



" Geography, <sup>may</sup> remain the same,  
history need not"

This year, when I was celebrating India's 75<sup>th</sup> Independence Day, watching flag hoisting by the honourable Prime Minister at Red Fort, my grandmother was in tears. When I asked if she was ok, she said, "Things have changed a lot since here birth."

The Britishers went, Indian became independent in 1947, her village has changed, her friends don't live there anymore, the society has changed.

This makes one ponder that is it not true that "change is the only constant of the world". Has not history changed? Has not laws changed? Has not world changed?

History Has changed

Looking back into Indian

Subcontinent in eighteenth century, it comprised of a vast land stretching from Lahore to Dhaka, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. British rule of Divide and Rule which seeded communalism in the struggle for freedom, led to free but partitioned nations in 1947.

This change is not restricted to India alone.

Japan in far east underwent transformation from Samurai domination to Meiji restoration and technological advancement. In 1945, Bombing of Hiroshima & Nagasaki changed the fate. But it rose out of ashes to become the developed pillar of Asia with a constant geography. India faced its challenge too.

Post Independence, India was struggling with poverty & hunger. It was dependent on the United States for food grain under PL480. It had literacy rate of less than 20% and life expectancy of 32 years. Has not

India's story changed? It is world's sixth largest economy of 3 trillion US\$ and aims to become 5 trillion economy in the coming years. It has life expectancy of 70 years and literacy rate of 74%. History changed not just its economy & growth but also the political system.

Politically, India <sup>had</sup> says a journey from medieval despotism of 1800's, to foreign subjugation under British to gradual demand for freedom under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawahar Lal Nehru & many more. It became a democracy, not the largest one, on 28<sup>th</sup> in 1950.

It has moved from single party dominance of 1960's to multiparty coalition and then a full fledged real democracy. For that matter Europe saw the transition from capitalism led industrialisation to Socialism in Eastern Europe.

This arose because of human ideas → human society. Now, there is a transition towards welfare state.

Society has seen transformation in multitude of spheres. From ancient women leaders Apala, Maitreyi contributing to Rigveda; to underplayed role in Manusmriti and Medieval subjugation. Women's role in Independence struggle in form of Laxmi Bai, Sarojini.

Naidu, Ram Gaidinli to leading the National Prime ministers and two presidents.

Many sections of society such as Dalits were subjugated to systematic social oppression, tribals were exploited and devoid of their traditional rights. This gave rise to revolts such as Santal revolts, reforms such as by Bissa Munda, political participation and now we have a Santal President inspiring generations of vulnerable sections of population to strive to change their history.

The change perpetuates to India's role in International arena.

In the past, the US put sanctions on India for Nuclear test. It denied India of wheat supply in 1960's as well. However, today India is a major US-defence partner, works with the US for civil nuclear projects. Both show multiple convergences in Indo Pacific, QUAD and other fora. Today India has a confident foreign policy to protect its National Interests.

Why does history change and not geography?

Geography tells about the territory, the physical settings - land, rivers, natural resources. Which remain static most of the time.

But history is associated with human beings, their interactions, their exchanges, their wars and their stories. The society, the culture and history continues to change.

Darwin has described this in biological terms as evolution. Like every living being, humans and their society change, and get better every generation. This is visible due to short span for which a man lives.

Even Hindu Mythology refers to Kalki as the god who destroys the world of human beings when Adharma increases. Then he

reestablishes Dharma with a new society in the same same land, the same constant geography. But this is an unamused question.

Is Geography always static?

This question is very relevant in today's context. "Gaia hypothesis" talks about how Earth impacts living beings & also the living beings impact the Earth.

Humans have proved it correct. We have changed the environment around us so much that it has become unsustainable. We are reared by the Disaster of Kerala floods of 2018 due to unchecked growth, deforestation in western ghats. We faced

138548\_52041\_1910104514\_(2022-08-20 11:07:42)

the challenges of extreme frequencies of drought, cyclone phaini vidisha, floods because of the way we not only changed our history, but also the geography & environment by climate change.

