Intricacies of Nation-States and Incidences of Exclusion

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Abstract Inequality though intrinsic to human society is the basis on which civilizations strive to exist and function. The chapter explores the various manifestations of social exclusion that emerge from the interaction between state and society, on the structural arrangements prevalent in the various nation-states. These structural arrangements highlight the governing principle and logic of the structures that preside over the various state institutions and society leading to incidences of exclusion. The chapter further highlights the establishment of the Indian state and the implications of this transition to a democratic regime in Cooch Behar, currently a district of West Bengal.

Introduction

Nation-states play a pivotal role in the sustenance and functioning of today's modern world. The state guards our basic fundamental rights, provides welfare measures and recognizes the various identities present within. Being a sovereign power it defends its citizens, both within and outside its territorial area from threats. Without the governing body or the binding force of the state, safeguarding human existence is doubtful. Owing to the history, organization of state machinery and geopolitics of the region, nation-states hold diverse position and roles in the society across the world.

The human civilization has evolved through various stages leading to the industrial and post-industrial societies. Focusing on the evolution process from the hunter-gatherer society to that of the Agrarian society, this particular transformation has led to a major breakthrough and is indebted with the most influential characteristics prevalent in today's world, that is, the introduction of private property and accumulation of wealth. This conception of private property and accumulation brings in aspects of resource inequality. Accumulation of wealth requires an organizational structure whose basic purpose was to sustain conditions of protected living and

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sustenance of the societal structure. This essential political character of the agricultural society brought the monarchic and self-governing settlements (Boix 2010). The resource inequality subsided into political or the then organizational structure since individuals and groups with animal resources and modes of agriculture dominated and made decisions regarding the organizational structure. Resource inequality gets transcended into other modes of inequality, be it social, economic, political and spatial inequalities.

Today, state is considered as an evolution of the organizational structure of the past. Thus, the state is a product of the society for protection and sustenance. Alongside the state is made up of individuals and their personalities, thus whatever social and psychological gets imprinted on the society itself gets imprinted on the state and its functioning. Society and its governance structures have evolved simultaneously. Thus inequality is intrinsic in the society to an extent that societies strive on inequalities. The rise of nation-states over feudal states and papal-states is an output of violent wars and resultant human sufferings. The struggle for the principles of French Revolution, that is, equality, liberty and fraternity has contributed to the evolution of socio-political consciousness which could accommodate a diluted form of every other identity in a restricted fashion giving certain spheres of autonomy for each of them in every individual's life. It is this socio-political consciousness what we call the "nation-state".

Formulation of State Machinery

Even though the "state" has been talked about since ancient Greece, the role of the state has been largely assumed; it was later that sociologist Max Weber and Talcott Parsons elaborated on the state order and nature of its constitution in its totality. Max Weber highlights the state as a system of administration and law which symbolizes collective action by and for the society. The state exercises domination over the community within its geographic area where it holds sovereign power. There are three major elements of the state, namely territory, monopoly of violence and legitimacy, thus the state emerges as a collective legal body which has coercive power. Talcott Parsons asserts that state and society are bound together by an overarching and unified set of values; it is these set of values that help society associate with the state and act as a system code on which the state is expected to function. These three overarching entities that govern the functioning of state and society are, namely, values and beliefs, institutions and elites. They govern the social and psychological orientation of individuals in the society towards social objects, agencies, production of knowledge and imprinting of symbols within the society which later gets embedded into the state machinery. Values and beliefs are order of symbols, ethics and morals that govern the population, whereas institutions are those entities that exercise authority be it economic, governmental, political or military. Institutions also have an important role of facilitating interaction between the state functionaries and the society. Elites are intimately connected to the central values, beliefs and institutions in the society.

