

IAAPS Perspective

Volume 1 || Issue 1 || June 2017



Indian Association for Asian and Pacific Studies

Editor-in-Chief

Partha S. Ghosh

Editors

Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury
Priya Singh

Editorial Board

Achintya Dutta
Chandan Sharma
Chatthip Nartsupha
Purusottam Bhattacharya
Sekhar Bandyopadhyay
Suchandra Ghosh

Publisher

Indian Association for Asian and Pacific Studies,
4 B Merlin Temple Tower,
115/1, Hazra Road, Kolkata-26
INDIA
Email: iaaps.iaaps@gmail.com

Design & Developed @ samaresh

This is a peer-reviewed online journal. The views expressed by the authors are their own. These are not official views of the IAAPS.

Contents

A Message from the President, IAAPS

Essays

- Neighbours' Woes: Borders and Boundaries between India and Bangladesh - *Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury and Rakhahari Chatterji* 1
- Tracing Rights Mechanisms for Migrants: The Case of Bangladeshis in India - *Vikash Kumar* 11
- Contemporary Southeast Asia: An Overview - *Kriengsak Chareonwongsak* 21
- The Nation Brand in Kazakhstan: Image Building in Times of Crisis - *Anita Sengupta* 31
- The Coverage of Gezi Park Resistance in the Turkish Media - *Yasemin İnceoğlu* 40

Book Review

- *The Actress in the Public Theatre of Calcutta*, Primus Books, New Delhi 2015 by Sarvani Gooptu - *Lipi Ghosh* 47

Document

- Academic History of IAAPS 50

A Message from the Desk of the President, IAAPS



The world has increasingly become digital. Young generations are more used to reading from their computer screens than from printed pages. The practice has its own hazards though for digitization can indeed supplement printed matters but not replace them altogether. Both are equally valuable. Not unaware of this reality yet at the same time making research ideas as much more available to a larger audience IAAPS has taken up this onerous task of initiating its e-journal with this inaugural number which is now before you. I am sure it would be read by scholars and concerned individuals at large and would provide a forum for continuous debates and discussions. All are welcome to join in this celebration of ideational conversations.

Given the Asia focus of our organization we start our journey with this collection of five articles and each is extremely relevant for our times. Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury and Rakhahari Chatterji's article on 'Neighbours' Woes: Borders and Boundaries between India and Bangladesh' is timely given the fact that after four decades the two countries have finally signed their land border agreement. Obviously everything would not be hunky-dory from now on but it is a massive step in the direction of sorting out many outstanding border issues between the two countries. The second article by Vikash Kumar makes the interesting case of 'Rights Mechanisms' in the context of Bangladeshi migrants in India. It analyses supply-demand dialectics in terms of state initiatives for safeguarding certain inalienable rights alongside the migrants' claims to their rights. Kriengsak Chareonwongsak's article entitled 'Contemporary Southeast Asia - An Overview' provides a narrative, as the title suggests, detailing all the major trends that are noticeable in the region of late. While democracy is in a secure stead in almost the entire region uncertainties do remain to make us keep questioning the future possibilities and probabilities. The forth article, 'The Nation Brand in Kazakhstan: Image Building in

Times of Crisis' by Anita Sengupta deals with a region which still remains an enigma to many of us. Its vast resources against the background of a small population yet inviting the possibility of an Islamic upsurge are being watched across the globe to fathom the way things would take shape there. Yasemin İnceoğlu's piece, 'The Coverage of Gezi Park Resistance in the Turkish Media' would make an interesting reading because one is curious to know how the protests against the authoritarianism of Recep Tayyip Erdogan was reported in the Turkish press particularly because the protesters belonged to both the left and right wing forces. More importantly they were protesting not merely against certain pro-corporate policies of the state but also against certain social policies which sounded retrograde and obscurantist (against the background of the recent failed coup against Erdogan the article assumes greater salience). More so, a book entitled *The Actress in the Public Theatre of Calcutta* by Sarvani Gooptu (Primus Books: 2015) on the actress who, for the first time in the history of Bengali theatre, performed in the public theatres of Calcutta in the late 19th century has been reviewed by Lipi Ghosh.

I hope the readers will welcome this venture. My best wishes to all of you.

Partha S. Ghosh
August 2016

Neighbours' Woes: Borders and Boundaries between India and Bangladesh

By

Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury & Rakhahari Chatterji*

The border between India and Bangladesh (4096 km) has always been contentious, and has defined the relationship between the two countries to a large extent. The fact that it is the longest India shares with any country is an important reason for the difficulties encountered. It is true that in South Asia in the present century the most important bilateral initiative between these two countries has been the attempt to resolve the long-standing border dispute that arose after the Partition of 1947 – that of the Land Border Agreement (LBA) and the exchange of enclaves (*Chhitmahals*) between these two countries. However, the question still remains that how far this agreement and exchange of enclaves can pave the way to resolve other unsettled border issues, which are very crucial to deal with.

The border, especially the part which runs along the state of West Bengal, for about 2,217 km, has been a complicated one even before the partition of India in 1947 and the formation of Bangladesh in 1971. This is mainly because the border ended up dividing a land that for centuries existed as part of one socio-economic, political and cultural space. In fact, it is the porous nature of the border which is at the heart of issues related to border management between the two countries. The vast stretches of unmanned, unguarded border has created numerous trans-border problems, including undocumented migration, increasing amount of unofficial trade, smuggling of arms and drugs and contraband items, and crimes like kidnapping for ransom, human trafficking, cattle lifting, extortion, cross-border movements of terrorists. It is also the reason why there is a need to establish mutually acceptable structures in the border areas.

*Professor Rakhahari Chatterji is currently Advisor and Dr. Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury is Fellow and coordinator of connectivity project at Observer Research Foundation, Kolkata. rakhahari@yahoo.com; anasubasu@orfonline.org
IAAPS Perspective, Vol.1, 1, August 2016

Against this backdrop the present essay will focus on some such unresolved issues in relation to India-Bangladesh border with special emphasis on West Bengal.

Exchange of *Chhitmahals* and Some Unanswered Questions

The LBA and the exchange of enclaves between these two countries have been much talked about in recent time. The visit of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Bangladesh witnessed the endorsement of the momentous LBA (1974) which has, at long last, conferred a legal identity to people living in enclaves within the geographical territories of both India and Bangladesh. It also shows an affirmation of the general attitude of friendliness towards Bangladesh on India's part. Experts in Bangladesh describe this as an important step towards creating a positive image for India in that country.¹ The Office of the Registrar General of India, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and DM, Cooch Behar and DCs of Lalmonirhat, Panchagarh, Kurigram and Nilphamari worked systematically and in a coordinated fashion to collect the options from the residents.² The implementation process is designed in three phases: The agreement and protocol came into effect from midnight of 31 July 2015. The transfer of territorial jurisdiction, exchange of strip maps and ground demarcation of the boundary are to be completed by 30 June 2016.³

In all, 111 Indian enclaves measuring 17,160 acres became Bangladesh territory; similarly, 51 Bangladesh enclaves, measuring 7,110 acres, became Indian territory. The 51 enclaves coming into India are spread across Dinhata, Mekliganj, Sitai, Sitalkuchi and Toofanganj Assembly constituencies. The right to vote issued to the new citizens with the Election Laws (Amendment) Act, 2016 coming into effect from 4 March 2016 was a welcome step. There are about 15,000 people inhabiting the enclaves, of which 9,776 former enclave-dwellers cast their votes for the first time during the West Bengal Assembly elections of 2016.⁴

According to the findings of the survey on the issue of 'choice of nationality,' almost all the 14215 residents of the Bangladeshi enclaves inside India opted for Indian citizenship, while only about 1027 of the 37369 residents of the Indian enclaves inside Bangladesh wanted Indian citizenship. Initially it was said that nearly 35000 people will opt for Indian citizenship where as at the end of the survey the number came down to 15242.⁵ Residents of enclaves in both countries will be permitted to enter whichever of the two countries they choose through Haldibari, Burimari and Banglabandha by 30 November, 2015. It was decided in the protocol that both governments shall facilitate remittance of sales proceeds of declared immovable properties as appropriate. The remaining formalities will be conducted by the India-Bangladesh Joint Boundary Working Group (JBWG).

While the ratification of the LBA is no doubt a welcome development in bilateral relations between the two countries, the implementation of the agreement needs a lot of consideration. It has been discovered meanwhile that land records of ownership have been misplaced or lost and the final decision may be based on word of mouth of the locals residing in the enclaves. It is as yet unclear how the complication that it will create will be resolved. The former enclaves are uncharted land: an administration will have to be installed now, the land admitted to the official territory through surveys have to be distributed among individuals, and identities processed. Additionally, human rights groups like the *Manabadhikar Surakhsha Manch* (MASUM) have alleged that the process of the survey has not been transparent and that the residents of the enclaves have not been allowed to choose their nationality. For instance, MASUM has claimed that 10 Hindu families, who are residents of the Bhandardaha enclave, Cooch Behar, India, were not listed at all in the survey. Recently the Indian Enclave People's Committee and Kuchlibary Sangram Committee have complained to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on the same line as MASUM. There is apprehension that those who were not counted in the Census 2011 will not get compensation. Moreover these organisations have complained that Indian residents of former enclaves within Bangladeshi territory were being tortured and raped.⁶ Further, the joint survey team faced complications as some members of the family want to be Indian citizens while others of the same family want to stay back in Bangladesh. The survey team has observed that clarity over compensation is only one of the problems. Many enclave residents said to the team that land mafia groups were pressuring them to sell their land and move. It is against this backdrop that the two governments put a stop to land sales between 22 June and 30 July 2015.

While both India and Bangladesh have committed to safe passage and maintaining the integrity of property records, the smooth facilitation and implementation of the same will require constant vigilance and support. Since, according to the agreement, the two countries will be able to exchange enclaves located in each other's territory, it inevitably calls into question the process of rehabilitation of the people who have been residing in these enclaves. The LBA is expected to offer a better quality of life to the people who, till date, did not enjoy basic human rights including access to schools, hospitals and other basic amenities. These people were *de facto* stateless, for all intents and purposes. Therefore, there needs to be a proper and durable rehabilitation policy for these people so that they can be assimilated with their respective mainlands quickly with as few hassles as possible.

Undocumented Migration

Crossing the border is a daily routine for many in both India and Bangladesh. There has been an increase in the trafficking of women and children, narcotics and drugs along with an increase in illegal and undocumented migration between these two countries.⁷ Undocumented migration from Bangladesh is a major concern for India. The migration, which began from 1947 onwards, was largely provoked by political upheaval, religious persecution, demographic, economic and environmental pressures. Opportunities for employment and education as well as medical needs encouraged illegal movement of traffic. Though migration across the border is well acknowledged, there is lack of authentic data on the exact number of people who have migrated. Some studies claim that the number runs into millions. This has caused serious problems of security and social tension in many parts of India, especially in the Northeast. The undocumented migration has disturbed the demographics in some of the Indian border-states and has created serious ethnic tensions. The Assam agitation of the 1980s is a case in point.

Of late, Bangladesh has also been claiming the existence of illegal migrants from India. Media reports claim that Indians living illegally in Bangladesh are remitting billions of dollars to India.⁸ According to Bangladesh government authorities, most of them come in search of jobs and mostly work in NGOs and garments and textile industries. However, these claims, official and otherwise, remain questionable.

The growth in cross-border migration and trafficking flows has resulted from a combination of push, pull and facilitating factors. Illiteracy, poverty, clashes between communities, natural calamities, political and ethnic unrest have all constantly increased vulnerabilities of marginalised groups, and made them susceptible to gross violations of human rights. At the same time, economic growth, relative prosperity and peace on the other side of the border act as 'pull' factors. India's growing economy creates increased demand for imported labour. Young women are particularly in demand because they are regarded as more compliant and less likely to rebel against substandard working conditions. In this context, it is to be noted that much of the earlier migration flows in Asia involved unskilled men looking for work. However, studies indicate a steady feminisation of migration since the 1990s as women seize the economic opportunities that migration offers. This phenomenon has also affected trafficking.⁹

Trafficking of Women and Children

A large part of the border (mainly with West Bengal) is flat terrain and has only 20 official checkpoints manned by the BSF along the Indian side of the border.¹⁰ This small number is often ineffective in maintaining strict vigil,

making illegal entry by traffickers very common. A number of illicit migration businesses have also developed to facilitate this cross-border movement, which may charge up to INR 50 per person for each trip (around 1999).¹¹ Human trafficking per se involves forced or coerced movements. Sometimes people are kidnapped outright and taken forcibly to another location. In other cases, traffickers use deception – such as false promises of well-paying jobs to entice victims. After providing transportation to get victims to their destinations, they charge exorbitant fees for their services, creating debt bondage. A well organised bribery system also assists the covert trade that has developed.

Further, traffickers facilitate easy entry of Bangladeshi girls into Kolkata brothels by using fake passports. A close nexus exists between traffickers and border village communities. In the Kushtia area of Bangladesh, some villages are used as stations for the traffickers. The borders of Bidirpur and Premtali in Rajshahi district are used because there are fewer checkpoints there. The border adjacent to Jessore is also very popular with traffickers. Particular hotels are used to keep the girls brought from different parts of Bangladesh. Since traffickers do not usually accompany the women while the latter cross the border, it is difficult for the border police to arrest them. There are female members in trafficking gangs who help them hide their identity and escape arrest.¹² Once the women enter India, they are kept in West Bengal or Orissa. After being 'sorted and graded,' they may be sent to Delhi, Mumbai or even to the Middle East.¹³

The issue of women's trafficking inevitably arises when discussing border management – therefore the need for a more holistic look at border concerns. Migration and the consequential presence of 'illegal' immigrants are problems related to resources such as land and money, but they are also equally related to the politics of nationalism, citizenship and the search for a self-sufficing identity.

The MoU signed between India and Bangladesh on the prevention of human trafficking especially of women and children in June, 2015 was a relief to curtail the flesh trade. The agreement provides that joint coordinated efforts must be undertaken by officials in both nations along with a systematic process of data circulation and coordinated patrolling in the border areas. There is also a provision for repatriation and rehabilitation of the victims which will be carried out by their mother territory. Sometimes, due to the unavailability of a proper home address of the victim, the entire procedure gets delayed, taking three to eight years or more for the trafficking survivor to reach home.

Though the MoU envisions collaborated efforts to address the issue, there is an immediate need for coordination between government and the NGOs on both sides, and community mobilisation. Good communication and

close collaboration are also required among community-based organisations and BSF border outposts.¹⁴

Insurgent Camps in Bangladesh

Presence of insurgent groups in Bangladesh from India's north-eastern states has been a major cause of concern for India. Taking advantage of the porous border, insurgent groups from these states often base themselves in Bangladesh and run their operations from across the border. Following requests from India, Bangladesh took action against these groups. Many top leaders of these insurgent groups were arrested and repatriated. But the problem is far from over and, according to some media reports; many of these groups are still active in Bangladesh. During the 39th Border Cooperation Conference between Director Generals of India's Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) in August 2014, India handed over a list of 71 camps of insurgent groups still active in Bangladesh.¹⁵

Criminal Activities across the Border

The porous border has encouraged cross-border criminal activities like smuggling of contraband, human trafficking (mainly of women and children) and circulation of fake Indian currency. Though there is no authentic data on the size of this illegal trade, some estimates suggest it to be around \$500 million annually.¹⁶ A major reason for this flourishing trade is the export ban imposed by India. The demand for beef in Bangladesh is quite high but the supply is limited. On the other hand, India is a cattle surplus country and the demand for beef is fairly low. The issue is also important as it is directly linked to the killing of people along the border. Most of those killed at the border are cattle smugglers, often referred to by the Bangladeshi media as cattle traders. It is known that cattle smuggling would not survive without the support of the local population, border guards and the police.¹⁷ The poor economic condition of the people living on the border has been one of the reasons for growth of this trade.