Hence, we need to focus on restoring the constancy of Mother Earth because we don't have the right to change geography around us.

A neverending lesson

History ~~change~~ has changed many times and in many spheres of life.

It will change in the future. Recently COVID-19 Pandemic influenced our life style, made us realise that

138548\_52041\_1910104514\_(2022-08-20 11:07:42)

there is a shared health of human,  
environment and wildlife called  
"ONE HEALTH".

History is undergoing change  
in Ukraine with an existential crisis,  
in Afghanistan for human rights,  
in Sri Lanka for sustainability. We  
need to work as a global family to  
ensure that the change of our story  
is for a better life, a better world..  
Hence, there is need to work for  
democracy, climate change, welfare  
and world peace. This is the ethos of  
India.

Talking to my grandmother  
about the changing society of India,  
I am reminded of how many

communities migrated to the subcontinent.  
The aryans, greeks, persians, arabs,  
latins, mughals<sup>came</sup> and changed it  
in every line and created what is  
called Hindustan by Feroz Ghalib.  
He <sup>correctly</sup> says that (in Urdu)

"Sarzamin-e-hind par  
aqran-e-alam ke "firaq"  
gafle basto gaya,  
Hindustan banta gaya."

[On the soil of hindustan, O Firaq!  
Caravans from all over the world  
Kept coming. And so was  
Hindustan made]

138548\_52041\_1910104514\_(2022-08-20 11:07:42)

PATRIARCHY ARISES OUT OF THE SAME CONSTELLATION  
THAT ENGAGES CASTEISM, RACISM AND COMMUNALISM

---

In 19th century Travancore Princely state, Ezhavas were downtrodden. Women of this toddy tapping caste were not allowed to cover their breasts without paying breast-tax called Mulakkaram. When, Nangeli was asked to pay her mulakkaram, she has no other way than to cut her breasts and offer them on plantain leaf to the tax collector.

A few decades later, African American section of population in the USA was facing the worst form of discrimination. On the day Supreme court banned racial segregation in public bus, Rosa Parks, a black woman

dared to ride in front of a Montgomery Alabama bus defying the racial segregation in American societies.

The first anecdote indicates the intersectionality of caste based discrimination and gender oppression creating an atmosphere of increase vulnerability for women of Ezhava caste. The second anecdote indicates <sup>that</sup> the need to break racial segregation and gender based discrimination together. Both the stories indicate that the problems of Patriarchy, caste, religion and even communalism ARISE FROM THE SAME CONSTELLATION OF IDEOLOGIES.

138548\_52041\_1910104514\_(2022-08-20 11:07:42)

PATRIARCHY refers to the system of "Father's Rule" wherein male dominate both the public and the private sphere of life. This results in systematic discrimination against women, suppression of their opportunities to, control of their choices.

A similar systematic discrimination can be observed in CASTEISM when it is based on birth-led caste, that defines your social hierarchy, leads to discrimination and oppression of the ones at the lowest rung of this artificial arrangement. RACISM follows a belief system that certain races are superior, hence need to dominate others. Finally, COMMUNALISM makes one's own religions

identity superior to that of other resulting in intolerance to other belief system.

A common peculiarity that can be seen in these systems is that they derive their legitimacy from an artificially created idea of supremacy of certain section, be it male, higher caste, superior race or own religion. This superior position in hierarchy of society deems to give them the freedom to suppress others opinion, intolerance, discrimination against them and oppression.

A long period of practice of this phenomenon leads to normalisation of the discrimination based on artificial hierarchy.

The most interesting aspect for these systems is how they are interconnected and come down to patriarchy. This can be explained in Indian caste system context -

Caste based hierarchy originally was meant for division of labour, differential control of resources such as cattle in vedic age and agricultural land & labour in post-vedic age.

In order to maintain static hierarchy & control over resources, higher caste controlled the reproduction of women. This allowed marriage from lower caste women to upper caste, but not the other way round, resulting in control of women's choices and discrimination.