They shape agencies to alter the existing institutions wherein they create and diffuse cultural symbols through religious houses, school, publishing houses, media, and so on. He also uses the term "normative order" in a manner which suggests shared value commitments and obligations between communities which help in establishing social order. These norms and values weave together the elites and institutions in the social, political, religious and economic realms. Without this normative order or normative solidarity among communities in a heterogeneous society, maintaining stability can be a difficult task. Edward Shills wrote on something familiar namely "transcendental notions", wherein he states that people's connection to each other in the society rests on transcendental notion. The people seek and create common understanding among them enabling strong relationships that bind them. Shills also talks about the creation of shared meanings, wherein the forging of social bonds between communities through non-instrumental means excludes as well as includes demarcation lines as in who is part of the society and who outside it (Migdal 2001). The "state" is marked by two main elements namely image and practice. The "image" of the state is of a dominant, integrated and autonomous entity that controls and makes rules by authorized organizations. The image has two perceptions, that is, by those who are within the state and those outside the state. Institutions outside the state having associations with agencies and communities within the state can have a crucial role in creation of the image of the state. The second key element is "practice". which is the routine performance of state actors and agencies. A state has different ethnic groups and communities within itself; Edward Shills defines a community as: "Not just a group of concrete and particular persons but rather by persons who acquire the visible or tangible form of values with standards and rules through which people derive their own dignity". It is the contestation between different communities which bring about conflicting interests, dispute over resources and instability within the society. A nation-state is formed over a certain set of ideals and visions; on the contrary, we have the image of the dominant elites who govern the processes of the state and practices of different institutions within. These institutions can be state actors, state-authorised agencies and actors from outside the geographical boundaries of the state. This practice may reinforce the image of the state or further weaken it. The three main components of association between the state and society are vision of the nation state, image of the dominant elite in it and the practice of both state and non-state actors superseding or manipulating the overarching set of values and beliefs.

In today's heterogeneous societies wherein multiple cultures, faith and traditions coexist, there may persist conflict of ethnicities, resulting in multiple values and belief systems rooted in culture, religion and way of life which may or may not coincide with each other. In case of conflict of interests, the contradictory nature of the state is found, wherein there is lack of unanimity in various state machineries. The state emerging from the society replicates these differences in the various state machineries impacting the functioning of the state. The social and psychological orientation present in the society becomes a part and parcel of state influence and functioning. The attempt to impact state machinery is the struggle to gain social

control. This heterogeneity of state organization within itself with the society is further extrapolated with the presence of nation-states globally.

Structure of the Society

Antony Giddens states that society is a group of people living in a particular territory subject to a common system of political authority and has a definite sense of identity among them (Giddens 2000). People inherently form groups to gain recognition and voice their concerns by becoming pressure groups; alongside groups relative performance in economic, social and political dimension is an important source of individual welfare and can create political instability. Existent identities recast as social groups and contest for their access to welfare and representation in the society through redressal mechanism in the form of grievances. Development practitioners target groups to address the persistent inequalities based on common characteristics of the group, while referring to them as horizontal inequality. The society shares the same cultural, political and civic culture which is represented and shared by various sub-structures of the state. Culture is the psychological orientation towards social objects. Political culture is the evaluative orientation towards the political system, whereas the civic culture refers to the way how citizens ought to behave in the democracy. The groups formed are on the basis of their ethnicity, that is, common national or cultural tradition ranging from common ancestors, language, social, cultural or national experiences. From the cultural environment of the state, one can determine what form of governance structure is at place (participation-oriented culture, subject-oriented culture and parochial-oriented culture, Almond and Verba 1963).

The state and the society bound by an overarching set of entities establish a "structure", wherein each structure has a function to perform on which the system runs. These "structures" are organized around the logic on which the system operates. "Logic" brings reason and validity to the patterns on how systems function or interact. A "function" refers to a cause and effect relation between agencies, institutions and individuals, meanwhile, having a sufficient degree of subjectivity into the impact of that function. "Logic" refers to both reason and moral principles; it can refer to sustainability of the state, accumulation of wealth or a certain bent of dominant moral principle governed by societal values and beliefs, depending on the psychological orientation of society. Elaborating on the lines of racism individuals practicing racism believe in the superiority of certain races over the other; their involvement in the various state institutions would replicate their actions through the state machinery, altering or strengthening the structural arrangements in the society. The structural arrangements prevalent based on the values system of the society are governed by the existing logic and governing principle. The values and beliefs in society need to be coherent and formal to establish a structural arrangement. These established "structures" don't change or evolve themselves; it is the various "processes" that alter the functioning of the system. Processes refer to the actions of various agencies

