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Revitalizing MSME Sector in India: Challenges and the Road Ahead

Srirang K Jha* and Ashish Kumar**

ABSTRACT
This article provides a razor-sharp commentary on the recent announcement of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman regarding revival of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME sector) in the wake of Covid-19 crisis. The nation-wide lockdown induced by the deadly pandemic had almost crippled the MSME sector due to suspension of business operations, disruptions in the supply chain, loss of business, large scale reverse migration by the workers and above all, cash flow crisis. As a huge percentage of the MSME sector enterprises fall under micro and small units, vulnerability to external shocks are quite natural. Hence the government came forward to facilitate revitalization of the MSME sector through a slew of interventions. However, the relief package for the MSME sector announced by the government was criticized for its lack of sensitivity towards the specific needs of the micro and small enterprises. Moreover, some of the stakeholders were also not appreciative of the new classification of MSMEs.

KEYWORDS: MSME, Covid-19, India

INTRODUCTION
Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector is currently at the receiving end due to the nation-wide lockdown since 24 March 2020 in the wake of Covid-19. Both the entrepreneurs and the workers have been walloped by the sudden closure of MSME sector so much so that an existential crisis has arisen. According to a survey conducted by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industries (FICCI), 60% of the MSMEs are deeply affected (Muralidharan, 2020).

The MSME sector is struggling for survival as substantial unpaid bills are lying in the various departments of the government of India, state governments, public sector undertakings as well as large private establishments. The predicament of MSME sector is likely to have catastrophic

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implications for all the stakeholders. There are an estimated 6.33 crore unincorporated MSMEs engaged in non-agricultural economic activities, employing 11 crore persons across the country, contributing nearly 30 per cent of India’s gross domestic product and close to half of the country’s total exports (Pandey and Pillai, 2020). According to another estimate, there are 67 million MSMEs in the country out of which 96.7% of them fall under micro-enterprises employing less than ten workers (Mehrotra, 2020).

Despite its volume, scale and expanse, the MSME sector is vulnerable and can quickly become unstable and unviable, particularly in the presence of external shocks (Ghosh, 2020). Micro businesses (fewer than ten employees) and growing businesses (zero to five years old) are most vulnerable across all sectors (Liu and Parilla, 2020). As the small businesses have more significant credit constraints and are more sensitive to weak consumer demand, they are often hit hardest especially during Covid-19 like crisis resulting in minimal foot traffic and social interactions which are critical for such firms (Liu and Parilla, 2020). Shortage of funds is not the only constraint in the way of revival of MSMEs. According to a survey conducted by Mahratta Chamber of Commerce Industries and Agriculture (MCCIA), the majority of SMEs are working just on 20% capacity utilization due to unavailability of labour and supply chain disruption issues (Indian Express, 2020b). Small businesses have also been affected adversely due to Covid-19 even in some of the developed countries like the USA. According to a survey conducted by the National Federation of Independent Business (USA), 92% of the small businesses reported having been affected negatively due to the pandemic (Lake, 2020).

**INTERVENTIONS FOR REVITALIZATION OF MSME SECTOR**
The first thing that the Government of India did to rejuvenate MSME sector in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic was redefining the classification of micro, small and medium enterprises as under:

- A micro-enterprise, where the investment in Plant and Machinery or Equipment does not exceed one crore rupees and turnover does not exceed five crore rupees;
- A small enterprise, where the investment in Plant and Machinery or Equipment does not exceed ten crore rupees and turnover does not exceed fifty crore rupees;
- A medium enterprise, where the investment in Plant and Machinery or Equipment does not exceed fifty crore rupees and turnover does not exceed two hundred and fifty crore rupees (Govt. of India, 2020).

The Government of India has announced several measures for stimulating the MSME sector facing a tough time due to nation-wide lockdown to contain the rapid spread of Covid-19. Table 1 presents a summary view of major interventions to put the MSME sector back on track and their concomitant implications.

**Table 1: Major Interventions for Revival of MSME Sector and Concomitant Implications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Interventions</th>
<th>Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Rs. 3 lakh crores collateral free automatic loans for businesses including MSMEs</td>
<td>45 lakh units likely to resume business activity and safeguard jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Rs. 20,000 crore subordinate debt for MSMEs</td>
<td>2 lakh MSMEs likely to benefit</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Rs. 50,000 crore equity infusion through MSME</td>
<td>Likely to help expand MSME size and</td>
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</table>
**Fund of Funds** encourage them to get listed in stock exchanges

4. Global tender to be disallowed up to Rs. 200 crores
   - Increased business opportunities for MSMEs
   - Unfair competition from foreign companies likely to be reduced, thus increasing the opportunities for Indian MSMEs to win the bids

5. E-market linkage for MSMEs to be promoted to act as a replacement for trade fairs and exhibitions.
   - Increased business opportunities for MSMEs

6. Rs. 2500 crores EPF support for business and workers for three more months
   - Liquidity relief likely to 3.67 lakh establishments having 72.22 lakh employees

7. EPF contributions reduced for businesses and workers for 3 months to the tune of Rs. 6750 crores
   - Relief likely to about 6.5 lakh establishments having about 4.3 crore employees covered under EPFO

[Based on Atmanirbhar Presentation Part 1: Businesses including MSMEs, Govt. of India, 2020]

**CRITIQUE**

Change in the definition of the MSMEs has raised the eyebrows of several stakeholders including Swadeshi Jagran Manch and Laghu Udyog Bharti – the two organizations which are ideologically close to ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. A primary concern of these lobby groups is that the turnover-based classification of MSME is likely to benefit the traders and assemblers who import from China at the cost of local manufacturers (Borpuzari, 2020). Further, in the opinion of Council of Leather Exports, classification of MSMEs should have been based either on investment or turnover as labour oriented sectors with Rs 20 crore investment in plant and machinery may achieve even Rs 500 crore turnover, which has now been capped at Rs 100 crore only (Borpuzari, 2020). Also, a considerable turnover is achieved due to the very nature of the final product, even with a much smaller investment in plant and machinery in specific sectors like the gems and jewellery and at the same time, some sectors have higher capital investments but lower turnovers (Ghosh, 2020).

Thus the stakeholders have mostly not appreciated the forward-looking move of the Government of India to change the classification of the MSMEs. While the new definitions do offer some privileges to MSMEs, in many cases, these cripple their operations too as in case of the global investment of the MSMEs, if it is more than the prescribed limit; they would no longer be able to enjoy the relaxations meant for them (Borpuzari, 2020). As such, for many firms, if either their investment increases or turnover increases, they will lose the status of an MSME – the new changes are not as beneficial to the sector as they could have been because the limit on turnover has been kept so less (Borpuzari, 2020). According to Ghosh (2020), the turnover criterion might provide an incentive to under-report and qualify as an MSME; though, under-reporting investment size is also a possible route for a unit to remain classified as an MSME.

Moreover, the announcement of the relief package for MSME Sector has received a mixed reaction from the stakeholders who had expected a better deal in terms of cash in hands in the form of sops. However, the relief package of the Government of India has mostly come across as cosmetic. The
MSME owners have severe concerns about the implementation of the relief package announced by the Government of India in word and spirit. In order to make the plan for revival of MSME successful on the ground, the government needs to closely monitor to ensure that banks transmit credit to the needy business units in the sector (Indian Express, 2020b). Moreover, the government departments, public sector undertaking and the other business establishments need to clear all the outstanding dues immediately to provide a fresh lease of life to the MSMEs without pushing them further to a debt-trap even if the government has come about a guarantor for the loans promised under the revival relief package. Expecting businesses and industries to avail additional loans at a time when there has been a severe reduction or evaporation of their incomes was like rubbing salt to their wound (Indian Express, 2020a).

Another concern about the viability of the relief package for MSME is the eligibility norms. It is believed in some quarters that micro-enterprises which comprise 99.4% of the 6.3 crores registered MSMEs in the country, may fall out of the eligibility criterion to get any benefits (Indian Express, 2020a). Interestingly, these micro enterprises employ 97% of the workforce in the sector, comprising 10.76 crore workers (Indian Express, 2020a). If the relief package fails to support the micro-enterprises, the whole purpose of the MSME relief package will be defeated even if some of them may benefit from the revival plan. Except for lip service, so far, not much attention has been paid exclusively to the micro sector’s viability, working capital requirements, credit leveraging capacities, or its market access (Ghosh, 2020).

Anyway, the loan-based solutions may not work especially for the small enterprises (Chakrabarty, 2020). The government has kept aside its welfare-oriented stance in supporting the micro and small scale industries while promoting a market-based solution to the current crisis primarily in the form credits guaranteed by the government. Many stakeholders feel that the risk-averse banks may not be enthusiastic in obliging the owners of micro and small enterprises for want of necessary collaterals even though the government’s guarantee is there as a cover for such advances.

Moreover, the MSME sector cannot revive and thrive during the current scenario without augmented demand for products and services. As such, the mood of the people in the country is very low due to Covid-19. Already, so many people have lost their jobs or reeling under income insecurity. Even if the MSMEs are enabled to commence their business operations in terms of manufacturing and service offerings, there are hardly any takers in the market. Hence, without enhancing the spending capabilities of the consumers, reviving the MSMEs looks quite challenging. In addition to the cash in the hands of the consumers for the successful revival of MSMEs, the government needs to reduce the GST to push the demands upwards. Increased consumption is the only way out for reviving the economy in general and the MSME sector in particular.

