Review

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Gernot Saalmann (Ed.)
Changing India: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.
New Delhi: Winshield Press 2015, XVII, 289 pages
ISBN 978-81-930-7030-7

Changing India narrates a wide range of stories from hunger fighters, remote villages and backward sections of the Indian society to thriving minorities, hill state and metropolis inhabitants who may step in the process of change for better or worse, all in all in one book. Hence, no name could have covered the diverse issues in the book better than "Changing India". The book consists of eleven papers which are categorized in four Parts: 1) The Poverty of Capitalism, 2) At Home and in Society 3) From Regionalism to Cosmopolitanism 4) Democracy at Work. Most of the papers come out of field work in some particular parts of the vast subcontinent, whereas some of them argue a general topic based on second hand data like gender or political issues.

In the introduction, the editor, Gernot Saalmann, distinguishes change in nature and in culture. Using culture versus nature in this text purposely bolds the importance of culture in any activity that man is involved. Therefore, we expect of reading on cultural changes in this book. Saalmann in his introductory text, tries to cover all the aspects of being and becoming different; whether it is active or passive or happens on micro, meso or macro levels of economy, social structure or religion.

The Poverty of Capitalism

The first batch of papers, which come under the title of *Poverty of Capitalism*, take us from the eastern to the most western states of India to display the impacts of capitalism on the creation of poverty. Gadadhara Mohapatra has done field work in the remote Kalahandi district of Odisha to depict *Hunger and Coping Strategies Among Kondh Tribe*. The paper is written on the basis of some existing texts which mull over the fact that despite a decline of poverty, food insecurity among Indian households has remained unchanged (Bordignon 2006 quoted in Mohapatra 2015: 4).

The writer has done extensive field work to draw the geography of hunger and bring the painful reality of everyday life into the academic world. In this, we learn that "the agriculture of *podu* cultivation provides food security only for 150 days a year" in the concerned villages (Mohapatra 2015: 12). The reason of this food insecurity is attributed to being landless, marginal or small land holdings, and lack of irrigation facilities (14). The paper has a descriptive essence rather than a critical look into the measures to cope with poverty and the process of changing these plans, which are mentioned in the scope of the study. It pictures the situation of the Kondh tribe as an outsider in a study which is hued by economic instead of social/cultural analysis.

Complementary to rural poverty in the first paper of the book, the second paper is dedicated to urban poverty in Jharkhand in order to show how the nature of urban poverty in the era of

liberalization is changing. Kiran Sharma catches our attention to poverty by stating that a third of the global poor reside in India (Sharma 2015: 24). We learn through the paper that Jharkhand has one of the worst conditions in terms of rural poverty.

Regarding the fact that India has the world's second largest urban population, this paper talks about a new urbanisation (27). She asserts on a consensus among researchers that "any definition has to be understood in relation to particular social, cultural and historical contexts" (24). The paper aims to define urban poverty through an emphasis on the relativity of this concept.

Concerning the point that poverty is one of the main obstacles to India's development, urban poverty would be a more severe barrier on the path to development. The paper claims urban poverty to be more severe than rural poverty as the poor people in cities occupy only a marginal position and lowest rung of the social hierarchy. Thus, some commonly used words as "social exclusion" relate only to a welfare state context. In this regard, poor people in developing countries never have been included.

In general, the paper sheds light on various aspects related to urban and rural poverty as well as their outcomes. The text has gathered a collection of definitions and dimensions of poverty in urban areas of Jharkhand, although it does not contain any solution. For instance, it names the rights which have been denied due to poverty, but the links between mentioned rights, the result of violation of these rights and the solutions are ignored. The writer hints to some points but leaves them unclear. We do not know the reason why tribal groups in Jharkhand have the highest poverty intensity in India. In the same way, it talks about the matter of weak institutional mechanisms, as well as non-economic factors which are important to understand social problems like poverty. In the conclusion, we hear that the urban poor are affected by the highly monetised nature of urban living and poverty related conflicts, but these matters do not catch enough attention to be developed. While the paper promises to depict the face of urban poverty, it draws a figure of poverty in general by collecting second hand data. Nevertheless, we can accept this definition that urban poverty is "the regular exclusion of poor from the benefits of urban development" (46).

Vikas Saharan in a paper titled *Changing Patterns of Literacy and Education in India - Reflections from Rajasthan*, elaborates the advantages of literacy. In that, empowerment and egalitarianism are among the main benefits of education. Thus, education has the potential to put the diverse social classes and groups together. Particularly in the case of women, empowerment values of education present them with independency and freedom of decision. The writer brings up the matter of literacy in Rajasthan, where the lowest literacy among states (ranking 29) exists and has more variation in male-female literacy, with lowest female literacy in the whole country (Saharan 2015: 55). The paper mentions the obstacles towards literacy and education and introduces some successful experiences like monitoring via "creating local level committees with due representation of women and teachers for better functioning of primary education among schools" (Saharan 2015: 67). In the same way, it supports the government sponsored pro-literacy campaign that comes along with some changes from the district to the village level (70).