and institutions that intend to alter the fabric of social structures prevalent in the society. Thus nature of state and society is such that both are intertwined to form a loop showcasing effective impact to each other. The state emerging from the society provides access to welfare and representation to its citizens and the population addresses the various issues faced through grievances and redressal mechanism.

Structural Forms of Exclusion

Social exclusion occurs where a particular group based on its distinct identity is excluded by the mainstream society from fully participating in the economic, social and political life. Exclusion persists when rules, norms, pattern of attitudes and behaviour of individuals and institutions represent obstacles to certain ethnic groups or individuals in achieving same rights and opportunities that majority does through intentional and unintentional deep-seated actions. Thus structural inequality in a state arises when certain groups enjoy unequal status in relation to other groups. Social exclusion occurs not only at legal institutional level but re-enforced through social level through the socialization of reality (Berger and Luckmann 1967). Berger and Luckmann in their book "*Social Construction of Reality*" state that an individual learns and absorbs knowledge, beliefs, biases and prejudices through the everyday dealing and interactions with family, friends and relatives (primary socialization).

At this primary stage an individual absorbs everything without understanding the depth, consequence or impact of that knowledge as the individual doesn't have comparative information regarding different perspectives prevalent in the society. The individual acknowledges the comparative understanding of different realities that is received from school, college and the external world while growing up (secondary socialization). Depending on the geopolitical positioning of his/her identity in the society, he/she builds up a certain mindset towards the psychological orientation of social objects. Thus an individual's actions, beliefs, values and morals are all dependent on his societal surrounding. And this is exactly from where exclusion emerges and blends into the state machinery.

Ethnicities don't always live together peacefully but rather compete to dominate national identity, when ethnicities are divided among more than one state or when ethnicities can't live together in a peaceful manner due to past history or influence of external events and agencies. Social exclusion can be a result of interaction between the different sub-structures of the state and various sections of the society depending on the cultural orientation, historical background or recent events, controversies or changes in law. We will explore on the various kinds of controversies and issues and deconstruct them into the institutional framework of the state and society, and decode them.

When one social group dominates the elites and institutions in the society and places themselves in various institutions, it leads to the creation of exclusion at the structural level since it moulds social behaviour through propagation of a certain kind of value and belief system and diffuses it into the state machinery for social reproduc-

tion. Now take the case of the Rwandan Genocide, 1994; there were two ethnicities that shared Rwanda, namely Hutu and Tutsi population. The Hutu power government gained extreme Hutu nationalism, thus the state itself took up arms against the Tutsi resulting in eight-lakh Tutsi's being massacred. Here the state machineries including the political bureaucracy were hijacked by the Hutus leading to genocide.

Since the state has multiple actors and agencies which often have diverse goals and whose vision and practice may not match with that of the state, state agencies themselves create contestation. Take the Niyamgiri Tribals and the Vedanta case in Odisha, 2013; the basic pre-context in such cases is that the state which protects the tribals and provides them with various constitutional safeguards itself has certain sub-structures which go against the constitution by joining hands with various corporate and transnational companies and plunder the tribals of not only their resource but also their culture. In this case the Odisha state machinery including the Kalahandi tehsildar's office and Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation of Orissa (IDCO) were involved in the requisitioning of alienating the land, whereas on the contrary, the Supreme Court ruled the judgement towards returning the said land to the natives.

Often state agencies have an alliance with external agencies leading to conflict of state and external agency goals. The presence and influence of hundreds of nation-states provide a universe of endless patterns of impact on each other. Take the case of plunder created by the ISIS Radical Islamist group which is being funded by various sources across the world. This nexus of state institutions with external agencies and organizations can have effects anywhere.

