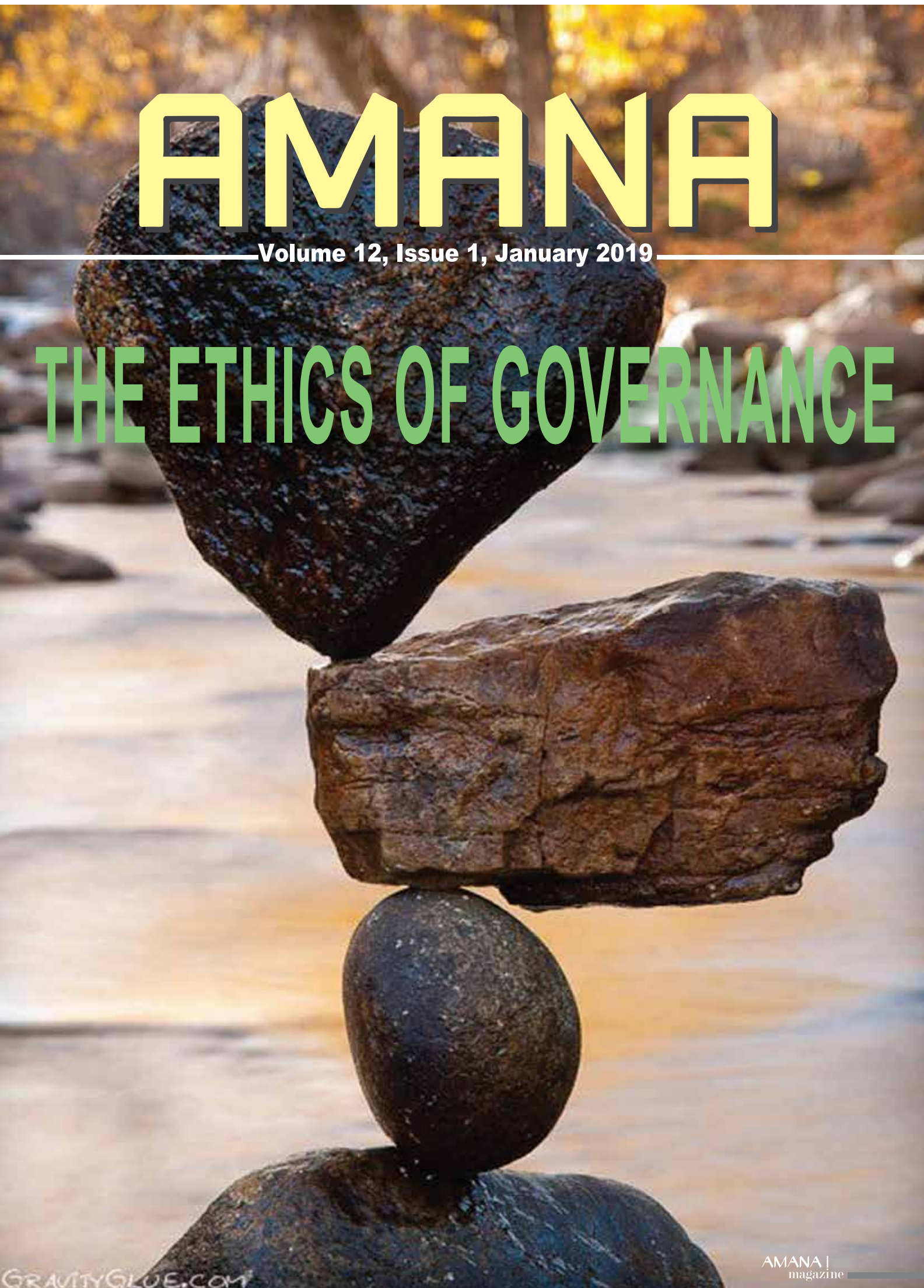
AMANA
Volume 12, Issue 1, January 2019
THE ETHICS OF GOVERNANCE
GRAVITYGLUE.COM
AMANA | magazine

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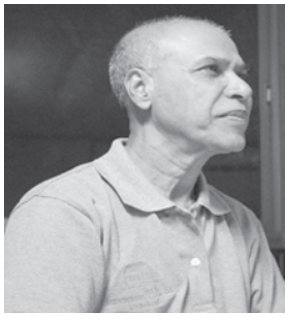
Editorial

Mohammad Abdus Sabur



A growing consensus seems to be emerging that the world has been making gradual progress in various fields such as food production, health science, communication technology, education and improved infra-structure. At the same time millions of people are left out, particularly the poorest of the poor, ethnic and religious minorities, victims of violence and wars, enforced migrants, refugees, children, youth and women in particular.

In many countries, people do elect their own representatives to act as parliamentarians. They do vote and elect the President and various bodies at state, and local levels to serve people by managing resources and running the administration. This can be termed as governance. But the question arises as to whether such governance is effective, efficient and just.

In a family we can also observe a kind of governance. Based on the available resources and the income, the mother and father try to respond to the needs of all: from the youngest one to the oldest. Sometimes, what they have is not enough. But based on love, conscience and values they prioritize and share according to needs and no one is left out. Of course, all families are not ideal. This aspect of priority - setting can be seen as being based on family norms. Governance also involves utilization of available data for critical analysis to determine the causes of gaps and disparities and to adopt policies guided by ethics and religious inspirations, to promote human dignity towards a just and peaceful society. In this issue we have three articles that draw upon the sources of inspiration for accountable and enabling Governance.

Dr. Clarence Dias in his paper refers to the letter of Lord Acton to Nandell Careighton and highlights the relationship between power and corruption. He also states that the term "governance" is not synonymous with "government". Various institutions and corporations do exercise power. He highlights positive examples of how the rule of law enshrined in India's secular Constitution has resulted in State's commitment to abolish practices of Sati Daho, Dowry, Untouchability and legitimizes the right of widows to re-marry. At global level, he refers to the United Nations initiatives in promoting the concept of Good Governance. Efforts are also being made to encourage and build capacity of member states to apply and practice good governance.

Dr. Azyumardi Azra in his paper discusses governance from Islamic perspectives. Those who accept responsibility through election or mandated through consensus, are trustees, with an obligation to govern justly. Unfortunately, governance in Islamic countries also suffers from ethical and moral deficits. Therefore, it is a common challenge for all Nation States. His paper calls for strategies to enhance capacity of civil society and empower people for informed and effective participation as stakeholders in Governance.

Shreya Bhattacharya in her paper explores how human rights and duties are enshrined in Indian philosophy and religious traditions.

Among the rest of the papers, Sucheta Mukharjee notes that the World Summit on Social Development established a framework to secure accountability and corporate social responsibility. Devosmita Bhattacharya examines governance in the NGO sector and cites examples of NGOs adopting measures to ensure that their programs are contributing towards promoting humanity and overcoming evil practices. Last, but not least, Suddhasattwa Barik and Priyanka Dutta examine what roles community values play in shaping ethical principles in local self- governance.

In the second part of this issue of AMANA we have two articles which are connected to governance more generally, as well as to ethical governance. Muto Ichiyo focuses on the inherent rights of human beings to be autonomous and interconnected as equals, which has been destroyed by the Composite Global Power Center. Ekraj Sabur highlights the specific case of the Uyghurs, who are victims of authoritarian and unethical governance in China.

I am sure these papers will generate further debate and discussion not only regarding governance at the present juncture, but also in meeting challenges yet to emerge, in the coming decades.

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The Ethics of Governance

Dr. Clarence J. Dias

Introduction

In April, 1887 (in a letter to Nandell Creighton) Lord Acton gave us the famous dictum "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men, even when they exercise influence and not authority; still more when you superadd the tendency of the certainty of corruption by authority." Today, more than 130 years later, Lord Acton's words continue to inspire and challenge us as we strive to grapple with the power of corruption and the corruption of power, both of which are pervasive in all spheres of governance alike, worldwide.

As Dr. Azra points out in his article, the issue of ethical governance most certainly includes, but goes much further than the problem of corruption. Power invariably does get misused, abused, and sometimes just does not get used when it should be, in the conduct of governance is both the action and manner of governing. The term "governance" is not synonymous with "government." This is because in modern societies "governing" is done not only by governments but also, significantly, by corporate and civil society actors and institutions as well. But in all instances, governing involves the exercise of power and hence Lord Acton's dictum comes into play. There have been two main responses to the abuse of power in the process of governing; the *good governance* approach and, more recently the *ethical governance* approach.

Good Governance

The concept of good governance originated in the context of development assistance and arose out of a concern on the part of donors that a significant portion of development aid given was being siphoned off by recipient governments for purposes other than development. As the United Nations University points out, "Good governance" is a term that has become a part of the vernacular of a large range of development institutions and other actors in the international and national arenas. What it means exactly, however, has not been so well established. The problem of lack of conceptual clarity when it comes to "good governance" and why this is problematic for the practical outcomes that development institutions and the like are trying to achieve merits further attention.

In a well-cited quote, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted that "good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development". But despite this consensus, "good governance" is an extremely elusive objective. It means different things to different organizations, not to mention to different actors within these organizations. To make matters even more confusing, governance experts also routinely focus on other types of governance -global governance, corporate governance, IT governance, participatory governance and so on

As far as the World Bank (and other development donor agencies) are concerned, good governance addresses economic institutions and public sector management, including transparency and accountability, regulatory reform, and public sector skills and leadership. Other organizations, notably the United Nations, the European Commission and OECD, highlight democratic governance and human rights, aspects of political governance, aspects which are avoided by the Bank. Some of the many issues that are treated under the rubric of good governance include: election monitoring, political party support, combating corruption, building independent judiciaries, security sector reform, improved service delivery, transparency of government accounts, decentralization, civil and political rights, government responsiveness and "forward vision", and the stability of the regulatory environment for private sector activities.

In sum, the good governance approach is management - focused and emphasizes principles of transparency, accountability and to a certain degree participation, or more accurately put consultation and voice.

Ethical governance

The ethical governance approach focuses on conforming to accepted standards of ethical conduct and involves expressing moral approval or disapproval. Although the ethical governance approach originated in the context of corporate

governance it is now being applied in all spheres of governance.

