state and local governments, though they have failed to do so. By not talking about growth, we are not going to get better education. If we did not have growth, we would not have more spending on social sectors.

ment of human resources in the education sector in Punjab. In May-June 2008, 6,000 teachers were being hired for primary schools in Punjab. The Punjab Government put forward extraordinary conditions that those candidates who passed from a rural school would be given extra five marks and the candidate who completed his/her BEd Degree before 1999 would be given one extra mark. Taking on this lobby of the rural classes and older educated people, a case was filed in the Punjab High Court against the decision. The High Court gave a stay order against the decision as a result of which, not a single teacher was hired in public schools in Punjab for eight years. Similarly, notwithstanding the fact that there are a lot of committees that

have recommended that the age of teachers to be hired for the public schools be lowered from the current age of 42 years to 28 years, this has not happened. Sadly, rationality in deployment of teachers is not present. I am not minimizing the merits of government schools; what I am trying to say is that private-run non-recognized schools give better education than the proxy and para-teacher-ridden government schools in Punjab.

There is a school named Sikhya in Chandigarh, set up by a philanthropist industrialist. Experimentally, in this school, children are brought from the slums and given bath, provided clean clothes, and taught good manners, while imparting them quality education. The school is eight years old and is doing well. On the other hand, we have a huge problem with alcohol and drugs in the schools of Punjab. In college, out of the total number of students that pass every year, 80 per cent are girls. Boys who pass from schools, having money to spend on alcohol, end up with no learning and wretched lives.

Introduction of IT education in primary schools in Punjab was a pioneering effort that not only removes the fear of the machine (computer) from the students but also makes them learn a lot of things better.

For the last five years, the central government has been emphasizing the need for reform by the state and local

governments, though they have failed to do so. By not talking about growth, we are not going to get better education. If we did not have growth, we would not have more spending on social sectors. Essentially, what I say is that along with growth, we should get local and state governments to reform their delivery systems for achieving better education and social inclusion. ✓

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I would like to discuss the effectiveness of education *vis-à-vis* social justice in England. Within the last few years, the government of UK has taken very important steps to train the teachers how to teach students in better ways. Though huge amount of money and energy were spent, the programme never yielded results as expected. The programme never followed a straight casual line. The result for the first five years was encouraging. But, as the time passed on, inequality in performance started becoming visible, in the sense that the good students did well and went up and the poor students did not scale up as expected. It was found that the students with poor performance were mostly from the deprived sections of the society. There were four challenges:

Resources: Schools were flooded with more and more resources with the hope that they would do better. But that was not the case always. The schools can do a lot by themselves.

Living in a post-industrial society, the school should not be of the industrial society type. Though children spend 15 per cent of their time in school, family still remains the most important influential factor in one's life. Thus, family remains in the centre so far as the inculcation of social values is concerned in bringing about a just society.

So, instead of putting more and more pressure on the school, the responsibility of inculcating social values must be equally shared by the family and the civil and cooperative societies.

Time: Because of the system in which we live, we tend to analyse success in a very limited time frame. Our politicians have no patience to wait and work constantly for ten or eleven years in which a child requires to grow up. We hurriedly give them one thing after the other with a hope to get better results. Thus, family still remains as the central actor that patiently brings up the children with constant nurturing. Thus, what is required here is to give sufficient time required for a certain thing.

Instead of putting more and more pressure on the school, the responsibility of inculcating social values must be equally shared by the family and the civil and cooperative societies.

The relationship between education and social justice: It is not a straight causal relationship. For example, to have a good impact of education on students, the teachers' background matters. By yourself, you cannot achieve great success in education. All the actors involved in the process have their share of contribution to the end. It also matters what kind of books the teachers read. For example, in the UK, it is The Bible and not the *Harry Potter* or the *Pride and Prejudice*

that is widely read by the teachers. As a result teachers are found to be conservative and their teaching is not much suitable for the liberal students. Thus, an increasing number of parents and children think that the current education is irrelevant for their future success. There is, therefore, a challenge for us to prove that the education system and the kind of teaching we offer are really worthy and relevant for the children.