The most effective and pragmatic step would be to lift the export ban on cattle. This would make the trade legal, facilitate health check-ups of animals and generate revenue. It would also stop needless deaths on the border. Bangladesh may bristle at the decision initially but could be convinced about its long-term benefits. As an initial step, cattle trade could be allowed at specially organised *haats* or markets on the West Bengal-Bangladesh border. The bigger problem, however, would be at home: cattle export is a highly emotive and sensitive issue. It would be difficult for any government—coalitional or not, to take the risk of legalising it.¹⁸ There is a proposal from the BSF to reduce jute cultivation adjacent to the border as these fields

comprising high jute trees provide sheds for the traders to smuggle cattle. In place of jute cultivation the farmers could be rehabilitated with alternative cultivation.¹⁹ The BSF has increased patrols on the 64 border posts along the India-Bangladesh border and has also begun to dig trenches and laying them with pipes, serving as literal obstacles for humans who would attempt to cross with smuggled cattle.

Another major cause of concern has been the smuggling of contraband substances. Bangladesh often raises the issue of Phensidyl, a cough syrup, which is smuggled from India and poses serious health hazards in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has been urging India to take appropriate measures to stop smuggling of this drug.

While the two countries had in 2011 agreed to the use of non-lethal weapons while apprehending smugglers, border killings remain a sensitive issue. A recent incident took place on the Banpur border post in Krishnanagar district of West Bengal when a suspected gold smuggler was killed in an encounter with BSF 11 forces. In the wake of the event, the BSF suspended seven of its troops. The incident took place at a time when both countries were holding a five-day long dialogue on border issues in Dhaka on 12 May. The 21-member Indian delegation was led by Border Security Force Chief K. K. Sharma while the 23-member Bangladeshi delegation was led by BGB Chief Maj. Gen. Aziz Ahmed. Among the issues discussed were smuggling of cattle and fake currency, 12 measures to enhance operational efficiency, and border security.²⁰

Smuggling of arms and explosives has been a major cause of worry too for both India and Bangladesh. For a long time, Bangladesh was used by Indian insurgent groups as a transit point for smuggling of China-made arms into India.²¹ It has also been reported that Kolkata, Guwahati and Shillong have of late emerged as India's new smuggling hubs, due to a spurt in trans-border smuggling through Bangladesh, Myanmar and Nepal. According to Central Board of Excise and Customs statistics, a total of 35,500 cases of smuggling and commercial fraud in 2012-13 have been reported as compared to 33,251 cases the previous year. Of these, less than five percent are from Mumbai whereas Kolkata, Guwahati and Shillong accounted for over 64 percent.²² In addition, Chinese consumer electronic goods are smuggled from the Indo-Nepal and Indo-Myanmar borders.

Yet another issue of concern is the smuggling of fake Indian currency from Bangladesh. Fake Indian currency sourced from Pakistan is sent via Bangladesh and brought into India. The smuggling of fake Indian currency takes place along India-Bangladesh border in particular. A Delhi Police report reveals that there are fake currency gangs, which have been smuggling fake notes into India from Bangladesh. While arresting a fake currency racket very recently the police said the accused associates obtained high quality fake currency at about 25 per cent of its face value in Bangladesh and sold it to

chain retailers at 45 per cent of the face value. These associates were thus earning approximately Rs 20 per hundred rupee note.²³ However, because of the clandestine nature of these activities it is very difficult to assess the quantum of illicit trade.

The network of illegal trade or smuggling including human trafficking is very strong and it demonstrates how border produces a spatially localized and exceptional economy, which runs parallel to normal economy. In many cases the smugglers conspire with the state apparatus. In this context it is important to understand how the smuggling business is organised and controlled by various 'syndicates' and how these syndicates are extremely well connected with the higher levels of political parties, civil administration and police, and their identities are rarely exposed.

The complex procedures involved in undertaking legal cross-border trade have also contributed to the growth of illegal trade. The volume of illegal trade is estimated to be double that of legal trade. The items most commonly smuggled from Bangladesh include sarees, diesel, fish and mosquito nets. Items smuggled from India include sugar, salt, medicine, betel nut, timber among others. The inefficient functioning of the Land Customs Stations has also been a cause of concern. Lack of infrastructure and lack of coordination among various agencies cause delays in clearance of passenger and cargo traffic, which is a major obstacle to trade. Further, Non-Tariff Barriers remain a major source of complaint for Bangladesh against India.

Since the border has been susceptible to cross-border criminal activities both countries are apprehensive about opening it up. The belief that a peaceful Indo-Bangladesh border will be a harbinger to prosperity is, however, gaining ground in both countries. The real challenge will be for the two countries to create policy instruments and mechanisms to allow seamless movement of legitimate goods and people while also maintaining peace and stability²⁴. Under the circumstances border management has gained importance on both sides of the border for the following reasons:

- To streamline the large volume of informal trade
- To strengthen and to increase the number of border *haats* to improve economic engagement across the border
- To ensure legal cross-border movement
- To ensure that terror outfits do not use vulnerable border areas for passage. Security detail on the border areas needs to be increased.

India and Bangladesh have a number of border management instruments in place such as the Joint Working Group on the Border, periodic flag meetings, and bi-annual meeting of the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Border Guard of Bangladesh (BGB) commanders. A Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP) was signed between the Director Generals of BSF and BGB on 30 July, 2011, under which more than 1,200 joint patrols have been undertaken so far leading to a reduction in the number of border

deaths.²⁵ However, the major challenge at the border is controlling illicit and undocumented cross-border activities without disrupting legitimate movement of goods and people.

Notes and References

¹ This write up draws from ORF monograph by Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury and Pratinashree Basu with Rakhahari Chatterji as Advisor, *India-Bangladesh Connectivity: Possibilities and Challenges* (Kolkata: June 2015).

² "Exchange of Enclaves between India and Bangladesh," 31 July 2015 cited in

<http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25565/Exchange+of+enclaves+between+India+and+Bangladesh> accessed on 10 August 2015

³ Public Diplomacy Division, *India and Bangladesh: Land Boundary Agreement*, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, p.13 cited in

http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/24529_LBA_MEA_Booklet_final.pdf accessed on 10 August 2015

⁴ Rakhahari Chatterji, Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury, Pratinashree Basu and Sreeparna Banerjee, *India-Bangladesh Connectivity: A year after Modi's visit*, Special Report 40, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, June 2016, p.2

⁵ *Ananda Bazaar Patrika*, 17 July 2015.

⁶ *Times of India*, 5 August 2015.

⁷ Upala Devi Banerjee, "Globalisation and its Links to Migration and Trafficking: The Crisis in India,

Nepal and Bangladesh," *Canadian Women Studies*, Vol. 22 (3, 4), 2003, pp.124-130.

⁸ "Bangladesh-India Economic Relations", *The Financial Express*, Dhaka, 26 July 2009.

⁹ Jyoti Sanghera, *Trafficking of Women and Children in South Asia: Taking Stock and Moving Ahead – A*

Broad Assessment of Anti-Trafficking Initiatives in Nepal, Bangladesh and India. (UNICEF, ROSA and Save the Children Alliance, South and Central Asia: 1999).

¹⁰ See Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury, "Trafficking of Women and the Crisis of Identity," *Peace Prints: South Asian Journal of Peace Building*, Vol. 4, No. 1: Summer 2012.

¹¹ Jyoti Sanghera, op. cit.

¹² See *Trafficking in Women and Children: The Cases of Bangladesh*, (UBINIG, Dhaka: 1995).

¹³ Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury- (2012), op. cit.

¹⁴ Same as note 4, pp. 4-5

¹⁵ "It is crossing, not illegal migration," *The Asian Age*, August 25, 2014

¹⁶ "Legal trade to cut border killing," *The Daily Star*, September 19, 2011.

¹⁷ In the International Consultative Workshop held on 19-20 September 2014 in ORF, Kolkata, Subir Bhaumik, eminent journalist, pointed out that there were strong vested interests on either side of the border to thwart legalization of cattle trade. See Basu Ray Chaudhury et al, same as note 1

¹⁸ Joyeeta Bhattacharjee, *India-Bangladesh Border Management: The Challenge of Cattle Smuggling*, ORF Special Report 1, July 2013, pp. 6-7.

¹⁹ *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, 7 July 2015.

²⁰ "India, Bangladesh hold border talks in Dhaka", *The Economic Times*, 12 May 2016,

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/indiabangladesh-hold-border-talks-in-dhaka/articleshow/52238333.cms> accessed on 12 May 2016

²¹ Subir Bhaumik, "Smuggling of China-made weapons in focus", *ALJAZEERA*, 4 February 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2014/02/smuggling-china-made-weapons-focus-20142463722679830.html> accessed o 14 August 2015

²²"Eastern India new smuggling hub," 27.7.2013

<http://bdnews24.com/world/2013/07/27/eastern-india-new-smuggling-hub> accessed on 15 October 2014.

²³"Indian kingpin of fake currency racket held", 29 March 2015,

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/delhi/indian-kingpin-of-fake-currency-racket-held/59923.html> accessed on 13 may 2015.

²⁴ See Basu Ray Chaudhury et al. (2015), op. cit.

²⁵"India, Bangladesh vow to increase joint border patrolling," *The Times of India*, 24 August 2014, cited in <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-Bangladesh-vow-to-increase-joint-border-patrolling/articleshow/40859031.cms>, accessed on 13 October 2014.

Tracing Rights Mechanisms for Migrants: The Case of Bangladeshis in India

By

Vikash Kumar *

Introduction

The issue of Bangladeshi migrants to India is like an elephant in the room, everybody knows that they are there but nobody knows how many of them are in India and how the Indian state can deal with them. Various studies have shown that the category of documented migrants from Bangladesh is virtually negligible when it is compared to the estimated number of undocumented migrants that ranges from 2 to 20 million. However, the census 2001 shows that out of approx 5 million foreigners with valid documents, 3.5 million were from Bangladesh based on the criteria of place of birth and of last residence etc. This figure might not be adequate as the answers to the census questions were voluntary. The successive governments in India have neither shared their estimates with the public in respect of the estimated number of Bangladeshis barring some incomplete responses to RTI questions or the questions raised in the Parliament. For the same reason, the Government has not spelt out its policies in respect to them either. Explanation of this vagueness is not difficult to find. It will have political implications both in ethnic and political terms.

Migration as a human phenomenon is as old as human history. In almost all geographical regions, the issue has attracted the attention of scholars and commentators. South Asia is no exception. Most of the concerned literature in the region can be classified under three categories: a. descriptive, b. political / security centric and c. humanistic. This study broadly falls under the third category but with a difference. Most of the studies which fall under this category are sympathetic studies concerned about the day to day plight of

*Dr. Vikash Kumar is Assistant Professor, Centre for Research in Rural & Industrial Development (CRRID), Chandigarh. Email: vikashkumar27@gmail.com
IAAPS Perspective, Vol.1, 1, August 2016

the individuals who often are victimized by the state and its agents in the receiving country. The point that misses in such studies is whether these migrants should be entitled to certain legal rights within the framework of domestic and international laws. Hence both the national and international legal regimes should come under academic scrutiny. An attempt of investigating the kind of rights they should be entitled to according to India's constitutional and legal provisions in view of their status as both documented undocumented or irregular migrants has been carried out. Since India is a party to several international regimes (which directly or indirectly impact migrants rights), the study will do a stock taking of the coordinated efforts that have been taken to match these two sets of legal regimes, national and international. The supply-demand dialectics in terms of state initiatives for safeguarding certain inalienable rights together with the claims of rights by the Bangladeshi migrants has also been examined. For this purpose this study, however, takes into account the two categories of migrants namely, a. those who migrated out of fear of persecution and took refuge in India; and b. economic migrants but with illegal status, and to what extent national mechanisms are in consonance with the international legal apparatus for safeguarding the human rights of these migrants. The subject is complex with huge political implications but certainly deserves academic investigation, which the study proposes to undertake through and in-depth study of the phenomena of Bangladeshi migration to India including its impact in the Northeast region.

Background and Context Setting

Migration policies across the world are driven by three core concerns: law and border enforcement, economic interest, and protection. In attempts of enforcing the sanctity of the border and safeguarding existing economic interest, concerns for protection of the migrants (people in movement) get marginalised. Intensified efforts to suppress migration do not deter people from moving towards places where they can get socio-political and physical security and economic opportunities, and search for such avenues drive many into clandestinity and widespread exploitation¹. In fact, such practices start a process of a chain reaction and their journeys become more dangerous, more secretive and prone to be targeted by border security agencies and criminalisation which often end up in the loss of human rights, extortions, and falling in trap of touts². Here, plurality of competing principles, which claim to be relevant to access justice (to 'us') and an arrangement of just social institutions (laws and rules) to deter 'they' fail to take account of the element of fairness or equality of opportunity that is quintessential for any just administrative system.³

Central to our understanding of the subject here is the border and border crossing. It is interesting to note as what kind of border with Bangladesh-India has inherited from partition and what kind of impact the Bangladesh war of 1971 had, that in certain respect the India-Bangladesh border became more 'unmanageable' than the erstwhile India-East Pakistan border. Though physically remain unchanged, in both psychologically and in policy terms they became two different lines. While the enemy image of Pakistan allowed India to enforce the border more stringently, in the post 1971 phase, when Bangladesh does not have an enemy image, it often becomes difficult for India to enforce its border more rigorously. In that sense, even the border fencing project that has been undertaken by the Indian state seems mere a response to the political criticism at domestic level than rather a real solution to the illegal movement of Bangladeshis to India

Stringent border controls between these South Asian countries, have not stopped the flow of migrants but have adversely impacted the access to human rights protection and triggered formation of increasingly sophisticated smuggling and trafficking networks. Such precarious situation poses credibility questions of border governance of the host country, in this case India, as well as public policy and its humanitarian obligations⁴. When survival is threatened people move and rigid borders and associated repercussions mean little in such desperate situations. Especially, when it becomes a question of life and death, people do not hesitate to even opt for illegal ways to tackle any obstacle that stands in their path of moving⁵. Such control mechanisms not only put irregular ones at greater risk during transit and after arrival but also affect documented entrants. In this context an example of the US-Mexico experience will be helpful. At the US-Mexico border, that is, between one more and the other less developed country, America is constantly under the demographic pressure from Mexico. At the moment, there are about 11,000,000 unauthorized people in the United States and majority of them are Mexicans. The Barack Obama administration, like its predecessors, is seized with the problem and is thinking of ways and means of tackling it. A similar scenario could be experienced in South Asian region also. In comparison to the US-Mexico border, the India-Bangladesh one is even more problematic because of geographical, anthropological and historical reasons. As mentioned above the estimated number of undocumented migrants from Bangladesh to India ranges from 2 to 20 million. At the other end, more than 10 million refugees are forced to leave their countries to escape persecution⁶.

Migration is not a standalone process especially from the gender perspective. In most of the cases women also accompany men while moving from one place/country to another. Any attempt of target hardening by the relatively wealthier nations against migrants from the poorer nations of the world has created a frontier of illegality i.e. border crossing. Like many other

forms of illegality and the attempts to police them, extra-legal border crossing has significant gendered dimensions⁷.

Analytic Proposition of Migrants Rights

The horizon of migration has increasingly widening and intra- and inter-regional phenomenon accompanied by an increase in the violation of the human rights of the people concerned. India serves as a country of origin, transit and destination. Migrants and their family members are subjected to wide range of human rights abuses during the entire cycle of migration which get manifested in the forms of inadequate conditions of work, sexual abuse of female migrant workers, expulsion and arbitrary detention of irregular migrants including accompanied children, difficulties with accessing social and economic rights, illegal recruitment practices, ill-treatment, inadequate housing, poor access to health care provisions and education, and the criminalisation of undocumented migrants. In all of the above, female family members have to bear the brunt more severely and of various nature⁸ and are often pushed into informal sectors as well as immoral/illegal economic activities like sex trade, organ trading, drug peddling smuggling etc⁹.

If we talk of emigration from Bangladesh, the trend has been a steady exodus of people, driven out by political and economic problems¹⁰. Following the partition of British India in 1947, more than 3 million people may have migrated from what was then East Pakistan; during the same period some 864,000 Muslim refugees immigrated to East Pakistan from India. Further the operation by the Pakistani military in East Pakistan in 1971 caused an estimated 8 to 10 million refugees to cross the border into India in one of the great mass movements of modern times. After the independence of Bangladesh, an undetermined number remained in India¹¹.