Unfortunately, the government’s revival plan for the MSME sector is focused on the supply side. Nayyar (2020) has rightly observed: ‘the design of this relief package seeks to focus on the supply side, with an emphasis on providing liquidity through lines of credit, where the RBI is providing as much as Rs 8 trillion, rather than on the demand side by stepping up government expenditure, to minimize the cost to the government. The arithmetic is imaginative — as much as Rs 10 trillion of the relief package will have to be financed by sources other than the Centre and the RBI. Where will resources to bridge this massive gap, 4.4 per cent of the GDP, come from?’
Nayyar (2020) has further observed: ‘this stress on the supply-side, while neglecting the demand-side, reveals a flawed understanding of economies in crisis and little recognition of the reality when a prolonged lockdown has brought the economy on the verge of collapse. Even in normal circumstances, the speed of adjustment of the supply-side is slow because supply responses take time. In contrast, the speed of adjustment on the demand-side as fast as incomes spent raise consumption demand without any time-lag. At present, if there is little or no increase in demand, supply responses will be slower than usual because producers would not wish to pile up inventories of unsold goods. In terms of the chicken-and-egg parable, demand must be revived first to kickstart the economy’.

It is also essential that the safety of the workers is given utmost priority. Already, the workers’ rights have been curtailed by several state governments by way of suspending the provisions of social security benefits under various laws. Indeed, repercussions would be disastrous in case the MSMEs compromise with the safety aspects on account of reducing their expenses. Unfortunately, there is hardly any monitoring mechanism in place to ensure compliance of safety guidelines issued by the Government of India. Best way to promote safety at the MSME workplaces is to provide cash incentives with more reliable vigilance on compliances. Any lapse in ensuring a safe work environment may unleash havoc and endanger the lives of all the stakeholders, especially when the Covid-19 spread is alarmingly very high. Leaving the safety issue at the discretion of MSME owners would be catastrophic. It is heartening to note that some of the MSMEs have stated working on fine-tuning their safety at workplace programs. Sanitizing premises, thermal scanning of employees and distancing are the new mantra as the industry sector tries playing its part in reviving the economy in the wake of the Covid-19 outbreak (Indian Express, 2020b).

PUBLIC POLICY IMPERATIVES
There may be three ways in which the government can support the revival of the MSMEs. The first is to empower the promoters/owners of the MSMEs so that they can overcome the after-shocks of Covid-19 on their own. Secondly, MSMEs can fight the battle of survival collectively through federations, chambers of commerce and industries and industry bodies. Third, the government should create a holistic ecosystem so that the markets can do the course correction and enable the MSMEs to come out of the adverse impacts of the pandemic successfully in a natural process.

Lake (2020) provides following suggestions to the promoters/owners of small businesses so that they can revive their enterprises:

- **Assessment of Financial Damage**: The promoters/owners need to assess the financial damage so that they can plan their financing needs to put their respective firms back on track;
- **Review of Business Plan**: The promoters/owners must take a second look at their business plans and see whether any course correction is required to revive their respective firms in the aftermath of Covid-19 pandemic;
- **Review of Funding Requirements**: Promoters/owners need to review their funding requirement in order to revive their firms after the pandemic;
- **Review of Budget to Account for New Spending**: While reopening the firms, they need to take caution to ensure the safety of workers, staff, managers and the visitors which might need extra spending;
• Timelines for Revival: The promoters/owners also need to set the timelines for the revival of their respective plans;
• Contingency Plan for Next Crisis: The promoters/owners also need to do planning for such crises in future.

Federations, chambers of commerce and industries and industry/sector-specific bodies need to work towards collective revival efforts instead of just looking up to the government for relief packages, subsidies and incentives. These bodies are quite vocal critics of the government measures. However, they have never showcased their efforts to revive the MSME sector in terms of conducting brainstorming sessions, scenario planning and strategic meetings to handle the crisis without the support of the government. Most of these bodies are subscription-based organizations, and collectively, they possess enormous resources and clout. However, they have not come forward with any concrete plans to help their members revive MSMEs in any significant way. It is high time that these bodies start reflecting on their roles and reposition them as proactive associations ready to march ahead in the collective interest of their members. Directly lobbying and critiquing the government may not help in the long run.

The government has the ultimate responsibility of putting a holistic ecosystem in place so that the MSMEs can survive and thrive in the post-Covid-19 crisis. The foremost task of the government in the revival of MSMEs is to bring back the workers who have migrated to their villages due to scare of the Covid-19. Assuring the workers of a safe work environment and providing the essential social security benefits are keys to bringing the workers back to work. Some of the state governments have suspended the labour laws for the time being, which may prove to be detrimental in terms of a steady supply of labour. The Government of India must take a decisive view on restoring the social security provisions of the labour laws. Secondly, the government also needs to iron out the supply chain disruptions so that the MSMEs can restart their business operations.

CONCLUSION
The MSMEs are facing an unusual crisis in the wake of Covid-19 in terms of suspended operations, labour shortage, supply-chain disruptions, lower demands for goods and services, cash flow crunch, among many other recurrent problems plaguing the sector. The MSME sector, the backbone of the economy that provides 25 per cent of employment, 32 per cent of the GDP and 45 per cent of exports, is unhappy despite the Rs 3 trillion line of credit for loans without collateral (Nayyar, 2020). In MSME stakeholders’ experience, lenders are not always supportive in extending loans, while buyers (central and state governments, public sector firms and the private sector) owe them as much as Rs 5 trillion which has resulted in a piquant situation in which they do not have the resources to pay wages or meet fixed costs on electricity, rent or interest during the lockdown period (Nayyar, 2020). MSME revival package announced by the Government of India has further dampened the mood of the stakeholders in the MSME sector.

Possibly, MSME stakeholders and opposition parties were expecting cash relief through direct benefit transfer as a one-time subsidy to all the micro and small enterprises which form the most significant chunk of the MSME sector. While the medium enterprises have different set of problems, and they can leverage the market-based solution of credit lines for surviving and thriving, micro and small enterprises certainly needed cash to overcome the present crisis. However, one should not forget that India has moved away from being a welfare state to a market economy since 1991. In the
market economy, the enterprises big or small have to tread their path and succeed despite all the odds.

Also, even the micro-entrepreneurs have an appetite for taking a risk, and that is why they are into some kind of business operations instead of working for a monthly salary. Besides indomitable risk abilities, these street-smart entrepreneurs have also learnt the tricks of organizing resources for their business operations. No wonder, there has been only 0.7% credit growth during April 2016—March 2020 in micro and small enterprises segment (Singh and Verma, 2020). Moreover, loan default rates in the MSME sector have been the lowest among the business loans (The Economic Times, 2020). So the Covid-19 crisis provides a unique opportunity to all of them to find their way out of the depressing scenario and write their destiny, not based on gratitude in the form of subsidies received from the state but to rely on their business acumen. Interestingly, unlike popular belief, the resilient micro and small entrepreneurs have not depended on bank credit too much.

REFERENCES


Assessing the Incidence of Forest Fires in Odisha

C R Das* and R K Panda**

ABSTRACT
Forest fire is a regular phenomenon in summer season throughout the state of Odisha as major chunk of forests prevailing in the state are dry deciduous type of forests. The forests of interior eastern and Southern parts of Odisha are more vulnerable to forest fires compared to those in the Eastern coastal parts. Long dry spell with scanty rainfall in those areas contribute to higher incidence of forest fires. The frequency and intensity of forest fires has tended to increase in recent years particularly after 1990s. Present paper attempts at analysing the incidence of forest fire in Odisha on the basis of secondary data from the Department of Forest and Environment, Govt. of Odisha. The trend of forest fire in Odisha based on time series data are analysed. The trend and incidence of forest fire in Odisha is spatially analysed taking into account forest circles, forest divisions and administrative districts. In the final section of the paper monetary loss as a result of forest fire in Odisha is estimated.

KEYWORDS: Forest Fire, Forest Cover, Trend of Forest Fire, Incidence of Forest Fire, Variation in the incidence of forest Fire, Monetary Loss of Forest Fire

INTRODUCTION
Forest fires have become an issue of global concern as in many countries, wildfires are burning larger areas, and fire seasons are growing longer due to a warming climate. With growing populations in and around the edges of forests, more lives and property are now at risk from fire. About 670,000 km² of forest land are burned each year on average (about 2 percent of the world’s forested areas, releasing billions of tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere, while hundreds of thousands of people are believed to die due to illnesses caused by exposure to smoke from forest fires and other landscape fires. Forest fire is one of the devastating elements predicted to increase as a result of climate change. Frequency and severity of forest fires, as well as areas affected by fires are also expected to increase. Climate change and other challenges threaten forests and their protective and productive functions. In this background management of forest fire has become an increasing issue of global concern. Forest fire is a regular phenomenon in summer season throughout the state of Odisha as major chunk of forests prevailing in the state are dry deciduous type of forests. The forests of interior eastern and Southern parts of Odisha are more vulnerable to forest fires compared to those in the Eastern coastal parts. Long dry spell with scanty rainfall in those areas contribute to higher incidence of forest fires. The frequency and intensity of forest fires has tended to increase in

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recent years particularly after 1990s\(^3\). Present paper attempts at analysing the incidence of forest fire in Odisha on the basis of secondary data from the Department of Forest and Environment, Govt. of Odisha. The trend of forest fire in Odisha based on time series data are analysed. The trend and incidence of forest fire in Odisha is spatially analysed taking into account forest circles, forest divisions and administrative districts. In the final section of the paper monetary loss as a result of forest fire in Odisha is estimated.