Social marketing approach: The public culture could be used in direct ways, like utilizing the newspapers and other tabloids in school curriculum. ✓

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The role of education in development and in reducing social injustice has been subject to extensive debate for a long time. We need not revisit this debate, except to note that, in India, there has been a strong policy focus, since the early 1990s, on improving access to basic education and enhancing primary schooling. Whether this is a part of a genuine human resource development effort, or of the safety nets post-liberalization, or of the compulsions of the universalization imperative, need not concern us here. What we need to note is that large programmes like the District Primary Education Programme and its successor, the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, were implemented through the 'mission' mode (read government bodies which had the characteristics of non-governmental organizations). There is enough evidence to indicate that these programmes have had some impact in creating a demand for education among large sections of our society which have hitherto been on the margins of the educational spectrum. Our studies show that these sections mainly belong to what are called the Other Backward Classes comprising castes that are ranked in the middle or lower-middle levels of the caste hierarchy. The supply of educational infrastructure has also improved dramatically over the last 15 years. Educational incentives may have had mixed results, but as our recent studies show, they may have had a role in keeping children in school, in spite of failures at the upper end of the primary scale. Our experience of various evaluations also indicates that the performance on the quality front may not be all that outstanding.

Regardless of this overall picture, what is of concern is the regional pattern of educational performance. Let me use the Educational Development Index computed by the Government of India. The figures pertain to 2007-08 and were made available in 2009 just a few months ago. This carefully-computed index has four components: access, infrastructure, teachers, and outcomes. Each com-

What is needed in states where teacher and infrastructure resources are being augmented is to pay closer attention to schooling governance. Improving teacher management and governance systems is easier said than done.

ponent has multiple indicators; for example, 'outcomes' has nine indicators including gender parity in enrolment and drop-out. The index has been computed for all the 35 states and union territories, for the overall elementary cycle, and separately for the primary and upper primary stages. Note that rankings are relative and poor rankings, especially on individual components that make up the index, have to be interpreted carefully. The bottom third or 12 states (ranks 24 to 35) are presented in Table 1. All states, except Manipur, occupy the lower ranks at both the primary and upper primary stages. (An un-shaded cell in the table indicates that that particular state is no longer in the ranks 24-35 list for that component.) What is interesting to note is that most of these states are also the ones affected by other social problems—whether one calls these insurgency, youth unrest, Maoist trouble, or the 'red corridor' syndrome. Educational governance in these states, with respect to the weakest of the four components of the index, has to improve if the link between education and reduction of social injustice is to be strengthened.

A few quick observations. Is the disadvantage common across all the four components? If the answer had been yes, there would have been a strong case for serious concern about the infrastructure (supply) as well as outcomes (output) dimensions. However, many of the states at the bottom do well on access and surprisingly, on outcomes. This is a sign of hope, because in spite of the teachers and infrastructure components which pull their performance down, these states may have provided enough access for the outcomes they show. Perhaps these outcomes would further improve if simultaneous and strong attention to school infrastructure and teacher deployment were to be emphasized. And an improvement on all four dimensions may, while posing stiff competition to the higher-ranked states, also help achieve the critical social breakthroughs that reinforce the link between education and social change.

Table 1: Regional Pattern of Educational Performance, India (Poorest 12 States and Union Territories)