The Bangladeshi migrants, mostly undocumented, face wrath of vested domestic politics in the name of protecting socio-cultural, religious, economic and regional interest. The primacy of domestic politics over the principles of humanity, justice and non-refoulement could be noticed by the fact the North-East India has seen numerous anti-migrants agitations often turning into violent conflicts. The local political interest superseded constitutional obligations of the Indian state when the people of Arunachal Pradesh, particularly its students associations, did not allow the Government of India to provide Chakmas the voting and citizenship rights¹². Even positive interventions made by National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and verdict of the Supreme Court seemed to have of little help. This denial and discrimination along with sporadic valance raises serious human rights concerns¹³ especially for women.

The plight of the Chakma and other non-Bangla speaking tribals did not stop even after they fled from Chittagong.¹⁴ Women in this region

suffered an unprecedented violence and cruelty due the ethnic conflicts. The actual number of emigrants would be much higher than the estimated figures¹⁵. These figures do not reflect those who just crossed over the Indian or Myanmar border either alone, individually, in a group or as member of migrating family. There is no authentic data available about such migrants, instead cases and stories are reported in media and by scholars about the human rights violations of migrants, especially about women in transit recurrently surface with the horrific stories of torture and exploitation by both state and non-state actors¹⁶. Nature of the violence might be different in varied situations but women remain at the receiving end in the whole process.

Partha Ghosh in his latest study argued that the status of Bangladeshis who migrated into India due to economic consideration is very sad. He argues that 'in the 1970s when Indian politics witnessed the Sanjay Gandhi (Indira Gandhi's younger son) phenomenon with its unprecedented activism exerted for making Indians go for sterilization so as to control the population growth of India, Bangladeshis became the softest targets in Delhi though Muslims in general had been similarly targeted. But unlike other Muslims who protested against the drive on religious grounds Bangladeshis could not do since their very stay in Delhi was questionable as most to them had no legal papers'. Most of them are concentrated in different slums with an average family size of about six their average income is as low as Rs. 2,000-4,000 (\$35-70) per family per month¹⁷. It is important to note that the aim of the paper is not to map the presence of Bangladeshi residing in different parts of India, as it is well known that their presence could be noticed in widespread in Indian town and cities.

Conceptual Exposition of International Human Rights Mechanism for Migrants

Migration and human rights have a complex relationship that starts when a migrant crosses a frontier, the act that defines international migration. While international human rights law recognises the right to leave one's country, there is no corresponding right to enter another country, even for a refugee, without that state's permission¹⁸. When survival is threatened people move across rigid borders; associated repercussions mean little to them. In such desperate situations, people do not hesitate to even opt for illegal ways to tackle any obstacle that stands in their path of moving¹⁹. For instance, an s Hazarika argues that 'according to estimates based on fertility rates and increase of population along the borders and elsewhere, there are at least about 1.5 million Bangladeshis who came to Assam post-1971'²⁰.

Stringent border controls do not reduce the flow of migrants but adversely impact on access to human rights protection mechanisms, as also, triggers the formation of increasingly sophisticated smuggling and trafficking

networks. These control mechanisms affect documented/regular entrants on one hand and on the other put the undocumented/irregular ones at greater risk during transit and after their arrival. Such precarious situations question the credibility of border governance of the host country as well as public policies in respect of their humanitarian obligations²¹. The above propositions encourage us to delve deeper into the issue of human rights of people involved in international migration in general and Bangladeshi migrants in particular.

Since cross border migration involves two or more countries their movements have ramifications at various diplomatic levels - both bilateral and multilateral - it becomes imperative to explore International rights based mechanism and their reflections in domestic laws and policies for safeguarding the rights of different categories of migrants. International human rights standards serve as a level playing field for safeguarding the fundamental rights of migrants though these standards differ in nature of protection they offer to migrants.

The existing international human rights mechanisms that include organisations, recommendations and conventions accord several rights to migrants, such as, right to equal pay for equal work, right to be free from discrimination, right to organise and join associations and unions, right to collective bargaining etc. Thus international human rights mechanisms could play a vital role in ensuring equal opportunity and fundamental rights to migrants that are central to the existence of any human being.

The Human Rights Council - an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system- was established in 2006 by replacing its predecessor the 'Commission of Human Rights'. The Council is responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations and make recommendations on them, including the rights of migrants. The Human Rights Council also works with the UN Special Procedures established by the former Commission on Human Rights and now assumed by the Council. One such procedure is the mandate of Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants. The Council seeks to promote, along with other thematic issues, the human rights of migrants by through a migrant centric approach. Through its various committees (or treaty bodies), the Council keeps track of the implementation of all core conventions²² that provide certain inalienable human rights to every individual including International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, of 18 December 1990 (popularly known as Convention on Migrant Workers or CMW). The Committee on Migrant Workers and the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants have been clear in stating that although countries have a sovereign right to determine conditions of entry and stay in their territories, they also have an obligation to respect, protect

and fulfil the human rights of all individuals under their jurisdiction, regardless of their nationality or origin and regardless of their immigration status (OHCHR, Migration and Human Rights, for more details refer to OHCHR website). The CMW stands most comprehensive instruments in safeguarding the rights of migrants because it takes note of all major ILO conventions and the UN core treaties existing at the time of the enforcement. Specific treaty based human rights mechanisms, however, also reflect on the issue of migrants within their mandate directly or indirectly.

The UN Human Rights Conventions that are applicable on migrants are: the International Bill of Human Rights that includes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrants and Members of Their Families (1990), and other UN instruments including International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) and Convention on Trafficking and Smuggling.

The International Bill of Human Rights²³ accords certain inalienable rights to every individual and migrant people are not exempted from the same, irrespective of their status and irrespective of whether states have ratified it or not. While there is recognition that migration policy is an issue area that lies within the sovereign jurisdiction of states concerned, states are nevertheless obliged to ensure that discrimination, racism and violence against migrants do not take place (OHCHR, Migration and Human Rights, web material). The other rights guaranteed are right to be free from slavery, equality before law, equal pay for equal work, liberty of movement (Art 12, ICCPR) and right to work (Art 6 ICESCR) etc.

Certain other UN instruments are also applicable on migrant workers indirectly. As the name suggests, the goal of International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965) is to do away with discrimination based on race, colour, descent, ethnic origin, though it does not include nationality. These rights are complemented by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW) that seeks to abolish any/all discriminations on the basis of sex and establishes equal pay for equal work for women, right to similar employment opportunities as men, freedom of choice of occupation, health and safety. In addition to these Conventions, is the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and two accompanying protocols: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by land, sea and air.

In addition to the above, - legally binding - Conventions or Covenants, there aren - legally not binding - Declarations and Resolutions that

can be regarded as significant steps in the development of the emergence of the notion of migrants rights. Various allied agencies of the UN within the ambit of the mandate and objectives continue to engage with varied aspects of the human migration and their implications. They also involve in standard setting and recommend best practices to deal with the migrants and to protect them from any kind of exploitation. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees, World Trade Organisation and World Bank, ILO and the IOM try to accord many rights to migrants such as right to equal pay for equal work, right to be free from discrimination, right to organise and join associations and unions, right to collective bargaining etc²⁴.

It is here that international organisations can play a vital role in ensuring that those who migrate indeed get a fair deal and are accorded certain basic human rights that are central to the existence of any human being.

Domestic Mechanisms for Migrants Rights in India

The Constitution of India provides certain entitlements for employment, nondiscrimination, right to work etc. (for example, Article 14, 15, 21, 23 (1), 39, 42, and 43) which are applicable for all workers including migrant workers from outside the country. Besides, there are other legislative frameworks under which migrants' rights are protected. These laws include the Minimum Wages Act, 1948; the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970; the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976; the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996; the Workmen's Compensation Act 1923; the Payment of Wages Act 1936; the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986; the Bonded Labour Act, 1976; the Employees State Insurance Act, 1952; and Maternity Benefit Act, 1961²⁵.

Concluding Observation

India is party to many of the international Covenants, Declarations, Resolutions and other treaty documents at both bilateral and multilateral levels for the promotion and protection of human rights including migrants' rights. Despite the presence of constitutional provisions and other legislations for safeguarding the rights of migrant labourers, a significant gap could be noticed between the international mechanisms and their realisation at the domestic level. The Convention against Torture (CAT) could not be ratified by the Indian Parliament as also the Refugee Convention 1951 and its protocol 1967 were not signed by the Government of India. Both the treaty documents are relevant for the proposed study. India could not become party to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant

Workers and Members of their Families 1990 (CMW)²⁶. Not signing the CMW by the Indian state raises significant concerns because the covenant has specific provisions of promotion and protection of rights which are equally applicable to irregular migrants. Conceding to CMW will hold the Government of India accountable for their human rights protection because of the fact that even when a migrant entered or remained illegally in the Indian territory does not nullify the state's duty under international law to protect his or her basic rights without discrimination, for example against torture, degrading treatment, or forced labour. These irregular/undocumented Bangladeshi migrants, however, at the actual level are not protected under any existing domestic laws and policies²⁷.

While the Indian state is by and large sympathetic to illegal Bangladeshis in India, which is reflected more in its omissions, there are commissions too. Indian judicial system has often taken recourse to the provision of Indian constitution to safeguard their rights of existence in India and since the Indian state has subscribed to many international regimes as well, there is no inherent contradiction therein, for instance in the case of Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh.

In the given situation, for illegal economic migrants silence seems to be the best policy of the government to whichever party it belongs to. The fact, however, remains that these Bangladeshi migrants are subjected to fear of loss of their dignity and often survival. Since most of the Bangladeshi Migrants fall under undocumented or at best under 'partially documented by mischief', they do not want to claim the rights and entitlement and remain deliberately invisible. The more invisible they are the better is for the state and the migrants themselves – and this is the point of departure for our investigation. Vagueness about the exact number of migrants is a kind of bliss for the migrants and the government, because once we have the exact figure the government would be expected to evolve a policy for dealing with them. On the other hand this vagueness gives the migrants and escape route to remain in oblivion. This also gives an opportunity to maintain a benign distance from each other.

Notes and References

¹ International Council on Human Rights Policy, *Irregular Migration, Migrant Smuggling and Human Rights: Towards Coherence*, 2010, p.16.

² *Ibid.* p.13.

³ For an elaborate study of the idea of justice, refer: John Rawls. 1999. *A Theory of Justice* (Revised Edition), USA: Harvard University Press. For a critique of the Rawlsian theory of justice, see, Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, Harvard University Press, USA, 2009.

⁴ *Op.cit.* note 4, p.2.

⁵ Paula Banerjee and Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury (eds), *Women in Indian Borderlands*, Sage, New Delhi, 2011, p. 4.

⁶ Stefanie Grant, 'Migrants' Human Rights: From the Margins to the Mainstream', March issue, *Migration Information Source*, Migration Policy Institute, Washington, 2005.

- ⁷ Pickering, Sharon, *Women, Borders, and Violence*, Springer, New York, 2011, p.1.
- ⁸ For a detailed account of status of women in migration and women in the border lands of South Asia, read Paula Banerjee and Anusua Basu Ray Chaudhury (eds), *Women in Indian Borderlands*, Sage, New Delhi, 2011.
- ⁹ Op. cit. note 8. p. 31.
- ¹⁰ Partha S. Ghosh, *Unwanted and Uprooted: A Political Study of Migrants, Refugees, Stateless and Displaced of South Asia*, Sanskriti, New Delhi, 2004 and for latest analysis see: Partha S. Ghosh, 2013.
- ¹¹ For more details, see, Antara Datta, *Refugees and Borders in South Asia: The Great Exodus of 1971*, Routledge, London and New York, 2013.
- ¹² Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, "Uprooted Twice: Refugees from Chittagong Hill Tract", in Ranabir Samaddar, (ed.) *Refugees and the State: Practices of Asylum and Care in India, 1947-2000*, New Delhi: Sage, 2003. See also, Prasad Chunnunnu, 'Student Movement in Arunachal Pradesh: A Case of Chakma-Hajong Refugee Problem', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XLII, No.15, April 14-20, Pp.1373-1379, 2007 and also see, Partha S. Ghosh and Deepak K. Mishra, 'Party Dynamics in a Border Region: Meeting the Challenges of Political Economy of India's N-E Hill States', in Ajay K. Mehra, ed. *Party System in India: Emerging Trajectories*, Lancer, New Delhi, 2013.
- ¹³ Op.cit. note 1.
- ¹⁴ Basu Ray Chaudhury, 2003; Ghosh, 2013, p.35.
- ¹⁵ Md. Shariat Ullah, *Determinants of International Labour Migration from Bangladesh: A Gravity Model of Panel Data*, 2012, <http://www.ritsumeai.ac.jp/acd/re/ssrc/result/memoirs/kiyou25/25-06.pdf> accessed on 10 June 2016.
- ¹⁶ Vikash Kumar, *Identifying International Rights Based Mechanisms for Women in International Migration: A case study of India-Bangladesh Border*, 11th orientation course on Forced Migration, Calcutta Research Group (CRG), 2013.
- ¹⁷ Partha S. Ghosh, 'Bangladeshis in Delhi: Making Sense of the Small Voices against the Big Narrative' in Singh, Supriya (et al), *Searching for Community: Melbourne to Delhi*, Manohar Publications, New Delhi, 2015
- ¹⁸ See note 9.
- ¹⁹ Banerjee and Chaudhury (eds), 2011, p.4.
- ²⁰ Sanjoy Hazarika, 'Contested Space and Identity in the Indian Northeast', AT WS (Academy of Third World Studies), Monograph 14, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, 2008.
- ²¹ International Council on Human Rights Policy, 2010, p.2.
- ²² Human Rights Committee (CCPR), Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Committee against Torture (CAT), Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW), Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED)
- ²³ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966.
- ²⁴ Michael, Hasenau, 'ILO Standards on Migrant Workers: The Fundamentals of the UN Convention and Their Genesis', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 25, No. 4, pp. 687-697, 1991; Also see Susan Martin 'An Overview of International Cooperation Over Migration', Proceedings of the Annual Meeting (American Society of International Law), 101, March 28-31, 2007, pp. 306-311.
- ²⁵ Chandrima B. Chatterjee, *Identities in Motion: Migration and Health in India*, Mumbai: CEHAT, 2006, pp. 23-25.
- ²⁶ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Migration and Human Rights, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Migration/Pages/MigrationAndHumanRightsIndex.aspx>, accessed on 15 September 2015.
- ²⁷ Chatterjee. 2006, pp. 25-26.

Contemporary Southeast Asia: An Overview

By

Kriengsak Chareonwongsak *

Introduction

ASEAN serves as a cooperative framework among its member countries in the Southeast Asian region, and was founded in 1967 with the goal of stemming Communist influence and expansion. Subsequently, ASEAN has become increasingly focused upon the importance of economic cooperation. The primary agenda of the present and the future of Southeast Asian region is to establish the ASEAN Community which comprises three pillars; these are ASEAN Political and Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). The ASEAN Summit Meeting in 2003 established a goal of transforming ASEAN into the ASEAN Community by 2020. The ASEAN Summit Meeting in 2007 hastened the implementation of AEC in 2015.

The implementation of the ASEAN Community has the goal of incorporating politics, economics, society and culture. APSC is the first pillar which has the goal of promoting and maintaining peace and security in the region to ensure that countries in the region live at peace with one another and can settle issues or conflicts by peaceful processes. The second pillar of AEC aims at four goals – to establish ASEAN into a single market and production base, to enhance economic competitiveness in ASEAN, to equally develop an economy and to integrate this economy into the world economy. ASCC is the third pillar which envisages the ASEAN community as a peoples centre. This shall be a community of caring and sharing societies. The ASEAN population shall have a better standard of living. There shall be promotion of the sustainable utilisation of natural resources and an ASEAN identity.

The acceleration of AEC implementation, however, raises certain questions as to whether the ASEAN member countries are ready to be part of

*Professor Kriengsak Chareonwongsak is Senior Fellow, Harvard University.
Email: kriengsak@kriengsak.com
IAAPS Perspective, Vol.1, 1, August 2016

the AEC. Survey results in some countries in ASEAN have demonstrated that most of the people are not ready. For example, the result of the survey of University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (2014) shows that 39 per cent of the questionnaire respondents who are SME businessmen in Thailand have little knowledge and understanding of the AEC.¹ The objectives of this paper are to evaluate the status of the implementation of the ASEAN Community and to analyze the ASEAN hindrances in achieving the above-mentioned goals.