This caste - patriarchal harmony

continues in today's India. Recently, Rajeshwari Sawankumar, President of a grampanchayat in Cuddalore in Tamil Nadu, was asked to sit on the floor, because she belonged to lower caste.

In South African context, the percentage of women who have faced sexual abuse is extremely high for Black women even after three decades after Apartheid regime. In the US, Michael Brown, a black woman was shot dead. This led to #Blacklivesmatter.

~~It's~~ Communal violence results into greater violence in the form of rapes, abuses against women. This happened during partition in 1947, and has been depicted

# U.P.S.C.

138548\_52041\_1910104514\_(2022-08-20 11:07:42)

(Question No.)

इस भाग में कुछ  
न लिखें  
(Don't write anything  
in this part)

on Indian side through the Book - Ghadas Pinjar  
and on Pakistani side by Hasan Bano Dastan.  
It was remembered during Sri Lankan  
civil war against Tamil women and  
post 1992 religious violence against Hindu  
women in Bangladesh as depicted by  
Tasleema Nashreen in her Book - Lajja.

Intersectionality has not only  
resulted in discrimination and violence.  
Nazi Germany also used patriarchal  
sex as an instrument to strengthen its  
"Eugenics" by control of whom German women  
married. Mother, wife and other roles  
played by women in a male-led society  
is used to propagate and perpetuate other  
forms of discrimination.

Similarly, Communism and Capitalism use women as the mark of their presence. Intersectionality also results in increased vulnerabilities as in Afghanistan, women discrimination under Taliban. As per UN reports, lack of mobility of women leads to higher vulnerabilities of women even in the sphere of climate change, which is based on a difference between Developed and developing countries.

In Indian society, women are devoid of equal rights to education, higher female girls child drop out rates, lower female students in higher ~~std~~ education, despite greater success of girl child in CBSE class X exams, UPSC toppers being.

women indicate the system of lack of opportunities for women.

When it comes to female labour force participation ratio it has declined to 21% which is one of the lowest in South Asia. Women participation in science in India is one of the lowest. Despite 33% reservation in Panchayat Raj institutions, women participation in political sphere is overshadowed by Panchayat patis.

This picture of women becomes gloomier when we look into the dropout rates of tribal girl child, higher education representation of dalit women and political representation of minority women.

# U.P.O.

सं  
No.)

Indian leaders of freedom struggle recognised this intersectorality and focused on women empowerment. Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar emphasised "I measure the progress of a society by the degree of progress which women have achieved". Periyar in Tamil Nadu while fighting against caste based discrimination, Mahatma Gandhi when nurturing religious harmony focused on freedom of choices of women. Women empowerment is the key to addressal of any systematic discrimination.

Nordic countries such as Sweden, Norway are the best example for women empowerment. This has resulted in an egalitarian society and

Indian constitution imbibes this principle by emphasising equality in Article 14, focused on non discrimination in Article 15 with emphasis for women in Article 15(3). Article 21 ensures the principle of right to equal life and liberty for all and put the responsibility on the state ensure equal opportunities, equal pay for women. The government for last 75 years has focussed on these aspects by various policy measures such as Beti Bachha Beti Padhao, Sakshanta Abhiyan, maternity Benefit Act, Sexual Harassment at workplace act. and many more policy and implementational schemes.

These have resulted in improved sex ratio (child sex ratio), better health, higher representation of women. India 'got its

# U.P.S.C.

प्रश्न संख्या  
(Question No.)

first tribal woman president, 'Draupadi  
Murmu, which will act as an inspiration  
to overcome the evil of casteism, racism  
, communalism and moreover patrilarchy and  
help us cover a long path to an  
egalitarian society imagined by our forefathers.

Long years ago we made a  
brist with destiny, to create a society where  
caste and communal barriers have faded away,  
where women are free of chains of patrilarchy,  
and now the time has come, when we  
shall redeem our pledge and make a  
nation where suppressed souls find utterance.