Social exclusion occurs when certain social groups claim contention over the construction of the state on the basis of certain vision leading to contestation over nuances of nationalism. Take the case of Hindu nationalism in India; they have been contesting for a long time that India is a Hindu state and are intent on making it a Hindu state. They are going against the principles on the basis of which the nation had been created and contesting it. Take for instance, the new drafted Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2016 which recalls only Hindu, Sikhs, Jains, Parsis and Christian population back to India, conveniently excluding the Muslim population. This replicates in the state policy as Hajong and Chakhma population who belong primarily to Hindu and Buddhist faith are being offered refuge by Rohingyas who are Muslim are being denied much support despite having Rohingyas refugee camps across India.

Exclusion formulates when value systems and beliefs of various ethnicities clash like the case of ethnic cleansing in Nazi/Germany where the Germans believe themselves to be the superior race and thus ended by creating genocide against the Jews. Here the value system and beliefs of the Germans didn't let the Jews and other communities adjust within one boundary. There can be other cases where both the involved community's value beliefs don't match and it leads to exclusionary structures. At a more fundamental level, the internal conflicts and the demarcation lines created during state formation result in aspects of social exclusion. Israel and Palestine war is a classic example where the formation of Israel and Palestine has resulted in contestations which persist even now in terms of land resources.

While understanding the state and society interaction, it is essential to understand the constraints of the state too. The state has various constraints as that of lack of strong political base which provides the inability to pursue gross-level policies and the state position acts as a tempting prize for those with organizational backing to overcome the state. Similarly, the heterogeneous identities present within the state compete between themselves for resources and power. Alongside this, lack of constraint over state population establishes the inability of the state to mobilize the population for specialized, task-oriented framework to provide welfare and sustenance.

State–Society Relations in India and Incidences to Social Exclusion

In an attempt to understand the formation of nation-state in India, an archival research was conducted[1] to comprehend the transition to democracy in a princely state in India and its impact on the state–society relation and the various complications surrounding it. The Indian dominion prior to Independence consisted of 564 princely states[2] which are currently constituted into 29 states and 7 union territories. The establishment of the "state" in India is a result of the democratic transition and its consolidation. Democracy though a homogenous regime in India has a peculiarity, that is, democracy is not the same everywhere. Take, for instance, there are 11 states that enjoy special category status such as Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttarakhand. These special statuses have been provided on the basis of certain parameters such as hilly and difficult terrain, sizable share of tribal population, hostile location, low resource and population density. Similarly, we have different allocation of central assistance funds and plans for the various Indian sub-states.[3] Democracy itself has evolved from the normative means of free and fair elections to creation of a favourable environment assisting economic, political and social growth of its citizens. Owing to the diverse interaction of the Indian state to its various populations and sub-states, it is clearly evident that the asymmetrical federalism accommodates various levels of democracy in India. Thus the research attempted to look at a princely state—"Cooch Behar" and how its integration into the Indian dominion has made socio-economic and political impact on state formation and the society.

Cooch Behar earned a separate geographical and historical identity, with Cooch Behar being the capital of the Kamatapur kingdom in the fifteenth century; Kamatapur kingdom included parts of the present West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Meghalaya

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[1]Research conducted by Allen Thomas titled "Changing modes of Governance and Impact on State—Society relations: a case study of the Cooch Behar State".

[2]Integration of the Indian States—V. P. Menon.