Progress on the Implementation of the ASEAN Community

Among the three Pillars of the ASEAN Community, the AEC has progressed significantly, although there has been no constructive development in either the APSC or the ASCC. ASEAN has constructed the AEC Blueprint as a plan to drive its member countries towards the implementation of the AEC. The ASEAN Secretariat has evaluated the implementation by preparing a report on the ASEAN Economic Community Scorecard. Two phases have been reviewed, these are: Phase I (2008-2009) and Phase II (2010-2011). From the report, the outcome of the operation plan or the implementation rate during the period from 2008 to 2011 showed a progress of 67.5 per cent towards the goal. The progress of the integration into the global economy goal was notably greater than that of the other goals, especially the establishment of economic cooperation between ASEAN and external countries, i.e. ASEAN+3 and ASEAN+6 [See Table 1].

The workplans to integrate ASEAN into a single market and production base have implemented slower than the target, which involves the free flow of goods, services and investments as well as the liberalisation of activities relating to food production, agriculture and forestry. The ASEAN workplans to develop a competitive economic region which have implemented slower than the target are consumer protection, intellectual property protection and infrastructure development in respect of energy and a transportation network between countries. Also, the workplans relating to equal economic development are still behind the target; for instance, small and medium sized enterprise development and capacity building through various projects.

Obstacles Impeding the Implementation of the ASEAN Community

The slowness of ASEAN member countries in carrying out the workplans can be attributed to various factors. In this paper, I will analyze three important factors which are obstacles in the implementation of the ASEAN Community. These comprise difference between ASEAN member countries, internal and intra conflicts between ASEAN member countries and ASEAN member countries' dependencies on countries outside the region.

a) Differences among ASEAN Member Countries

The implementation of ASEAN Community is likely to be difficult over a short period of time due to wide gaps or differences between the ASEAN member countries especially the differences between the former ASEAN member countries, or the ASEAN-6 (Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) and the new ASEAN member countries or CLMV (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam). The differences among these countries can be classified into three categories which are economics, politics and government, as well as society and culture.

The economic development levels of the ASEAN member countries are dramatically different. Singapore, a developed country, earns a GDP per capita of US\$ 51,709. Most of the CLMV countries, which are underdeveloped countries, have a GDP per capita of not more than US\$2,000. The GDP per capita of Cambodia, Laos PDR and Vietnam is US\$ 944, US\$1,417 and US\$ 1,755 respectively.² The different levels of economic development also lead to different structures, institutions, rules and regulations and economic standards, which cause difficulties in the harmonisation of their rules and regulations and their economic standards. Consequently, the CLMV countries, which have a low development level, are not yet ready for the integration of AEC in 2015.

Table 1: Implementation of ASEAN Economic Community Scorecard under Phase I (2008-2009) and Phase II (2010-2011) (Per Cent Implementation Rate*)

	B	C	In	L	M	M	P	Si	T	V	ASEAN
	r	a		a	a	y	h		h	e	
1. Single Market & Production Base											
Free Flow of Goods											
Free Flow of Services											
Free Flow of Investment											
Free Flow of Capital											65.9
Free Flow of Skilled Labour											
Priority Integration Sectors											
Food, Agriculture and Forestry											
2. Competitive Economic Region											
Competition Policy											
Consumer Protection											
Intellectual Property Rights											
Transport											67.9
Energy											
Mineral											
ICT											
Taxation											
E-commerce											
3. Equitable Economic Development											
SME Development											66.7
Initiative for ASEAN Integration											
4. Integration into the Global Economy											
External Economic Relations											85.7
ASEAN Economic Community Scorecard											67.5

* Implementation rate is calculated as the ratio of measures that are fully implemented to total number of measures targeted

Br = Brunei Darussalam, Ca = Cambodia, In = Indonesia, La = Lao PDR, Ma = Malaysia, My = Myanmar, Ph = Philippines, Si = Singapore, Th = Thailand, Vi = Vietnam

■ Indicates that all measures targeted in this area were implemented

■ Indicates that more than half of measures targeted in this area were implemented

■ Indicates that less than half of measures targeted in this area were implemented

Source: ASEAN Secretariat (2012) ASEAN Community Scorecard. Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat

The different levels of economic development will probably give ASEAN member countries considerably different benefits from the implementation of AEC. The studies of Petri et al. (2010) have predicted that the implementation of AEC in 2015 will reduce the agricultural crops and mining, while industrial products and services will expand.³ This shows that the countries which rely on industrial production and services will gain a

greater benefit from the AEC. The University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (2011) studied the effects of AEC upon the change in the rate of the member countries' GDP.⁴ This study showed that the implementation of AEC in 2015 will greatly increase the GDP of the ASEAN-6 which will be higher than that of the CLMV countries [See Table 2]. Due to the differences in the benefits received by each country from the AEC, those countries which anticipate that they will obtain lower benefits are unwilling to follow the ASEAN Community's agreement; for example, the Philippines and Indonesia. Trajano (2013) indicated that both countries will not be able to satisfactorily overcome the investment limitations, as their governments are unwilling to liberalize their services industry which is protected from the impact of foreign investors.⁵

Table 2: AEC Impact on the Rate of Change of the GDP of the Member Countries in 2015

Countries	Per cent	Countries	Per cent	Countries	Per cent
Singapore	1.8	Malaysia	1.18	Myanmar	0.9
Thailand	1.75	Philippines	1.07	Lao PDR	0.89
Indonesia	1.25	Vietnam	0.97	Cambodia	0.66

Source: The Centre for International Trade Studies, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce

ASEAN member countries abound with myriads of diversity in respect of their political systems and governmental structures. Although the member countries in the ASEAN-6 are considered democratic countries, their governmental structures are very different. Singapore is an authoritarian democracy while Thailand and the Philippines are liberal democracies. Vietnam and Laos are still following the socialism system. Cambodia and Myanmar are embarking on a program of democratisation and development. This diversity of political systems is also reflected by the legal systems. The countries which were previously under British colonial rule, observe the common law system while the countries that were under French colonial rule are governed by the legalcode. At the same time the communist legal system is still applied in some countries. The countries in which most of the people follow the Muslim faith will be subject also to the influence of Muslim law. This diversity of political systems and government structures probably gives each country a different standpoint relating to political issues, the rights and freedom of their people and the roles of the government. The harmonisation of law to complement each country will take a lot of time.

There is also a diversity of languages, religions and cultures among the ASEAN member countries. Bahasa Melayu is widely used in Malaysia, Indonesia and the 3 southernmost provinces in Thailand. The origin of this language is very different from the origin of the languages used in Thailand,

Laos and Cambodia. When compared to the European Union, most European languages have roots in ancient Latin and Greek, which makes it easier to learn the neighboring countries' languages than it is to learn the language of a neighboring country in the Southeast Asia region. Religious diversities among the ASEAN population include Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. The proportion of the overall population adhering to each of these religions amounts to a number of people. This is different from the European Union in which most of the population is Christian. Due to these myriad of diversities, it will be difficult for the member countries to agree upon the implementation plan as the national interests of each country are not in harmony.

b) Internal Conflicts and Disputes between ASEAN Member Countries

As the timetable for the implementation of AEC is fast approaching, the ASEAN member countries are confronted with conflicts and disputes, both internally and between the ASEAN member countries, which hamper the creation of a harmonious environment in the region and are obstacles that cause the implementation of the ASEAN Community not to align with the plan.

The disputes between ASEAN member countries concern the same issues that happened in the past and which have continued till the present. The disputes have occurred from time to time, especially the disputes about territorial claims, e.g. rights over the South China Sea Islands (Scarborough shoal) of the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Vietnam as well as China. Although the Philippines has endeavoured to put this issue to the ASEAN forum in order to claim its rights over the area, some member countries did not agree with the Philippine's approach and kept the dispute unresolved. Another example of conflict is the dispute between Thailand and Cambodia over the territory within the vicinity of Preah Vihear Temple. The dispute has flared up and has involved some fighting and the deployment of artillery. This dispute was not resolved by using the ASEAN mechanism but it was brought before the International Court of Justice for a ruling.

The above examples of conflicts have demonstrated that ASEAN has no effective mechanism to resolve conflicts between the member countries. The important factor that made ASEAN powerless in resolving conflicts between its member countries is the ASEAN member countries' foreign policies which have become known as the 'ASEAN Way'. The ASEAN Way is based on the principle of upholding non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of one another and the provisions of an agenda and decision-making by consensus. Although there have been reactions from some member countries which tried to put forward some changes leading to a constructive intervention/flexible engagement principle, the ASEAN leaders

still firmly believe that the ASEAN Way is the most effective principle to be utilized in establishing relationships within the ASEAN Community⁶.

As these conflicts have never been settled, ASEAN is still at risk and can be compared to a time bomb that can explode at any time in the future if the conflicts are re-ignited. With regard to the Phra Vihear Temple issue, even though in 2013 the International Court of Justice has issued a ruling, in practice the court decision has been interpreted in a different way by each of the parties to the dispute. So, there will be a chance that conflicts may flare up between these two countries in the future. Besides, many ASEAN member countries still have their own internal conflicts in addition to the conflict between Thailand and Cambodia. There are conflicts of race and religion between Buddhists and Muslim Rohingya living in Myanmar, and the violence of the terrorist group Muslim Malayu in the southern border area of Thailand and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the southern islands of the Philippines.

c) Dependence of the ASEAN Member Countries upon Countries Outside the Region

Although the cooperation of the AEC member countries on economic policy with other countries outside the region has to be on the principle of 'ASEAN First', each member country is heavily reliant and focuses on economic cooperation with countries outside the region. Ravenhill indicated that each of the ASEAN member countries has negotiated, studied or implemented bilateral free trade agreements (bilateral FTAs) with countries or group of countries outside the ASEAN region in a total of 59 agreements.⁷ These agreements have made ASEAN member countries committed to other countries in order to receive more benefits than they would have obtained from the ASEAN member countries. These commitments contradict the 'ASEAN First' principle and have led to the member countries being less focused on the commitments made within the ASEAN Community.

ASEAN has to face up to intervention from superpowers like the U.S.A. and China, which are competing for influence in the region. The rapid growth of the Chinese economy has made China into new superpower. The Beijing government has tried to expand its influence into Southeast Asia region by assisting many countries in the region in developing infrastructure. The United States of America has also resumed its focus on ASEAN after neglecting this region for a long time. This is confirmed by the President's and Foreign Minister's frequent state visits to the ASEAN region. As a result of the involvement of the superpowers ASEAN has been intervened or directed or influenced by the countries from outside the region. As a result, ASEAN has lost its role as a hub (ASEAN Centrality). It has also affected the agreements in which ASEAN acts as a core (ASEAN +3 and ASEAN +6), which has become

less significant. The Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement (TPP) is an example of an economic agreement with countries outside the region that has negatively impacted the AEC cooperation framework of the ASEAN member countries. This is due to the fact that TPP's objectives and agreements are similar to those of the AEC cooperation framework. TPP member countries are Chile, New Zealand, U.S.A., Australia, Peru, Singapore, Brunei, Vietnam and Malaysia. While the remaining countries of ASEAN are in a stage of further studying or waiting to make a decision. The TPP may cause the ASEAN Community to become less important, and could also weaken ASEAN's role as a core of the region (ASEAN Centrality) and this will lead to a loss of power as the U.S.A. will assume the role as the TPP core and use the TPP as a tool to define an agenda which is in the interest of the U.S.A but not in the interest of ASEAN.⁸

At the same time, China has become more influential with the ASEAN member countries as a trading partner and also as a financial support provider. Chinese investment in ASEAN has been expanding because the Chinese government has transportation development projects both by land and water to connect with the southern provinces of China and ASEAN. China has changed its role from that of an investment recipient to become an investor in foreign countries.⁹ The Chinese government has a policy to create a relationship with people of Chinese descent in foreign countries and the Southeast Asian region has the greatest number of people of Chinese descent. Chinese diaspora also plays an important economic role in each country in the region [See Table 3]. For these reasons, China is taking an active role in the ASEAN economic scene, both micro and macro. It is, therefore, not surprising that ASEAN has not determined any action on the disputes in relation to claims of rights over the islands in the South China Sea between China and the Philippines, because many countries in ASEAN have to rely on China and at the same time many member countries have also expressed their rights to claim over these islands.

Table 3: Economic Roles of the Chinese Descents in ASEAN

Countries	Per cent of Chinese Descents to Total Population	Per cent of economic value of private sector controlled by Chinese Descents	Top 10 Richest Chinese Descents
Malaysia	22.6	39*	8
Indonesia	1.3	70	8
Philippines	1	60	N.A.
Singapore	74.2	N.A.	8
Thailand	14	N.A.	8

Remarks: Percentage of business value on the Stock Exchange owned by Chinese Descents

Source: *Forbes* (2012)¹⁰, *Chua* (2003)¹¹, *CIA* (2016)¹², *Singapore Department of Statistics* (2012)¹³

The comparison of benefits that each of the member countries has received with the benefits gained from cooperation with other countries, or other groups of countries outside the region, is another factor that has impacted the implementation of the ASEAN Community. The importance of the AEC within the member countries will lessen if the ASEAN member countries expect to receive greater benefits from their cooperation with the countries outside the region. For example, Indonesia may have a motivation to join the BRIC Group which has a large economy and rapid economic development. This group includes Brazil, Russia, India and China. If this is to be the case, ASEAN would become much less dynamic, as Indonesia is the largest economy in ASEAN and has a population that represents almost half of the Southeast Asia region.

Conclusion

The most important factor in Southeast Asia today is the establishment of the ASEAN Community. Even though the leaders of ASEAN member countries have agreed to accelerate the integration, the implementation of the member countries still lags behind the plan. The major drawback of the ASEAN Community concerns the motivation of each country to cooperate with its neighboring countries.

Due to the differences between the countries in ASEAN, it is difficult to find any agreeable standpoints that show a coherent national interest in each country. Another issue is the inconsistency of the national and regional interests that has led to ASEAN inefficiently managing conflicts within the region. The last issue is the benefits gained by member countries from cooperation outside the region that will probably be greater than the benefits gained within the ASEAN region. These are the factors that have made ASEAN appear to be less important in the eyes of its member countries.

Notes and References

¹ University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, '1.3 million SMEs are not ready to compete (in Thai)', *Daily news*, 28 January 2014

² World Bank, *World Development Indicators: GDP per capita (current US\$)*, 2013

³ P. A. Petri, M.G. Plummer, F. Zhai, *The Economics of the ASEAN Economic Community*, Working Paper No. 13, Department of Economics and International Business School, Brandeis University, Massachusetts, 2010

⁴ University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, An Analysis: After One Year of the ASEAN Economic Community, What is Thailand's Status in the ASEAN Market? *Thailand Economic & Business Review*, Vol. , No. 1, 2011

⁵ J. C. Trajano, *Achieving the ASEAN Economic Community: Are the Philippines and Indonesia Ready for 2015?* RSIS Commentaries, No. 080/2013, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore, 2013

⁶ M. M. Ishak and M.A. Sani, *Major Issues Confronting Intra-ASEAN Relations: The ASEAN Community and the Neo-Communitarianism Agenda*, Paper presented at the 18th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, Adelaide, 2010, July

⁷ J. Ravenhill, *Fighting irrelevance: An economic community 'with ASEAN characteristics'*, Working paper, 2007/3, Australia: Department of International Relations, Australian National University, Canberra, 2007

⁸ C. Chalookongtavorn, "The Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement (TPP)" (in Thai), *Industrial Economic Journal*, Vol. 7, No.26, 2010, pp. 8-11

⁹ Guangyu Li and Jonathan Woetzel 'What China's five-year plan means for business' McKinsey. (2011, July) <http://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/china/what-chinas-five-year-plan-means-for-business> accessed on 23 June 2016

¹⁰ Forbes, *Indonesia's 40 Richest*. http://www.forbes.com/lists/2011/80/indonesia-billionaires-11_land.html accessed on 10 October 2012; Forbes, *Malaysia's 40 Richest*. http://www.forbes.com/lists/2012/84/malaysia-billionaires-12_rank.html accessed on 10 October 2012; Forbes, *Singapore's 40 Richest*. <http://www.forbes.com/singapore-billionaires/> accessed on 10 October 2012; Forbes, *Thailand's 40 Richest*. <http://www.forbes.com/thailand-billionaires/> accessed on 10 October 2012.