**FOREST COVER IN ODISHA COMPARED TO ALL INDIA LEVEL**

Based on interpretation of satellite data pertaining to Oct-Dec 2015, the forest cover in the state is 51,345 sq. km which is 32.98% of the state geographical area (Forest Survey of India, 2017). However, the recorded forest area is significantly higher than this, at 58,136 km\(^2\), which constitutes around 37.34 per cent of the geographical area of the state. In terms of forest canopy density classes, the state has 6967 sq. km under very dense forest, 21370 sq. km under moderately dense forest and 23008 sq. km under open forest. The total forest of the state decreased from 56661.1 sq. kms in 1975 to 48669.4 sq. kms in 2010 and correspondingly non-forest area comprising of scrub, grassland, wetland and others increased from 99045.9 sq. kms in 1975 to 107037.6 sq. kms in 2010.

However, in subsequent years as it can be observed from the chart -2.1 the forest area has increased. Forest Area land cover in terms forest areas comprising of semi evergreen, moist deciduous, dry deciduous and mangrove forest types as a percentage to total forest area of the state has decreased from 36.4 percent in the year 1975 to 31.3 percent in the year 2010. Correspondingly, land cover in terms of scrubs, grasslands, wetlands and other land use pattern has increased overall from 63.6 percent to 68.7 percent.

Forest Cover refers to all tree cover area irrespective of grown in private land or government land. In the year 1989, forest cover of the country was at 640134 sq kms which was 19.47 percent of the geographical area of the country. Forest cover as percentage to geographical area at all India level increased from 19.47 percent to 21.54 percent in the year 2017. Correspondingly, it decreased in Odisha from 34.14 percent in the year 1989 to 32.98 percent in the year 2017. Forest cover in Odisha as percentage to all India level Forest coverage is found decreased from 8.30 percent in the year 1989 to 7.25 percent.
percent in the year 2017.

### Table 1: Forest cover in India in Odisha (in Sq. Km)

<table>
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<th>India Geographic Area (Sq. Km)</th>
<th>Forest Cover (Sq. Km)</th>
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Source: Statistical Abstract of Odisha, 2012, p-260 and FSI of different Years

**INCIDENCE OF FOREST AND FOREST FIRE IN ODISHA COMPARED TO ALL INDIA SITUATION**

India is one of the few countries rich in bio diversity. As per the Forest Survey of India Report, 2017, India has forest cover of 767419 km², comprising 16.15 percent of the total geographic area of the country. The forest cover of the country is closely associated with various factors, both natural and man-made. The geology, climate, socio-economic conditions etc. are various such factors which directly or indirectly influence the forest and its bio-diversity. The state of Odisha is having 51345 km² of forest coverage accounting 32.98 percent of the total geographical area of the state and 7.25 percent forest cover to the overall forest coverage of the country in the year 2017.
Forest fires are as old as forests themselves and it is said that human discovery and knowledge on fire came out of “forest-fire”. Each year due to forest fire in many parts of the country, forest cover is adversely affected. However, due to more frequent occurrence of fires in vast majority of forest lands in many parts of the world, forest fires are largely being considered as threats for environment, socio-economic activity and also human life. Forests and forest ecosystems are of key importance for the social, economic and environmental viability and development of a country. It also plays significant roles in rural and urban communities by providing goods and services. They constitute an important economic factor and at the same time supply complex, dynamic, highly valuable natural ecosystems that also facilitate and protect biodiversity. According to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, annual carbon emissions from forest fires are in the range of 2.5 billion to 4.0 billion tons of CO$_2$ and smoke exposure from landscape fires (including forest fires) is estimated to cause 260,000 to 600,000 premature deaths annually. Moreover, forest fires result in the loss of forest goods such as timber, fuel wood, fodder, and non-timber forest products, and consequently, the loss of livelihoods for people directly dependent on forests, loss of natural habitat for wildlife, and soil erosion and damage to water supply.

**TREND OF FOREST FIRE IN ODISHA**

As it can be seen from the following table that during the period 2006 to 2016, number of forest fires in Odisha has increased at CAGR of 103.6 percent and there is an increasing linear trend over this period. However, the Year on Year (Y-O-Y) variations are found with fluctuations. Compared to the past year maximum increase is noticed in the year 2012 followed by the years 2016, 2009 and 2008. For other years, there is negative variation in the incidence of forest fires implying that compared to last year, number of forest fires decreased in those years. Out of the total 18481 forest fires reported during the period 2006 to 2016 in all forest circles of Odisha, about 13.9 percent occurred in the year 2012 followed by 13.6 percent in the year 2016, 11.1 percent in the year 2010 and 10.4 percent in the year 2009. During the 2006 to 2016, out of the overall forest fire incidence comparatively Maximum proportion of forest fires were witnessed in Berhampur circle followed by Koraput circle, Bhawanipatna circle and Rourkela circle. Further analysis indicates that there are 1680 number of forest fires per year in all forest circles in Odisha.
Table 2: Circle wise Number of forest fires in Odisha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.</th>
<th>Circles</th>
<th>Number of recorded forest fires</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
<th>% Share</th>
<th>Number of forest fires per Annum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Angul</td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>1172</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Baripada</td>
<td></td>
<td>78</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Brhampur</td>
<td></td>
<td>631</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>1019</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>6665</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bhawanipatna</td>
<td></td>
<td>241</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>2316</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bhubaneswar</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Koraput</td>
<td></td>
<td>453</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>4442</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Rourkela</td>
<td></td>
<td>85</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>42</td>
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<td>138</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>1608</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sambalpur</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>1616</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>1245</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>2055</td>
<td>772</td>
<td>2572</td>
<td>1837</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>1053</td>
<td>2553</td>
<td>18481</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1680</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Office of the PCCF, Bhubaneswar
DISTRICT WISE VARIATION IN THE INCIDENCE OF FOREST FIRES

Out of 30 administrative districts in the state, incidence of forest fires during the period 2006-2016 is noticed in 26 districts and the incidence is very negligible in Puri district as there was only one forest fire incidence during the period 2006 to 2016. Similarly, there is also lower incidence of forest fires in the districts Balasore, Bolangir, Jharsuguda, Nabarangapur and Sonepur as these districts individually account less than 1 percent of the overall incidence of forest fires in Odisha. Kandhamal district is found having the highest incidence of forest fires to the extent of about 21.3 percent of the overall forest fires in the state. Higher incidence of forest fires is also witnessed in the districts Rayagada, Kalahandi, Gajapati, Malkangiri, Koraput and Ganjam districts. These districts come under Berahampur, Koraput and Bhawanipatna circles which is evident from chart-2 and Table- 2.3. The CAGR of the number of forest fires for all the districts is found at 103.6 percent. Compared to the overall CAGR of all districts, in 16 districts there is higher CAGR and in 14 districts, there is lower CAGR.
Table 3: District wise incidence of forest fires

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.</th>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Number of forest fires by administrative districts in Odisha</th>
<th>CAGR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Angul</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Balasore</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bargarh</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bolangir</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Boudh</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cuttack</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Deogarh</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Dhenkanal</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Gajapati</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ganjam</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Jharsuguda</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Kalahandi</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Kandhamal</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Keonjhar</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Khurda</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Koraput</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Malkangiri</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Mayurbhanj</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Nabarangpur</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Nayagarh</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Nuapada</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Puri</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Rayagada</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Sambalpur</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Subarnapur</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Sundargarh</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Districts</td>
<td>1616</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>1245</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Source: Office of the PCCF, Bhubaneswar.]
INCIDENCE OF FOREST FIRES BY FOREST TYPES

With the objective of assessing which categories of forest are more prone towards forest fires, forest type wise incidence of forest fires in the year 2018 was analysed. As per the table given below, it is observed that out of the total number of fire incidences in all forest categories, about 68.5 percent of forest-fires occurred in reserved forests and 18.8 percent of fires were in protected reserve forests. Reserved forests and protected reserve forests jointly account around 87.3 percent of the overall forest fires in the year 2018.

Table 4: Occurrence of forest fires in 2018 by forest type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.</th>
<th>Forest Type</th>
<th>No of forest fires</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Demarcated Protected Forest (DPF)</td>
<td>1293</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Protected Forest (PF)</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Reserved Forest (RF)</td>
<td>14339</td>
<td>68.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Demarcated Protected Forest (Private)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>NF</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Protected Reserve Forest (PRF)</td>
<td>3934</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Un-demarcated Protected Forest (UDPF)</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20941</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AVERAGE FOREST AREA AFFECTED DUE TO FOREST FIRE

The entire forest area of the state is administered under eight forest circles. Out of the total 81531 number of forest fires erupted in all the forest circles in Odisha during the period 2010-2018, it is found that maximum proportion of forest fires were found in Berhampur circle followed by Koraput.
by City Forest, Bonai, Nayagarh, Bamara (W/L) and Ghumshar (North) divisions. In these six forest divisions, forest area affected per forest fire event is found at more than 2 hectares. For eight forest divisions- Hirakud (W/L), Athamalik, Chandaka (W/L), Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Jeypore, Bolangir and Subarnapur, the average forest area affected by forest fire is between the range of 1-2 hectares. For the remaining 34 forest divisions, it is found at less than 1 hectare. Taking into account the area affected per forest fire event, the forest divisions in terms of effects of forest fire, are classified as high intensity, moderate intensity and low intensity forest fires if the average forest area lost due to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Intensity Forest Fire Divisions</th>
<th>Moderate Intensity Forest Fire Divisions</th>
<th>Low Intensity Forest Fire Divisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Balasore (W/L) City Forest Bonai Nayagarh Bamara (W/L) Ghumshar (North)</td>
<td>• Hirakud (W/L Athamalik Chandaka (W/L) Sundargarh Jharsuguda Jeypore Bolangir Subarnapur</td>
<td>• Rest of the forest divisions in Odisha which are excluded from the list of high intensity and moderate intensity forest fire divisions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Forest area is more than 2 hectares, 1-2 hectares and less than 1 hectare respectively.