Ethical governance is the right and justified conduct of activities of an organization (or government) to serve the larger public interest. Impartiality, accountability, transparency, honesty, integrity, probity, perseverance, truthfulness, citizen centricity, patriotism are some of the values which are must for attainment of ethical governance.

Some suggested measures to improve ethical governance by an organization include:

- Ensuring that the recruitment process selects honest candidates on the basis of merit, renouncing favoritism and partiality.
- Training officials to include the component of "inculcation of moral values.
- An organizational "Code of Conduct" for its officials with the Head charged with ensuring that the code is being followed.
- Clear delineation of duties and responsibilities of all the employees to avoid any conflicts or clashes in performing their roles and responsibilities.
- Coordination and cooperation between seniors, juniors and subordinates.
- An "in house checking system" for detection of malpractices in the organization.
- Employees working with full dedication and honesty should be rewarded to inspire other employees.

Ethical governance is a necessity for a country to best serve the citizens and hence can be a panacea for all the evils such as corruption that are grappling with the governance in a country like ours.

The International Evolution of Ethical Principles of Governance

Conceptualizing ethical governance and suggesting implementation measures is necessary, but not sufficient unless the ethical values and principles are identified and agreement reached thereon amongst all important stakeholders. What follows below is an identification of some of those values and principles as they have evolved in the international, mainly UN arena.

The Charter Of the United Nations

The Charter of the United Nations gives us 5 ethical values and principles:

- Respect for the worth and dignity of the human person
- Equal rights of men and women
- Equal rights of all states, big and small
- Establishing and maintaining grievance redress and justice mechanisms
- Better standards of life in larger freedom

The International Bill of Rights

The International Bill of Rights consists of the Universal declaration of Human rights and the 2 Covenants on economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on civil and Political Rights respectively. They give us the following ethical values and principles:

- Nondiscrimination
- Security of the person
- Human security

Our Common Future

The Brundtland Report gives us the following ethical governance principles relating to the environment:

- Sustainability: renewable resources must not be utilized in a manner that makes them non-renewable and non-renewable resources must in a manner that guard against their depletion and exhaustion.
- Intergenerational Equity: developmental actions taken today should not prejudice the ability of future generations to develop themselves.
- Intergenerational Justice: no leaving of "environmental footprints".

Ethical Principles relating to Corporate Governance

After the Copenhagen World Summit on Social Development (2005) which recognized corporations as "key vehicles of social development, issues of corporate governance assumed great significance. There have been 2 major UN responses. First, the UN Secretary-General's Global Compact (unveiled at the Davos Summit in 1999) provides 10 principles of a global compact between CEOs of participating corporations and the UN. Second, the UN Human Rights Council, at its session in 2011 adopted the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGP) and later in 2017 adopted a detailed Reporting Framework. Together we have a detailed set of principles along with a detailed reporting fromat and process relating to corporate governance. These

are analyzed in detail in another article (by Sucheta Mukherjee) in this issue of AMANA.

Ethical Principles relating to International cooperation and Governance

A series of UN activities starting with UN reform proposals in 2005, 2016 and 2017, followed by the Millennium Summit (giving us the Millennium Development Goals), the UN Report In *Larger Freedom* we now have a Sustainable Development Goals ongoing process which is continuously producing ethical governance principles which merit analysis in a future, follow-up article.

Conclusion

There remains now only the question whether a moral principles-based approach of *ethical governance* is needed in light of the prior, existing legal approach of *good governance*. India, it may be argued has a long-standing Constitution which has unequivocally established the rule of law. We have, for example, laws abolishing sati, dowry, untouchability, and encouraging widow remarriage which have led social change by seeking to eliminate unethical cultural values and practices. We also have laws, for example, decriminalizing homosexual activity between consenting adults that have followed and responded to social change in light of changing social mores and values. So, is a moral approach to ethical governance either desirable or necessary? Might not such moral approach be superfluous and contradictory? The answer is no, such moral approach is complementary rather than contradictory. We do have many good laws but the record of implementation and enforcement of such laws is poor. Moreover, we have a horde of lawyers adept at finding loopholes in such laws enabling the evasion of them. Thus a moral approach would help bring pressure for making the law on the books become a living reality, Moreover,in light of the following articles by Mrs. S. Mukherjee and Dr. A. Azra it seems clear that, at least for India, a moral approach to ethical governance is both desirable and necessary. So far as other countries are concerned, the answer becomes obvious when one compares the archetypical "good" governance record of the present Trump government in the US with the ethical governance records of the likes of Nelson Mandela (in South Africa), the post-Somosa, Sandinista government (in Nicaragua) and Xanana Gusmao (in Timor Leste)!

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Faith, Ethics and Good Governance: An Islamic Perspective

Dr. Azyumardi Azra, CBE

Islam places a very strong emphasis on moral sand ethics (*akhlaq al-karimah*) both in personal and communal life. In fact, the Prophet Muhammad was sent in order for human being to achieve noble morality and ethics (*innama bu`ithtu li utammima makarim al-akhlaq*). Therefore, Islam is opposed to any kind of transgression of noble ethics, such as corruption and injustice. Islam unequivocally prohibits both bribery and robbery. Islam forbids Muslims from stealing private and public funds and wealth. Islam empathically prohibits corruption defined as "illicit or illegal activities for private or group material gain", and/or "the abuse of trust, power, and public office/position in the interest of private or group gain".

Islam teaches that power and public positions held by leaders are *"amanah"* (trusteeship) endowed by God to human beings. Holders of public office are accountable to both God and the community. As *"khalifah"*, representatives of God on earth, they are also responsible for the enforcement of justice (*al-`adalah*), not only for other people but also for themselves. Otherwise they will be responsible for making corruption (*al-fasad*) in life.

Islamic Ethics

Islam prohibits Muslims to practice any excessive attitude or act (*ishraf*) in any aspect of life. Therefore Islam is against the excessive accumulation of wealth by way of unlawful or illegal means such as corruption. The accumulation of wealth is allowed only through halal (lawful) and *tayyib* (good) means; and a certain amount of the halal wealth should be donated to the poor and the weak and other disadvantaged people as almsgiving (*zakah, infaq, sadaqah*). Islam is opposed to greed; those Muslims who fail to control their greed-especially of material things-are regarded as having downgraded their own humanity to the level of animals. Therefore, Muslims are obliged to conduct *"jihad"* against their greed. This is in fact the "greater jihad" as opposed to *"lesser jihad"*, that is waging the war against the aggressive enemy of Islam. Islam urges Muslims to live in a modest way (*wasat*). Islam also encourages Muslims to feel satisfied (*qana'ah*) with what they have gained through *halal*, permissible or lawful, means. These teachings are in fact part and parcel of Islamic spirituality (Sufism), that are commonly practiced by independent Sufis and those who are affiliated with the *tariqah* (Sufi brotherhood).

Islam urges all leaders to be 'exemplary' (*uswah hasanah*) for all people; setting a real example, and not simply by talking. The religion also appeals to the believers to continually give reminders to others (*tawsiyyah*) to refrain themselves from any wrongdoing in a wise way (*bi al-hikmah*) and set a good example (*maw`izah hasanah*). If necessary, Islam allows Muslims to enforce Islamic prohibition of corruption in a forceful manner based on the principle of *al-amr bi al-ma`ruf wa al-nahy `an al-munkar*, enjoining good and forbidding evil.

Similarly, local cultures in many Islamic countries and others in general basically regard corruption as a shameful act that must be avoided. Various cultural systems and groups emphasize that people should live in a modest way, not being misled by uncontrollable lust and greed. But with the penetration and intrusion of materialistic and hedonistic life-style, these local cultural values have eroded significantly. More and more people think and act in pragmatic ways to accumulate wealth by abusing their power and public position.

The Creation of Good Governance

Corruption, no doubt, is still one of the most serious and acute problems in many countries, Islamic or otherwise, many countries and governments face corruption today and, of course, it is one of the biggest constraints in efforts to create good governance. Despite the efforts to combat corruption, it has continued to gain

momentum and there is not much convincing evidence that this rampant and acute problem could be soon solved. Despite accelerated efforts to bring corrupt persons to justice, many countries remain severely inflicted by corruption.

The combat against so rampant corruption is clearly not easy. The difficulties are becoming even more complicated, for corruption seems to have become a 'culture' at every level of society, having even stronger roots in public and societal lives. Serious and concerted efforts must be conducted, however, so that corruption can be reduced if not eliminated all together.

The eradication of corruption and—by the same token—creation of good governance has been a central issue in many countries; there have been increasing demands from many sectors of the society that government should put in place special programs to combat corruption. One such is through the formation of a Commission for Corruption Eradication. Despite some skepticism among the public whether or not the Commission will be able to combat corruption in a comprehensive manner, it is clear that it has become increasingly more powerful to investigate corruption cases among high public officials and bring them to justice.

On the other hand, civil society organizations have been also trying to play a greater role towards that end, by forming for instance a number of 'watchdog bodies'—such as Corruption Watch (ICW)-that attempt to watch the working of government institutions and other public offices. Since then, a number of policies and programs that have been implemented by the governments; but one has to admit that not much progress has been achieved. There are a number of inhibiting factors that make the efforts to create good governance in Indonesia a very difficult task.

One of the biggest hurdles towards the creation of good governance is the state of political culture in many countries which are 'soft state'. Employing the Weberian framework, many developing and emerging countries could be arguably included in the category of *soft state*.

Among some important features of state political culture in a'soft state' are: first, the existence of a culture of "*patron-client*" relationships among state officials and many segments of society, particularly the business sector. This kind of relationship gave rise to strong 'patrimonialism' at almost all levels of society. Second, unclear and inappropriate practices in government and bureaucracy; there seem to be no clear boundaries, for instance, between those things that are official and those are personal in nature. Third, weakness in social and public ethics; and fourth, weakness and inconsistency in law enforcement as well as low ethics, credibility, accountability and morale of law enforcement agencies.