¹¹ A. Chua, *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability*. Doubleday, New York, 2003.

¹² Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook 2016-17*. Central Intelligence Agency, Washington, DC, 2016, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>. accessed on 23 June 2016

¹³ Singapore Department of Statistics. 'Key Demographics Indicators, 1970-2011'. *Population Trends 2011*. Singapore Department of Statistics, Singapore, 2011

The Nation Brand in Kazakhstan: Image Building in Times of Crisis

By

Anita Sengupta *

The newly emerging states in the post-Soviet era have engaged in a complex exercise in order to position themselves on the global geographical and mental map as stable countries with promising economies. This has involved a systematic identity and image transformation that was both internally and externally driven. Image building or what in the case of states is referred to as nation branding assumed particular significance in the time of transition. Transition entailed distancing the emerging state from the old economic and political system that existed before the transition but also an attempt to change negative stereotypes and reinforce positive stereotypes associated with the country and its people and to position the country as a reliable and eligible member of the international community. In most transitional states where the leadership has been in power for a number of years there also remains the challenge of differentiating between the 'image' of the state and the 'image' of the government. Country promotions are often politicized and there is frequently domestic disagreement on the way that reputation is managed abroad. While 'brand equity' is often sought for, the 'image' that a state portrays of itself may be in conflict with the 'image' it enjoys in the international community. However, despite such multiple 'images' the effort of states to legitimize themselves both domestically as well as within the international community through the management of reputation and 'image building' remains a continuing challenge. This essay looks into recent Kazakh experiences of nation branding in the background of growing importance of regional associations on the one hand and conflicts on the other that involve all members of the association.

*Dr. Anita Sengupta is a Senior Researcher, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata and Visiting Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi. Email: anitasengupta@hotmail.com
IAAPS Perspective, Vol.1, 1, August 2016

Symbolism, Legitimacy and Diplomacy

Kazakhstan's incorporation within the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) has meant that in recent times Kazakhstan has seen substantial devaluation and setbacks and as Russia faced sanctions and its economy slowed, Kazakhstan was also affected.¹ Events in Ukraine created various concerns for the Eurasian Union. Where Nazarbayev had once thought of the EEU as a coalition of equals, Moscow's policies have meant that the concerns are no longer just economic but also political. Since Crimea, Astana has proposed increased penalties for those calling for separatism and devised timetables for ethnic Kazakhs seeking citizenship. Meanwhile nationalist anti-Russian protests are on the rise. The protests have been small but they hint at the fact that President Nazarbayev's unspoken social contract in which citizens' traded political freedom for prosperity and social stability is becoming fragile. Tensions surfaced in 2011 when 15 people were shot dead as striking oil workers clashed with the police in Zhanaozhen in the west of the country. The protests are small but they hint at the fact that President Putin's actions in Crimea have also affected the EEU momentum. Russian calls for potential common passports and currency has fallen flat and the possibility of a Eurasian Union, first proposed by Russia in 2012 has failed to materialize. For the EEU to be considered in any consequential geopolitical role, it would require the membership of Ukraine. But events since early 2014 preclude the possibility. Ukraine's non role in the EEU shares strong parallels with the other attempt at post-Soviet integration, the Commonwealth of Independent States. The CIS was meant to be a regional successor but without Ukraine's participation (Ukraine was only an associate member and officially exited the group in June 2014) the effectiveness of the CIS was compromised.

Kazakhstan is therefore an unsettled state. Economic and political uncertainties loom on the horizon. Probably no country is experiencing greater anxiety about the Ukrainian conflict and the deterioration of the EU-Russian relations. Both subjects threaten to reduce some of the pillars on which the Kazakh President built independent Kazakhstan. The country's economic sovereignty is in question and there is a general impression that Astana now is an unwilling participant in the Eurasian integration process with the recognition that changing course will not be easy. On 11 November 2014, two months ahead of the normal date, Nazarbayev gave his traditional televised speech on the state of the nation to the two chambers of the Kazakh Parliament. The speech was an attempt to dispel uncertainty and project control in the face of a complex situation. The reality of the situation is a cause for concern. The rate of growth of the Kazakh economy is falling. It was reduced from 6% in 2013 to 4% in the first nine months of 2014. Astana fears an even greater decline with the fall in oil prices. The drop in oil prices which has been 25% since mid-2014 is the main reason, but not the only one.

Kazakhstan receives about \$55 billion annually from the export of crude oil. An average price of \$75-80 per barrel means a drop of around \$15 billion a year, annually from the export of oil, though there are disagreements about the real impact on local finances. The most optimistic or closest to the government figures give a figure of \$5 billion in real impact as the bulk of the reduction will be applied to the part of the capital that does not return to Kazakhstan and so the state will continue to bring in similar amounts as of now amounting to about \$35-40 billion real annual income.

In order to tackle this reduction in income and avoid economic contraction, the Kazakh President announced the launch of *Nurly Zhol*, a plan of investment and public loans of some \$4 billion annually from the Kazakhstan National Fund over the next three years. It is the second time since the beginning of the global crisis in 2008 that Kazakhstan has resorted to using money from this fund. The Kazakh central bank has been concentrating its efforts on maintaining exchange rate stability during 2015. The country is living with the psychological impact of the devaluation of almost 20% of the value of the tenge in February 2014 that brought about an immediate increase in mortgage prices and consumer prices. The devaluation provoked protests and growing distrust among the population about the desirability and economic attractiveness of integration within the Eurasian Economic Union process. The Kazakh government seems determined to avoid another devaluation however if oil prices remain close to their current level, in the opinion of many economists it would be inevitable. In Kazakhstan today the connection between economic uncertainty and the geopolitics of the war of sanctions between the EU and Russia with its impact on the Kazakh economy seems inevitable. The Kazakh President began his speech with declaring, "Our country is affected by being located close to the epicentre of geopolitical tensions".² Astana has felt particularly affected by the crisis in Ukraine. The Russian reaction to Maidan has been one of uncertainty particularly since the arguments used to question the Ukrainian borders were seen by many as being those that could be used to justify a similar intervention on Kazakh territory. In fact northern Kazakhstan has been as present in Russian ultranationalist rhetoric as the Ukrainian territory. This is part of the reason why the economic integration with Russia arouses suspicion among significant sections of the Kazakh population. Being aware of such reactions in a televised interview with a local channel *Khabar* on 26 August 2014, Nazarbayev said

If the rules set forth in the agreement are not followed Kazakhstan has the right to withdraw from the Eurasian Economic Union. I have said this before and I am saying this again, Kazakhstan will not be part of organizations that poses a threat to our independence.³

Moscow's response was immediate. On 28 August 2014, in response to a question at the *Nashi* youth nationalist movement President Putin questioned the historical legitimacy of Kazakhstan as a state, insinuating that it was a "Soviet error" and indicating that an overwhelming majority of the Kazakh population was committed to the strong relations with Russia and staying within the Russian sphere (*Ruski mir*). However, he did not clarify where the conviction about the will of the majority came from.⁴ 24% of Kazakh citizens are ethnic Russians, concentrated in the north of the country that shares a border with Russia. Till date, Kazakh Russians have little interest in secession and it was generally assumed that they are well integrated within the new Kazakh state. However, events in Ukraine have indicated the capacity of inter-ethnic issues to divide society. The Kazakh government opted for a discrete response and announced the celebration of the 550th anniversary of the Kazakh state in 2015.

According to President Nazarbayev, the Kazakh people had carved out a proto state on the steppes of Eurasia in the mid 1400's a decade and a half before Russians shook off the Mongol yoke on the way to creating their own state. He argued that Kerey Khan and Zhanibek created the first khanate in 1465, which may not have been a state in the modern understanding of the term and with the present borders, but "it is important that the foundation was laid then and we are the people continuing the great deeds of our ancestors."⁵ Designed to foster nation building, the Kazakh celebrations will harness popular culture and arts to promote a patriotic message and focus on 'great events and great heroes'. According to Dosym Satpayev what is important is "....not so much statehood, but the idea of the consolidation of the Kazakh state, the creation of a single people".⁶ While on the one hand the celebrations are a reaction to Putin's comment they also reflect on how the Ukrainian crisis is testing traditional Russo-Kazakh relations. There has also been a stress on tolerance, unity and ethnic harmony amid the on-going troubles in Ukraine which has tended to divide public opinion. Mindful of competing ethnic agendas Nazarbayev used Independence Day celebrations in December 2015 to issue a call for patriotism and unity. He said, "Independence is the unflinching resolution of each citizen to defend Kazakhstan, their own home and the motherland to the last drop of blood, as our classic ancestors have bequeathed us."⁷

It is interesting that the idea of a post-Soviet Eurasian Union as an entity where political sovereignty would be preserved but a common economic space would be created had first been proposed by Nazarbayev. However, Kazakh leaders have also clearly indicated that while Russia is an inevitable major trading partner, Kazakhstan would not be reduced to a satellite state. Bakytzhan Sagintayev, the first Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan and its lead negotiator pointed this out clearly when he said, "We are not creating a political organization, we are forming a purely economic

union. The EEU is a pragmatic means to get benefits. We don't meddle into what Russia is doing politically and they cannot tell us what foreign policy to pursue."⁸ As such Astana has rejected all Russian attempts to deepen the EEU through measures such as a common passport and currency, a collective parliament and a common border force. Kazakhstan has also been an enthusiastic partner in the China led One Road One Belt initiative which runs through the state. President Nazarbayev has also cautioned against measures that would undermine the EEU if political showmanship is prioritized over genuine economic collaboration. He has also warned that the inclusion of additional members like Armenia would entangle the organization and Kazakhstan in the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict.

On 14 February, 2015, the council of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan called for an early Presidential election in Kazakhstan. The council members, representing more than eight hundred ethnic associations throughout the country explained their action by citing "numerous appeals of citizens", a need to give the President "a new mandate" to implement his economic stimulus programmes against adverse external environments as well as the constitutional requirement to hold separate presidential and parliamentary elections, which could end up in quick succession in 2016. As the Assembly pointed out

In the context of growing global economic crisis and complex international agenda this nation-wide initiative for holding the election is a requirement of time. It is necessary to give President Nursultan Nazarbayev a new mandate of national trust to steer the country in this period of global trials.⁹

In the briefing at the central Communications Service, held on the same day, the nine members of the Mazhilis from the Ak Zol Party including a Chechen, a German, a Kazakh, a Korean, a Tatar, an Uzbek and a Ukrainian offered firm support for the initiative. According to the Assembly, amid the intensifying global economic crisis early elections would enable Kazakhstan to efficiently implement the Nurlı Zhol Anti-Crisis Programme and to further pursue the long term priorities set by the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy.¹⁰

Concern over how the decision would be received in the international community was addressed by the Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov when he said that early Presidential elections would not affect the international image of Kazakhstan. Speaking to reporters in the Mazhilis on 16 February he argued

I think it will have no effect on our international image. It is our own choice. This is a proposal by members of the Ak Zhol Party, and I think that the members of the Parliament will make appropriate proposals. It is the choice of our people. Therefore foreign states have nothing to do with it.

We support and develop our relations with foreign communities. I believe that foreign communities will support the choice of our people, and if people express the wish to hold elections whenever they find it convenient, I think it should not have any impact on our relations with foreign countries. On the contrary, I think there will be more predictability, specificity and indeed we will hold elections in accordance with international standards.¹¹

The Presidential election assumes significance since Nazarbayev is identified with the state itself. In addition to the creation of the Nazarbayev University, Astana Day, a holiday celebrating the capital happens to fall on the same day as Nazarbayev's birthday. He also rewrote the lyrics of the National Anthem. In 2010 the Parliament named him 'leader of the nation' thus ensuring his immunity from prosecution. There are bronze handprints of Nazarbayev and Kazakhs place their hand on the prints to make a wish. Joshua Kucera argues that a feature of the propaganda surrounding Nazarbayev is that while it is intended for domestic consumption, its aim is to emphasize his stature abroad.¹² In Astana's Museum of the First President of Kazakhstan, devoted to Nazarbayev, a couple of rooms focus on his early life, but the bulk of the collection is devoted to awards, honours and gifts that Nazarbayev has received from abroad. Kucera goes on to argue that in the initial years after independence, Nazarbayev decided to stake his internal legitimacy on his international reputation. As Edward Schatz argued, 'Nazarbayev sought to portray an image of state elite that was engaged internationally and therefore deserving of support domestically'.¹³

The emphasis remains on state diplomacy with Erlan Idrissov, Minister of Foreign Affairs, stressing the need for expansion of diplomatic representation abroad and on promoting state interest in the "farthest part of the world".¹⁴ The accent is now on the Kazakhstan's bid for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council in 2017-18. The conclusion of negotiations with the European Union on a new enhanced partnership and cooperation agreement and accession to WTO are highlighted as Kazakhstan's diplomatic victory and independent foreign policy. Kazakhstan is attempting to keep its diplomatic options open amid rising Western-Russian tensions. Unwilling to get dragged into western sanctions, Astana has enlisted the help of western specialists including former British Prime Minister Tony Blair to push for international roles that would add to its global weight. Kazakhstan is pursuing this aim through a variety of avenues which includes a bid for a UN Security Council seat but also bidding for the Winter Olympic Games. According to Rico Isaacs all this is part of Kazakhstan's strategy to promote itself as a player on the international stage and make the international community aware of Kazakhstan. He argues that Kazakhstan is promoting itself as a mediator of interests of competing powers in the region – big powers like Russia, China and the United States but also countries like Turkey and Iran.¹⁵

Astana's Security Council bid is calibrated to show that a country with a foothold in both Europe and Asia is ideally situated to serve as a bridge between the East and the West and serve as a go between that could potentially help defuse confrontation between Kremlin and the western powers. The leadership is reinforcing the image of an "honest broker in an unsettled and challenging world."¹⁶ Erlan Idrissov also highlighted initiatives designed to demonstrate Kazakhshtan's benign international influence, from its track record promoting nuclear non-proliferation to its imminent launch of an overseas development agency KazAID which would engage in development initiatives involving poorer Central Asian neighbours and Afghanistan. The Western-Russian standoff over Ukraine poses a particularly vexing problem for Astana. It is unwilling to sacrifice its relations with the United States and European Union for the sake of Russian ambitions. Moscow's policy in Ukraine along with territorial claims voiced by Russian nationalists on parts of northern Kazakhstan and aspersions cast by Putin on Kazakh statehood has meant that Astana now insists that it is important for Kazakhstan to indicate to the international community Kazakhstan's existence as a state separate and independent from Russia. However, Kazakhstan's diplomatic success story has not been without criticism from within. Opposition politician Amirzhan Kosanov has noted that while it is acceptable for every country to want a positive image in the eyes of the international community, in Kazakhstan the effort is to project every diplomatic success as the success of the President.¹⁷ It is also argued that this international image making is an attempt to divert attention away from Kazakhstan's domestic issues. Nazarbayev was inducted into his new term of office as Kazakhstan's President on 29 April at a ceremony at the Palace of Independence at Astana in the presence of members of Parliament, cabinet officials and foreign ambassadors. In his inaugural speech the newly installed President pledged to move quickly on implementing his campaign platform of five institutional reforms that focus on building a meritocratic government, strengthening the rule of law and developing a middle class.

The Politics of Symbolism

In post-Soviet Kazakhstan the function of symbols and myths in the production of the 'image' of the state has acquired various possibilities. Neither the symbols themselves, nor the images that they supported however remain uncontested. In addition, Kazakhstan was faced with a looming succession crisis. In Kazakhstan President Nazarbayev has been in power since independence and been re-elected multiple times. There have been rumours of change but no clear alternatives. Election dates are flexible and there always remains the possibility that succession could happen as handover of power. Analysts have argued that the principal driver of intra

elite stability is resource sharing and Presidential successions would be determined through resource distribution which could create tensions within the elites and local business communities.¹⁸ Prior to the elections it was being argued that leadership change could point towards institutional reform, with the objective of creating institutions that are more amenable to political reform. The possibility of the emergence of a 'consensus successor' with a more predictable regulation of elite interests was also seen to be on the cards.¹⁹ Early Presidential elections were held in Kazakhstan on 26 April 2015. The incumbent President won with 97.7% votes. Procedures remain important in name only and the actual centres of power and stability remain outside these institutional processes. There are few clues as to what would unfold given the potential for instability during a period of transition. In such circumstances the symbolism inherent in actions, reactions and responses assume particular significance. The 'image' that Kazakhstan has created for itself is sought to be consolidated through symbolic speech and action, aimed both at legitimizing its domestic position and strengthening its diplomatic leverage in the global arena. However, the 'images' themselves have faced contestation from within as alternative images have gained salience particularly in the peripheries and from the marginalized but also in the global arena.