[3]Gadgil Formula.

of India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. As the Kamatapur kingdom disintegrated, the various regions within it became autonomous. Cooch Behar is currently a district of West Bengal. The transition to democracy in Cooch Behar was largely supervised by the British Administrative structure since the Treaty of 1773,[4] wherein the Maharaja of Cooch Behar accepted the terms of condition of the British administration in return for safety from the neighbouring kingdoms. The Annual Administrative Reports[5] published by the British officers and submitted to the then Maharaja of Cooch Behar highlight the role of the colonial bureaucratic regime in establishing new revenue and land system, law and order, basic infrastructure such as electricity, railways, communications and press, meanwhile, investing on education, skill development and health. But these improvements were made for the convenience of the British, such as the railways helped the British administration to expand and penetrate newer geographical spaces and extract resources. Similarly, the press was created so that administrative works need not be published in West Bengal to save time and resources; the work of the press was not to produce documents or material for the largely illiterate population but to print stamps, copy old documents and print judicial and state documents. Needless to say, the economy was agrarian in nature and most small-scale industries were pushed out of business. Though raw materials were extracted from Cooch Behar such as silk, but were never re-invested in Cooch Behar.

Cooch Behar acceded to the Indian dominion in 1949 but an important precedent to the Accession of Cooch Behar was the Government of India Act 1935, which attempted at forming the "All India Federation"—a Union of the British India territories and princely states, thus increasing the size of legislature, extension of franchise, division of subjects into three lists and retention of communal electorates. The negotiations made between the Viceroy Linlithgow, special representatives (sent by the Viceroy), the Maharaja of Cooch Behar and his ministers acted as a base for the negotiations and dealings in the Instrument of Accession of 1949. Unfortunately, the "All India Federation" could not come into existence as many princely states refused to join it.

The incidences of Accession of Cooch Behar commenced from 1947 till 1950, wherein constant dialogues and meetings have been recorded between Sardar Patel, V. P. Menon and the Maharaja of Cooch Behar Jagaddipendra Narayan. The chief minister of Cooch Behar signed the Standstill agreement with V. P. Menon of the Indian Dominion on 14 August 1947. According to the Standstill Agreement, the Government of India would provide public services and administration to Cooch Behar on reasonable compensation basis until the Instrument of Accession is signed. Till 1947 Cooch Behar was a colonial bureaucratic monarchy. From 1947 to 1949, it was a constitutional monarchy and from 1950 onwards became a democracy under Indian jurisdiction.

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[4]The Treaty of 1773 between the Maharaja of Cooch Behar and the British (Cooch Behar Royal Archives).

[5]The Annual Administrative Report of Cooch Behar State 1878–1979, 1897–1998, 1902–1903, 1916–1917, 1926–1927 and 1935–1936.

Post 1947, a lot of disturbances[6] were noted in Cooch Behar according to the documents present at the National Archives of India, Delhi. A major reason behind it was the demographic composition and location of Cooch Behar, as Muslims occupied 40% of the population and geographically it was surrounded by East Pakistan from three sides. Alongside Cooch Behar occupies a strategic position for India as it acted as India's only link to the North Eastern states. The West Bengal state reports to the centre that not all is well in Cooch Behar and there are chances that Cooch Behar may accede to Pakistan, which will further pose problems to the Indian Dominion in accessing the North East. The West Bengal state asserts that the Cooch Behar state was pursuing policies to invite Muslims from East Bengal and drive the Hindus away leading to a narrow majority of the Muslims, thus upsetting the communal harmony and acceding to Pakistan. Meanwhile, the Cooch Behar state clarifies to the centre stating that Muslims constitute only 38% of the population and that the relations between the Muslims and non-Muslims in the state are cordial. Multiple reports suggest that the state of Cooch Behar continues to pursue imperialistic policies of pre-independence. The Cooch Behar state has a heterogeneous population with the aboriginal royalists known as the Rajbanshis and the outsiders called the Bhatias. The Cooch Beharis have formed the "Hitsadhani Sabha" which intends to carry on propaganda to incite hatred towards the Bhatias. The Hitsadhani Sabha is a purely communal organization and its activities are detrimental. The state is a party to this movement since most of the people involved in it are part of the state machinery. The ruler of Cooch Behar was a titular guy who doesn't involve much in the affairs of the state. Despite being shorn of paramountcy and being a constitutional monarch, he chose to be a feudal chief who has left his affairs in the hands of his ministers. The state being influenced by the Hitsadhani Sabha is practicing exclusionary measures towards the Bhatias in terms of education opportunities and jobs.