Government is of course only one of the actors in the governance of a country. There are many other actors outside of the executive branch of government, including the legislative and judicial branches which play an important role in the decision-making process. Even in a wider sense, there are other 'non-government actors' that also play a role in decision-making or in influencing decision-making process, who can be called 'actors' of governance. They are, for instance, civil society organizations and groups, NGOs, research institutes, political parties, the military, religious leaders, public intellectuals, and others. But, above all, it is government especially that is central in the creation of good governance. We will discuss later the role of civil society in the eradication of corruption.

The creation of 'good governance', no doubt, needs an accurate understanding of the very concept and practice of "governance". According to the concept of participatory governance, governance is basically good governance and good order of public life for a better shared life. Therefore, 'good governance' is an order that makes it possible for the public to share better life and at the same time is free from any kind of disorder and imbalance. Good governance includes eight major characteristics; participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follows the rule of law. With these characteristics, good governance assures that corruption, for instance, is minimized.

There are a great deal of very complex constraints in the creation of good governance; among others, are; first, lack of understanding of the concept and the necessity of good governance; second, lack of trust and cooperation between government bodies and agencies on the one hand and civil society on

the other; third, absence of precedence and experience in Indonesia of the implementation and development of good governance.

Good governance in many ways is identical with governance that is free from corruption, collusion and nepotism-known in Indonesia as *KKN* (*korupsi, kolusi, nepotisme*). The creation of good governance which is clean and healthy government requires reforming bureaucracy and public service. The aim of the reform is to create transparency in bureaucratic processes and public service. To achieve this aim, it is necessary to improve the quality of human resources in bureaucracy. Human resources development in bureaucracy should be more professional from the recruitment of employees, their conduct of public service, to their job promotion.

The reform of governance can also be called reinventing of government. Using the framework of Osborne & Gablaer (1992), reinventing government has an orientation to the creation of ten kinds of governance models, that is:

1. Catalyst government, which leads rather than dictates;

2. Society-owned government, which gives authority rather than being served;

3. Government with mission, which transforms organization of bureaucracy from simply works by regulations to missions;

4. Competitive government, which emphasizes competitiveness in public service;

5. Result-oriented government, which has an orientation to results rather than simply the presence of employees;

6. Society-oriented government, which aims at fulfilling the needs of society rather than those of bureaucracy;

7. Entrepreneurship government, which produces revenues rather than simply spends;

8. Anticipative government, which prevents rather than cures mistakes and failures;

9. Decentralized government; and

10. "Market-oriented" government, which encourages changes through market and the public.

Conclusion

It is clear that the creation of good governance needs the participation of civil society and public as a whole. Indonesia's first vice-president, Mohammad Hatta once stated that corruption has been 'part of culture' of many Indonesians. Bung Hatta, one of the two proclamators of Indonesian independence besides Soekarno, is to a great degree right; particularly now, corruption is so rampant, that it isas if it is part and parcel of daily culture in many countries. People in general—willingly or unwillingly—are now so permissive of almost all kinds of corruption.

Therefore, by the same token, rampant practices of power arrogance and *KKN* in many countries have also been caused by public apathy. This originates from public's unawareness of their rights as both citizens and subjects of public service of government bureaucracy. The public does not know either how to file complaints, or does not want to be bothered by complications resulting from their complaints of bad practices of bureaucracy. Therefore, dissemination of the ideas and practices of good governance is absolutely necessary; as to what good governance is all about; of benefits that the public can derive from good governance and, in reverse, of public disadvantages or even loss, resulting from bad governance.

At the same time, faith, religious ethics, and local wisdom against corruption, collusion and nepotism should also be continuously strengthened. Religious leaders and preachers play a special role in this context by also practicing and disseminating noble religious values against corruption and at the same time supporting the creation of good governance.

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Human Rights and Duties in Indian Philosophy and Religions

Shreya Battacharya

The evolution of human rights can be traced in all major world's religion and the religious books such as the Vedas, the Koran, the Torah and the Bible, which are considered as the oldest source of human rights doctrines. The relation between individual and society and their connection to morality in terms of *'dharma'* is the core of ancient Indian philosophy. According to the *Mahabharata* dharma maintains social order; dharma ensures well-being and progress of mankind. The Mahabharata is principally based on *dharma* where *dharmyuddh* or the battle of Kurukshetra was fought to uphold the *dharma* or moral duty over family, relations and society. The notion of human rights remained centred in the concept of human duties. Kautilaya's Arthasastra sets out civil and political obligations and a number of economic duties that a king must perform and uphold. Thus, the *Arthasatra* is considered to be one of the treasures in human rights doctrine in India. Kautilaya sttated, *"The king shall provide the orphan, the aged, the infirm, the afflicted and helpless with maintenance; he shall also provide subsistence to the helpless expectant mothers and also to the children they give birth to."* [1]

Hinduism, is one of the world's oldest religion. The ancient texts of the Vedas and Upanishads, which were written over 3000 years ago, stress that divine truth is universal and religious beliefs must be the way of life. These scriptures address wisdom, necessity of moral behaviour, importance of duty and good conduct towards others suffering in need. The believers of Hinduism are required to faithfully fulfil their responsibilities to all people, beyond self or family, without distinction and to practice charity and compassion towards sick, homeless and hungry persons.

Similarly, Buddhism, which originated in India, began by addressing the universal issues of human relationships, respect for life of each person, and compassion for the human beings who are held in suffering. Buddhism also attacked the rigid caste system prevailing at the time and urged its followers to practice universal brotherhood and equality. The Eightfold Path of Buddha includes right view, right speech, right action, right thought, right effort, right livelihood, right mindfulness, and right concentration. The Path depicts how he felt the necessity to protect human rights, and moral obligations and duties. The central values of Buddhism are *prajnaparamita* that is perfection of wisdom, *tathagatagarbha* that is a universal individual potentiality for enlightenment, *brahmaviharathat* which is an attitude that combines compassion and even-headedness, and *nirvana*.[2] During the regime of emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BC after the conquest of Kalinga, he established principles of civil rights and pursued the path of non-violence or *ahimsa*. He abolished the sport of hunting and mutilation of animal and showed mercy for prisoners. He preached the principles of non-violence, tolerance, liberal attitudes and generosity, and obedience and respect for teachers and priests. Mahatma Gandhi, in the 21st century who regarded himself as a deeply traditional and orthodox Hindu was guided by the principles of non-violence.

Understanding 'self' is the philosophical foundation of human relations in South Asia, especially in India. Every school of thought in India explains the self which eventually leads to explaining 'dharma'-duty or morality. The central tenet of the Jain value of 'anekantavada' is that one needs to think freely to be free. In Jainism the principal value is freedom. Mahavira while promoting Jainism advocated for equal privileges and the universal brotherhood of man. To sum up the concepts of human rights in Indian philosophy, that the ancient doctrines of India do not directly point out what are human rights. Rather they precisely talk about human suffering and moral duties to wipe out the suffering. They are more inclined towards humanism which can be considered today as the pillar of the concept of human rights.

1. Namrata Kothari, "Human Rights and Jainism-A Comparative Study," Philosophy Study7, no.2 (May 2017): 250, https://doi: 10.17265/2159-5313/2017.05.003.

2. Gordon Davis, "Autonomy and Human Rights in Ancient and Modern Indian Buddhism", in Human Rights India and the West, ed. Ashwani Peetush, Jay Drydyk (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015), 148

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The Ethics of Corporate Governance

Sucheta Mukherjee

Introduction

During the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, emphasis was laid on the importance of social development and the overall wellbeing of all. One of the action points of the Summit was encouraging corporations to function within the framework of respecting and protecting the communities where they work and being accountable for their actions as well. Thereby, there was a shift from development through aid to development through trade and investments. This focused on corporations being the main tool for social development.

This further became a necessity with the advent of the Structural Adjustment Programmes in the late 1990s, which led to privatisation and economic globalisation, and enabled corporations to operate beyond their boundaries too. With the emergence of the free market and the focus on corporations as the main tool for development, corporations are caught in jeopardy of either not doing enough for development or not doing anything at all for social development. The lack of regulations and guidelines from the government largely contributed to this situation. This article will further explore in the next sections how corporations have been held more accountable for their actions through various international norms and regulations.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility started off as a voluntary approach of the corporations. It was the need of the corporation to correlate the action of the corporation with the societal norm of the community where the corporation works. However, even though it started off as a voluntary measure for corporations, over time it became not so voluntary with the introduction of Kimberly Process and other state government frameworks. The Kimberley Process is an international certification scheme through which trade in rough diamonds is regulated. Some governments have also formulated various national frameworks and laws which make corporations follow and conduct ethical business practices.

Global Compact

The Global Compact is a principle-based framework for conducting business responsibly and reporting on their implementation. The ten principles of the Global Compact have been derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organisation's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and the Right to Work; the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption. The first two principles focus on human rights, the next four principles focus on labour, whereas the next three focus on environment and the last on corruption. Currently there are 9,894 companies from 160 countries who are participants in the Global Compact.

UNGP and the Reporting Framework

In 2005, John Ruggie was appointed as the Special Representative of the Secretary General on the issue of human rights and other transnational corporations and other business enterprises. Ruggie in his report to the Human Rights Council, explained the framework of state duty to protect, corporate responsibility to respect and the victims' access to remedies. The Report states how Governments can formulate legislation and put checks and balances on the corporation to respect rights. The report stresses the scope of sustainability reporting which would enable the stakeholders to compare rights-related performance. The report further reiterates the State's duty to protect its people against all abuses, including corporate abuse which falls within its jurisdictions.

In 2011, the United Nations Human Rights Council endorsed the Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights, making it the first human rights reporting initiative to be endorsed by the United Nations. Unilever is the first company to pilot the UNGP in its draft form. ABN AMRO, Ericsson, H&M, Nestle and Newmont are the early adopters of UNGP.

The Reporting Framework is comprised of 31 principles that enable companies to report meaningfully on their human rights performance, regardless of size or how far they have progressed in implementing their responsibility to respect human rights. Corporations also identify "salient human rights issues" - the human rights that are at risk of the most severe impacts of their business.