Number of forest fires, total area affected by forest fire for all the forest circles during the period 2010 to 2018 is separately shown for all the years for all forest circles. The trend of average forest area affected by forest fires in all the circles is shown in the chart given alongside. It is observed that overtime for all forest circles, the average affected forest area per forest fire event is showing a declining trend. By the end of 2018, affected forest area per forest fire event for all forest circles are found to have been less than 1 hectare. This signifies the efficiency improvement in managing forest fire by the forest department people. As it can be observed from the following chart average forest are affected per forest fire event for Angul, Baripada, Berhampur and Bhawanipatna was more than six hectares up to the year 2012 and subsequently it has declined to less than one hectares by the year 2018. Similarly, for all the remaining divisions also it has declined over years. At all Odisha level also a linearly declining trend of affected forest area per fire event is evidenced. During discussion with forest officials, it was informed that particularly after the introduction of CAMPA funds for forest protection, good deal of
efforts is directed forest fire prevention, mitigation and suppression for which the intensity of forest fire over time is showing a declining trend.

**ASSESSING THE MONETARY LOSS DUE TO FOREST FIRE**

From the previous analysis, it was found that annually on an average there are 1680 forest fires in Odisha and the average forest area affected per forest fire is calculated at 0.393 hectares. So roughly, 660 hectares of forest is affected by forest fires every year. In order to make the economic loss as a result of forest fire, the calculation for compensatory afforestation as adopted by the Central Empowered Committee (2006) is considered at 2018-19 prices. The details of calculation are as per the following table. While converting 2005-06 prices into 2018-19 prices cost of inflation index is taken into account and accordingly, 2018-19 economic cost per hectare of fire incidence is calculated and subsequently adjusted for 660 hectares of forest area affected by forest fire annually. In this process, annually the overall loss as a result of forest fire in Odisha is arrived at Rs.122.82 crores.

**Table 5: Annual Economic loss as a result of forest fire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.</th>
<th>Particulars of Cost</th>
<th>Cost (Rs. / Hectare in 2005-06 price level)</th>
<th>Cost (Rs. / Hectare in 2018-19 price level)</th>
<th>Overall, Forest fire cost (1680 no. of forest fires with average area of 0.393 hectares affected per fire incidence)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Value of timber and fuel wood</td>
<td>152830</td>
<td>365747</td>
<td>241393026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Value of NTFPS</td>
<td>7631</td>
<td>18262</td>
<td>12053067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Value of fodder</td>
<td>2958</td>
<td>7079</td>
<td>4672123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Value of Eco-tourism</td>
<td>65113</td>
<td>155826</td>
<td>102845149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Value of bio-prospecting</td>
<td>25553</td>
<td>61152</td>
<td>40360636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Value of Eco-logical services of forest</td>
<td>144332</td>
<td>345410</td>
<td>227970544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Value of flagship species</td>
<td>258400</td>
<td>618393</td>
<td>408139487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Carbon sequestration value</td>
<td>120780</td>
<td>289046</td>
<td>190770462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Forest Fire Cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>777597</strong></td>
<td><strong>1860916</strong></td>
<td><strong>1228204492</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TRENDS OF MONETARY LOSS DUE TO FOREST FIRE**

Annual monetary loss as a result of forest fire is calculated at 2005-06 prices, current price level of the year and 2018-19 prices. The cost of inflation index (CII) prepared by the ministry of finance which was notified on 12th September 2019 is used to calculate the monetary loss of forest fire. As per the analysis made in the following table-2.11, the total cost due to forest fire in Odisha has increased from Rs.74.67 crore in the year 2010 to Rs.756.53 crore in the year 2018 at 2005-06 price level. At current price level, it has increased from Rs.106.59 crore in the year 2010 to Rs.1810.51 crore. Owing to more area under forest fire identified in 2016, there is sudden increase in the total cost of forest fire after the year 2016.
## Table 6: Trend of Monetary Loss due to forest fire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Area Affected by Forest Fire in Odisha (Hectares)</th>
<th>Total Cost at 2005-06 Prices (Rs. / Hectare = Rs.777597)</th>
<th>Cost of Inflation Index Numbers (CII for 2005-06= 117)</th>
<th>Current Price level (Rs. In Crores) [ Col 3 * Col 5]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>960.315</td>
<td>74.67</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>106.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1136.2</td>
<td>88.35</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>138.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2252.57</td>
<td>175.16</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>299.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>164.821</td>
<td>12.82</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>24.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>881.9</td>
<td>68.58</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>140.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>849.63</td>
<td>66.07</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>143.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1944.84</td>
<td>151.23</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>341.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>14121.32</td>
<td>1098.07</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>2552.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>9729.13</td>
<td>756.53</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>1810.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Number of forest fires in Odisha has increased at CAGR of 103.6 percent and an increasing linear trend is observed during the period 2006 to 2016. Out of the total number of forest fires erupted during the period 2006-2016, maximum proportion of forest fires were witnessed in Berhampur circle followed by Koraput circle, Bhawanipatna circle and Rourkela circle. Kandhamal district is found having the highest incidence of forest fires to the extent of about 21.3 percent of the overall forest fires in the state. Higher incidence of forest fires is also witnessed in the districts Rayagada, Kalahandi, Gajapati, Malkangiri, Koraput and Ganjam districts. These districts come under Berahampur, Koraput and Bhawanipatna circles. Compared to the overall CAGR of number of forest fires in the state, there is higher CAGR in 16 districts and lower CAGR in 14 districts. Reserved forests and protected reserve forests jointly account around 87.3 percent of the overall forest fires in the year 2018. Overtime for all forest circles, the average affected forest area per forest fire event is showing a declining trend. Annually the overall loss as a result of forest fire in Odisha is arrived at Rs.122.82 crores. The total cost due to forest fire in Odisha has increased from Rs.74.67 crore in the year 2010 to Rs.756.53 crore in the year 2018 at 2005-06 price level. At current price level, it has increased from Rs.106.59 crore in the year 2010 to Rs.1810.51 crore. Considering 2018-19 price level, it has increased from Rs.125.20 crore in the year 2010 to Rs.756.53 crore.

[Note: The paper owes to the study “Management of Forest Fire in Odisha” prepared by NCDS, Bhubaneswar, for which the first author was the project director and the second author was a consultant and the study was undertaken for the PCCF, HoFF, Govt. of Odisha.]

### ENDNOTES

2. Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe   Forest Europe   Liaison Unit, OSLO

Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, Forest Europe Liaison Unit, OSLO


REFERENCES

Social Structure and patriachal status during Swosthani Vratkatha Period

Shukra Raj Adhikari

ABSTRACT

*Swosthani Vratkatha* is a devotional text dedicated to the local goddess Swosthani. Its story reflects the agro-based sociocultural structure in the medieval period of Nepal. This paper attempts to analyze the social structure at the period, in terms of the production system, marriage, family, and status of the female. This article is based on Qualitative research which used Secondary data with text review and historical content analysis. Though patriarchal norms and values guided family and marriage systems as the unit of social structure at that period, women had a significant role in protecting the parental property and resources, in supporting the gods in the war, to manage the home and family life. These facts differ from than patriarchal theoretical explanation.

KEYWORDS: Family, Marriage, Patriarchy, Social Structure, Swosthani Vratkatha,

Introduction

*Swosthani Vratkatha* is the blended story of Skanda Puran and Folkstory of the medieval period of Nepal. It seems like the series of stories narrated by lord Kumar to Agastya Muni. Lord Shiva and goddess Parvati have two sons named Kumar and Ganesh. The story mostly concentrates around Lord Shiva. It is also a form of prayer to Lord Shiva and his various forms. Goddess Swosthani is believed to be a four-handed goddess with Chakra, Trishul, sword, and lotus in each of her hands. She resides in the centre of Asta Matrika or eight goddesses of power. The Asta Matrika are Mahakali, Vaishnavi, Brahmi Maheswori, Barahi, Indrayani, and Chamunda. According to Hutt (1999), the *Swosthani Vratkatha* is a crucial text for anyone who wishes to understand the ideals and constraints that have traditionally governed the lives of women (mainly, but not exclusively Brahman and Chettriya women) in Nepal. According to Dave (2018), *Swosthani Vratkatha* depicts the goddess tradition, ritual studies, and the sociocultural dynamics of a staunchly Hindu Nepali Society. While Brikenhitz thoroughly explains and contextualizes her arguments, this work is best suited for those familiar with the goddess traditions of the Bhakti movement and their manifestations across the Hindu diaspora.