Notes and References

¹ Michel Casey, "Vladimir Putin's Impotent Eurasian Union", *Foreign Policy*, June 5, 2014; "Tenge Fever", *The Economist*, 22 February 2014. It records the anger at the devaluation of the tenge by 19% on 11 February 2014 as the sign of a broader malaise.

² Nicolas de Pedro, "Kazakhstan's Eurasian dilemma", *Opinion CIDOB*, no 283, 19 December 2014

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Joanna Lillis, "Kazakhstan Celebrates Statehood in Riposte to Russia", *Eurasianet*, 6 January 2015, http://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/kazahskoy-gosudarstvennosti-v-2015-godu-ispolnitsya-550-let-nazarbaev-263876 accessed on 20 June 2016

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Alex Vatanka, "Kazakhstan's Crafty Eurasian Union Strategy", *The National Interest*, 20 June 2014.

⁹ Alter Nurbekov, "Kazakhstan's Ethnic Assembly Calls for Early Presidential Elections", *Astana Times*, 15 February 2015

¹⁰ Assel Satubaldina, "Presidential elections in Kazakhstan will help prevent provocations from outside: Majlis MP", *Tengrinews* 19 February, 2015

¹¹ Danna Bupezhanova, "Early elections Won't Affect Kazakhstan's Image Abroad, FM says", *Astana Times*, 18 February, 2015

¹² Joshua Kucera, "Kazakhstan Rising", 15 August 2011, www.josuakucera.net/2011/08/kazakhstan-rising.html

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Blog by Erlan Idrissov, Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Kazakhstan Diplomacy: Advocating win win situation", 20 October, 2014.

¹⁵ Joanna Lillis, "Kazakhstan: Astana Embraces Soft Power to Massage International Image", 10 December, 2014, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/71286>

¹⁶ Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov at the launch of the Eurasian Council on Foreign Affairs cited in Joanna Lillis, *ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ For a detailed discussion see Jos Boonstra and Marlene Laruelle, "Uncharted Waters: Presidential successions in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan", *EUCAM Policy Brief*, No 33, April 2014, www.eucentralasia.eu.

https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/178985/Uncharted%20waters_%20Presidential%20successions%20in%20Kazakhstan%20and%20Uzbekista.pdf accessed on 12 June 2016

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

The Coverage of Gezi Park Resistance in the Turkish Media

By

Yasemin İnceođlu *

Gezi Park Protests held on 28th of May 2013 initially started as a peaceful environmentalist demonstration against the cutting off the trees in Gezi Park by 50 environmentalists. They protested against replacing the park with a reconstruction of the historic Taksim Military Barracks which was demolished in 1940 with the possibility of housing a shopping mall. The protests developed into anti-government demonstrations when a group was attacked by the police. Demonstrations were held in many cities in Turkey. According to the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey around 640,000 people had participated in the demonstrations as of 5 June. Protests took place in 78 of Turkey's 81 provinces.¹ The biggest protests have been in Istanbul, with reports of more than 100,000 protesters.

The demonstrators primarily accuse Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan of rowing authoritarian regime, censoring the media, interfering to the private lifes such as -alcohol consumption, abortionetc-and putting religion at the centre of politics in violation of Turkey's secular constitution.

Events Leading up to the Protests were such as;

-A large bank in Turkey, Ziraat Bank, changed its name from "T.C. Ziraat Bankası" to simply "Ziraat Bankası", thus omitting the acronym of the Republic of Turkey.

-The Turkish flag was formally removed from the logo of the Grand National Assembly which was viewed as a denigration of parliamentary process and the republic by many people.

*Professor Yasemin İnceođlu is the Dean of Faculty of Communications in Galatasaray University, Istanbul, Turkey. Email: inceogluy@gmail.com
IAAPS Perspective, Vol.1, 1, August 2016

-World-renowned Turkish pianist Fazıl Say was handed a suspended 10-month prison sentence for “insulting religious beliefs held by a section of the society. Armenian-Turkish writer, Sevan Nişanyan, was charged with 58 weeks in jail for an alleged insult to the Prophet Muhammad in a blog post, under similar charges as those put on Fazıl Say -An official from the ruling AKP, sparked considerable controversy after calling for the “annihilation of atheists” in his Twitter account.

-The government voted to ban the sale of alcohol in shops between 22:00 and 06:00, and on sponsorship of events by drinks companies and any consumption of alcohol within 100m of mosques. The laws were passed less than two weeks after public announcement with no public consultation.

-The undebated decision to name the Third Bosphorus Bridge *Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge*, for Selim I, is criticised by Alevi groups (some 15–30% of Turkey’s population), as Alevis consider the Sultan responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of Alevis during the Battle of Chaldiran.

-In a parliamentary debate (on 29 May 2013), the government opposed a proposed extension of LGBT rights in Turkey.²

According to Prime Minister Erdoğan’s 4 June speech from Morocco, the demonstrators were mostly looters, political losers who went hand-in-hand with ‘terrorists’ and ‘extremists’. He indicated that these protests were possibly somehow organized by the Republican Peoples Party (even though the CHP had initially supported construction on the Gezi-park). In response to Prime Minister Erdoğan’s description of the protesters as looters (*çapulcu*), demonstrators took up the name as a symbol of pride, describing their peaceful and humorous civic disobedience actions as ‘Chapulling’.

Who were the Protestors and Why were they at Gezi Park?

The young and the old, the secular and the religious, the soccer hooligans, anarchists, communists, nationalists, Kurds, gays, feminists, and students, families with children, women in headscarves, men in suits, hipsters in sneakers, pharmacists, tea-house proprietors – all took to the streets to register their displeasure.

According to KONDA’s study (2013)³, most of the protestors were young, with an average age of 28. The same survey found that 52 percent of protestors were employed, 37 percent students and 56 percent had an undergraduate or master’s degree. GENAR’s study (2013), found that the vast majority of protestors were leftist in political orientation. As the results of the survey reveal, 33.5 percent of participants defined their identity as Kemalist, 12.4 percent as socialist, 8.9 percent as social democrat, 6.1 percent as secular and 3.3 percent as revolutionist. Those who describe themselves as pro-liberty or democrat without giving reference to any leftist identity within a Turkish context totaled 27.4 percent.⁴

Esra E.Bilgiç and Z.Kafkaslı (2013)⁵ two academicians from Istanbul Bilgi University polled some 3,000 activists at the park through the social media on the the third and fourth of June for two days and found striking results about the socio-political composition of the participants.

Almost 40 percent of the movement belonged to the 19-25 age group while 24 percent were between 26 to 30 years old. An overwhelming majority of 92.4 percent of the participants say that the authoritarian behavior of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan motivated them to join the demonstration. 91.3 percent also claim that police brutality and the use of disproportionate use of force against the protesters were among the factors that caused them to take part in the movement. Violation of democratic rights by the government figures 91.1 percent among the factors that made them join the occupy Gezi protest.⁶

Those who say that they joined the protest because of the political movement they are affiliated with represented only 7.7 percent of the activists. 81.2 percent of the participants described themselves as “freedom seekers,” followed by 64.5 percent who marked “secularist” option as “definitely accepting.” 54.5 percent marked the “I am apolitical” choice as “I do not accept.”⁷

92.1 percent said they were not voting for the Justice and Development Party (AKP). According to the poll 96.7 percent demanded an end to police violence, 96.1 percent wanted freedoms to be respected and 37 percent favored the formation of a new political party. The pollsters also asked whether there was anyone who favored a military coup to get rid of the government. 79.5 percent replied they definitely were against such an option while 6.6 percent expressed their definite support for such an alternative.

A detailed profile of the demonstrators was researched by KONDA on June 6-7 through face-to-face interviews with 4,411 protesters in Taksim.⁵ According to KONDA’s investigation, the main reason protesters participated in the demonstrations was the government’s policies. Most participants (32.6 percent) said they joined the protests because of curtailment of liberties, while 20.9 percent referred to AK Party policies and 17 percent Prime Minister Erdoğan’s attitudes. Those who went to the Taksim protests with the aim of preventing the trees from being felled numbered only about 11.5 percent. It is a reality that the AK Party has widened the scope of liberties during its 10-year rule, particularly in relation to the requirements of the EU adaptation process.⁸

Media: The Failing Student

The question which immediately comes to mind is how such a very important social reaction and uprising in Turkey has been manipulated by the mainstream media. Firstly we must take in into consideration the structure of

media ownership in Turkey. Issues such as defence, nuclear power, construction, and the economy are covered in a superficial, amateurish way, or sometimes not at all.

Mainstream media simply played three monkeys for the beginning of the days of the protests. Unfortunately this silence of the media will go down in the history of media as a case of shame. These events in the media caused an inevitable disinformation due to the lack of flow of information while violating the public's right to know. What the media didn't do or what it weakly did is question the back ground of these protests. The media did not question why this resistance started by 50 environmentalists protestors turned into a mass reaction. Media even suspended its duty of journalism and failed terribly within this process, let alone carrying out solution-oriented peace journalism. Protestors were described as provocateurs in parallel with the statements of the government and events being attributed to illegal organizations. Nevertheless, it is wrong to call this movement an "organized movement". On the contrary; it was anti-hierarchic and anti-authoritarian movement. It did not continue in a chain of command; it was the movement of public, which was marginalized against oppressive government and police violence. However, the people who tried to sabotage this movement; who were the provocateurs and groups from some organizations might have been included but the protestors were the ones who excluded them from the group once they were noticed.

CNNTurk, one of two mainstream channels, was broadcasting a documentary on penguins at the time, when events started to occur, while the other one, NTV, was broadcasting a Hitler documentary. Both the channels apologized for failing to cover the event. Some news outlets such as Ulusal and Halk TV, which benefit from greater freedom and independence than the mainstream media, as they are not caught up in the same ownership structure, streamed live coverage of the protests, which became one of the few channels for following the protests when most broadcasters were not covering the events at all.

Later in June the state media regulator RTÜK fined a number of channels (including Halk TV and Ulusal Kanal) "for 'harming the physical, moral and mental development of children and young people' by broadcasting coverage of the Gezi Park protests". Hayat TV, which had also given the protests extensive coverage, was ordered to stop broadcasting on 14 June, although RTÜK rapidly reversed its decision in the face of protests. Demonstrators were dissatisfied with media for not reflecting the protests. This reaction caused mass protests to the media especially to the TV channels from time to time while it sometimes reflected on media workers who covered the demonstrations.

The Role of Social Media

Although media preferred to be blind-folded to the protests, social media promptly responded with resolutions such as "Occupy Gezi" and "Diren Gezi Parki" ("Resist Gezi Park") being adopted. In the 12 hours from 4 pm 31 May, there were more than 2 million tweets for the 3 leading hashtags, with 88% in Turkish and 90% of geolocated tweets coming from Turkey.⁹

The whole information flow was carried out via social media: the community was mobilized in this movement thanks to the social media, a great solidarity was demonstrated, warnings were made and aid was provided. Nevertheless, on the other hand, unconfirmed information was all over due to the problems, stemming from the fact that it was an uncontrolled media, hate speeches were uttered.

Social media for its responses, Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan said "There is now a menace which is called Twitter. The best examples of lies can be found there. To me, social media is the worst menace to society." I consider this statement unfortunate either as many of his statements. The reaction of country's Prime Minister with "terrible trouble" expression in the age of communication is the indicator of the level of his intolerance towards the freedom of communication of the people. On the other hand; when it is considered that the Prime Minister has 2.750.000 followers in the twitter, this is a self-contradictory expression.

A research conducted by New York University evaluated the tweets related to the protests, from Turkey as a "phenomenon". Opinions, tweeted in Egypt during Arap Spring did not exceed %30, this rate reached 90% in Turkey by breaking a new ground. 2 million tweets were tweeted between 16.00 Pm and midnight, within 8 hours, only in last Friday's afternoon; 300 tweets were tweeted per minute after midnight.

Violations and the Journalists

A report by the International Press Institute puts forth a more modest number saying that 37 journalists resigned, 21 journalists were fired, and 14 have been on compulsory leave since the end of May when the Gezi Park protests in Istanbul started.¹⁰¹¹

CPJ also documented numerous cases of attacks on and the obstruction and detention of journalists during the clashes between police and anti-government protesters in Istanbul, Ankara, and elsewhere in Turkey. They include instances in which journalists were targeted deliberately by police in retaliation for photographing the clashes. Both local and international reporters were affected.¹²

There were also reports of journalists being targeted by police and a Russian journalist "beaten and detained by suspected Turkish intelligence

services, as he was taking pictures of empty police cars on Taksim Square. Reporters without Borders reported eight journalists arrested some violently, and several forced to delete photographs from their digital cameras.

Ankara Mayor Melih Gökçek launched a spurious and inflammatory campaign on Twitter against local BBC reporter Selin Girit, labeling her a traitor and a spy in apparent disagreement with the BBC's coverage of the protests.¹³ Gökçek created a critical hashtag "ingiltreadınaajanlıkyapmaselingirit," which in English means "Don't be a spy in the name of England, Selin Girit" and urged his followers to popularize it on Twitter. Girit received "a large number of threatening messages".

Even more worrisome was the decision of the Turkish state media regulator, RTÜK, to penalize four television stations in connection with their coverage of the Gezi Park demonstrations. The regulator levied fines against the pro-opposition TV stations Ulusal Kanal, Halk TV, Cem TV, and EM TV, in the amount of 12,000 Turkish lira (US\$6,460) each, for allegedly "inciting violence" and "violating broadcasting principles," according to local news reports. RTÜK said the stations' live coverage of clashes between riot police and protesters "could harm the physical, moral, and mental development of children and young people," the reports said.¹⁴¹⁵

In mid-June, PM publicly accused the international media of biased coverage of the Gezi Park events, blaming CNN International, the BBC, and Reuters for portraying Turkey differently to the World thru their "fabricated news".

According to the Turkish Union of Journalists, an independent media association that documents attacks on the press, at least 22 journalists were fired and another 37 were forced to quit their jobs over their coverage of the anti-government protests. As a result of direct or indirect government pressure, media owners have dismissed many popular journalists and the absence of their voices has been conspicuous. It is a reality that the AK Party has widened the scope of liberties during its 10-year rule, particularly in relation to the requirements of the EU adaptation process.

As result of the authoritarian approach followed neither the Prime Minister Erdogan nor AKP party could see the wave of the social outburst and upheaval created which had the effect of limiting freedom in general.

The Prime Minister instead of listening to the outcry and the criticisms of the community chose to ignore them. He rather focused on fabricating plenty of conspiracy theories and thus increased the intensity of the already existing polarisation in the community by publicly making declarations and appearances in the media controlled by his ruling party referring to 'His Head Scarved citizens' or 'His Police'.

Thus, media failed to perform the following duties; media's greatest responsibility before the public; in other words, is to serve the public's right to information. Media as the fourth estate, must act as a "conscience and voice

of the public". Providing deficient, distorted news or reflecting the public movement as an organized movement of a bunch of impertinent, angry crowd or marginals is nothing more than disinformation. Media must adopt a manner in favour of peace, human rights, democracy, not in favour of violence.

To summarize Gezi Park Protest will be remembered in the Turkish political and media history as an unfortunate and unsuccessful event in which the ruling party and the media jointly failed.

Notes and References

¹ Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, Evaluation Report on Gezi Park Resistance and the Aftermath, 2013, http://www.ihd.org.tr/images/pdf/2013/rapor_gezivesonrasi_17temmuz.pdf, accessed on 21 June 2016.

² Mecliste Eşcinsel Diyalogu [Dialogue on Homosexuality in the Turkish Parliament], <http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/mecliste-escinsel-diyalogu-1135491/>, accessed on 21 June 2016.