Even though the UNGP Reporting Framework is in itself not mandatory, there are increasing regulatory requirements, including that of the European Union, making it mandatory for many companies to report on their human rights performance with explicit reference to UNGP.

Conclusion

Ethical corporate governance has made significant progress over the years from being completely voluntary to now being translated into concrete terms because of the UNGP Reporting Framework. Nonetheless, it has a long road to traverse still, as it lacks legal binding force. The corporations which have benefitted from reporting in the framework have paved the way for other corporations to follow suit and be accountable for their actions and respect human rights as an integral part of their business. The states too have progressed well as far as protecting against human rights abuse is concerned, by formulating national legislations which put market pressure on the corporation to respect human rights. However, not all states have enacted laws. In the near future, one can positively hope for more accountability of the corporations for their actions.

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NGOs and Good Governance

Devosmita Bhattacharya

"for men may come and men may go but I go on forever"
--- Lord Tennyson (The brook)

Is that not the story of every other female that has spiralled in the vortex of child abuse, marital-rape, female foeticide and the like?

Non-Governmental Organizations, being independent authorities that have taken their humane side to another level, can also succumb to the metropolitan greed of self-gain. It is not rare to witness corruption within the financial aspects of an Organisation that is free from the shackles of government rules and regulations. But it is the corruption towards the cause that brought benevolent people together which is most alarming.

A lot of researchers and scholars, including contemporary writer Kamala Das, has rightfully said, "***I have no joys that are not yours, no aches that are not yours***" These words are reflective of the attitude that NGO workers should have and are supposed to strive for. Life shall not come easy for either the one in pain or for those suffering from old age. But it is essentially the characteristic personality of the worker to deal with an issue keeping in mind the growing problems that are faced by any section of humankind.

Social Work has a multitude of programs and management workshops and field work that greatly benefit the Indian population that deals with mediocrity every day, and those who are under the poverty line. It is not easy to pinpoint a certain problem in an NGO but it helps in initiating a protocol that could benefit more and more people like an enormous Mexican wave with good governance. As early as the 1980s, a change in trend started taking place within the Non-Governmental Organisation movement. It started placing emphasis on the importance of a much-required professional approach, based on sound management, excellent governance planning and co-ordination. Thus, the post- emergency period witnessed people coming out of the Church, the Left, the Gandhian and Lohiaite movements converging as far as development at the grassroots- level was concerned. They focused on awareness and conscientisation as the objective of mobilizing the underprivileged to influence the social, political as well as economic structures. India was witnessing an NGO boom, where there seemed to be 1 NGO for every 600 people. With a population of1.3 billion people, India could well be branded the land of opportunities for Non-Governmental Organisations.

Speaking of the positives of Non-Governmental Organizations, one does go back to the age from where it all started and some of these relief movements made history:

1. THE SMILE FOUNDATION:

The organisation was created in 2002 and promotes the cause of literacy amidst underprivileged children. The people behind the Smile Foundation have envisaged children to be the building- blocks of the future and hence have developed programs ranging from healthcare, education, livelihood and women empowerment to a system where privileged children can help their underprivileged counterparts.

To cite a more familiar example, the award-winning documentary "I am Kalam" that was based on a cause for children, was supported by the Smile Foundation.

2. NANHI KALI: Started initially by Anand Mahindra, as a mere sponsorship project in 1996, had the ambitious aim of eradicating the vicious circle of poverty in India by educating female children. The Nanhi Kali project is aided by funding from 21 different NGOs that humanely take up the responsibility of providing for one girl child each in all respects. The most interesting fact about it is anyone can take up responsibility of one girl child for as little as 2400 rupees a year.

3. GIVE INDIA FOUNDATION: Most of the world might have heard about the 'Joy of Giving Week' celebrations that find national coverage in the Indian media each year. Give India Foundation hosts this week which does not exactly perform hands-on based community work but carries a

unique authority among all other Indian NGOs because it acts both as an online as well as an offline donation platform for more than 200 Indian NGOs which are scrutinized for their transparency and credibility in operations through the Give India special scanner.

If someone donates through Give India, they will tell the donor exactly where his/her money has gone and follow it up with a feedback report. This organization for social change, set up by an IIM-A alumnus has been the recipient of many awards for their work in creating accountability in the area of donations.

4. GOONJ: Forbes has listed GOONJ as India's most powerful and influential rural entrepreneur organization. "Vastra Samman", the famous program put this organisation on the map as it mobilized recyclable and re-usable items such as grains, clothes, export surpluses, books and much more; from urban to rural centres. With many donation points across the country, *Goonj has successfully been channelizing more than 70,000 kg of material every month* and has a team of more than 300 volunteers at their disposal and partners with 250 other organizations.

5. HELP AGE INDIA is an organization that goes all the way back to 1978 and has been supporting India's isolated, poor as well as sick elderly folk. Among attributes and ancillary functions to support the elderly population of India, it plays a critical role in the course of influencing policy change for India's grey population in governments, thus, providing -

a. physical and material support to the abandoned elders

b. opening physiotherapy centres

c. sponsoring cataract operations

d. providing help lines for the elderly to help them understand and fight for their rights.

This organisation has come a long way and has also been dedicatedly expressing its causes in the National Commission of India over the years

Thus, good governance is the only way that social service can shower humanity in a way that is intended to benefit our people who, with a beacon of hope will light India's path from being looked down upon as a Third World country to an evolved civilization that can boast of perfection and the eradication of social evils and superstitions.

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The Role of Community Values and Principles in Local Self-Governance: A Case Study of Gram Panchayats in India

Suddhasattwa Barik and Priyanka Dutta

Introduction:

The concept of "Local Self-Government" (LSG) emerges from people's basic need for sovereignty, liberty, fraternity and protection of their human rights to development. Local Self-Governments are those bodies that look after the administration of an area or a small community such as a village, a town or a city. LSG operates at the grass-roots level of the society, directly linked to the people, and touching their everyday life and affairs. LSG urges for the full participation of the community itself to exercise decision-making powers, conforming to established values and principles through its governing mechanisms. Such ethical values and principles are: "accountability", "transparency", "honesty", "integrity", "probity", "perseverance", "truthfulness", "citizen-centricity" and "patriotism towards nation-building". Along with such ethical values and principles, an ideal Local Self-Government aims to adopt a people-centric, bottom-up approach to governance. LSG aims to involve local community to identify and address local needs, especially providing social protection, development and justice to its own vulnerable groups and areas and maintaining peace and harmony.

As far as "participation" is the concerned, it means that: "people are closely involved in the economic, social, cultural and political processes that affect their lives. Participation in this sense is an essential element of human development. It generally refers to peoples' decision and involvement in particular projects or programmes."

In a democratic society, people's participation can take two forms:

- Direct democracy: Direct participation of people in governance.
- Representative democracy; People rule through their representatives.

Gandhiji advocated for *Panchayati Raj (PR)* as the foundation of India's political system, as a decentralized form of government in which each village would be responsible for its own affairs. He wanted true democracy to function in India. He, therefore, observed: 'True democracy cannot be run only worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village.' The term *PR* literally implies government of the people's representatives.

In village self-governance, the village being the decentralised small political unit endowed with fullest powers, every individual will have a direct voice, full participation in the decision-making by the government. The individual is the architect of his own government. Therefore, *Panchayats* are the only way to strengthen direct democracy at the grass-root level and pull the weaker sections out of marginalization. It ensures people's direct participation in governance, which is referred to as "Participatory Governance".

Values and Principles relating to governance by gram panchayats:

Several committees including the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee in 1957; V.T. Krishnammachari Committee in 1960; Takhatmal Jain Study Group in 1966; Ashok Mehta Committee in 1978; G.V.K. Rao Committee in 1985; Dr. L.M. Singhvi Committee in 1986; and P. K. Thoongan committee in 1988 were formed to study the various ways of reviving and implementing more decentralized administration and on the basis of their recommendations, to overcome the crises of a centralised form of governance. India finally adopted the *Panchayati Raj (PR)* system to delegate several administrative functions at the local level and empowering elected gram panchayats. The

73rd Constitutional Amendment Act in 1993 adopted the *Panchayati Raj Act* in Part IX of the Constitution.

The *PR Act* offers substantial space for responsive, inclusive and participatory governance. It reaches out to the weaker sections such as Women, Scheduled and Other Backward Classes with enabling provisions to assimilate them into mainstream political dynamics. The *Panchayat Act* not only safeguards the interest of the rural poor across the country but also safeguards Tribal communities living in the forest regions. So, that they could also enjoy the benefits of local self-government along with their traditional and cultural practices and lifestyle through separate *"Gram Sabhas"* (Village Council Meetings).

Panchayat bodies have knowledge of ground realities, people's sufferings and local conditions as they are directly connected to grassroots people. They are entrusted with the overall human and infrastructural development of their said jurisdiction, including the provision of social justice. *Panchayats* involvement ensures greater transparency in working and fund utilization when programs are executed by State agencies. Most importantly, they are answerable to the people. The system has three levels: *"Gram Panchayat"* (at the village level), *"Mandal Parishad"* or *"Block Samiti"* or *"Panchayat Samiti"* (at the block level), and *"Zila Parishad"* (at the district level).

As an institution of direct democracy, GPs at the grassroots level in India have the following salient features:

i. Broadened and Representative Leadership.

ii. Women's Empowerment.

iii. Sovereign Financial Powers.

iv. Gram Sabha (Village Council Meetings).

v. Development Agent and Adjuncts of the governments.

vi. Easing out Bureaucratic Procedural Complexities.

vii. Rotation of Reserved Constituencies.

Present-day panchayat governance practice:

The formation of the Panchayati Raj Institutions *(PRIs)* is a step in the right direction and over time those institutions are expected to emerge as strong centres of local self-government, responsive to the needs of the local community. The public image of *PR,* is:

i. It is an instrument for the implementation of the community development programme.

ii. It provides an opportunity for increasing participation with village government.

iii. And for attaining political stability.

Three basics rationales have been forward for the creation of *PR*:

i. To make a community development programme relevant to the needs and problems of the people;

ii. To transfer decision-making authority to the villages regarding development work, and

iii. To realize the values of participatory democracy.