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According to Brikenhitz (2019), The Swosthani devotional tradition is a cultural phenomenon of considerable social and religious significance in Nepal. It holds a privileged position in Nepali culture – as a Brahmanical tradition, a written tradition, and a tradition with such an extensive reach into so many Nepali homes, hearts, and imaginations. Nevertheless, it is a relatively young tradition, considering the antiquity for so many of Hinduism’s traditions. The Swosthani Vratkatha, commonly shortened to Swosthani Katha, is one of Nepal’s most well-known and often read/heard storytelling traditions. It is a devotional text dedicated to the local goddess Swosthani which Hindus in Nepal recite annually in the hope of earning religious merit and the goddess's favour. As the opening vignette, describes, it is not a national holiday or public festival, nor a text taught in school, but a household affair for which family members and friends of all ages and genders gather to listen to the text’s familiar tales. Over my fifteen years of researching the Swosthani tradition, I have heard time and time again that copies of the Swosthani Vratkatha can be found "in every Hindu household in Nepal" and I have primarily found this to be true. This is especially so in the villages in and around the Kathmandu valley, which reflects the geo-cultural origins of the Swosthani tradition among the Newars (Brikenholtz, 2019).

Benet (1983) said that women are dominated by patriarchal Hindu rituals, religious texts such as RishiPanchami, Swosthani Vratkatha. These kinds of narratives are significant factors of gender discrimination in Hindu society and culture. In terms of this context, this article is going to attempt to find out the sociocultural structure of the period of Swosthani Vratkatha period.

OBJECTIVE AND METHOD
The main objective of this paper is to analyze the social structure of the period of Swosthani Vratkatha in terms of the production system, marriage, family, and status of the female. For the sake of explaining the social structure of the Swosthani period, majorly, secondary data are used under the qualitative method in this paper. I have taken help from the textual review as well as the historical content analysis methods for this work. The contents of Swosthani Vratkatha are quoted and interpreted based on Sapkota, Bhusal, and Bijukchhe (2072).

Theoretical Insight
Patriarchy refers to the male-dominated concept; it is a principle of subordinating women. Walbi (1990) mentions patriarchy as the rule of the father, i.e. is called a male-dominated family. Furthermore, it is a social and ideological construct that considers men as superior to women. Patriarchy is based on a system of power relations. She argues that in a patriarchal social structure, men oppress, exploit, and subjugate women. This view is focused on men’s oppression of women only. However, it ignored the mutual relationship and cooperation between male and female to run the social structure. It is also silent to the ensuring of the women's participation and empowerment in the patriarchal sociocultural structure. It imposes masculinity and femininity character stereotypes in society. Patriarchal societies propagate the ideology of motherhood which restricts women’s mobility and burdens them with the responsibilities to nurture and rear children.

Herbert Spencer argued that the processing of sociocultural evolution, permanent settlement, private property, ritual-based marriage, and family systems are developed in the stage of the agricultural society. The human being is also tied-up in animal husbandry, crops based production, patriarchal family, polygyny system and in an agricultural society. Social structure is the relationship between human consciousness and objects (Ritzer, 1996).
Life and the universe is an endless series of conflict, speed, innovation, the fall of the old and the origin of the new. Due to the conflict, the social structure is developing from a low level to a high level (Coser, 1996). According to Marx, the process of development is caused by the struggle between the old and the new, the victory or rise of the new, and the defeat of the old. The changes are based on a permanent historical process of building sociocultural structures (Henslin, 1997). This article attempt to reflect the analogy of the sociocultural facts in terms of the production system of social structure and patriarchal theoretical explanation.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Economic Structure**
Swosthani Vrata Katha reflects the pastoral and agricultural production systems. Practices of private ownership, income, and distribution of resources were established at that time.

In chapter four, page number 64 of Swosthani Vratkatha, Sati Devi mentions "It is my fortune, I have no other options, he is my husband, and I should perform my duty." Mentioned facts indicate that women believed in fortune and religious norms at that period. This fact reflects the characteristics of agricultural and feudalistic society.

In chapter three, page number 54 of Swosthani Vratakatha, Dakashya Prajapati expresses "I have no son. Who will protect the property?" In this expression, Dakashya Prajapati seems worried about the protection of resources without a son. According to this fact, we can easily assume the practices of private property.

Similarly, according to chapter four, page number 68 of Swosthani Vratkatha, Sati Devi covered the ground with cow dung at the behest of Mahadev. This means cow dung was used for purification in religious activities. This reference also indicates the symbol of animal husbandry at that period.

The facts mentioned above confirm that the production system is based on the feudal animal husbandry-agricultural production system. On the other hand, Jessica (2018) mentioned the fact that Swosthani Vratkatha is 441 years old text. This indicates the old regime of Nepali society and the Kathmandu Valley before the unification of Nepal. In the history of Nepal, the medieval (Malla period) regime was based on agriculture and animal husbandry (Sharma, 2058).

_Swosthani Vratakatha_ reflects the agro-economic structure. It symbolically presents the situations where people went away from the house and country to manage the livelihood of their family. In chapter eighteen, page number 228 of _Swosthani Vratakatha_, Nagini mention "We do not have our kids and husband, the serpents (husband of Nagini) have gone out the state".

Similarly, on page 270 of the 22nd chapter of _Swosthani Vratakatha_, Goma Brahmani says ‘.... Your father’s name is Shiva Sharma. Your father went abroad to beg after I conceived, but he has not arrived until today. Where does he live? There is no address to the place ...’:
These passages show the facts, the husbands of the Naginis went out to earn income and the father of Nawaraj, Shiva Sharma also went out to beg. The fact justified that men went away to earn income at that time.
Sociocultural Diversity
We can find several contexts of sociocultural diversity in the period of *Swosthani*’s story. Under the twentieth chapter, page number 250, Sharma Brahmam mentions... "O, Mother! There are also old people in the world. There are children too. There are good and evil. Some have no children. Some men are older than women. Some have no wives, some have no men, and some are rich. Some are poor. The life cycle of human beings is as the potter’s spinning wheel. In this prose, Shivasharma Brahaman expresses the stratified variety and changing reality of human society. These facts present the diversification of society in the period of Swosthani Vratkatha.

Patriarchal Family arrangement
*Swosthani Vratkatha* reflects the facts of the patrilocal family system. The marriage events of Mahadev, Sati Devi, Nawaraj, Chandrawati indicate the practices of patrilocal system of marriage. Represent of male, Mahadev and Nawaraj brought their wife to their home. Similarly, the representation of females, Sati Devi, and Chandrawati left their birth home and went to the husband's home after marriage.

Similarly, there seems to be a patrilineal family system at that time. The events, Vow of the son, offerings to husband, if not husband, secondly to the son, if not son, thirdly to a cultural son, etc. reflects the example of the patrilineal family system.

Ritual based Marriage Traditions
The central theme of *Swosthani Vratkatha* is concerned about the events of marriage. Examining the contents of the *Swasthani Vratkatha* seems that there was variety in the marriage forms, practices, and traditions.

Love marriage
In the twelfth chapter, page number 158 of Swosthani Vratakatha, Parvati says "I have been worshipping Shri Mahadev since childhood. If my father Himalaya gave my Kanyadan to anyone except for Mahadev, I would commit suicide and die". In this prose, the female character Parvati has been worshipping the Mahadev since her childhood to get Mahadev as her husband. If her father did not let her marry Mahadev or worshipped God would not marry her, she would commit suicide. This fact confirms the prevalence of love marriage in that period.

Marital Harmony
The contents of various chapters of *Swosthani Vratkatha* reflects the events of marital harmony between the husband and wife. In chapter twenty-ninth, page number 318-319 of Swosthani Vratkatha, Nagini mentions "O Lord! Where did you go? Leaving me alone for so many years. I had your vision today. I found four wonderful pieces of bread, but I cannot them alone without you. I am looking forward to you. Please come and eat pieces of bread."

Similarly, in the mentioned chapter and page, Nag mentions ".... O woman! I have got four loaves of bread just like you found. I have brought with me how can I eat without feeding you? So he gave two of the four loaves to Nagini".

The prose mentioned above has presented the respect and goodwill between husband and wife in the form of Nag and Nagini. Both Nag and Nagini do not eat bread without each other. They share the bread with each other.
Marriage with *kanyadan* (bridesmaids)

From a sociological point of view, marriage is considered a micro sociocultural institution (Farley, 199). There are various ritualistic processes within the marriage system. Except for the *kanyadan*, other ritual processes of marriage are not found in the content of Swosthani Vratkatha.

In the twelfth chapter, page number 161 of *Swosthani Vratkatha*, Himalaya Parvat says "…Parvati where did you go? I am disgraced here, Vishnu and other gods have returned without giving Kanyadaan."

Mentioned above prose shows the facts of *Kanyadan*. *Kanyadan* is the primary ritual process of the Vedic marriage system of Aryans. It was the symbol of ritual purity in Vedic Aryan society (Thapar, 2008). It was diffused from the Vedic period to the *Swosthani Vratkatha* period.

Arranged Marriage

We can find the various context of arranged marriage in *Swosthani Vratkatha*. Already discussed in the context of *Kanyadan*, it was also a part of the ritual of arrange marriage. In the twentieth chapter, page number 246 of Swosthani Vratkatha, there is a dialogue between Shivsharma and Shivbhatta Brahman "Shivsharma says Oh, Brahman! Why have you been watching me for so long? Shiva Bhatta replied that I am a Brahmin, named Shiva Bhatta. I have a daughter in my home. I am searching for a Brahmin to give *Kanyadan*. Have you any kind of information about the proper bridegroom?"

Mentioned above dialogue shows the responsibility of the father to marry the daughter. This fact indicates the prevalence of arrange marriage system at the *Swosthani Vratkatha* period.