The paper has been successful in answering the questions that may come to the mind of a reader and elaborates some unwritten facts that the statistics do not explain. One of these facts is that a gross elementary school enrolment rate more than hundred does not imply that the goal of universalism of primary education is achieved. Any analysis would not be completed without bringing over age and under age children into account (64).

At Home and in Society

The next group of papers under the title *At Home and in Society*, takes us to one of the eastern Indian states, West Bengal, and enlightens the concept and challenges of childhood in this state, and then explores the family-woman problems which are rooted in the ancient religious texts. This part, more closely, targets the transition related matters of Indian society.

The first paper, using the name of a mythological bird, Halcyon, in order to recall the idyllically happy and peaceful time in the past, prepares us to hear some tales of transformation relevant to Bengali childhood middle class. It names some undeniable factors in the notion of childhood, that consist of regional cultures, historical backgrounds and political-economic profile. "The accent of this paper is on the discussion of perceptions of transforming childhood in West Bengal, particularly in the years after liberalisation" (Sen 2015: 77). Hence, the impacts of liberalisation, as a significant turning point in Indian history after independence, on Indian/Bengali culture, is traced by the tales and autobiographies. The paper in its historical part, raises the claim that the colonial period came along with an educational reform, which caused a confrontation of indigenous and Western values. As a consequence of economic liberalisation and the advent of private channels, a new "media culture of childhood" has emerged. This new media culture was crucial for the transformation of childhood. Hia Sen, the writer of this paper, employs "leisure culture" as the term for this usage of media by children and young people (83).

Bengali Middle Class Childhood and Tales of Transformation is about the transformation of childhood within other social changes and traces approaches to childhood rather than the process this notion has passed through. As the autobiographies and diaries of women from the 19th century reflect, the spatial aspect of childhood has changed drastically by shifting from the domestic sphere in the early and mid nineteenth century, to the more external domain of the school (88).

This coherent paper discloses the fact that the idea of childhood, in a sense that the contemporary middle classes understand it, and the construct and the lived pedagogised, protected childhood might not have existed prior to 50 years ago. Therefore, we can talk about the "absence of childhood" in India where the richness of childhood experience is muted. The process of formation of childhood, opens a broader perception about societal change in India which is largely preoccupied with binaries such as 'western vs. indigenous', 'materialist vs. non-materialist', and 'tradition vs. modern (90).

The next paper makes a swing from the tales to the ground reality of the India-Bangladesh border. Chandni Basu, in her paper *Children at the West Bengal Border: A State of Justice between Bangladesh and India*, brings forth the issues of identity and belonging while perpending the notions of juvenile justice and child protection within the domain of border dynamics. The paper has that "a look at the newly established separate judicial mechanism for children in conjunction to the massive fencing drive by India at the Bangladesh border signals towards yet another aspect of the dynamic of 'changing' India" (Basu 2015: 95). The research is based on the observations of the researcher at the Dhrubashram state institutional home for boys at Ariadaha in a seven-month period between 2011-2012 (99 f.). It highlights the emotional and the everyday meanings that borders generate in the lives of people focusing on apprehended children from Bangladesh.

The paper refers to a number that shows 15000 children cross the border into India every year (van Schendel 2005 quoted in Basu 2015: 99). This situation contributes a new dimension to the issue of security at the state institutional home. The apprehended children have changed the idea of undesirable outsider as border crossing is deemed to be a minor act according to the ethos at the organisation (102). From a point of view, the issue of children is reflected in the Indian juvenile law for the apparent reason that in the modern time, children have found their own identity. Yet, the limitation of law is not covered by the authorities.

The paper presents some new phenomenon like "borderisation" reiterated by Nevzat Soguk. Borderisation is a relative word which not only stands for the differences but also "the commonalities, connections and possibilities of convergences of internationalities and relations yet to be formed" (105). According to this theory, the presence of apprehended children from Bangladesh in West Bengal, amplifies the presence of border. In the idea that this paper puts forward, border

has a capacity to shape and reshape identities (109).

