

# **A World Divided A World Fragmented**

Arise the Phoenix from the ashes

Edited by Viren Lobo

## **An Especioza Trust Production**

*(Forest fires, natural or a man made plot to capture real estate ? Natural fires or the slow fires caused by tribals leave in their wake ashes that provide nutrients for the crop/ forest to regenerate. Some natural fires can be deadly and man made fire lines can prevent their rapid spread. Some cultural practises of tribals can be outdated/ have no relevance but wrong symbolism. These are the subject of education to realise the change needed. However there are fires of another kind too, how does man help nature root these out)*



Forest Fire: Natural or man made

# Foreword

## A story of the Indian Grey Wolf and the Shepard

The Indian Grey Wolf was in danger of extinction.

The habitat on which he depended was being decimated.

Savannah Grasslands being replaced by sugar cane fields and invasive weeds.

Profit the name of the game

Sustainability and healthy living put to shame

Then came the lion from Gujarat

I know a way to put an end to this mess

With a load roar he announced his intentions

The earth quaked beneath his feet

All feared, this is the end they thought

A mad idea they bought

Collective action is our insurance

A way to build endurance

The Shepard listening quietly nodded quietly.

Wolf, Wolf he cried

All came to attention

The story of the Wolf went on

A new resolution in the Panchayat passed

A group the Shepard to protect was formed

Then came ripples of a story from the USA

How the introduction of the wolf had restored the Yellowstone National park

Our story is different however

The wolf is just trying to be clever

In the meantime the Lion his territory in Gujarat expanded

Plans for Kuno disbanded

A Cheetah was brought instead.

What more we will have in store

For now you can listen to Al Gore.

Viren

## **Guilty until innocent or innocent until proven guilty: Take your pick**

The story takes a turn when more chocolates reach a mofussil town in tonnes

More than the town can absorb

Naturally stock go unsold

A decision to write off can only be taken by the bold

The revenge that prompted this first despatch

Seethes over at this bold action

Poisoning or accident the result some time later

Cry foul

That is the voice of a mad man the headlines screamed

Pay no attention the world was told

But there were eyes on this bold

Take him whenever you get a chance

As from responsibility we distance

Many years later

The position of Director was up for grabs

A number applied but the post was taken they were told

Till one day the whistle-blower the balloon busted

He was sequestered for his troubles

The winds blew the story around

Till Hercules its centre found

Abhimanyu in the chakravyuh he became

For the rest things continued just the same

Till a ban on publication

Started a new refrain

The manthan then began

Smita's eyes smouldered

Like Durga

The spear she grabbed

The lion in its den was nabbed

The rabbit had conquered all shouted

Long live the rabbit they said

Meanwhile the lion of Gir had crossed its borders

Left a fake address at the head quarters

Cannot be traced said some

Gone into hiding said others

The Lion turned out to be someone's pet dog

Now one stuck in a bog

Who will clear the fog

The power of social media said one

Technology/ social interface said another

Science people interface

The one disgraced now has a new face

Transformation take a while

For now the whistle blows: A hundred miles

Viren Lobo

# Background

## Charter of demands of Akhil Bharatiya Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Samiti

At a consultation organised by All India Union of Forest Working People on 13th and 14th March, on the need to unite all communities dependant on the natural resources for survival and livelihoods, the following draft Charter of demands from ABMKSS has been submitted to the Ad Hoc Coordination Committee of which ABMKSS is a part.

ABMKSS is very clear that Communities dependent on the Natural Resources of this country have a historic right to the resources of this country. They do not see them as resources to be exploited but life support systems on which the livelihoods of Tribals, Pastoralists, Small and Traditional Fishers, Small and Marginal Farmers and Natural Resource wage labour depend. Forest, Water and Land are ours. And the biodiversity they support too.

Reproduction of life is dependent on the conservation of the life support systems on which life depends.

In this connection ABMKSS is very clear that Women and Children are at the Centre of all development which is dependant on Nature of Nature and it is only on the basis of empowered women and children that true realisation of the demands below can be met. This clarity also recognises that principles of production and reproduction of life necessitates that exploitation of human, beings and nature have to end.

We have the following charter of demands

- a. Legal protection for natural resource dependent Communities along the lines of the Forest Rights Act. In a sense correction of historic injustice done to these communities.
- b. Employment Guarantee to conserve and develop these natural resources back to pristine, near pristine condition.
- c. An end to destruction and pollution of these resources.
- d. Principles of local self governance to be applied with conditions related to conservation and livelihood support in preservation and development of these resources. This principle exists under Pesa, the Panchayati Raj Act and FPIC but is not implemented.
- e. Local value addition for self consumption/ recycling principles in line with Nature's cycles.
- f. Participation in governance of major natural resources having ecological significance.

Viren Lobo

On behalf of ABMKSS

## Dedication



Mandatai with Sathya Muyanoor when he visited in December 2022

### **Mandatai passes away peacefully**

On 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023, Mandakini Khandekar breathed her last at 2.30 am. Mandatai was Marie's friend. I got in touch with her out of the blue when she posted back Dad's book via Munki. The letter reached me after three months. In any case the brother sister duo were back in action speaking to me even after they had passed away.

Mandatai was the person to take this magazine dedicated to the family trust to Marie's friends. The first edition focused as it was on Marie was shared with a number of them. In the meantime, I shared about IELA and got endorsement from her about the approach I was following.

She was educated in Ahilyabai Holkar's Indore, where her legacy of respect and dignity for women carried on. Her experience with the community radio for education, a pioneering effort at that time, experience in TISS and shared friendship and concerns that she and Marie had were stamped in the fine dignity with which she carried herself even at the age of ninety

when I first met her (in a capacity different to the child who had met her along with my family in Mumbai between 1969-73).