The need of *Gotra* in Marriage Ritual

*Swosthani Vratkatha* refers to the need to know the Gotra of the bride and groom in order to perform the marriage ceremony. In the twenty-third chapter, page number 174 of *Swosthani Vratkatha*, Himalaya mentions "…O Jagadishwar, I am going to perform the *Kanyadan* of daughter to marry you at this Shubalgan, what is your *Gotra*? I cannot do anything without pronouncing the *Gotra*.” This context indicates the importance of Gotra in marriage rituals. Marriage within the same *Gotra* is restricted in the Hindu Culture (Majumdar, 2008). They believed, *Gotra* is the symbol of a consanguineous relationship.

Mismatched Marriage

Goma is married as a child to a disabled man ten times her age. This kind of event is indicated in the twenty-fourth chapter of *Swosthani Vratkatha*. In the page number 285 of that chapter, Goma Brahmani expressed her grief at marrying an old man (seventy years) at an early age (seven years), and that she had to be without her husband at her young age due to having an elderly husband. Briconholtz (2018) states that the period of *Swosthani Vratkatha* is related to the medieval period of Nepalese society. Sharma (2058) mentioned that early marriage and child marriage was the sociocultural characteristic of medieval Nepalese society.

Woman Makeup

We can find several events of the marriage in the Swosthani story. There seem so many makeup practices of the bride with new ornaments, clothes, etc.
In the twenty-third chapter, page number 174 of Swosthani Vratkatha following is mentioned, "Menuka brought her daughter Parvati adorned with perfume, diamonds, pearls, rubies, and jewels." According to this prose, the daughter of Menuka is decorated by several ornaments and perfume as the bride. This content indicates the makeup tradition of the bride in a marriage ceremony.

**Continuation of Creation**
Aryan culture always seems worried about the continuation of creation. These norms also influence the period of Swosthani Vratkatha. There are various contexts concerning about offspring in the Swosthani Vratkatha. In the eighteenth chapter, page number 228 of Swosthani Vratkatha, Nagini's mention "O God! We are also sad; We have no children, we are also sinners, we have no husband too." This phrase refers to the fact that the female characters, the Naginis, became sinners due to lack of husband and offspring.

**Husband-Wife Dialogue**
Various chapters of Swosthani Vratkatha are decorated by the events of conjugal love between husband and wife. As stated on page 209 of the sixteenth chapter, "Jalandhar, who lived in a town called Antapur, joked and laughed with his wife, Vrinda. Seeing the laughing situation of Husband, Vrinda asked Jalandhar he was laughing happily. Jalandhar answered that my wife Vrinda is most beautiful than others in the world". This conversation reflects the lovely interaction between Jalandhar and Vrinda as the husband and wife.

**Husband as the God**
The contents of the chapters of Swosthani Vratakatha reflects the male-centric society with several examples. Under the twenty-first chapter, the page number of 259, Goma mentions concerning Purana and Smriti "The husband is like God for the wife. The woman would have squint if she looked at her husband, angrily. A woman disobeying her husband will be sinful, like a bitch, hateful...". In this version, the husband is as respected as God. Moreover, the wife is characterized as the person who should be obedient. It reflects the male-centric events and examples.

**Examining the Character of the Woman:**
As you read through the chapters of the Swastiani story, you can find the different contexts of the purity test for the woman.

In the twenty-third chapter, page number 172 of Swosthani Vratkatha, Mahadev says, "O Pawarti, I am not the Indra, I have come to test your character. I became thrilled to see my original form..."

This prose indicates the Vrat event of Parwati to gain Mahadev as the husband. Mahadev tried to test the purity of Parwati at that moment. This fact reflects the testing tradition of female purity and husband devotion in the period of Swosthani Vratkatha.

**Worshipped Women**
The narratives of Swosthani story seem to reflect a patriarchal family structure. Within the patriarchal sociocultural structure, we can find different levels of roles, responsibilities, and status of the female which are briefly mentioned below:
Daughter for property protection
Contents of chapters of Swasthani Vratkatha indicate the female responsibility to protect the property and resource although it is the product of the patriarchal sociocultural system.
In the third chapter of Swasthani Vratkatha, Dakshaprajapati says, "O Vishnu! I do not have a son; my daughter must protect the resources and property. I will not give it, but you defeat me in the contract. You can take Kanyadan at the proper time." In this prose, due to the need for protection of parental resources, Daksha Prajapati denied daughter marriage. This fact shows the example of the right of a daughter to protect the parental property.

Homeless without a wife
In the contents of several chapters of Swasthani Vratkatha, it seems the significant role of women is for the upliftment and prosperity of the home. In the thirty-first chapters of Swasthani Vratkatha, Goma Maharani mentions, "O daughter in law! Listen to both Chandravati and Lavanyavati, without the sun, days are not bright and without the moon, nights are not beautiful, so every man does not have a good life without of wife in the house. This passage emphasizes the need for a better role of the wife for the betterment of the home at that time. It has highlighted female existence and needs.

Feature of female
Swasthani Vratkatha has discussed the good and bad qualities of different forms of female characters in different chapters. On page 249-250 of the twentieth chapter of the Swasthani Vratkatha, the daughter is described as bright as the shining sun, her face as the full moon, the hand, and leg as the trunk, the hip as the lion... In this passage, the qualities and character of a woman are symbolically compared to the sun, moon, lion, duck, etc.

Powerful Goddess
We can see the several contexts of the dominant role of female characters in the chapters of Swasthani Vratkatha. God requests goddesses for support in the war. According to the contents of the seventh chapter of Swasthani Vratkatha, the army of God Shiva was supported by Goddess Mahakali to defeated demon Tarakasur.

Lord Vishnu Captured by Vrinda:
The contents of the various chapters of the Swasthani Vratkatha indicate the effort of God to deceive the female character Vrinda; God disguised himself as a man. In the seventeenth chapter, Page number 214 of Swasthani Vratkatha following is mentioned, "When Vrinda thought, she realized that Vishnu had come as the disguised form of Jalandhar to deceive. Now I have to do some tricks and start gesturing to Vishnu and saying - O Swami, do you believe me when I say something? Disguised form of Jalandhar, Vishnu promised to obey. Moreover, Vrinda locked Vishnu in a room and went to another house". According to this passage, the female character, Vrinda has succeeded to deceive male character Vishnu.

CONCLUSION
Swasthani Vratkatha has a kind of story which reflected the pastoral and agricultural production systems of the medieval period of Nepal. Practices of private ownership, income, and distribution of resources were established at that agro-based sociocultural structure. These facts show the analogy to the evolutionary insight of Herbert Spencer. Patriarchal norms and values guided family and marriage systems as the unit of social structure at that period. However, women had a significant role in protecting the parental property and resources, in supporting the gods in the war, to manage...
the home and family life, at that patriarchal social structure. These facts differ from than patriarchal
theoretical explanation which is explained by Walbi (1990).

REFERENCES
US Policy Action towards Taiwan amidst US-China Trade War

Soumya Mittal* and Tsai-Hsuan Chung**

ABSTRACT

The U.S. commits to One-China Policy that recognizes that Taiwan is a part of China. However, they are also informally bound by the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, that requires them to come to Taiwan’s aid. In the light of economic and political tensions arising from US-China trade war and the re-election of Taiwan's President, it is essential to explore U.S.’ actions that can have a sizeable impact on economies around the world. Given US’ fundamental democratic values, commitment to the protection of East Asia and desire to maintain a strategic military position, the U.S. needs to intervene if China takes forceful military action against Taiwan. However, to not aggravate China and worsen their economic relations, the intervention should only be passive that facilitates dialogue between China and Taiwan.

KEYWORDS: United States, People’s Republic of China, Taiwan, US-China trade war, One-China Policy, Taiwan Relations Act, East Asia, Foreign policy

INTRODUCTION

The United States (U.S.) has a formal commitment to 'One China Policy', which compels it to recognize that Taiwan is a part of the People’s Republic of China (P.R.C.) (Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the Kingdom of Norway, 2004). At the same time, under their 1979 Taiwan Relations Act (T.R.A.), the U.S. has unofficially committed to coming to Taiwan's defence, if needed (American Institute in Taiwan, 1979). With the recent re-election of President Tsai Ing-Wen in Taiwan, leader of the Democratic Progressive Party (D.C.P.) that supports Taiwan's sovereignty, it is necessary to determine the U.S.' obligations, especially concerning the ongoing US-China trade war and its foreign policy on fostering democracy (Bush, 2020).

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U.S. – CHINA TRADE WAR

China is currently the U.S.' largest goods trading partner totalling $659.8 billion during the year 2018 (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2020a). Citing national security as the reason, on April 4, 2018, the U.S. imposed 25% tariffs on Chinese goods worth US$50 billion (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020). China responded by imposing reciprocal tariffs. Since then, the two countries have been at a trade war that has had repercussions throughout the world. In January 2020, the tensions between the two countries eased as the countries committed to relax tariffs and purchase more goods.

Taiwan also plays an important role, currently being the 11th largest goods trading partner totalling US$78 billion (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2020b). It is a critical player in global supply chains of computers and telecommunication component technology. Most of the electronic products imported into the U.S., such as products from Apple Inc., are assembled by Taiwanese-owned businesses (Morrison, 2019). Maintaining the stability and viability of Taiwan's economy is vital to the health of the U.S. and global economies.

With China and Taiwan currently being at odds, the U.S. can either leverage its relations with Taiwan, especially its trade agreements, to negotiate a favourable deal with China or China might unify with Taiwan, strengthening China's economic position. Either case would have a significant impact on the economies all around the world.