PRIMARY						
State/UT	Elementary Rank	Primary Rank	Access	Infrastructure	Teachers	Outcomes
Bihar	35	35	12	35	34	30
Arunachal	34	34	21	31	33	35
West Bengal	33	30	27	30	27	18
Jharkhand	32	33	6	33	32	28
Assam	31	32	3	34	35	19
Meghalaya	30	31	1	32	26	33
Chattisgarh	29	24	5	28	29	17
Orissa	28	28	25	24	25	26
Uttar Pradesh	27	27	24	19	31	14
Madhya Pradesh	26	26	13	15	30	29
Tripura	25	25	32	26	21	20
Manipur	24	29	31	27	23	24
UPPER PRIMARY						
State/UT	Elementary Rank	Upper Primary Rank	Access	Infrastructure	Teachers	Outcomes
Bihar	35	35	33	35	34	30
Arunachal	34	32	35	25	24	19
West Bengal	33	34	34	32	31	32
Jharkhand	32	33	32	31	30	25
Assam	31	30	25	34	27	14
Meghalaya	30	29	26	33	21	21
Chattisgarh	29	31	7	30	33	34
Orissa	28	28	23	28	28	33
Uttar Pradesh	27	27	22	9	35	9
Madhya Pradesh	26	26	19	20	32	35
Tripura	25	25	18	29	26	23
Manipur	24	21	28	24	20	6

A network like this should take up questions of how educational management can be improved to address issues of schooling infrastructure and teacher resources, if absolute educational performance is to improve significantly. Public investment, particularly in development of infrastructure, has not been great in the bottom-ranked states, especially if one considers that certain states like Bihar, whose per capita GDP is one-fifth that of Punjab, are at a great disadvantage. Educational investments have to increase substantially in such states. One needs to guard against arguments which reduce educational performance to just a matter of governance, and claim that the quality of infrastructure and

teacher resources are adequate for these states. There is no doubt about the need for much higher investments.

The leadership that is exercised on a school determines the success with which educational breakthroughs are achieved, and more importantly, how positive educational practices get institutionalized.

The earlier question of why Punjab does so poorly on outcomes in comparison with a state like Assam, in spite of doing well on the other components, takes us to the problems we have had with the process issues in teacher management—deployment of teacher resources may be adequate, but problems like teacher absenteeism and politicization vitiate the schooling process. This is an important factor affecting outcomes, and is one major reason for the various prescriptions for privatization of

primary schooling. An extreme view is that people have already voted—they are shifting to private, often un-

recognized, primary schools as they are unhappy with problems like teacher absenteeism, poor quality of instruction, and weak stress on English. Thus, this view would recommend a rapid transformation of the public nature of primary education. However, one cannot ignore the reach of the public schooling system and the constituencies it serves— i.e., more than 80 per cent of the close to 200 million children in the age group of 6-14 years, in one million schools out of the total number of 1.25 million schools. The continued role of the state in ensuring adequate levels of basic education is beyond doubt. What is needed in states where teacher and infrastructure resources are being augmented is to pay closer attention to schooling governance. Improving teacher management and governance systems is easier said than done. Appointing para-teachers does not seem to be a solution. The evidence is mixed, and there are strong arguments for the position that this is a short-sighted initiative. Teacher training and motivation are issues on which a sharper policy focus is needed. We conclude with some of the lessons from our studies of outstanding primary school teachers who have achieved their educational goals in spite of formidable socio-economic constraints—constraints that confront many teachers in our public schooling system.

The key question that such teachers answer is, “Is the average school able to function as a well-defined autonomous institution in a community context, meeting the educational needs of that context? Is it spearheaded by

A new kind of teacher development is required to help teacher-leaders develop their skills and abilities to promote their schools as well-defined institutions achieving certain educational goals.

relevant leadership from within the school and the community?” The leadership that is exercised on a school determines the success with which educational breakthroughs are achieved, and more importantly, how positive educational practices get institutionalized. A second proposition is that the leadership evolves out of an interaction between the school’s leader (the teacher) and the local context. Teacher training, as traditionally understood, can only have a limited effect in promoting this kind of leadership. A new kind of teacher development is required to help teacher-leaders develop their skills and abilities to promote their schools as well-defined institutions achieving certain educational goals. These goals, among others, include the following:

- *No disabled children out of school:* We cannot talk about social justice if we are not able to provide education and other opportunities to disabled children. They are doing that.
- *No girl out of school:* With equal emphasis on female education, these schools have taken special care to bring all the female children to school.
- *Schooling beyond school:* These teachers are socio-educational entrepreneurs. Their work extends beyond the school’s boundaries. They realize that schooling starts much before the age of six. They know that overcoming educational barriers has to be rooted in the school-family-community matrix. ✓

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Gerard Lemos

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There are six dimensions that I wish to focus on while discussing social justice in its international context: Economic growth, increase in inequality, persistence of poverty, affording social welfare, fair public services, and security.