According to the Panchayat Act, GPs are designated to perform three roles: "Obligatory", "Designated and Assigned", and "Discretionary". It is the "discretionary role" that mainly focuses on ethical values and principles. Based on the socio-cultural, economic and political needs of the people, *GP* is in a position to undertake necessary activities needed to improve the conditions of its citizens. Some of these activities include providing care and social benefits to the deprived community, demonstrating trustworthiness and accountability to the citizens, maintaining transparency in terms of fund utilisation. *GP* activities aim at improving poor conditions of the vulnerable groups through livelihood programs, reducing poverty and inequality through the formation of co-operatives by the community and formation of Self-Help groups especially by the women.

However, *GP* at present is performing the role of only development agent and is engaged in only implementing the Central and State-run schemes and programs. Their main focus is on infrastructural development as instructed by local bureaucrats. Their human development role, which was the prime focus of local self-governance, largely remains ignored. Formation of different types of village co-operatives is a part of the discretionary role that is largely ignored. Existing village co-operatives are non-functional because the *GPs* have failed to establish the market linkages to sell their produce, to incur profit to sustain livelihood and overcome poverty. Thus, the present situation is one of decline of co-operatives at the grassroots level. The reasons are lack of people's active participation, growing corruption among elected representatives and staff, and red-tapism in the bureaucratic system. This is

accompanied by a lack of adequate awareness and knowledge, skills and manpower. The Panchayats feel that their roles have not been clearly defined.

Community values and ethical principles of governance:

As the institution of governance at the local level, the communities expect their *GPs* to serve the larger public interest, being impartial and non-discriminatory in the election of representatives and their functioning, accountability, transparency, honesty, integrity, probity, perseverance, truthfulness, citizen centricity and patriotism. Further, the *GPs* are expected to have a code of conduct, clear delineation of duties and responsibilities, to maintain natural resources and equality and intergenerational equity among different caste, class, sex and religion. Most importantly the *GPs* are highly revered and trusted to provide fair and equal justice especially to the vulnerable groups thereby, maintaining peace and human security in its jurisdiction, so that no one is left behind in terms of socio-economic and political development.

Despite having the provision in the Panchayat Act of people's participation in local governance the reality is quite different. People, in the name of participation are made to agree upon the decisions taken by the elective representatives. Even if the community is involved and made to participate in the planning and implementation processes, they articulate their respective individual needs rather than the needs benefiting the entire community. *GPs* now have become a mockery that has no share in sovereign governance and is thus entirely subordinate to the federal system of Central, State and regional authorities - District and Block Administrations respectively. Therefore, the whole question of ethical values being articulated by the citizens is overshadowed by political party domination, political will, corruption and self-interest of elected representatives and influential people of the *GPs*.

The situation is not gruesome throughout the nation. In some states such as West Bengal, Kerala and Karnataka communities, to an extent, have articulated and implemented their ethical values in the local government institutions - Gram Panchayats. In the State of Maharashtra, ethical values and principles of local self-governance such as *Pani Panchayat (Water Panchayat), Bal Panchayat (Child Panchayat) in some GPs* and consecutive *Mahila Gram Sabha (Women Village Council Meeting)* along with *Gram Sabha* could be identified. This was made possible because of some non-governmental interventions in the State's decision-making process relating to *GP*. Even then *Bal Panchayat* and *Mahila Sabha* are governed by the patriarchal values of the region, which hinders the basic objectives of local self-governance. However, in the North-Eastern states with their matriarchal society, *GPs* are yet to gain their full status as an institution of local self-government. The situation is more or less the same across the nation. It is not that the community is unaware of or ignorant about their strengths to articulate and inculcate ethical values in governance at the local level. The need of the hour is to have a persistent amount of knowledge-building programmes to spread awareness, disseminate information and strengthening their capacity for active participation for making decisions in the local self-governance.

There is an urgent need for capacity-building among the masses regarding knowledge about the Constitutional rights of the citizens, the local self-governance process and direct people's participation in decentralized planning. Frequent capacity-building and skill development training are required for the elected members and staff of the PRIs to perform their duties well. So, that the citizens as right-holders could claim their rights and elected representatives and staff as duty-bearers could perform their duties efficiently and effectively maintaining ethical values and principles of the communities. It is through this process that the community values and principles could be adhered to and secured in local self-governance for years to come.

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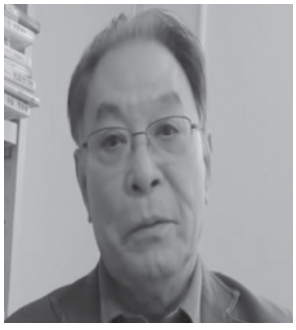
Towards the Autonomy of the People of the World: The Need for a New Movement of Movements to Animate Processes of People's Alliance

Muto Ichiyo



I
The Second Wave

My point of departure in imagining 'another world' is that we are in the second historical wave of people's movement against capitalism, the first wave being the 19th to 20th century communist-socialist movement concentrating on the seizure of the State as the decisive instrument of social change. It is obvious that the historic movement guided by that paradigm was tested and failed significantly, leaving global capitalism triumphant, though in a miserable shape. The second wave seeks to undermine and overthrow the capitalist regime in new ways, vision and strategy, not dedicated to the seizure of the state and establishment of the party-state. What then should be the visions and strategies of the second wave?

There seems to be a broad consensus among many who desire change that the world today is managed and ruled by a composite global power centre to preserve and promote extremely destructive capitalism. This *de facto* global centre of rule consists of diverse agencies: national and transnational as well as public and private, an organic formation into which nation states have become inextricably enmeshed. This global power is not monolithic but is divided by clashing interests among its components. Yet, they join forces when it comes to defending their basic logic and rule, as well as their interests, against actual and possible resistance from popular forces. There is in fact no legitimacy for this power, nor is there any democracy in the way global affairs are managed.

The second wave of anti-capitalism movement therefore has to be a political struggle to resist, undermine, and overthrow this global power structure, a struggle for global democracy of a new type. It is clear that the global democracy we need is not world government, as a resurrection of the sovereign nation state on a world scale. We are not struggling for a United States of the World, a universal state vested with the mission of abolishing capitalism from above.

What we envisage as 'another world' must be a self-governance of the people of the world (global autonomy) that manages social and economic systems in non-capitalist ways. If this is to be our perspective, it follows that the key to bringing a change of this nature is the ability of the people of the world to organise themselves into a global democratic autonomy, politically and morally forcing the capitalist power centre and capitalist markets to follow their rules, finally terminating capitalism. Is such a perspective well-grounded?

The first step towards answering this question is to recognise that there is as yet no such entity as the 'people of the world' as an agency of autonomy. It therefore follows that the possibility of bringing about 'another world' depends on whether and how the people of the world can emerge as a body of global autonomy and, more specifically, whether and how social movements can be instrumental to the emergence of global people exercising autonomy.

People's Alliance and Transborder Democracy

Let us examine this problematique using as a referent some of our pre-World Social forum experiences, namely, the People's Plan for the 21st Century.[i] In hindsight, this program was a forerunner of the movement of movements for another world, projecting visions of global social change beyond the state-oriented perspective. In August 1989, immediately before the fall of the Berlin wall, a coalition of movement groups in Japan, took the initiative in organising, together with popular movements and NGO friends from other lands mainly in Asia, a large international program titled the People's Plan for the 21st Century (PP21). It was a multi-issue, multi-sector movement-project attempt to search for a 21st century planned and created by the people themselves, not by big business and elitist bureaucrats. The programme, held in the form of close to 20 thematic and sector-wise international events all over the Japanese archipelago with more than 120,000 Japanese and

300 overseas participants, culminated in a synthesis gathering in Minamata, a place known for mercury pollution that victimised hundreds of thousands of people and for the resulting grassroots struggle against the polluting company.[ii] That struggle of the poorest of the poor in a peripheral Japanese locality was launched in the 1950s and culminated in the 1970s, raising environmental concerns in Japan and beyond. The purpose of the PP21 programme was to get people's efforts together to bring about janakashaba, a 'world that does not stand like this', an original phrase coined by fishing people victimised by pollution and in the midst of struggle. The synthesis conference adopted the Minamata Declaration, presenting the key issues and themes of the programme, and it was agreed that PP21 should be continued as a people's linking process. The second PP21 convergence was held in 1992 in Thailand and the third in South Asia in 1996, culminating in a big mobilisation in Kathmandu.

Largely due to internal difficulties, it was not possible to maintain the momentum of PP21. In 2002, following the initiation of the World Social Forum process in 2001, the organisers of the PP21 process met and decided to stop holding large multi-issue, multi-sector convergences, so as not to duplicate the WSF. Unlike WSF, PP21 adopted declarations, beginning with the Minamata declaration in 1989, through to the Rajchadamnoen Pledge adopted by the Thai programme in 1992, to the Sagarmatha Declaration adopted in Kathmandu in 1996. Hence, the ideas and linkages created through PP21 have left their imprints on the later movements.

The key concepts introduced then were transborder participatory democracy and a global alliance of the people.. Emphasising that our hope for the future hinged on the formation of such a global people's alliance, posited as the people constituting themselves to exercise autonomy, we called it the 'Alliance of Hope'. PP21 envisioned both transborder participatory democracy[iii] and a people's alliance, not as static institutions or bodies but as dynamic processes of constant formation and renewal.

II
The State of the Global People

Bound Together in Hostile Relations

PP21 chose the word 'people' to designate the body to self-rule but, as pointed out earlier, we were keenly aware that there is no such 'people' as an actually existing body to exercise democracy as self-rule. As a presentation to the PP21 Assembly in 2002,[iv] stated:

…they (the people) are "divided into various groups positioned differently in the global hierarchical structures, divided by gender, ethnic, religious, geographical, class, cultural, and national borders",[v] peoples identities are not static, but dynamically changing, overlapping, and mutually interacting. As such "these groups are being forced to live together under conditions imposed upon them."…. "state-supported global capital is organizing all these groups into a system of international and hierarchical division of labour" and that "this order is lauded as the world of interdependence." (read interdependent globalization). "But it is an interdependence forced upon the people and permeated by hostility and division. The dominant system perpetuates itself by organizing internal division, and setting one people's group against another." through promoting practices of "national chauvinism, machinated communalism, cultural exclusivity, sexism, and the entire panoply of radical ethnic prejudices" that "serve the ruling elites well in their efforts to establish an organization for domination, incapable of its own unity."