U.S.' FOREIGN POLICY TO PROMOTE DEMOCRACY

One of the key objectives of U.S. foreign policy is promoting democratic institutions, processes, and values (Lawson & Epstein, 2019). Over the past decade, the U.S. has allocated more than $2 billion annually from foreign assistance funds to promote democracy. Taiwan is a model of an emerging democracy, having evolved from a one-party authoritarian state to multiparty democracy and an open society. The U.S. passed the Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative (TAIPEI) Act on March 4, 2020, which strengthened the U.S.' resolve to protect Taiwan's national recognition (Zhou, 2020). However, the TAIPEI legislation has attracted criticism from the Foreign Ministry of China. If the U.S. intervenes, then they would be in direct violation of their official 'One China policy', attracting reproach from China and consequential economic loss.

On the other hand, the U.S.' commitment to Taiwan's security and peaceful resolution of its relationship with the Mainland remains essential for its credibility in the global order. The U.S. has other allies in East Asia such as Japan, South Korea, Philippines, who rely on the U.S. for their security and maintaining peace and stability in the region (Breer, 2010). Although East Asia fears US-China military conflict over Taiwan, the U.S.'s abstention would question its regional commitment against China and compel the allies to fear U.S.' abandonment of their interests as well.

Besides, Taiwan's central location in the South China Sea has served a variety of strategic purposes for regional powers since World War II, both offensive and defensive (Bosco, 2015). While China's reaction and hostility are valid concerns, the U.S.' non-intervention would be compromising its foreign policy values, international commitments, and strategic defence and offence in East Asia. Further, it would give China the platform to demonstrate the power of authoritarianism to the world, which would not be preferred by the U.S.
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE U.S.: PASSIVE INTERVENTIONS

Active intervention in Taiwan might escalate U.S.' economic tensions with China. However, complete abstention would compromise their democratic values. The optimal policy action for the U.S. should be a passive intervention. First, the U.S. should provide a platform to facilitate dialogue between Taiwan and China to ensure that there are no unilateral changes in the status quo and no provocation from either China or Taiwan. Second, according to the P.R.C.'s 2005 Anti-Secession Law, it can employ non-peaceful means to achieve national reunification with Taiwan (Chinawaledu, 2012). In this unlikely case, if China's actions threaten regional stability and cross-strait security, the U.S. should intervene and deploy reasonable military force. Third, in the implementation of the TAIPEI Act, instead of asking international agencies to recognize Taiwan, the U.S. should support Taiwan's informal engagement in global space. Taiwan should be allowed to participate in international meetings and conferences as an observer instead of a formal participant. Several creative ways to share information, resources or policies with Taiwan can be employed without giving Taiwan any decision-making power. This would help promote human rights, global health, and S.D.G.s in Taiwan without aggravating China.

POLITICAL FEASIBILITY

To implement the policies, the U.S. needs to get China on board. The U.S. has to promise not to take any military action unless their national security or security of East Asia is threatened. The U.S. needs to negotiate with China to determine the extent of Taiwan's engagement in international space. While Taiwan might wish for more active intervention from the U.S., it has no reason to object to the proposed policy actions.

To facilitate dialogue between China and Taiwan, the U.S. can employ its existing organizations in the two regions, the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in China and American Institute in Taiwan. Since the regional institutions' have more familiarity with domestic issues and policies, they can provide a peaceful and efficient communication platform between China and Taiwan.

Given the U.S.' current status and power in international organizations (I.O.s), implementing the TAIPEI Act would be feasible and encouraged (Hillard & Shendruk, 2019). The U.S. is one of the five permanent members on the U.N. Security Council, and also the largest donor to the U.N., contributing roughly one-fifth of the body's collective budget. It also maintains a similar amount of contribution and membership in other I.O.s such as APEC, ASEAN, and so on.

FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY

There are two main costs for the U.S. First; the proposed actions would require increasing monetary donation to the I.O.s to enhance its power and control. However, even if the current administration does not increase the contributions or if it decreases the pertinent budget, the U.S.’ current status in the organizations still makes the recommendations feasible. Second, the policies would also require increasing the U.S. Department of Defense's budget on overseas contingency operations, if military intervention is undertaken. As per the department's 2020-21 budget, 10% is allocated to overseas contingency operations (U.S. Department of Defense, 2020). Based on the U.S.’ past military interventions for safeguarding national security and geographical importance of Taiwan, it is very likely that the U.S. would be willing to fund operations for maintaining cross-strait stability (Bergsten, Freeman, Lardy & Mitchell, 2009).
The passive intervention would have the benefits of decreasing potential friction with China and avoid both trade war and military conflict. Discouraging China’s intimidation and military threats to Taiwan would also promote a democratic political system in Taiwan. Further, the increase of Taiwan’s engagement in I.O.s would also improve the strength of democracy to the world.

CONCLUSION
The proposed policy actions would ensure economic stability and national security for both the U.S. government and the citizens of China and Taiwan. It would maintain peaceful and stable cross-strait relations. However, if any of the three regions dissents from the agreed-upon policies, the U.S., China, and Taiwan would all suffer from economic loss, escalated trade war, and military conflicts.

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Terrorism, Secularism and the Spirit of Peace: 
A Contemporary Gandhian Perspective

Niranjan Mohapatra* and Swapna S Prabhu**

ABSTRACT
The backbone of the predominant model for political violence in the modern world rests on terrorism incited in the name of religion. There can be different ways of comprehending terrorism and terrorist activities, and this very task of reflecting our understanding and interpretation of terrorism is done primarily by society. In other words, the idea of terrorism is conceptualized and constructed by the people and reflected by the media in its language. A Gandhian Satyagrahi’s chief forte is that there is something of God in every individual and that appeal can be made to the divine in man through love and conscious self-suffering. Gandhism, as a universal ideology holds that the need today is not one religion, but mutual respect and tolerance of the devotees of different religions. Gandhi was also opposed to conversion from one religion to another, especially when it took the form of mass conversions and proselytism, i.e., primarily for the sake of material ends. The present paper seeks to understand how secularism yields an understanding of spirituality and how and why spiritual terrorism is most widespread among certain repressive societies who object reforms and other expressions of dissent considering violence as the only way to completely reconfigure the social order to establish a spirit of peace which is in harmony with their faith. Against this backdrop, the paper also analyses how the Gandhian philosophy can be used to understand the nexus between secularism, terrorism and the spirit of peace in the contemporary global scenario.

KEYWORDS: Terrorism, Secularism, Spirit of Peace, Gandhian Perspective

INTRODUCTION
Peace on earth today is deluding even with all the weapons of mass destruction and the technical know-how to reach the outer space. Mighty nations of the world also find themselves in the shackles of insecurity. For instance, cases of aggressive behavior by big powers like the Chinese aggression in the South China Sea, North Korea’s unauthorized nuclear weapons programme, Pakistan’s intrusive and insurgency efforts into India, frequently emerging mass civil unrest in most of the parts of

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Middle-East and Africa are some examples of how possession of weapons generate more insecurity today than security. Further, the global phenomenon of terrorism and religious fanaticism has made us realize that international and global peace is not dependent on the deadly weapons we, as nations, possess (Vijayam 2004: 71). The spirit of peace lies in the ability of the nations to build strong international and regional relations with each other. Hence, the need for the hour is to look for an alternative to violence, and the solution naturally lies in the Gandhian methods of peace and non-violence.

Non-violence, for Gandhi, was not merely a philosophy rather a plan of action to be applied on a collective level to be treated as a potent weapon in the hands of the common masses striving for national liberation. In other words, non-violence was a means to achieve the ultimate end of discovering the truth. The truth could not be discovered, according to Gandhi, without a firm conviction based on the participation of the body and mind resulting in a change in the whole way of life and consciousness while remaining closer to nature. In brief, the identification of the individual self with the whole cosmos while subsequently retaining the individuality constituted the idea of ‘non-violence’. Religion here plays a significant role in propelling the individual to continually strive to refine his/her thoughts, action and behavior, thus working towards one’s spiritual development and the refinement of inner-self (Xaxa & Mahakul 2009: 47).

In the twenty-first century, the perverted ideology of terrorism is quickly attracting young youth to various terrorist organizations of the world, including the Islamic State that relies heavily on the thrill of violence, the seduction of sex and an assurance of a meaningful life as a Jihadi1. Besides expressing anger over perceived injustices to the religious and ethnic minorities by the majority community, most of the terrorists take immediately satisfying radical steps to obtain meaning through self-sacrifice, an eagerness to die for an incomprehensible millenarian cause (Chanda, 2015). However, the backbone of the predominant model for political violence in the modern world rests on terrorism incited in the name of religion. The present paper is thus an attempt to understand violence, terrorism and its nexus with religion and the spirit of peace from a Gandhian perspective.

The role and the activities of the Indian anarchists and Hindu militant nationalists who saw violence as the only solution to break the British rule in India, according to Juergensmeyer, a Professor of Sociology, played a significant role in sharpening Gandhi’s views about violent struggle. Gandhi challenged the logic of the militant nationalists on the grounds of political realism apprehending that the methods the militants used for sporadic acts of terrorism and guerilla warfare against the British military would become part of India’s national character. Gandhi has sketched out a non-violent approach, in his book Hind Swaraj, beginning with an example of the nature of the conflict. He always insisted on looking at the real cause of conflict rather than on a specific clash between individuals. Since for Gandhi, every conflict was a contestation at two levels, i.e., between persons and between principles. Moreover, behind every fighter was the more significant issue and every fight was on some level, an encounter between differing ‘angles of vision’ illuminating the same truth (Juergensmeyer 2007: 31-32).