When it comes to childhood, the Indian/Bangladeshi roots are less strong. Children of Bangladesh make their best to get to their destination, even though its price be loosing their identity. They may deliberately loose their identification documents and mislead the Indian authorities to not deport them to their homeland. Chandni Basu effectively has shown how some local incidents in a region affects every country. By focusing on a limited issue on the micro level, the paper reaches to a reality on the macro level which claims "lessons from the complex connectedness in the region paves the way towards a possibility of increased tolerance in South Asia" (113).

The last paper of the section titled *At Home and in Society*, starts with raising the matter of violence by men against women in India. From the very beginning of the paper, *Religion, Culture and the Construct of Family-Woman: Transforming India*, we hear that any religion considers women to have a lower position. It refers to Brahmanical revivalism, Buddhist period and Christian era. The writer introduces Manavadharmashastra, the law-book of Hindus, as the most anti-woman Sanskritic core of Hinduism and claims that religion, whether Hinduism, Islam, Christianity or any other, always provided a subordinate position for women (Subrahamanian 2015: 116). The aim of this paper is "to shed light on the ideology working in the background of social life and to critically deconstruct it" (Subrahamanian 2015: 115). The main idea of this argument asserts that "the social functioning in India is not just out of caste hierarchy, but also out of the gender hierarchy" (123). It thinks over family as the place that may demonstrate the gender bias. Moreover, the text tries to correct misunderstandings about some ancient text like Manu-Smrti. The writer interprets this text as referring to a nuclear family but not joint family, since it mentions only to the husband, wife and a son or a daughter (124).

The paper delivers a valid point on the philosophy of Hinduism. It ascertains the relevance of Foucault's idea on religion as the political force in the Indian context (119). The text travels ahead to portray the position of women in contemporary India and remarks the supports Indian women grasped in Colonialism and Nationalism. In the reformist theories mentioned, women issues became a ground in which the traditional ideas were rejected. The paper deems Indian women as an objective to change by focusing on culture and religion as two significant factors. It proves that changes have happened on a superficial level as well as the place of women in Indian law. Yet, these improvements have not caused to a real freedom for women. Eradication of Sati as a superstitious custom is one of the examples discussed in this paper. Nevertheless, the text has not blatantly mentioned the violent acts against women as the starting point of the text.

Overall, the paper digs out the root of the subordinate position of women in Indian society based on textual analysis. The results lead us to no completely new findings but offer a comprehensive analysis on the reasons and justifications of fundamental religious groups.

From Regionalism to Cosmopolitanism

The following group of papers under the title *From Regionalism to Cosmopolitanism*, travels from North East to South India to indicate how regional values confront globalism and cosmopolitanism. Andreas Küchle, in his paper *Cultural and Social Change in Nagaland*, traces the process of this change in a small population of 232085 people (2008) whose main occupation is cultivation of rice. The sources of information used to write this paper are existing literature, statistics, newspaper articles and two months of fieldwork mainly in Mokokchung district during autumn 2009. It views the progress of a changing social structure in Nagaland through a historical lens (Küchle 2015: 137).

Using the theory of symbolic power and violence by Bourdieu, the writer mentions a phenomenon called symbolic struggle which is obvious in the North Eastern society. This notion describes the situation that people have been faced with while attempting to adapt to capitalist

economy. Küchle finds it interesting that "though the society around underwent massive change, people's behaviour did not adapt simultaneously to the new circumstances" (140). He aims to find a theoretical construction in order to understand the dynamics of change (144). Küchle talks about a hill socio-culture and social structure related to this geographical division which is the homeland of the Ao Naga community. As it is emphasized in the text, "hill socio-culture tries to conceptualise the social distribution and different evaluation of practices" (161). The text throws light on the various aspects of the Ao Naga community like possessions, marriage and gender egalitarity. The writer distinguishes different forms of capital in this society as clan membership is a social and symbolic capital; sex, age, success in head hunting and achieved feasts of merit are specific forms of symbolic capital, and rice is the major economic capital (153). He confines his research on social structure "to the analysis of the three main important fields of administration, religion and economy" (163).

In terms of administration, the paper mentions the adverse impact of British colonialism. Though for the first time the judicial and administrative power of the whole tribe was centralized and the infrastructure, services and institutions came onto the scene, no democratic system was employed. In the middle of the 20th century, local protests were suppressed by a symbolic violence such as heavy fines.

As far as religion is concerned, the paper mentions missionary activities which penetrated the educational system and not only could affect social values, but also weakened the unity and homogeneity of the village (169). Afterwards, the text explains how conversion brought about changes in various dimensions of life and the division of labour.

In the field of economy, we learn that the British administration integrated daily life of Naga into the Indian economic field. It was the time that the Indian rupee replaced *Japili* currency. Yet, "until today, Nagaland is only to a very low extent integrated into the economic field" (174).