Briefly put, the economic prowess of India, China, Brazil etc., is growing and consequently, standard of living is improving steadily. Concomitantly, inequality is increasing and the social problems are coming to the fore. There is a need to address them. Also, I think there is

need for establishment of the North-South dialogue to facilitate learning across countries in both the halves of the globe. In my view, the participation of delegates from six different countries, going through almost the same phase of transition, provided an immense opportunity for mutual learning by sharing of experiences, ideas and opinions in this colloquium.

I would like to reiterate what I learned from the discussions:

- There were several diverse views on the issues of participation, citizenship, and the notion of agency. The key themes included the contexts in which they could get manifested, the extent to which they could get extended in unique ways, the extent to which they could influence and so on.
- Social inequality and violence are the two issues that were discussed. I think, there is a strong link between social inequality and violence. This is an area that needs to be explored more. One dimension of violence is women and children that need our special attention, though there are other dimensions of violence which are no less important.
- There is a live debate between the notions of modernity and the particular role the different traditions play in modernity. What I found particularly from our delegates of the UK is that the European future is rejected partly on the ground that it is unviable and partly on the ground that it is undeservable. One of the key battle-field in which tradition is being played out against modernity is the role of English language. However, the stories we listen from across the states in India is that as far as public and economic demand is concerned, there is broadly an argument in favour of the instrumental benefits of learning English. That is an emergent

The economic prowess of India, China, Brazil etc., is growing and consequently, the standard of living is improving steadily. Concomitantly, inequality is increasing and the social problems are coming to the fore.

We never agree on the issue of whether we need more state and less civil society, less market and more civil society, or less state and more market, etc.

form of modernity as an economic good, if not a cultural artifact. That is a part of the new notion of modernity.

- So far as education, health, and welfare are concerned, there is a general consensus that there are universal entitlements. Talking about the three main themes — education, health and livelihood, we found that universal entitlement is contested worldwide — whether those things are to be carried out by the NGOs, state, co-

operatives or market. I was impressed by the conversation on education. Knowing about the contractual teachers and the role played by politics on the sphere, I would say that at least the public primary education system is going to collapse, if you allow me to say so. I feel market is entering in the field of education with force and people are ambivalent about that. The debate of whether to choose public or private market has somehow settled to some extent. However, as was mentioned, health entitlement in the UK is going to be a public provision. But within that, there are conflicts and complications in including the traditional health practices in the mainstream health system.

Livelihood. The examples from Mexico and Brazil were extremely compelling and the role of state in improving the livelihood and income through social welfare schemes were forcefully pointed out. This is what people

felt was a fair distribution of the available resources. From a theoretical point of view, this, I might say, is old-fashioned contractual relationship between the state and the citizens rather than political or democratic relationship. But, we never agree on the issue of whether we need more state and less civil society, less market and more civil society, or less state and more market, etc. ✓

Anil Gupta

I propose that we should have a long-term view of social justice, say for 500 years. This is not to make us complacent, but to generate more energy and infuse greater accountability. There is a reason for saying this. There was a king named Akbar who, 500 years ago, wanted to popularize one new religion called *Din-i-Ilahi* – a religion which he built by taking virtues and good practices from all religions. Though he failed to popularize the religion, the fact remains that he tried. Inequality of some kind may remain, but we should see that the poorest get universal access to healthcare, education and so on. Those kinds of inequality at least should be completely eliminated. So, we should have a long-term vision, the power of which helps us to achieve the targets much faster. In 1868 or so, after Meiji restoration, Japan set up a working group to study the educational system worldwide. After the study, the team prepared a report that was titled as “200 years of education plan for Japan.” By the turn of the century, Japan was the first Asian country to be fully literate. That is the power of a long-term vision.