Currently, capitalist globalisation entails two parallel phenomena. On the one hand, the accelerated development of communication technology and networking beyond borders which has created a cosmopolitan arena, in which people, especially the young, from far-flung cultural and political as well as geographical locations and milieus are communicating and sharing information, sentiments, and cultures. Actions are being promoted which are resisting capitalist global rule from spreading rapidly. But, on the other hand, we witness serious divisions ripping the people into antagonistic collectives and causing conflicts among them. People are badly divided, segmented, and set to fight each other, often to the point of violent, even murderous conflicts. The divides run between collectives of various kinds as well as individuals. Inter-people conflicts of various social, historical, and economic origins have often been rekindled and aggravated under the spur of competition for survival that most communities are forced into. Religious and other 'fundamentalisms', jingoism, misogyny, racism, other hate campaigns, internal wars, and other forms of violence wielded by common people against one another are now part of daily life on the globe.

Building Alliances

The capitalist globalisation regime is dividing people into conflictual situations in the same process that links them up in the unequal global division of labour. The new inter-people

relationships thus made, are characterised by antagonistic closeness and are not made by the choice of the people involved. They breed inter-people violence and conflict. On the other hand, this same process can, as it often does, generate the urge and initiative among some of the people dragged into antagonism to create new mutual relations beyond the externally erected barriers. Ironically, the two diametrically opposed urges are stimulated by the same capitalist globalisation process.

Alliance-building therefore relates to the effort to demolish from within the structural and subjective barriers separating and/or linking the people's communities. In other words, if members of the groups linked together in externally-determined relationships begin to interact with one another and discredit, weaken, and overcome such relationships by creating new relationships of their own making, in which people from both sides find each other differently than before, then the process of people's alliance-building gets under way. In the PP21 programme, we called it 'inter-people autonomy', meaning that communities self-manage not only their internal affairs but also their mutual relationships. People's alliance - as a step toward people's autonomy on a global scale - emerges as people's collectives and communities create new relationships of their own making.

There are very diverse groupings of global people with intersecting identities. Their diversity, instead of being developed as the richness of human civilisation, is exploited by the capitalist regime as the basis of competition useful for capital accumulation. Alliance-building seeks to give back life to diversity as the wealth of global society.

But what groups of people are we talking about? They come to the surface as new resistance occurs asserting certain identities. But some of the macro divisions are historically present, brought forward by major movements of the oppressed people involved. Among such division lines are those relating to North-South, gender, class, urban-rural, national, ethnic, cultural, and religious relationships.

These and numerous other burning issues are now closely intertwined, precluding the likelihood of separate solutions for each of them. In discussing the topic, allow me to reproduce some relevant paragraphs from an earlier paper :

Globalization of capital supported by the global power center has not only made the world smaller, but also has telescoped major events and problems that have arisen in the past centuries, into the present. This defines the nature of alternatives we are committed to create. In other words, in resolving burning problems of today, we must undo history, tracing back to where the problems originated. As it were, we face a single complex of problems. And the problems integrated into this single complex, having arisen at different times and settings in history, not only have been bequeathed to us unresolved, but have been fused in peculiar combinations so that the possibility of resolving those problems separately and one by one is close to precluded. To simplify, the present condenses in its midst at least the following problems and their legacies:

1. Thousands of years of domination of women by men;

2. Five hundred years of domination of the South by the North; the conquests of the people and their civilizations in the 'new continent' legitimated the notion of conquest in general -- the conquest of people by the 'civilized' and the conquest of nature by h human beings;

3. Two hundred years of domination of agriculture by industry (industrial revolution);

4. Two hundred years of domination of society by the modern state and inter-state system;

5 . Two hundred years of the domination and exploitation of labour by capital;

6. One hundred years of imperialist domination of colonies;

7. Forty years of destruction of nature and diversity (homogenization) in the name of development.[vi]

You can add any number of 'current' problems that have survived through history. The point is that none of them has survived in its original shape. These have been brought into a deformed synthesis in diverse combinations. Modern capitalism, for instance, integrates (2) to (5) on the basis of (1), while (7) integrates all the preceding problems. Item (2), is mediated by (1), (3), (5), and (6), produces (7) in the form of the widening gap between the North and the South. And so on.

Our alternatives address precisely this problem complex. Given the organic intertwined nature of the problems, the process to overcome them needs be a single process. 'Single' does not mean 'in one fell swoop'. Nor do we anticipate an apocalyptic settlement. It means disentanglement in the same historical time and in interrelatedness. It means that trying to fully resolve any one of the problems as separate from the others cannot, after all is said and

done, succeed in resolving even that problem. This is a crucial point. For instance, the environmentalist movement will never succeed in preserving nature if it refuses to consider Southern poverty.

The clue to disentanglement is to begin with alliance-builders taking sides with the dominated in the above list: women, indigenous people, other oppressed minorities, the South, agriculture, labour, civil nature, and diversity. Already, vigorous voices have been raised and demands presented by or on behalf of them. We have fairly active social movements on all of those issues. The starting point in our search for global alternatives is to exert our full force to work changes on the dominating side in line with the demands of the dominated - namely men, conquerors, North, capital, state, human arrogance, and homogeneity. Without the prerogative of the dominated, there is no emancipating alternative.

III
Characteristics of Inter-Movement Politics for Inter-People Alliance

Social movement today, in my view, faces this kind of historic challenge. For alliance- building, movements play a decisive role in helping this process get underway. Boaventura de Sousa Santos, discussing the World Social Forum and the global left, noted that one of the salient contributions of the WSF was "the passage from a movement politics to inter-movement politics".[vii] By 'inter-movement politics', he signalled "a politics run by the idea that no single issue social movement can succeed in carrying out its agenda without the cooperation of other movements". A few important features involved include the following:

- Inter-people politics
- Movement and constituency
- Interaction: between people, as collectives and as individuals, in a positive context
- 'Virtuous Interaction'. as distinguished from vicious interaction that aggravates conflicts.
- Bonds: We all know that there are certain social bonds which enable human beings to live together in friendly relationships.
- Internal impacts: Virtuous interaction can cause changes not only in the mutual relationships between groups, but also in the internal power relationships and cultures within the groups involved, in emancipating directions.
- Structural changes: of the oppressing / oppressed, exploiting / exploited, dominating / dominated relationships that exist.
- Alliance and economic articulation: people's alliances are not just political partnerships but rather, constitute the embryo of a society yet to come through changing existing socio-economic patterns of articulation, toward a better world.
- Dialogue with nature
- Social contracts as steps in an ever-evolving people's

Movement or Space? The WSF as a New Type of Movement

Returning now to the 'movement of movements' and its important arena, the World Social Forum, for some time now the question has been debated as to whether the WSF is a space or a movement. It is an issue of essential relevance. I have no doubt that the WSF is a movement, but it should consciously be a movement of a new type. Chico Whitaker, probably one of the stronger proponents of the 'space' school of thought, says that "movement and space are completely different things". I disagree with this dichotomy. According to Chico:

A movement congregates people - its activists, as the activists of a party - who decide to organise themselves to collectively accomplish certain objectives. Its formation and existence entails the definition of strategies to reach these objectives, the formulation of action programmes, and the distribution of responsibilities among its members - including those concerning the direction of the movement. Those who assume this function will lead the activists of the movement, getting them - through authoritarian or democratic methods, according to the choice made by the founders of the movement - to take responsibility for their commitments in the collective action. A movement's its effectiveness will depend on the explicitness and precision of its specific objectives, and therefore, of its own boundaries in time and space.[viii]

Clearly, the WSF should not be, and cannot be, a movement of the type Whitaker has described. True, there may be some people who want to reorganise the WSF in that image. But the rejection of this type of movement does not justify the idea of the WSF being a square rented for free use. In between these two poles is the possibility and necessity of a new type of movement. The WSF, I believe, should develop itself as such a movement - *a movement devoted to generating and mediating interactions among diverse groups of people, deliberately igniting processes to build and develop inter-people alliances based on multilateral*

agreements that will form the body of the people's charter for global people's self-rule.

Is such an effort a 'movement'? I think this is exactly what people mean when they use the term, a 'movement of movements'. This coinage vaguely implies cooperation among various movements but can be understood as only a temporary, utilitarian cooperation. I think it can mean far more.

The WSF has created excellent possibilities for a new type of movement to emerge. In fact numerous workshops and other events in the arena offer various issue-, sector-, class-, gender- and otherwise-based movements to meet, develop common platforms, and common action. But systematic efforts of the WSF to encourage inter-movement politics, it appears to me, have been absent or minimal. As far as I know, meetings of social movements which used to be held as voluntary projects were not intended, nor were they appropriate, as occasions to facilitate serious, patient discussion and negotiation for transborder alliance- building. Setting dates for worldwide action and agreeing on general goals, it seems, was the utmost that social movement gatherings could aim at. It is time for us to clearly recognise inter-movement politics, and for that matter inter-people politics, in their own right, as new dimensions of movement.

I think the time is ripe for change. The Bush administration ironically gave us a focus - the war - while the WTO gave us another focus - neoliberal globalisation. The WSF functioned as an effective arena where, by the momentum of huge convergences, people emerged as 'another superpower', making their presence felt. But that stimulus is gone with the downfall of Bush, leaving Empire and global capitalism bogged down, so that the hostile global foci that have so far facilitated people's mobilisations have, equally, become less visible. Instead of constituting ourselves chiefly by reacting to the global power, we need to find ways to constitute ourselves, among ourselves, through the medium of a movement of movements.