In terms of theory, the paper has not got much further than the concepts of habitus and capitals by Bourdieu. It could have used post-colonial theories as the administration imported by the British forms the basis of a large part of analysis in this research work. It represents a different picture of India that is not dyed by poverty, but lack of perspectives.

The subsequent text, titled *The Kerala Model and the Mappila Muslims of Malabar*, by Barbara Riedel, briefly explains some facts of social life of Muslims of Malabar focusing on education. It contains some practical and tangible examples of interviews with students. The paper explores the reasons behind the positive changes that the community has undergone within the last 100 years.

The state that is under focus of this paper, Kerala, has achieved the highest rate of The Human Development Reports of the UN in comparison with Indian average and other low-income countries (Riedel 2015: 195). Hence, we can talk about a Kerala Model of development and Kerala Studies which is a branch of Asian Studies (195). Riedel in this paper suggest that instead of 'Kerala model', 'Kerala success story' is a preference (197). She believes that "Kerala's success is due to a whole bundle of reasons, which all are related to Kerala's particular history and geographical situation" (196). Then she dissects these reasons into eight points: 1) politicisation, 2) maritime and commercial connections, 3) a plural society, 4) social reform groups and their leaders, 5) Christianity and Christian missionaries, 6) Communism and communist activities, 7) reform-minded Indian princes and 8) the position of women (197).

Despite this flourishing condition, the paper states that the rate of unemployment among Mappila Muslim community is high. Many of them find a job beyond the Indian borders, in UAE and transmit money to their families. The text raises the question whether Kerala's relative high standard of living depends too much on this transferred money.

Overall, the reader gets the impression that the case of Kerala success story, should be considered outcome of a minority condition and the geographical and religious closeness to the Persian

Gulf countries rather than a planned model of development. This condition is interpreted as "emerging new Kerala based cosmopolitanism within parts of the Mappila Muslim community" (195). Regarding the mentioned state of Kerala's Mappila Muslims, the notion *cosmopolitanism at work* would be defined as a process that is always unfinished, imperfect and in bad order, and sometimes painful (205). Whereas, the incompleteness of cosmopolitanism should not translate to an ambiguous identity but a new self-confident identity.

In the next paper, *Gender, Family, and Religion in Colonial South India: The Transformation of Mappila Matriliny in Malabar (c. 1910-1940)*, Manaf Kottakkunnummal tries to shed light on the cultural dynamics in the transformation of the familial customs of Muslims in colonial Malabar, a district of then Madras presidency. The paper tries to trace the legislations passed during a 30-year period and brings the interconnections of social and religious rule into the focus. The analysis is based on second hand data that include published and unpublished Government documents, magazines, souvenirs, and newspaper reports in Malayalam and English (Kottakkunnummal 2015: 212). The word tharavadu is the key-word that the researcher has looked for in the texts. It refers to the matrilineal joint family that was transformed both structurally and conceptually during the mentioned period. The paper supposes to trace this transformation in the joint matrilineal families.

In the light of reviewing existed literature on the transformation of Muslim matriliny in Colonial Malabar, the writer makes his mind to have a look at "the interplay between economic factors, ideological factors, legal measures, and state policies in the realm of the Muslim family" (214). By this point of view, it seems that the paper is more concerned with a top down way of transformation. The text mentions the religious opposition to matrilineal practices which is a valid point in terms of Islamic principles. One of the fields in which the contrasting ideas are demonstrated is the Malabar Wills Act of 1898. This act was a general law for Hindus as well as Muslims (216). It shows how the Muslim community resorted to the provision of wakf or charity in Islam in order to overcome insufficiency of matrilineality. Furthermore, the paper deems family and women as the objects of discourses on religion and community (225). Nonetheless, in general, the women of the Mappila community enjoy a high status thanks to some facts as their economic stability and the ownership of land and the Islamic instructions. The paper briefly reviews the period of 1910-1940 as a period that had all the socio-cultural dynamics of a transitional period. The correct interpretation of Islam and colonial modernity are two main factors of transformation of Mappila matriliny. Furthermore, the three legislations that happened during the period mentioned, marked the transition in the meaning of being women (228). At the end of the paper, we come to know that the religious and social rules are in an unending contradiction: "The court, religious experts, and common Mappilas always encountered one another in the site of the family" (230).