Another problem apart from the Hitsadhani Sabha is of the enclaves or chit lands[7] of Pakistani Domination within the Cooch Behar state which act as a base for Pakistani Movement and the Cooch Behar enclaves which are in East Pakistan making it difficult for essential supplies and administration to reach its population. Since there is no arrangement for preventing and safeguarding the Pakistani infiltration, the state stands unprotected. Also, the railway line connecting Cooch Behar with West Bengal and Assam passes through the Pakistan enclaves which have made it utterly impossible to send regular supplies from outside. Amidst these growing problems, the Maharaja of Cooch Behar signed the Instrument of Accession on 12 September 1949, following which on 1 January 1950 Cooch Behar was declared a district within the state of West Bengal against popular opinion of the people of Cooch Behar.

It has been noted in the Patel Correspondences Vol. 8, p. 517 that the merger with the West Bengal was highly unpopular with the people of Cooch Behar, yet the

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[6]Affairs in the Cooch Behar State; Disturbances in the Cooch Behar State (Ministry of States 1947) NAI, Delhi, Clash between Cooch Behar State Forces and Students of Cooch Behar Victoria College 1945; NAI Delhi, Cooch Behar State's Affairs (Ministry of States 1949) NAI, Delhi.

[7]Administration of Pak enclaves within the Cooch Behar State and Cooch Behar enclaves within Pakistan (Ministry of State 1950); NAI, Delhi.

merger happened. The signing of the Instrument of Accession and the merger with West Bengal were part of the negotiations and dealings between the Cooch Behar state and the Indian dominion. The India Independence Act did not and does not require a ruler to consult his people before deciding on accession; this is a huge price for establishment of democracy. Democracy involves certain element of coercion into it and the accession and merger of Cooch Behar is one such example. From the documents present at the National Archives of India, Delhi and the Cooch Behar Royal Archives, Cooch Behar suggests that the West Bengal state played a crucial role in the accession of Cooch Behar. The archival documents suggest that the West Bengal government influenced the Government of India to act in a certain manner which may or may not have been in the best or popular interest of the people of Cooch Behar, that is, a sub-state body (West Bengal Government) with stronger political integrity (than Cooch Behar) influences the state machinery and its actions (Government of India) against the interests of another sub-state body.

This reciprocates into the fact that the West Bengal government had more political power as compared to those in the political arena of Cooch Behar. And this is quite true ever since the Maharaja of Cooch Behar signed the Treaty of 1773 with the British; he agreed on Cooch Behar being a part of the West Bengal province and since then the affairs of Cooch Behar have been either handled or monitored by West Bengal. The Britishers played a major role since they positioned a certain category of population in a geographic area based on their material resource over another category of population and it carried on. To elaborate, the change in the spelling of the name of Cooch Behar State from "Kuch Bihar" to "Cooch Behar" came through the Official Secretary of the Government of Bengal to the Secretary of Home Department dated 12 August 1896. The West Bengal province acted as a base for the British administration to reach to the other nearby kingdoms and geographic areas, thus submerging smaller kingdoms like Cooch Behar into it. Similarly, all reports and documents between 1947 and 1950 pertaining to the affairs of Cooch Behar came through West Bengal (Disturbance in the Cooch Behar State 1947) even when Cooch Behar had not acceded to the Indian Dominion nor had been merged to West Bengal (State 1947). This evidence is sufficient to highlight that the political and bureaucratic actors of the West Bengal State dominated the political and bureaucratic actors of the Cooch Behar State. The research does not assert whether the influence of West Bengal on the Indian Central Government in regard to Cooch Behar has been good or bad rather the research highlights processes of persuasion within the various state machineries, institutions and agencies.