Notes :

● [i] The contents of the 1989 PP21 program are covered in AMPO Vol 21, Nos 1-2 ('Steps into People's Century'); of the 1992 Thai PP21 in AMPO Vol 24, No 3; and of the 1996 programme in AMPO Vol 27, No 2; available from the Pacific-Asia Resource Center (PARC), Toyo Bldg, 3F, 1-7-1 Kanda Awaji-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0063 Japan; Phone: +81 3 5209 3455; Fax: +81 3 5209 3453; Email : ampo@parc-jp.org. The Keynote address by Muto Ichiyo to the Minamata conference is reprinted in Jeremy Brecher et al, eds, Global Visions, South End Press, 1993; major documents and declarations from 1989 through 1996 were published in a book form in Hong Kong in 1997 Copy availability can be checked with PARC in Tokyo; also for major statements from PP21 convergences go to www.ppjaponesia.org/

● [ii]Jun Ui ed.," Industrial pollution in Japan," United Nations University Press, Tokyo, 1992; Michiko Ishimure, translated by Livia Monnet,"Paradise in the Sea of Sorrow: Our Minamata Disease," Michigan Classics in Japanese Studies, No.25

● [iii] Transborder participatory democracy is (a) worldwide democracy practiced by the people of the world and (b) the right of the people to participate in any decisions that affect them, regardless of where those decisions are made. This concept was proposed by Muto Ichiyo in the keynote to the 1989 PP21 Minamata gathering.

● [iv] Go to www.ppjaponesia.org for Muto's paper to the 2002 PP21 general assembly.

● [v] Quotes in this paragraph are from Muto's keynote speech at PP21 Minama gathering; see endnotes2 and 12.

● [vi] Muto, 'Alliance of Hope and Challenges of Global Democracy', Ecumenical Review, World Council of Churches, Jan 1994.

● [vii] Boaventura de Souza Santos, 'The World Social Forum and the Global Left', http://www.forumsocialmundial.org

● [viii] Chico Whitaker, 'The WSF As Open Space', Jai Sen et al, eds, World Social Forum : Challenging Empires, Viveka Foundation, 2004, pp 112-3

MUTO ICHIYO is an activist-writer on political and social affairs, national and global. Born in 1931 in Tokyo, he joined the student movement and peace movement in the 1950s; was active in the anti-Vietnam War movement in the 1960s; founded the English journals AMPO (1969) and the Pacific-Asia Resources Center (1973); initiated the People's Plan 21 in the 1980s, and in the 1990s founded the People's Plan Study Group (PPSG) of which he served as a co-president until 2007. He taught at the sociology department of the State University of New York at Binghamton, in the US, during the 1980s-90s. E-mail: mutoi@mrj.biglobe.ne.jp

Ethical Governance: Myth Or Reality?

Ali Ahmed Ziauddin

Power and morality were never quite compatible except for very brief periods intermittently in different regions and ages during five millennia old human civilisation. The mythical governance of lord Ram of India, the sage kings, Yao, Shun, and Yu of China and King Arthur of England will definitely enter this list. But in historical times backed by archeological evidence and written records perhaps only three will make into this list despite competing claims otherwise; Asoka, who ruled an empire, Pericles, and Muhammad, both of whom ruled city states. Whether mythical or historical, all however followed ethical maxims emitting from moral teachings of religions.

From antiquity until modern times religions provided necessary political, legal, moral, and socio-economic guidance in all organized societies. Laws pertaining to ethics were integral part in governance. Of course, this definitely doesn't mean the respective rulers abided by these maxims. They operated on the axis of power; manipulating ethical/moral maxims for the benefit of individual/coterie/clan/class. But despite abusing and making a mockery of all the ethical laws they could not get rid of it, probably they didn't want to either, it was easier to fool people this way. These rulers claimed to have divine sanctions to govern their respective domains while in this world. They exercised absolute power over life, property, and social relation of the ordinary people. Such a sordid tale endured for several millennia until overthrown by series of upheavals rather socio-political revolutions of 18-19 centuries.

A new age was ushered in, completely different from all earlier ones in respect to organizing societies. Rigid religious dogmas as preached and controlled by the clerics that had long held societies hostage in partnership with the rulers were slowly discarded. That system had rotted to the core; that's why when it was uprooted the ethical maxims emitting from religions were also replaced by a new socio-political order that offered rules/regulations for equitable and accountable governance based on human reason. But the economic structure of this new society was based on unregulated greed otherwise known as monopoly capitalism. So in course of time all the professed secular logic for practicing ethical concerns in governance was glossed over to accommodate profit. And now this is the supreme global order.

Is ethical governance at all possible? Perhaps to a certain extent in welfare governments. But as the saying goes no system is perfect, they too have pitfalls like the few functional ones namely the Nordic states. When the push comes to shove they do not hesitate to join the alliance of the imperial powers to wage war on recalcitrant states unwilling to bend to their diktats. So they too have a double face. These acts are euphemistically called humanitarian interventions to put the victim state back on track. But rest of the world knows what they really are; the same old colonial trick to preserve Western control over the entire world or as far as possible. But when it comes to social welfare programmes the Nordic states spend far more than others. And there are two other models, one socialist, other Islamic, namely China, and Saudi Arabia. While both have functional welfare systems their intolerance of dissent, and brutal methods of suppression sucks away the heart and soul of human existence that craves liberty above all.

If these are the best examples of apparently functional welfare states; where else to look for one? The first criterion of a welfare state is paramount concern for humanity. But It won't come from thin air; societies need to strive for it. And the first step towards that goal for the states is to install stiff rules/regulations to control the present greedy, self destructive monopoly capitalism. It will slowly pave the way for a more equitable society and accountable governance that will have ethical concerns. In order to build such a future constant pressure from all possible avenues/sectors forming a rainbow coalition is imperative. It's these pressures that will eventually help create ethical societies.

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Why is the world silent about China's Uyghur Muslims?

Ekraj Sabur

In recent years, in this age of information technology, the atrocious reality of the Uyghur Muslim minority in China's autonomous region of Xinjiang has been fed to the palms and appears before the eyes of the global citizens via frequently leaked images and published reports on the mainstream and social media in recent years. Nonetheless, the global responses from individuals and states seem far less significant as compared with the outrage expressed over human rights violations in Yemen, Syria, Palestine, Myanmar and elsewhere. Perhaps, information overload in a world filled with violence might be one of the reasons which puzzles and hinders the world conscience, and prevents frustrated citizens and their leaders alike from digesting, prioritizing or even believing the evidence presented, which ultimately influences and determines their action and inaction. While the West spearheaded by the US, European Union and Australia have become vocal in their condemnation of China over the plight of Uyghur in the international arena, not much voice of complaint or protestis heard from the leaders in the Muslim world. There is more to the information overload which explains the inaction and insufficient responses. This article analyzes the factors which cause such inaction and silence on the plight of Uyghur Muslim minority in China.

Mysterious Land

Beijing's iron fist control and surveillance make China a land of mystery where truth acquisition is uneasy. The absence of well-established truth is the key hindrance to raise global awareness and mobiliz collective international solidarity to protect the rights of China's Turkish-speaking Muslim minority of Central Asian origin. Despite the evidence and oral testimonies of the Uyghur surviving witnesses fleeing their motherland into exile, their first-hand account of the mass ethno-religious violence seems insufficient to convince leaders in the Muslim world. The well-established, yet unresolved crises yielding adverse spillover effects on the internal affairs of Muslim states such as Israel-occupied Palestine, Yemen, Syria and Iraq. Myanmar's Rohingya exodus, has overwhelmed the Muslim political elites with humanitarian concerns and security concerns. This, intertwined with the image of China as an emerging power to wrestle the war-mongering American hegemony, led many ordinary citizens to doubt the authenticity of both, the content and intention of the Western power camp affiliated pro-human rights groups and journalists risking lives to document and expose the plight of the Uyghur Muslims.

In China, the Chinese government's divide and rule policy is so effective that the Chinese Muslim populace is deeply polarized. Unlike the Uyghur who strongly inherit Central Asian cultural and Muslim heritage, the Hui Muslims residing across the country are considered by the government as moderate and assimilative to the Han dominant Chinese society. The latter enjoy more freedom and do not challenge the Chinese state's unitary policy. The media control and censorship not only disallowed the cries of the Uyghur to be heard by their brethren, but even tainted them as terrorists and a threat to the national security, making them further estranged and alienated in their own country. Such rigid state-controlled media propaganda led to the societal endorsement of a heavy-handed approach to suppress the Uyghur.

The rapid economic growth in China resulting in an increase in the middle class is another factor which undermines much of Han ability Majority, and to a large extent, the Hui, to comprehend and believe that the state brutality against the Uyghur is real and possible in their country in this century. Furious Chinese responses to the Uyghur coverage on social media in defense of the Chinese government further caused confusion amongst the external observers.

From Unipolar to Multipolar New World Order: Trade over Ethics

The decline of the American hegemony due to its failed domestic and international capitalist policies, particularly, the Iraq war in 2003 marks the end of a unipolar world. The electoral victoryof President Donald Trump and his nationalist economic policies

such as Americans first, with less global hegemonic ambition, are resonant with the sentiment of many angry and frustrated working middle-class Americans, reaffirming the failure of the American capitalist system. Subsequently, the world began to observe the new regional dynamic with the new era of multi-polarity where nation states are freely partnering with other emerging powers. China as a rising global power has formed economic and security alliances with several countries both in the pro and anti-American camps across the world. The Chinese global project of the Belt and the Road Initiative (BRI), financed by its international financial institution, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has conditioned the countries from Asia to Africa to be part of the global value chain which primarily serves the interest of Chinese investors and, of course, the elites in the host countries. Some of the investments include 210 million USD Suez Canal Economic Zone in Egypt, 53 billion USD trade deal with United Arab Emirate, and a 65 billion USD oil deal with Saudi Arabia, while boosting its investment in Israel and sustaining a strong trade partnership with Iran.