Intentions are also important. Gandhiji said, “If I thought bad of you, then I caused you violence.” What he taught us was that violence was not only physical but also social and psychological. So, intentions matters too. We want good consequences but also good intentions.

A good outcome of our efforts would be to produce a book of stories containing the stories from across the countries and culture about how our elders viewed and conceived social justice. Let me illustrate. There was a Chola king in South India who had put a big bell on a temple. If any injustice was caused to anybody, then they might ring the bell seeking justice from the King. One day, the bell rang violently. The king went there to see what the matter was and he found that a cow was ringing the bell. As the cow saw the king, it started walking down. The king followed. After sometimes, the cow stopped where there lay a dead calf. The king found a chariot standing near

the dead calf and he recognized it as his son's. He called for his son, asked him to lie down on the road, and ordered the chariot to be run over him. The king's son died as the chariot ran over him. We may not agree with this notion of justice, but the fact remains that the rights of an animal can be at par with the rights of a human being under certain situations and that a king or a ruler cannot discriminate among contending parties based on power relations. So, it extends the notion of social justice to a great extent.

The notion of social justice can also be illustrated through the story of Ekalavya. One day, a tribal boy went to a teacher named Dronacharya and asked him whether he

In 1868 or so, after Meiji restoration, Japan set up a working group to study the educational system worldwide. After the study, the team prepared a report that was titled as “200 years of education plan for Japan.” By the turn of the century, Japan was the first Asian country to be fully literate. That is the power of a long-term vision.

could learn archery from him. The teacher replied negatively saying that he taught only the children of the royal family. But, Ekalavya was determined. He came back home and practised archery by establishing an idol of Dronacharya. One day, Dronacharya was wandering in a forest with his five royal students, when he got distracted by the barking of a dog. Suddenly, seeing the mouth of the dog full of arrow-shots, and with nobody around, he could immediately conjecture that there was somebody who could aim at the mouth of the dog by hearing the sound of its barking. The next thought was that the person who shot the arrow must be the best archer. Now the problem was that he had promised to one of his disciples, Arjun, that he would make him the best archer of the

world. Later, having traced the boy, the teacher asked him whether he shot the mouth of the dog by hearing its voice. As Ekalavya admitted that he did, Dronacharya wanted to know about his teacher. Ekalavya showed him the idol of Dronacharya, the teacher himself, and said that he taught him. Cunningly then, the teacher asked Ekalavya to pay his *dakshina* (fees). As Ekalavya readily agreed, the teacher asked him to give him the thumb finger of his right hand and the latter instantly obliged. Perhaps this incident changed our history. Had Eklavya

not given his thumb, the tribals today could have been the best archers of the world and would have ruled over. The teacher not only took away the thumb of the boy but all his aspirations. This story is taught to the students to learn obedience, loyalty, and perseverance, but not to see the great social injustice behind the scene. It is such a power of the rulers that ingrains the seeds of injustice in our society. It is indeed surprising that there is a national award in our country in the name of that teacher, the Drona Awards!

If there are visible deep-rooted mechanizations and institutions that instill the process of social injustice as a legitimate way of life, we need to attack those cultural roots of injustice and only then would we be able to make the world a just society.

Thus, my plea to this forum is that if there are visible deep-rooted mechanizations and institutions that instill the process of social injustice as a legitimate way of life, we need to attack those cultural roots of injustice and only then would we be able to make the world a just society. I would urge upon everybody to collect and teach students such stories and to make them aware not only about the prevalence of injustice but also go into the roots and the consequences of such unjust actions. ✓

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*Until the great mass of the people shall be filled with the sense of responsibility for each other's welfare, **social justice** can never be attained."*

— Helen Keller