The Indian Bureaucratic system was borrowed from the British Indian Bureaucratic System; not that no new political group or individual were allowed to enter the political system but those who already had access and recognition to power held on to them when India became independent. To elaborate, the legislative assembly seats[8] when Cooch Behar merged to West Bengal in 1950 were given to Satish Chandra Roy Sarkar and Umesh Chandra Mandal wherein Satish Chandra Roy was part of the

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[8]Representation of Cooch Behar in West Bengal Legislative Assembly (Ministry of States 1950); NAI, Delhi.

town committee of Dinhata as per the Annual Administration Report of the Cooch Behar State 1935–1936. It was difficult to know the background of Mr. Umesh Chandra Mandal but it seems he emerged himself from the Cooch Behar State Mandal as its president. Alongside there was no independent and neutral body that allocated the legislative assembly seats, rather it was the Maharaja and his officers who decided to allocate the legislative assembly seats. This highlights the fact that transition to democracy has linkages and impacts of the past administrative regime.

Moving on from administrative and political impact on establishment of the democratic state in Cooch Behar, social change also needs due attention which requires an anthropological investigation to understand the geographical positioning and cultural resemblance of the Rajbanshis. The local royalists or the Rajbanshis belong to both Hindu and Muslim faith and reside in not just Cooch Behar but also in parts of the neighbouring states of Assam, Bihar and Bangladesh.

During colonial monarchy in the Cooch Behar state, the state put no restrictions of any sort on its people and their intermixing with other people from other regions or kingdoms to that point that there were no societal/cultural restrictions to intermarriage between the tribes; hence the cultural integrity of the tribes were maintained. Post independence through the creation of state boundaries has restricted their movement and unknowingly asserted them with other cultures, resulting in them being culturally influenced.

The accession of Cooch Behar has divided cultural boundaries through the creation of administrative jurisdiction along with the fact that Rangpur had been merged to Bangladesh. Owing to the policies of the Indian state the same Rajbanshis community receives separate status in different states; to elaborate, the Rajbanshis and the Kochs are OBC in Assam, SC in Bihar and ST in West Bengal. It is understood that the status of ST/SC and OBC is given through socio-economic evaluation of each state with respect to its population, yet the ambiguity remains. Alongside when these areas got merged into the separate states, they lost their collective autonomy and were subjected to different cultures without providing any institutional backing to safeguard their own culture and community. For example, once Cooch Behar was merged into West Bengal, all laws of West Bengal were imposed on Cooch Behar since it was not an exception. Bengali was imposed as the official language of Cooch Behar and in education Koch history was not taught until a few decades back. Leaving apart the role of the state, if we look at the cultural influence on Rajbanshis, wherever they have been influenced by the Hindu religion through the process of Sanskritization their etiquettes, dressing style, eating habits and even in fact language has been influenced through the different groups around them. Rajbanshis in Darjeeling, Cooch Behar and in districts of Assam all have stark distinctions in terms of the accent of their language, dressing sense and eating habits. The Rajbanshi language that served as a medium of expression in the erstwhile Kamrup-Kamata region is known as Goalparia in Assam and Deshi or Kamata in North Bengal. Owing to the colonial influence on the Bengal province, Bengali as a language flourished; meanwhile influencing the majority population. Also keeping in mind the condition of the Cooch Behar Palace which acts as a cultural heritage of the Koch Rajbanshis has been neglected by the West Bengal State Government and the Archaeology Department of India.

The Palace has not been looked after, neither painted nor have any measures taken to preserve the monument. The walls of the Palace are now dilapidated; stray animals are grazing in the Palace gardens; and littering can be found all through the Palace. Such a condition of the Cooch Behar Palace which was once quoted to have the potential to be one of the Seven Wonders of India now rests as a humiliation for the Koch Rajbanshi people who have been neglected all this while (Das 2012).