Aside from its close tie with US allies in the Middle East, China continues strengthening its geopolitical-economic interests through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), an economic and security alliance membered by mostly Eurasian nations, most of whom are considered illiberal in their governance. China and Russia attempt to orient SCO to supersede NATO and EU. The aforementioned reality reflects both a new balance of power and the rise of Chinese imperialism that has influence over other countries regardless of their economic orientations. With economic strength, China managed to become the second largest funder to the United Nations. Together with Russia, it attempts to weaken UN's human rights protection apparatus by defunding the human rights posts.

Global Muslim Leadership in Crisis

It's an undeniable truth that most of the Muslim countries share authoritarian characteristic where subjugation of their own civilians is common. The condemnation and protest against China on the plight of its Muslim minority would be counterproductive. Not only would the act be seen as interference of China's internal affairs, but the protesting states who have no credibility to speak for human rights may also face the backlash for their internal malfeasance. This is also true with Turkey whose President, is praised by many Muslims across the world for his strong support of the Muslim minorities in non-Muslim majority countries including the Uyghur. Given their shared ethno-religious and linguistic identities, the Uyghur gained more sympathy and solidarity from the Turkish society where they were granted asylum. Nonetheless, there are multiple factors which undermine Turkey's role in addressing the humanitarian crisis of Uyghur. First, the Turkish government's massive crackdown on domestic political opponents has disqualified Turkey as a credible human rights defender. Second, Uyghur is not the only Turkish-speaking minority group facing suppression. Turkey is often expected to extend its hand to the Turkish-speaking minorities in Eurasia and Caucasus. Its support of the Azeri in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Armenia has jeopardized its relationship with Russia. Turkey has become more careful in its international role, particularly in avoiding confrontation with its few remaining allies. This is reflected in Turkey's less vocal intervention over Nagorno-Karabakh upon the normalization of Russia and Turkey diplomatic ties. Third, China, like Russia is one of the few remaining friends of Turkey. Having conflict with China over Uyghur would cause more harm to the Turkey's international status quo. The recent political stance of Turkey with China has been compromising as manifested in the crackdown on the pro-Uyghur media and movements in Turkey.

These developments, perhaps explain the silence and inaction of the Muslim world on the Uyghur. Protesting against China on the treatment of its minority at this moment, in the eyes of Muslim leaders, including Turkey, is presumably not worth losing economic privilege and security alliance. China is a big power, not esy to deal with, and its escalating global strength is seen as the alternative to leverage against the US which is presently in its weakest position ever.

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The Uighur Question: A Civil Society Solution

Dr. Chandra Muzaffar

In the last few months, the International Movement for a Just World (JUST) like so many other civil society groups in various parts of the world has been inundated with videos and articles from different sources alleging cruel persecution and harsh oppression of the Uighur Muslim minority in Xinjiang province in the Western part of China. It is alleged that the Chinese government views the Uighur and also some other Muslim groups such as the Kazakhs and Kyrgyzas as threats to national security given their purported links to terrorism and separatist insurgency. Even a UN human rights panel had issued a report in August 2018 that stated that in order to wean them away from terrorism "as many as 2 million people may have been forced into a vast network of detention camps" in Xinjiang.

In these camps, according to dissident Uighurs, there is a systematic effort to brainwash the detainees. The propaganda is not just about immunising them against militancy or separatist ideologies. They are required it is alleged to abdicate Islamic prohibitions and even to renounce their faith. Torture is apparently common in these camps and even deaths have occurred. Some critics have gone so far as to describe the targeting of the Uighurs as "the most brutal repression the regime has undertaken since the Cultural Revolution."

The Chinese authorities have denied vehemently these allegations. They reject any suggestion that there has been forced renunciation of Islam in the camps. They admit though that there are re-education centres but focused entirely on combating terrorism, religious extremism and separatism.

These denials have not convinced the critics especially those from civil society in the West and the East. They persist with their allegations and are disappointed that governments as a whole have chosen to keep quiet about the atrocities supposedly committed by the Chinese authorities. They attribute their silence to the governments' fear that China with its huge economic clout will make things difficult for countries that have become dependent upon Chinese investments and trade for their own economic well-being.

At the same time it is equally true that China is being attacked much more in the media and by civil society groups today than in the past because of its phenomenal rise as a global power. The forces that dominate the present global system resent this since they are hell-bent on perpetuating their hegemony. This is why they are using the media and civil society to expose flaws and foibles in Chinese governance. How Beijing treats the Uighurs and other minorities is perhaps one of those flaws that is susceptible to manipulation and distortion. And indeed, there has been a great deal of exaggeration and hyperbole in the media about the plight of the Uighurs. This does not mean however that the real challenges confronting the Uighurs and other minorities should be glossed over.

To convince everyone that the Chinese government is willing to address genuine Uighur grievances it should invite representatives from civil society in a number of Muslim majority countries to undertake a fact-finding mission to Xinjiang whose primary purpose would be to examine and analyse the actual situation on the ground facing the Uighur and other alleged victims of persecution. The mission should have maximum access to the Uighur community and to the authorities in the province. Members of the mission should have the full freedom to visit the re-education centres and conduct interviews with detainees past and present. The mission's report should be submitted to not only the authorities in Xinjiang and to the leaders of the Uighur community but also to the government in Beijing. The countries from which the members of the mission are drawn and the world at large should also have full access to its findings.Most of all, one hopes that if the recommendations are feasible, Beijing and Xinjiang will try to implement them with sincere trust.If that is done, it is quite conceivable that the chapter on the Uighurs will be brought to a close.

It is in Beijing's interest to resolve the Uighur issue in such a manner that the identity and dignity of the Uighurs and other minorities in Xinjiang are protected and enhanced. If injustices against Uighurs real or perceived are allowed to fester much longer, it may erode China's standing among Muslim majority countries. This is especially so since the Hui, Muslims among the majority Han people, it is alleged, are also now being targeted by the authorities.

As negative perceptions of the Chinese government's treatment of the Uighurs and other Muslims grow, there could be repercussions in the medium and long-term for China's Belt Road Initiative (BRI) since it involves a large number of countries with substantial Muslim populations. China is also heavily dependent upon the import of oil from Muslim countries. There are already civil society groups in a couple of these countries which are unhappy about Beijing's attitude towards the Uighurs and Muslims in general. They are demanding action against Beijing.

Viewed in this context, resolving Uighur challenges immediately may well secure China's economic position and fortify its global role.

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Selfish

Dr. Mohamed Yunus Yasin

Human perceives the world around him,
The world radiates from him,
Nothing but his perception,
For the world is perceived by the self,
From the eyes that receives the light,
To the brain the interprets his sight,
To each his own world,
No two worlds are the same,

To some it is beautiful,
To others not so,
And some think it is abundant,
But some think there is not enough,
Some find it full of goodness and ease,
Some think it is dreadful and difficult,
For every positive there is a negative,
All but man's perception,

This is a world which is human centric,
For it is susceptible to his action,
Good or bad,
And even these is but a perception,
One man's bad is another's good,
Good could be his need,
Good can be his greed,
The is no absolutes in his mind,
Except the pursuits of happiness,
Happiness he finds in wealth,
Money he tries to gain at all cost,
Money that drives the economy,
Modern economy that is in constant need to grow,
Grow to make only some rich,
But the majority remains poor and destitute,

Yet the natural world too has its own absolutes,
Like water that quenches thirst,
Food that gives sustenance,
Air which keeps creatures alive,
And fire that keeps him warm,
These are simple absolutes that no one can deny,

So it is our imperative to determine which is important,
Our wealth which we think gives us happiness,
Or nature's absolutes,
Without which we cannot exist,
And that is absolutely true.

Letter to the Editor

Reflecting on the articles of AMANA (Vol. 11, Issue 1, September 2018)

This is a very stimulating read. The article on the Quranic message of universalism and pluralism is excellent. It is a crime that the message is distorted by so many, just like Christianity has been over the centuries. This message needs a wider audience.

The several multi polar articles are interesting. China is certainly a new pole and unlikely to seek to be colonial as far as land is concerned. It even seems to be a reasonably just society. But it will undoubtedly exert financial colonial clout like the US. I discount any support for Russia which suffers as it always has at the hands of its own now-elected leadership. It is corrupt and hegemonic as Ukraine can attest. The Baltic Nations have every right to fear them. I am dismayed by the Trumpian 'America first' but I do think America gets way too much criticism. Without the American economic juggernaut, the world would be far poorer. India owes its huge increase in income to the US outsourcing transition - its what made the American workers resent it and elect Trump. India has come a long way but has so many internal issues, like those pointed out in Assam, that it will be a long time before it is ready to be a pole. I think we are light years away from a fair multi polar world. You just have to look at all the countries other than Europe and North America to see that dictatorship and corruption rules. Look at the Middle East, Africa, Venezuela. South Africa is sinking like Zimbabwe under its own corruption. I do not see any less of a wealth gap in corrupt countries than in developed ones - probably worse, including ASEAN countries. Even there we had the extraordinary expropriation of state funds in Malaysia. Why does anyone think these dictators, even when 'elected' are going to act in anyone's interests but their own?

It takes extraordinary leadership, like that exhibited by the US founding fathers and the democracies of Western Europe to develop a just society. Gandhi and Mandela are revered for this type of leadership. But for it to endure, it takes independent courts and police. Until countries can monitor behavior effectively, man's worst traits will prevail. It would be better to try to imitate the US than rail against it.

Mr. Anthony Coughlan
LOMEF Sponsor

The AMANA magazine was initiated in 2005 following suggestions made at the first round of the Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN) 'Peace Studies & Conflict Transformation' course. In Arabic, Amana means trust and embodies the primary objective of the publication in highlighting peace initiatives, peace collaboration, progressive Muslim action and inter-faith cooperation and understanding. To ensure a wide distribution range and to connect with grass-roots communities, AMANA is printed in English, Bahasa Indonesia and Thai.

AMAN supports holistic development through awareness building with an overall aim of mobilizing and sharing resources in order to help marganilized groups in Asia. AMAN aim to build understanding and solidarity among Muslims and other faith communities towards people's empowerment, human rights, justic and peace. With over 1500 members, the network of AMAN spans Asia and is coordinated from Bangkok, Thailand.

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Focus : Islam and peace; inter-faith partnerships; development initiatives; human rights; gender and peace.