³ KONDA Research and Consultancy, "Who are they, why are they there and what to they demand", June 6-7, 2013, <http://www.slideshare.net/UtkanBoyacolu/konda-gezi-parksurveyenglish1>, accessed July 6, 2013.

⁴ GENAR's survey on Gezi Park, 2013, http://www.GENAR.com.tr/files/GEZIPARKI_PROFIL-SON.pdf, accessed on 6 July 2013.

⁵ Esra Bilgiç & Zehra Kafkasyalı, *I am Young, Libertarian, What do I ask For?*, <http://www.bilgiyay.com/Content/files/DIRENGEZL.pdf>, June 3-4 2013, accessed on 20 April 2014.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Same as note 2

⁹ SMaPP DATA REPORT A Breakout Role for Twitter? The Role of Social Media in the Turkish Protests, 2013, https://wp.nyu.edu/smapp/wp-content/uploads/sites/1693/2016/04/turkey_data_report.pdf, accessed on 21 June 2016.

¹⁰ Turkey's media freedom worsens, http://printarchive.epochtimes.com/a1/en/au/nnn/2013/08-Aug/Edition%20409/Edition_409_01.pdf, accessed on 21 June 2016.

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Report of CPJ(Committee to Protect of Journalists) on Gezi Park, 2013.

¹³ -BBC Türkçe Editörü'nden okurlara: Selin Girit'in Twitter mesajları hakkında, [From the BBC Turkish editor to the readers: About Selin Girit's Twitter Messages], 23 June 2013, http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2013/06/130628_nisancioglu_blog_selingirit, accessed on 21 June 2016

¹⁴ Turkey fines TV stations for protest coverage, <https://cpj.org/2013/06/turkey-fines-tv-stations-in-connection-with-protes.php>, accessed on 21 June 2016.

¹⁵ Ibid

Book Review

By

Lipi Ghosh *

**Sarvani Gooptu *The Actress in the Public Theatre of Calcutta,*
Primus Books, 2015, New Delhi**

The book under title is a significant presentation on the actress in the public theatres of Calcutta in the late 19th century. It was long way back in 1873 that women were able to break the tradition of male domination in acting of the stage.

The book talks of the history of Bengali theatre and it narrates the story of women who were courageous enough to do acting on the stage in the world of group-theatres. The book also discusses the hurdles which the women had to overcome in their significant journey of asserting artistic identity. To put briefly the subject matter of the book- it started with narration of English theatre which was very popular in various halls in Calcutta. The performances were done entirely by men from middle class background and till 1872 theatre remained a benchmark of rich Bengalis with wealth and culture, rest of the people remained out of the reach from the rest of society. The work is mainly the study of participation of women in Bengali theatre when actress started performing on the stage. The wave of Orientalism resulted in the emergence of various Indologists which were followed by a number of Sanskrit plays and scholarly works on Indian theatre by several Indologists. It was the period when these writers were aware of English theatre and there was a good strong hold of Anglicists also in the society of Bengal. The Indologists however discussed many indigenous influences and the Orientalist writers gradually started to write many nationalist tints in theatre. Theatre at that point of time was discussed as an art form and gradually it made a final way in successful evolution and development.

*Dr. Lipi Ghosh is Professor, Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Calcutta. Email: lipighosh@gmail.com
IAAPS Perspective, Vol.1, 1, August 2016

The first chapter of the book discusses the entry of public actresses in theatre; it narrates how different events pertained to the use of women to play female roles. There were several examples about this sea-change in Bengali taste and culture. Sarvani Gooptu refers to the performance Bidyasundar and its hilarious acceptance by the contemporary audience. She refers to private amateur theatre from around 1857 and the question of female roles therein. Interestingly enough women and actresses of this age were considered as 'Falling Women' by the society and no intellectual male of Bengal did anything for the reform of this idea. From 1870's onward there was a tradition that public theatre came up for the benefit of the masses, the author depicted the role of National Theatre and the first five actresses behind it.

The second chapter of the book talks about the training of the actresses and blossoming of their talent in the age of mass theatre. Binodini, Tinkadi Dashi, Tarasundari became successful and famous in this age. This chapter takes up the crucial question whether these actresses responded to the 'training' or to the issue of their own 'passion.'

The third chapter of the book takes into account the great drama of the age, it was the time Dwijendralal Roy came into direct association with Bengali Theatre, Girish Ghosh, Apareshchandra Mukhopadhyay, Amritalal Bose and many stalwarts generated new meanings for the theatre of the age. The Tagore family of Jorasanko also became the path-breaker of the Bengali theatre of this age. It was the time when Rabindranath's plays started competing with other heroes of the theatre. Rabindranath actively participated in theatre and his plays consisted of large segment of women and that way it added a new inspiration for the world of theatre.

Chapter four of the book talks of the actress and her audience; this is a very interesting chapter showing how was the mass response to the women acting themselves in the female roles.

Chapter five and chapter six delves into the world of identity issue of the actress of this age. Gooptu's observation is that it was the transition period when theatre was caught between the notion of tradition and modernity. It was the time when many aspects of theatre had reached a saturation point and there has to be something new for the people to explore. Gradually "Classic" ushered in many modern stage techniques and 'Ostentatious' show was the order of the day. To Gooptu it was a kind of compromise with originality. It was a period when often women had to fight much for the survival of their identity. There are references of some actresses at the law court on the issue of their fight for survival. The case of Tara and Charushila are appropriate examples in this regard.

Chapter seven of the book again delves into the realm of search for the identity of this actress of the age. The author narrates the issue of the struggle between 'Family-Ties' versus 'Artistic-Identity.'

Finally the author observes that with coming of actress in the public theatre the aura of the respectability of theatre was destroyed and gradually acting became a profession.

One of the important aspect of the book is that it presents the short biographical sketches of Golapsundari, Jagatarini, Elokeshi, Shyamasundari, Binodini Dashi, Kadambini, Jadumani, Kshetramoni, Basantakumari, Gangamoni, Harisunadri, Bhushankumari, Tarasundari, Tinkadi Dashi, Kiranbala, Nagendrabala, Kusumkumari, Sushilabala, Charushila, Neharbala, Prabhadevi, Krishnabhamini and Kankabati.

As a reviewer I must say that the work is a significant step forward to discuss the identity of the actress in public theatres of Calcutta, However the author while talking of the 20th century could have made a more comprehensive reference to the theatre group of Sisirkumar Bhadhuri and the female actress on his stage other than Kankabati. Actresses of later period are a missing link in this work, which we can hope will be covered by the author in her future research work. It would have been also very interesting if the author could give some references to the reaction of women actresses of the age towards their male counterpart on the stage or vice-versa.

As a whole the book is a novel original research tantalizing an unknown facet of history with very lucid but analytical approach. It is not only a research contribution but it can be a good reader for each and every Bengali having an interest in the subject.

The Indian Association of Asian and Pacific Studies: A History of its Activities

The Indian Association for Asian and Pacific Studies (Registered under Act VI of 1961, Government of West Bengal, India) is a non-profit governmental organization taking interest in different kinds of academic endeavours and it works on Asia and Pacific regions. The Association promotes research and understanding of differing regions of Asia and Pacific Studies to carry out social science oriented studies as well as present their works to the public in the form of lectures, panel discussions, symposia and conferences. The research undertaken by the Association rests on both primary research topics and policy oriented issues such as social and cultural pattern, gender and disadvantaged groups, political developments, economy, trade and investments, science-technology etc. The Association thus works as a platform for social science oriented research projects and promotes programmes of workshops, dialogue and training.

The Indian Association of Asian and Pacific Studies has been for the past 15 years been organising lectures, seminars and international conferences of a very high quality. Yet it has been hampered by an acute lack of infrastructure. The Association which has members from various disciplines affiliated to institutions belonging to almost thirty countries across the globe has operated out of the home of its Founder-Secretary and does not possess any infrastructural asset like an office-room, furniture or even a computer. Considering the rapid increase in the membership number and change in the composition of the Executive Council of the Association it has become very difficult to operate out of the personal home of the Secretary and has become necessary for the organization to acquire an office space and equipment. The organization over the years has accumulated a certain savings which along with a grant from a funding agency may be fruitfully used for this purpose.

Despite the infrastructural constraints, IAAPS has been constantly striving to encourage academic debates and extend its outreach. In this regard the history of the academic programmes of the Indian Association of Asian and Pacific Studies is worth noting:

Lecture Programmes:**2003**

Lecture Programme I - 9th February 2003 - Professor Probhat Kumar Dutta Centenary Professor of Public Administration and Adviser, State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development, Government of West Bengal spoke on *Politicizing Rural Developments in West Bengal: Lessons for Rural Developments in Asia*.

Lecture Programme II- 3rd May 2003- Professor Barun De, Member West Bengal Heritage Commission spoke on *The USA, Central Asia and the New Asian International Relations*.

Lecture Programme III- 30th Sept 2003- Professor Mandakranta Bose, Director, Centre for India and South Asia Research, Institute of Asian Research, University of British Columbia, Vancouver BC, Canada spoke on *In Sita's Footsteps: growing up female in the Asian Diaspora*.

Lecture programme IV- 26th December 2003- Professor Jayanta Kumar Ray, Former Centenary Professor of International Relations, Department of History, Calcutta University and President, South Asia Research Society, Kolkata spoke on *Aspects of India's Foreign Relations*.

2004

Lecture Programme I- 18th March 2004- Professor S.C.Mukhopadhyay, Fellow, West Bengal Academy of Science and Technology and Professor Dept. of Geography, Calcutta University spoke on *Hydro-Geo-morphological problem of South Asia with special reference to North East India*.

Lecture Programme II- 28th July 2004- Professor Purushottam Bhattacharyya, Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University, spoke on *Asia Policy of European Union*.

Lecture Programme III- 7th October 2004- Professor Chittabrata Palit, Professor of History, Jadavpur University, spoke on *Science and Nationalism: The Asian Perspective*.

Lecture Programme IV- 30th December 2004, Professor Rabindra Sen, Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University, spoke on Taiwan Issue in China- ASEAN Relations (Renuka & Rathindranath Guha Memorial Lecture)

2005

Lecture Programme I – 5th March 2005- Ms Madhuri Narayanan, Director, CARE India spoke on *Eradicating Gender Based Violence in South Asia: Why it matters and implications for personal, social and institutional change*.

Lecture Programme II- 21st July 2005- Professor Hasi Banerjee, Department of History, Calcutta University spoke on *Mira Behn (Madlein Slade): A tale of Self surrender and Self-realization*

Lecture Programme III- 11th Nov 2005- Professor Mukul Mukherjee, Hon. Associate of Women's Studies Research Centre and Formerly Professor of Economics, Delhi University spoke on *Women and Health: the Indian scenario*.
Lecture Programme IV- 23rd December 2005- Professor Ishita Mukhopadhyay, Department of Economics, Calcutta University and Director of WSRC, Calcutta University spoke on *Women and work in Global South* (Renuka & Rathindranath Guha Memorial Lecture)

2006-2007

Lecture Programme I – 26th May 2006- Professor Mohua Sarkar, Department of History Jadavpur University spoke on *Situating Environmental History: Recent Debates*.

Lecture Programme II – 20th Sept 2006- Professor Asha Mukherjee, Head of the Department of Philosophy and Religion, Vishwa Bharati, Santiniketan spoke on *Environmental Ethics: Tagore's Vision*.

Lecture Programme III- 18th December 2006- Professor Buddhadev Chaudhuri, Dr Ambedkar Professor in Anthropology, Calcutta University spoke on *Forest, Health and Indigenous people*.

Lecture Programme IV- 27th March 2007- Professor Arun Bandopadhyay, Nurul Hasan Professor of History and Dean (Arts) Calcutta University, spoke on *Environment, Community and Globalisation: A Historical Perspective in South Asian Context*. (Renuka & Rathindranath Guha Memorial Lecture)

2007-2008

Lecture Programme I – 13th July 2007- Dr Madhumala Sengupta, Department of Education, Calcutta University, spoke on *The State of Higher Education in the perspective of Globalisation*.

Lecture Programme II – 18th Sept 2007- Professor Sandhya De, Department of Philosophy, Rabindra Bharati University, spoke on *Rights of Man and the Light of Right Education*.

Lecture Programme III- 21st November 2007- Professor Sunait Chutintaranond, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand spoke on *Globalization and South East Asian Studies in Educational Curriculum of Thailand*.

Lecture Programme IV- 24th March 2008- Professor Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, Surendranath Banerjee Chair Professor of Dept. of Political Science, Calcutta University spoke on *Intellectuals, Knowledge and Masses: A question of Pedagogy*. (Renuka & Rathindranath Guha Memorial Lecture)

2008-2009

Lecture Programme I- 13th June 2008- Ms Swati Bhattacharjee, Assistant Editor, ABP spoke on *From Outcasts to Activists: the Sex workers' challenge to Bhadrals in Bengal*.

Lecture Programme II-30th Sept 2008, Professor Debi Chatterjee, Dept. of International Relations, Jadavpur University spoke on *Dalit Women: Exclusion and Protests*.

Lecture Programme III- 30th January 2009- Professor Samir Kumar Das, Dept. of Political Science Calcutta University, spoke on *Political Exclusion and its consequences: the rise of Insurgency in Kashmir and Sri Lanka*.

Lecture Programme IV- 2nd April 2009- Professor Gopal Krishna Chakrabarti, Dept. of Anthropology Calcutta University and Director, Centre for the Study of Social exclusion and Inclusive policy, Calcutta University spoke on *On the Verge of Existence: An introduction to the study of social Exclusion*. (Renuka & Rathindranath Guha Memorial Lecture)

2009-2010

Lecture Programme I- 30th June 2009- Dr Binoda Mishra, Fellow, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute, spoke on *India's Look East Policy: Conjectures and Realities*

Lecture Programme II- 16th September 2009- Mr Ashis Chakrabarty, The Telegraph, Kolkata spoke on *India- China Relations: Illusions of Engagement*.

Lecture Programme III- 22nd December 2009- Professor Partha Pratim Basu, Dept. of International Relations, Jadavpur University, Spoke on *India, Pakistan, Afghanistan: The Troubled Triad*.

Lecture Programme IV- 24th March 2010- Professor Radharaman Chakrabarti, Former Vice Chancellor, Netaji Subhas Open University and Eminent Academician, spoke on *India's Foreign policy in the context of Globalization*. (Renuka & Rathindranath Guha Memorial Lecture)

2010-2011

Lecture Programme I- 22nd June 2010- Dr Manjula Bose, Director Tagore Research Institute, spoke on *The Relevance of Tagore in the Present days*.

Lecture Programme II- 24th September 2010- Professor Amita Dutt, Uday Shankar Chair and Dean, Faculty of Fine Arts, Rabindra Bharati University, spoke on *The Feminine in Tagore's Dance Dramas*.

Lecture Programme III- 24th February 2011- Professor Sabujkoli Sen, Dept. of Philosophy, Vishva Bharati, Santiniketan spoke on *Tagore's Religion*.

Lecture Programme IV- 4th April 2011- Professor Uma Dasgupta, Former Professor Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata spoke on *Rabindranath and the Heritage of Buddha*. (Renuka & Rathindranath Guha Memorial Lecture)

2012

Annual Seminar and Panel Discussion- 24th March 2012- *Understanding North East India: Multiple Dimensions*- Speakers were Dr Suchandra Ghosh, Dr M.K.Raha, Prof Lipi Ghosh, Dr Binoda Mishra, Mr Mainak Sen.

2013

Annual Seminar and PPT Discussion- 29th May 2013- *Travel Across Asia: Glimpses of Indonesia and Lower Burma*. Speakers were Professor Chittabrata Palit, Emeritus Professor, Jadavpur University and Dr Suchandra Ghosh, Reader, Dept. of Ancient Indian History and Culture, Calcutta University.