Democracy at Work
Reading the previous papers, we have some ideas on the notion of *Democracy at Work*, that is the title of the last part of the book. The first paper, titled *India – A Westminster Model of Democracy?*, aims to compare the Indian political system with the Westminster Model. From the very beginning, the paper asserts that the Indian political system grew out of the British colonial system. It lists the elements that characterise the Westminster or majoritarian model and by comparing it with the Indian system states: "The very fact that the Indian parliament does not enjoy full and unrestricted sovereignty but is subordinated to the supremacy of a written constitution is indication enough that Indian democracy lacks a vital ingredient of the majoritarianism of the Westminster model" (Jürgenmeyer 2015: 240). Thus, Indian democracy cannot be properly understood by referring exclusively to the opposing concepts of majoritarian versus consensus democracy. In other word, the system oscillates between the two poles of majoritarian

and a negotiation democracy (244).

Clemens Jürgenmeyer in this paper gets to the point that the political constellation in India is a consequence of the enormous social political heterogeneity of Indian society and not of institutional necessity. He compares the political behavior of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi or various coalition governments to show just how the process of decision-making and its implementation can be diverse from consensualism to authoritarianism (242). The writer believes that India's political system has an inbuilt trend towards the sharing of power through negotiated compromise. This quality of the Indian political system has made it appropriate for a democracy in a heterogeneous and large country (244). At the conclusion of this cohesive paper, it accomplishes that the long uneven path India has gone through to get its own political system, and to acquire its own unique version of democracy, is a source of hope for the undemocratic world.

This paper on the Indian model of democracy, could have been a complementation of the first group of papers to draw a picture of the Indian political system after the depiction of Indian economy, and particularly the elimination of poverty and the impact of economic liberalization. In general, it seems the divisions follow the papers' topics rather than the papers meet the purpose of a comprehensive category.

The last piece of the book is to enlighten the condition of *Street Food Vendors and the Dynamics of Public Space in the Emerging Mega City Hyderabad.* Helene Grenzebach in this paper depicts the public space and the circumstances under which this mega city has been developing. The text investigates this developing process by outlining the socio-economic condition of street vendors in this city. The daily business of 50 to 60,000 of mobile street vendors in Hyderabad is under focus of this study. The importance of street vendors in the development of India comes into the light when we learn that street vendors in general constitute approximately two per cent of the population of Indian cities (Grenzebach 2015: 254).

The research has been undertaken by conducting 45 semi-structured interviews with street food vendors and security personnel at five research sites within Hyderabad, expert interviews with union leaders and concerned community members, mapping and observations. The collection of data for this research backs to September and October 2011 (251). The text employs the concept of public sphere, whereas one of the previous researches on this topic (Kaviraj 1997: 84 & 86 quoted in Grenzebach 2015: 252) declares it as an imported concept from Britain and not widely shared in India. The paper looks at the public sphere in terms of differentiation that exists between activities of men and women's roles in this sphere. Furthermore, some neglected dimensions about presence of street vendors; like vigilance over public spaces, that enhances the safety for all city residents comes into the light. Additionally, they assist to achieve the goal of food security in India. Despite of these advantages, the text informs us that street vending is considered a major problem by state authorities (260). This research claims that the street vendors have an inclusive understanding of urban space, even better than the municipal authorities. The adaptation measures to the new regulations proves this claim.

This micro level social phenomena of transforming the mega city brings into view greater Hyderabad with the larger aspect of a dynamic region oriented toward global growth sectors (257). Coming back to the micro level, the paper shows how street food vendors cope with the dynamics of public space, and economic developments like the new emerging multinational companies. The paper declares that "the elemental structures of the system of street food vending are currently not altered by overarching neo-liberalisation, the segment of street food vending is not transforming" (274).

This book reflects the process of various alterations in Indian society, from enactment of capitalism to partition of the subcontinent into different states. It comes out as a worthy source for social effects of capitalism on Indian society. The eleven selected papers by Indian and Western

authors provide a collection of practical and theoretical data which come to the help of academics and policy makers alike. The texts define how to look at the issues of a multi-layered society like India by presenting some covert realities of social structures and agencies in villages and cities as well as streets and homes.

The four parts of papers move from economy to the matters relevant to family, homeland and policy-making. The first three parts expose the contradictions of change in Indian society whereas the last part sheds light on the challenges of democracy on macro and micro levels. Some states like West Bengal and Kerala are more under focus by these papers. The editor has tried to sort the papers by the geographical and conceptual similarities. Nevertheless, the papers are as diverse as the land of India. Some of them are descriptive and do not go beyond a journalistic text while some others are focused on a precise argumentation. The quality of papers improves from the beginning to the end of the book.

By reviewing all the papers of this book, one may assert that the book fulfills the purpose of introducing change, its process and agents, as well as ideas and benefits that are mentioned in the introduction. The content of *Changing India* truly ascertains that "India's very special *mixture of chaos and bureaucracy* is a guarantee for stability and change at the same time" (Saalmann 2015: xi).