GANDHI, SECULARISM AND HUMAN LIFE
Gandhi’s philosophy of life was based on a secular ideology, which he defined as ‘Sarvadharma Sambhav’ meaning equal respect for all faiths. Religion is a way of life since it binds people together by inculcating the values of equality, brotherhood and virtues of toleration. Considering religion as one’s concern, Gandhi believed in the non-interference of the state in the religious matters of the
individuals. Further, linking secularism to a way of life, Gandhi maintained that ‘love of truth is the love of God’ and that ‘service to mankind is service to God’. In other words, Gandhi believed that an individual’s religion must be expressed in ‘service to the helpless’.

However, given the contemporary trends in international terrorism, it can be rightly said that term terrorism is an ideologically contested and emotionally charged concept, where some refuse to use it considering it either hopelessly vague or carrying unhelpful pejorative implications. However, terrorism sometimes tends to be used as a political tool, a means of determining the legitimacy, or illegitimacy of a group or a political movement under consideration. This raises questions about the very nature of terrorism as to whether it is an evil in itself and beyond any moral justification (Heywood 2011: 285).

For instance, those who say that Islamic jihad was merely for the defence of the ‘homeland of Islam’ weaken the greatness of the Islamic way of life and consider it less significant than their ‘homeland’. The case of defence of the ‘homeland of Islam’ means the defence of Islamic beliefs, the Islamic way of life and the Islamic community. This, however, does not seem to be the ultimate objective of the Islamic movement of jihad. Instead, it is a means to establish the Divine authority within, making it the headquarters for the movement of Islam to be carried out throughout the world (Derian 2012: 207). Gandhi was both a reformer as well as a revolutionary, for he never compromised with anything that he thought was bad, immoral or evil in any form. He, however, was always of the opinion that by terrorizing the minds of the people, no objectives can be achieved, whether good or bad, divine or evil.

Being secular for Gandhi meant doing good of all. However, he was always disappointed at the fact that the degeneration of India’s democratic fabric has created chaos in every walk of life, resulting in frustration in every avenue of social effort. These undesirable conditions, according to Gandhi, are getting manifested in forms of increasing militancy, terrorism, communal and other riots resulting in balkanizing the country and weakening the hold of the government on the masses. Violence and frustration among the masses erupt when the state acquires the license to waste scarce resources with a profit motive. Even more disappointing is the fact that around 58 per cent of the Indian population still lives below the poverty line, and the number of educated unemployed has risen to millions. Had Gandhi been alive, he would not have allowed India to spend extensively towards the stockpiling of arms. He also would not have allowed the evils in the democracy to grow unabated seeking into every fibre of our political life. Non-violence was his cardinal philosophy and service to humanity, his religion (Mathur 1989: 52-53).

Again, while the mainstream approaches view terrorism as an attack on civilized or humanitarian values, certain radical scholars argue that terrorism and other forms of political violence may advance the very cause of political justice countering other more widespread forms of violence or abuse, implying that they are justifiable (Heywood 2011: 285). Gandhi, however, strove to build a secular society free from any religious interference, especially in the matters of the state. Considering religion as a personal matter, he believed that the reason why the term ‘secularism’ was not frequently used in the pre-independent India was that Indian nationalism was mostly secular during those days. In other words, India never wanted partition of the country on religious grounds (Vijayam 2004:72). Perhaps this was the reason why an overwhelming majority of Muslims opted to stay back in India even after the brutal phase of partition.
GANDHI, PEACE EDUCATION AND VIOLENCE

In the contemporary age of atomic power with the deadliest weapons of mass destruction, the future of humanity does not depend on any further production of deadly weapons rather depends entirely on building an alternative to violence. That, according to the Gandhian perspective is, a non-violent resistance since Gandhi always opined that weapons cannot bring peace and that peace is possible only through dialogue and goodwill (Vijayam 2004: 72).

The adoption of goodwill and moral means for the realization of the ultimate end of life, according to Gandhi, requires ‘self-purification’ and one of its chief elements is Ahimsa (Non-violence). Ahimsa, for him, meant avoiding injury in thought, word or deed, to anything on earth. In brief, it means love for all creations of God and to work selflessly for the good of his fellow beings, something that would ultimately result in the overall development of human society. The performance of such a moral role by any individual, according to Gandhi, primarily rests on and is influenced by education as received by the individual during his/her formative years. Gandhi, therefore, prescribed for a specific scheme of education known as the ‘Nayi Talim’ meaning new education wherein every child ought to be educated and trained for the realization of his/her noble goals in life and also strive for just social order (Xaxa & Mahakul 2009:42-43).

Although not a philosopher in a specialized sense, Gandhi’s philosophical affirmations through his insights into aspects such as ahimsa, satyagraha, swadeshi, peace and truth are nothing less than his reflections on peace education that have more value than the mainstream ‘academic’ philosophy, although his formulations of peace education reflect his commitment to the absolute ideals of ahimsa (non-violence) and satya (truth), they are mainly shaped by his changing and conflicted reactions to the specific yet contextualized structures of a British colonial education. For Gandhi, these influences had socialized ‘modern’ Indians to adopt western models and subsequently to look down upon their own traditional Hindu and other Indian values. The real goal of education, for Gandhi, was liberation, in so far as, it provides a means for serving the needs of others, liberates oneself from all forms of servitude and domination, and leads to one’s ethical and spiritual liberation. Thus, one of the significant contributions of Gandhi is towards peace education since his scheme of education mainly rests on simple living and the development of non-violent relations that result in the integrated training of body, mind and spirit. This approach to life through peace education would suffice to shun any form of violence in contemporary society (Allen 2007: 290-294).

The relevance of his peace education lies in his multi-dimensional analyses of the nature of violence along with the structural violence of the status quo. For instance, he believes that educational violence (violence emanating from the way the model of the education system is structured) cannot be separated from linguistic, economic, psychological and other forms of violence. The way the British colonial education in India structured the values and goals of the educational model, to a great extent, inflicted severe psychological and cultural violence on colonized Indians. Similarly, while identifying violence with human-caused oppression, exploitation, injustice and suffering, Gandhi acts as a catalyst for rethinking our views on terrorism and violence. As such, one of the most significant contributions of Gandhi’s approach to violence is to understand the multi-dimensional structures of the violence of status quo by analyzing how modern education has ‘commodified’ students as a means to some corporate end. Thus, making education an attempt to increase their market-driven exchange value. Gandhian peace education, on the other hand, can teach us to empathize with others by moulding our language and practising non-violent interventions that can break escalating causal cycles of violence that are on the brink of explosion (Allen 2007: 297-298).
GANDHI VS TERRORISM
Terrorism in the name of religion is one of the most predominant models of global political violence, and it rests on a strong belief that an ‘other-worldly’ power has ordered or instead sanctioned terrorist violence for preserving the glory of God. In this use, the use of violence is a form of communication, especially when other possible forms of communications fail.

Rejecting the notion that the goal justifies the means, Gandhi staunchly argued that since the ends and the means were ultimately the same, if we fight violently, we would establish a pattern of violence that would be part of any solution to the conflict, no matter how noble the cause may be. For instance, he once asked ‘if terrorists were successful in ousting the British from India, then who will rule in their place?’ He answered that it would be the ones who had killed in order to liberate India and that ‘India can gain nothing from the rule of murderers’. However, Gandhi was obvious in concluding that ‘Heroic violence is less sinful than cowardly non-violence’. In other words, he believed that inaction at a time of conflagration is inexcusable and that since cowardice is beneath contempt, fighting it is non-violent. What can be derived from this is a Gandhian justification of an act of violence to halt an act of terrorism (Juergensmeyer 2007: 33-34).

CONCLUSION
Terrorism for Gandhi was more of a body of ideas which necessitated a thorough examination in order to understand the attitude of those who carry out terrorist activities. Terrorists, according to him, were not to be left free but were to be treated as misguided soldiers rather than monsters. The leading cause of terrorist activities was not a religion but the ideology that succeeds in garnering the support of a large chunk of masses and thereby misleading them to believe in other-worldly desires even after death. In precise, Gandhi believed in confronting the issues/ ideas behind terrorism by alleviating the conditions that inspired and motivated actors to act in inappropriate and badly chosen ways. Similarly, he was against any violent posture adopted by the state that very often turned out to be coercive, and thus he was often termed as an anarchist. In short, proclaiming a ‘war on terror’ was tantamount to another form of terrorism.

Although Gandhi would not expect the state to negotiate with difficult, violent extremists, he wanted the state to be aware of the strength/ potential of public support in confronting the cause of terrorism. By applying Gandhian philosophy to understanding contemporary international terrorism, one may conclude that the spirit of peace can be established partly by acknowledging the dreams of several traditional Muslims in West Asia to be free from any American or European domination and also by establishing the moral character of a society that respects people of diverse cultures and is democratically governed.

ENDNOTES
1The term ‘jihad’ is an Arabic word which occurs nearly forty-one times in the Koran and which means “to endeavour, to strive, to struggle” in an effort towards a commendable aim. In a religious context, jihad can mean the struggle against personal sin or evil inclinations, efforts to improve society morally, or the act of spreading Islam in general (peacefully or by force).
3As interpreted from the work of Gandhi titled Collected Works, Vol. 51, p. 17.

SELECTED READINGS