2014

Annual Seminar to commemorate 125th Birth Anniversary of Jawaharlal Nehru-10th February 2014- Professor Radharaman Chakraborty, eminent academician and former Vice Chancellor of Netaji Subhas Open University spoke on *Nehru- Good Governance*

Biennial Conferences:

1. **1st-3rd March 2002:** Held at University of Calcutta, Kolkata. The keynote address was given by Professor Arun Dasgupta, retired Professor of History, Calcutta University and Fellow of Asiatic Society, on "*Calcutta in Asian Studies*". The sectional Presidents at this conference were Prof Asok Mukhopadhyay, Dept. of Political Science, Calcutta University for South Asia, Prof Jahar Lal Sen, Dept. of History, Calcutta University for South East Asia, Professor Satish Chandra, Dept. of History, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Former Chairman, University Grants Commission for West and Central Asia and Prof Kamal Sheel, Dept. of Foreign Languages, Benaras Hindu University for East Asia and Pacific region. There were 39 speakers in the South Asia section; 25 speakers for Southeast Asia section; 8 papers in the West and Central Asia section and 9 papers for the East Asia and Pacific region.

This included one participant from Thailand and 26 participants from other states of India with the largest contingent coming from Assam. There was a special session, the Asia Fellows programme where 2 speakers from the Institute of International Education, Bangkok sat at a Round Table with IAAPS Executive Committee members. (2 countries participated)

2. **29th -31st January 2004:** held at Sambalpur University, Orissa. The keynote speaker was Prof Hermann Kulke, Professor of South and Southeast Asian History at the Dept. of History, Kiel University. The sectional presidents were Prof Deepak Kumar Jawaharlal Nehru University, for South Asia, Prof. A Lakshmana Chetty, Prof of Indo China and South Pacific Studies, S.V University, Tirupati for South East Asia, Dr. Dwijendra Nath Bakshi, Diplomat for East Asia and Pacific and Prof Hari Vasudevan, Prof of Central Asian Studies at

Jamia Milia Islamia, ND. There were 34 papers in the South Asia section, 7 papers in West and Central Asia, 7 papers in the Southeast section, 7 in East Asia and 22 papers in South and Southeast Asia culture and society section. There were 8 overseas participants with 4 coming from UK, and one each from Belgium, Japan, Finland and Bangladesh. There were 15 local participants from Orissa, 42 from West Bengal and 12 participants from New Delhi, UP, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Mumbai and Tamil Nadu.
(6 countries participated)

3. **13th -15th October 2006:** held at Jiwaji University, Gwalior. The Keynote address was given by Professor Wang Gungwu, Director, East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore and Emeritus Professor, Australian National University. The Sectional Presidents were Prof S.D.Muni for South Asia, Prof. V.Suryanarayana for Southeast Asia, Prof. Surendra Gopal for West and Central Asia and Prof. P.V.Rao for East Asia and Pacific. There were 56 papers in the South Asia section, 13 papers in the South East Asia section, 7 papers in the East Asia and Pacific section, 10 papers in the West and Central Asia section and 6 papers in the South- Southeast Asia society and culture section. There were 12 overseas participants- 4 from Bangladesh, 3 from China, and one each from Philippines, Indonesia, Taiwan, Australia, and Thailand. There were 11 local participants from Gwalior (MP), 48 from West Bengal, 7 from Orissa, 3 from Assam, 3, from Rajasthan, 3 from Delhi, 2 from UP, and one each from Mumbai, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Manipur. (8 countries participated)
There was an ASF meeting with Asia Fellows and Conference participants.
4. **22nd -24th August 2008:** held at Santiniketan, West Bengal. The Keynote address was by Prof Anthony Reid, a Southeast Asian historian at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, on *Imperial Alchemy: Understanding Asian Nationalisms*. The sectional Presidents were Prof Sugata Bose, Gardiner Professor, Harvard University. USA for South Asian section (*Asian Universalism and South Asian imagination*), Prof Biswadeb Mukherjee, Dept. of Chinese, Viswa Bharati for East Asia and Pacific section (*Buddhism and Cultural History of China, Korea and Japan, Ruminations on the approach*), Prof Peter Skilling, EFEO, Changmai, Thailand for South East Asia (*Exploring the legacy of the 'Golden land': why study south east Asia?*) and Prof Ajay Patnaik, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi or West and Central Asia (Central Asian Security: Internal Dimensions. There were 51 papers in the South Asia section, 16

papers for the South and Southeast Asia section, 22 papers in the Southeast section, 16 papers for East Asia and Pacific section and 11 papers for West and Central Asia section. 116 papers in all. There were 27 overseas participants. The largest contingent was from Bangladesh 6, 4 each from Thailand, and China, 3 from USA, 2 each from Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka and one each from Russia, Indonesia, Japan and United Kingdom. There were 60 participants from West Bengal, 11 from UP, 8 from New Delhi, 6 from Orissa, 3 from Madhya Pradesh, 2 each from Assam and Karnataka and one each from Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Mizoram, Chandigarh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Manipur. (12 countries participated)

5. **10th- 12th December 2010:** held at Sikkim University, Gangtok. The Keynote speaker was Ambassador K.Kesavapany, Director of the Institute of South east Asia Studies, Singapore who spoke on Asia at the Crossroads of its destiny. The sectional presidents were Prof Indranath Mukherji, Senior consultant, Research and Information system for developing countries, New Delhi for South Asia section (Global Financial turmoil and South Asia), Prof G.C. Naidu, Centre for South, Central and Southeast Asian and Southwest Pacific Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi for Southeast Asia section (*Emerging Southeast Asia Security. Is India a significant factor?*), Prof Patricia Uberoi, Hon. Director of Institute of Chinese Studies, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, for East Asia and Pacific section (*Reflection on China in the Indian Cinematic imagination*) and Prof Nirmala Joshi, Director, India Central Asia Foundation, New Delhi, for West and Central Asia section (*Central Asia though the ages*). There were 73 papers in all. There were 7 local participants from Sikkim, 40 participants from West Bengal, 9 from New Delhi, 4 from Meghalaya, 3 from Karnataka, 2 each from Maharashtra and UP, and one each from Assam, Manipur, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. There were 9 overseas participants- 2 from Bangladesh and one each from Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, United Kingdom, Austria, United States of America, and Canada. (9 countries participated)
6. **17th - 19th December 2012:** held at University of Calcutta in collaboration with the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies. In the inaugural session there were addresses by Professor Suranjan Das, Vice Chancellor, University of Calcutta, Professor Partha. S. Ghosh, President (IAAPS), Professor Sugata Bose, Gardiner Professor of History, Department of History, Harvard University, USA, Mr Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty, Special Secretary (Public Diplomacy), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, Ambassador K

Kesavapany, Senior Fellow, Diplomatic Academy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore. The Keynote Speaker was Sunanda Kumar Datta-Ray, Writer and International Columnist, Singapore, (*Asia can't be a Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark*). The sectional presidents were - Professor P. Sahadevan, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India (*Regional Order in South Asia*), Professor Sutiphand Chirathivat, Chula Global Network, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand (*Southeast Asian Recent Attempts to Broaden Regional Integration in Asia*), Professor Tansen Sen, Weissman School of Arts & Sciences, Baruch College, New York, USA. (*Is there a need for China Studies in India?*) and Professor A.P.S. Chauhan, Centre for Central Asian Studies, Jiwaji University, Gwalior, India (*Revitalizing the Civilizational Ties for a Prosperous and Stable Asia : Focus on India- Central Asian Relations*).

There were 157 papers in all. In the South Asia section there were different panels- South Asia politics -9, gender-9, culture-9, West Bengal-13, social exclusion-6 culture religion and identity-7. In the Southeast Asian section there were 9 papers, in East Asia and Pacific section there were 6 papers, in South, Southeast, East Asia and Pacific section there were 25 papers, in West and Central Asia section there were 10 papers, in South and East Asia section there were 23 papers and in South and South- east Asia there were 15 papers in the Gender panel and 8 in Science and Technology panel.

There were 60 participants from West Bengal, 11 from UP, 8 from Delhi, 6 from Orissa, 3 from Madhya Pradesh, 2 each from Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Karnataka and one each from Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Mizoram, Chandigarh Maharashtra, Gujarat and Manipur. There were 21 overseas participants. The largest contingent were from China and Thailand- 4 each, 3 participants came from USA, 2 each from Malaysia, Philippines, and Sri Lanka and one each from Russia, Indonesia, Japan and United Kingdom. There were participants from 15 Indian states and 10 other countries. Ms Mamata Banerjee, Honourable Chief Minister of West Bengal gave her well-wishers' message for the Conference.

7. **20th – 22nd December 2014:** held in Tezpur University. Assam. The Conference was inaugurated by Rajiv Bhatia, Director General, Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi. The Keynote address was given by Prof Prasenjit Duara, Director, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. There were special lectures by Prof Ranjan Chakraborty, V.C. Vidyasagar University and Dr H.N.Das, Former Chief Secretary, Govt of Assam; and on 22nd there was a valedictory lecture by Prof A.C.Bhagavati, Former V.C. Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal

Pradesh and former Professor of Anthropology, Guwahati University. There were ten panels with 2-3 technical sessions under each panel. 1) In the panel on *Historicity of South Asia and Beyond* there were eight speakers, 2) In the panel on *Geographical and Cultural identities in South Asia and Other Asian countries* there were four speakers. 3) In the panel on *Major Security Issues (traditional and non-traditional) in South and Beyond* there were five speakers 4) In the panel on *Movement of Population and Demography of South Asia: Contexts of Diaspora and Migration* there were four speakers 5) In the panel on *Regional and Sub-regional Organisations in South Asia and Beyond-Challenges and Opportunities* there were eight speakers 6) In the panel on *Peace and Conflict Studies in South Asia and Beyond* there were eight speakers 7) In the panel on *Ethnicity and Minority in South Asia and Other Asian Countries: Contexts of Identities* there were nine speakers 8) In the panel on *Gender in Society of South Asia and Beyond: Continuity and Change* there were fifteen speakers 9) In the panel on *Social History of Science and Medicine in South Asia and Beyond* there were six speakers 10) In the panel on *Northeast India: History, Polity and Contemporary Dimensions* there were twelve speakers.

Collaborative Programmes with other Institutions and Special Lectures:

1st -2nd March 2003 - *Women across Asia* in collaboration with Women's Studies Research Centre and Institute of Development Studies. 30 speakers from different institutions participated in this Seminar from different parts of the country.

5th March 2005- Special Lecture programme *Travels across Asia* in collaboration with School of International Relations and Strategic Studies, Jadavpur University.

18th February 2006- Book Release of *Women across Asia* in collaboration with Women's Studies Research Centre.

25th March 2006- International Symposium on *Celebrating IT in Social Utility: Sharing Experience from Asia* in collaboration with Indo-Japan Welfare and Cultural Association and Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities, Calcutta University.

3rd January 2008- National Seminar on *Globalization and the State of Higher Education: The South Asian Scenario* where four speakers from Calcutta University, Jadavpur University and National Council of Educational Research and Training,(NCERT) Delhi presented papers.

12th-13th January, 2013- University Grants Commission (UGC) Sponsored National Seminar on *Contemporary Indian Education and Society: Relevance of*

Swami Vivekananda, in Collaboration with Fakir Chand College, Diamond Harbour. The Speakers included Swami Tattwaswarananda, Principal, Ramkrishna Mission Sikhana Mandir, Belur Math, Dr Kamal Krishna Dey, Ex-Principal David Hare Training College, Dr Soma Chanda, Rama Devi Women's College, Bhubaneswar, Professor Tridib Kumar Chakraborty, Dept. of International Relations, Jadavpur University, Dr Sujata Raha, College Of Education, Burdwan, Swami Purnananda, Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission TB Sanatorium, Ranchi.

18th -19th December 2013- International Seminar on *India's Look East Policy: Gleanings from the Past to the Present* in collaboration with University of Burdwan. The speakers were Professor Sugata Bose, Gardiner Fellow, Harvard University, USA, Dr Suchandra Ghosh, Dept. of Ancient Indian History and Culture, Calcutta University, Dr Sarvani Gooptu, Calcutta Girls' College, Dr Aparajita Dhar, Burdwan University, Dr Yogesh Raj, Martin Chautari, Nepal, Dr Syed Tanveer Nasreen, Burdwan University, Dr Binata Sarkar, Burdwan University, Dr Rajen Singh Laishram, Manipur University, Dr Rakhee Bhattacharya, Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies, New Delhi, Dr Jatindranath Saikia, Golaghat Commerce College, Assam, Prof Tridib Chakraborti, Jadavpur University, Prof Suthiphand Chirathivat, Chulalongkora University, Dr Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhary, Calcutta Research Group, Prof Manmohini Kaul, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

2015: IAAPS participates as a *Strategic Partner* in First World Asian Studies Conference organised by TIIKM, which was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The conference was organized by The International Institute of Knowledge Management (TIIKM), Sri Lanka and it provided a research platform for academics, scholars, thinkers, practitioners, and corporate and public policy-makers around the world to exchange knowledge, discuss issues, share innovations, and build networks. There were several Conference Tracks as noted below –

Asian Archives: Manuscripts and other endangered documents related to Asian history, culture, drawings, maps and photographs were encouraged.

Asian languages and literature: Studies on oriental languages such as Sinhala, Tamil, Pali and Sanskrit and studies related to Asian literature were discussed.

Asian Religions: Manuscripts and other working papers related to Asian religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, the Bahá'í Faith, Islam, Taoic religions, Confucianism, Daoism, Chinese ethnic religion, Shinto, Mugyo, Indian religions, Jainism, Lingayatism, Sikhism were given priority. Other religious studies were also incorporated.

Asian History and Heritage: Research on South Asian Archaeology was given foremost priority. Asian Hydraulic Civilization Chronicles and Historical Traditions, Indian Ocean Trade, South Asian influence in Southeast Asia,

Urbanization and State formation, Pre-Modern Asia, Religious Revivalism and National Movement were also investigated.

Asia and the West: Encounter with Western colonial powers was investigated mainly through Asian sources and the Asian point of view. The study of our Industrial heritage, changes to the landscape, new townscapes and architecture with Western influence were also discussed.

Asian Migrants: Studies on the migration of South Asian workers to the other parts of the world and history of such movements in the past were taken into account. Also studies on refugees, illegal migrations of Asians to other parts of the world were counted as interesting topics.

Traditional Asia: Aspects of Traditional Asian Sciences, Technologies and Knowledge was to be investigated. Asian Hunter-Gatherers, Ayurveda Medicine, Slash and Burn cultivation, Pack-Animal Transportation, Traditional Sea Faring and Methods of Fishing, Rituals and Ceremonies, Marriage Customs, Folk-lore and other aspects of Asian Ethnology were incorporated.

Asian Environment: Research on various aspects of Asian Environment was encouraged. Sea level changes, Environmental change, Tsunami and other Natural Hazards, Tropical Mountains were some of the prioritized areas under this theme.

Asian Art: Contemporary Art and Literature, Drama and Theatre, Visual Art and other Creative Work were patronized. Cultural shows, Exhibitions, Workshops and similar activities were organized

Contemporary Asia: Studies on Economy, Politics and Society of Contemporary Asia were covered under this theme. Research on Bilateral Relations, Trade and Cultural Agreements, Regional Cooperation, Mitigating Terrorism and Peace Building efforts were also encouraged and taken into account.

Editorial Team

Achintya Dutta, Professor, Department of History,
University of Burdwan, West Bengal, India

Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury, Fellow, Observer Research
Foundation, Kolkata, India

Chandan Sharma, Professor, Department of Sociology,
Tezpur University, Assam, India.

Chatthip Nartsupha, Emeritus Professor, Chulalongkorn
University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Partha S. Ghosh, ICSSR National Fellow, Institute of
Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi, India

Priya Singh, Fellow, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of
Asian Studies, Kolkata, India.

Purusottam Bhattacharya, Retired Professor, Department of
International Relations, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India

Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, Director, New Zealand India
Research Institute Victoria University of Wellington,
New Zealand.

Suchandra Ghosh, Professor, Department of Ancient
Indian History and Culture, University of Calcutta .

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Articles submitted for consideration of publication in **IAAPS Perspective** should be around 3500 words. Book Reviews can be around 1000 words and review articles can be around 1500 words. Articles will have endnotes. Endnotes should be restricted to the minimum. Enquiries about possible submissions are welcome.

For submission of articles and all other matters, correspondence should be addressed to the Editor, **IAAPS Perspective**, iaaps.iaaps@gmail.com or anasuab@gmail.com ; priyasingh70@gmail.com. Authors will have to submit articles in soft copies (in MS Word).

The individual contributor retains his/her copyright. However, in reproduction of the article elsewhere, full citation of the journal will be appreciated.

Please visit our website: www.iaaps.org.in