The picture of cultural deterioration is to be dealt with caution and for this attempt we study the past anthropological reports in helping us evaluate the situation. The Statistical Account of Bengal: State of Kuch Behar written by W. W. Hunter in 1876 states that from Maldah district on the borders of Purniah in the province of Behar on to the southwest to Goalpara district and the Assam valley of Brahmaputra on the northwest, thus ranging from Bihar, West Bengal, Assam and Bangladesh, used to be the regions where Rajbanshis lived. Wherever Rajbanshis lived they assimilated with the local cultures; for example, many Rajbanshis adopted the Muslim faith and often were confused with the general Muhammadan population of East Bengal. Similarly, in the regions largely dominated by the Hindu faith has led to the process of Sanskritization, wherein the Rajbanshis adopted the regionally accepted pure practices such as abstinence from pork meat and worship of Krishna (Hindu god). Alongside in the book "Rajbanshis of North Bengal" written by Charu Chandra Sanyal, it is evident that the Ahoms (natives of Assam), Khens (indigenous tribes of Cooch Behar who ruled till the Mughal invasion) and Rajbanshis who fought among themselves were practically mixed through matrimonial and other alliances since inter-marriage were freely allowed. These anthropological studies suggest that the Rajbanshis were intermixed and it would be improper to state that cultural deterioration happened, but rather it is a process of cultural assimilation. To highlight the role of the Indian democratic state, rather than using the term cultural deterioration, cultural neglect would be the correct terminology. Instances of imposition of Bengali language which is foreign to them since independence, history of Cooch Behar not being included in course curriculum and lack of state support to preserve the culture of Cooch Behar highlight the state negligence. Today there is a stark deviation in the cultural practices, language, customs and access of Rajbanshis to their own history. They have lost their unique identity and have merged with the dominant cultures in each of these states. In administrative terms much of the welfare funds and developments happen at the heart of West Bengal and Cooch Behar has been a victim of it. Their villages are poor; they don't have access to better opportunities of education, health and employment; thus they are distant from the developments of West Bengal. The neglect of the Rajbanshis community has led to a process of cultural revival.

Way Forward

It is evident that states may compete with each other on the varied levels of consolidation owing to their specific geographic, political and social setup; but moreover, state competes within itself with respect to the heterogenic composition of the society to

achieve democratic consolidation. Take the case of the Indian Democratic state; the vast multiplicity of communities with unique identities spread across administrative divisions based on religious and languages requires different democratic processes and institutions to cater to the community's specific requirements. Alongside most importantly, the nature of the functioning of the state is dependent on human beings who are bound to be influenced and act in a prejudiced manner. It is the influence of these varied individuals at the various state and non-state actors and institutions, both within and outside the state, that systemic inequalities are produced and established. It can be stated through the very existence of the caste system in the Hindu culture, or colonial establishments in Asia and Africa or through racism and genocide. As Laski in the first line of his book "*Introduction to Political Economy*" states that society is based on inequality. The social fabric of society is rooted in these inequalities which replicate themselves in the form of actors, agencies and institutions which affect the society owing to their own values and beliefs which have either been passed on from generations or are being created due to multiple and varied levels of impact on identity and resource. The systemic differences prevalent in the political and social spheres create and propagate inequalities for maintaining the status quo.

Inclusive policies are to be made keeping in mind not only communities that fail to achieve welfare measures from the state or those who need special attention but also in a way to protect the state interest and its functioning. Take the case of the recent Immigration Policy of the US post-Trump period or India's Reserve Bank of India economic policies before the 2008 depression; it is evident that the state protects its citizens and itself for a period of sustained growth. The state should not be exposed and deranged that it loses its functioning. It is also to be noticed that there is a myriad of inter-relations and connections between the state, society, and transnational bodies both within themselves and between themselves. It is interesting to notice that during the austerity measures (2010–2011) to support Greece from the debt crisis, taxi drivers in Germany were working extra hours to bail Greece out of debt. Similarly a small minority ethnic group in India known as Malayalis/Keralites known for out-migration were known to be reasons for the Blue Jasmine revolution in Tunisia (2011) resulting in the Arab spring since the Keralites occupied the major jobs resulting in job scarcity and social tensions among the youth of Tunisia. Understanding the state is the key to understand the prevalent problems in the society and carve policies to address them.

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