Avidly reading my work, she provided her own insights on the Mahabharata, Maharashtrian cuisine, Nat Geo and many other aspects as a spin off from the reports/ articles I had written.

Mandatai, never loved publicity, keeping a low profile and discouraging me from openly publicising her role and contribution to my organisation IELA which is in many ways a novel response to the the path to the future, one that stems from the analysis done on the Brundtland Committee report Our Common Future by a group in SPWD and then later finding resonance in the encyclical of Pope Francis - Laudato si. In the conditions that gave birth to this, her support from a generation straddling my parents and grandparents provided the roots that Especioza trust needed, beyond the immediate family members who have been a great support to me all through.

Mandatai will be remembered forever as the soul of IELA and Especioza Trust. The unseen visionary who could recognise the path to the future which needed all the support she could give. Rest in Peace Mandatai. Your spirit lives on.

Viren Lobo

## To Doc: His light eyes hiding deep thoughts



Dr A K Nagaraja

For animals doc had a cure  
And with this secure  
He could carefully watch  
Human behaviour too  
Different animals in the zoo  
Or human beings with varied traits  
Take your pick  
His latest travels told a story  
As he caught up with family  
A varied snap shot  
Encompassing three continents  
An observer of life's treasures  
One he valued with good measure  
Was it a time and tested formula  
Like the famous debate in the reading room  
Or the googly from a veteran  
Who had seen a lot  
Doc knew to disengage  
When things he had got hot  
Yet knew how to still stir the pot.  
Of late Doc had a been a bit listless  
The reason we all soon knew  
Will put down his irritability  
To what was in the stew  
Farewell Doc  
Your light eyes and deep thoughts will be remembered for long  
Even as you leave us forlorn.

Viren Lobo



## Vandana Thakur an untimely death: Her spirit lives on



Vasudha Thakur

<https://www.thedartmouth.com/article/2023/03/vasudha-thakur-23-dies#:~:text=Vasudha%20Thakur%20'23%2C%20a%20student,Brown%20to%20the%20Dartmouth%20community.>

### Vasudha Thakur '23 dies

Thakur will be remembered as a force of optimism “who made time for everyone” and “stood up for what she believed in.”

by [The Dartmouth Senior Staff](#) | 3/25/23 8:48pm

by [Naina Bhalla](#) / The Dartmouth

Vasudha Thakur '23, a student from New Delhi, India, died Saturday morning, according to an email sent by Dean of the College Scott Brown to the Dartmouth community.

At Dartmouth, Thakur double majored in economics and geography, though she had a particular fondness for geography, Brown wrote. She was also a member of the International Students Association. Prior to college, Thakur attended Sanskriti School, a high school in her hometown.

Brown wrote that Thakur’s friends described her as an “unusually positive and open person who stood up for what she believed in,” and “a good, reliable friend who made time for everyone.”

Representatives from Dartmouth’s Counseling Center, along with other resources, were made available to students Saturday evening and will be offered Sunday afternoon in One Wheelock, Brown wrote. Counseling Center and Tucker Center staff will also be available to provide support on Monday afternoon in Collis 221, 222 and 223.

In his email, Brown added that Dartmouth is planning an evening gathering to mourn several deaths in the community, with more details to follow in a subsequent schoolwide message.

For students, counseling services are available at (603) 646-9442 at all hours and through the Department of Safety and Security at (603) 646-4000 for immediate assistance. Students can call UHelp — a service of UWill, the College’s free teletherapy provider — at (833) 646-1526. Students can also reach out to the College chaplain to set up a confidential pastoral

counseling session. The Student Wellness Center and Undergraduate Deans Office remain available resources for undergraduate students.

This article will be updated as more details become available, and a full obituary will be published in the near future. If you would like to share a memory, please contact [editor@thedartmouth.com](mailto:editor@thedartmouth.com).

Vasudha's mother Vinita Thakur was DSP, Udaipur, when promoted and transferred as DIG, Rajasthan she and her younger daughter had dinner with us. A sad and shocking incident for all of us.



Marie Mies: Photo by Irene Franken

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/pune/recalls-association-maria-mies-german-sociologist-ecofeminist-died-8614877/>

<https://www.polenekoloji.org/forces-of-reproduction-socialist-ecofeminism-and-the-global-ecological-crisis/>

A widely recognized foundational reference for materialist ecofeminism is the work of German sociologist Maria Mies, and particularly her book *Patriarchy and Accumulation on the World Scale* (1986). Starting from the ‘unresolved questions’ about the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism, Mies claimed that feminism needed to go beyond the analysis of reproductive labour in western countries, connecting it with the specific material conditions of women in the peripheries of the capitalist world-system in order to identify ‘the contradictory policies regarding women which were, and still are, promoted by the brotherhood of militarists, capitalists, politicians and scientists in their effort to keep the growth model going’ (Ibid.: 3). In short, Mies laid the basis for a decolonial/feminist ecosocialism, premised on the rejection of GDP growth as a universal measure of progress (Barca, 2019b; Gregoratti and Raphael, 2019).

Developing this perspective required to rethink ‘the concepts of nature, of labour, of the sexual division of labour, of the family and of productivity’. Political economy, Mies argued, had conceptualized *labour* in opposition to both nature and women, i.e. as male-coded, transcendent agency actively shaping the world by giving it value. On the contrary, she claimed, all the labour that goes into the production of life must be called *productive* ‘in the broad sense of producing use values for the satisfaction of human needs’ (Ibid.: 47). Mies’ overall argument was that the production of life, or else subsistence production, performed mainly in unwaged form by women, slaves, peasants and other colonized subjects,

‘constitutes the perennial basis upon which “capitalist productive labour” can be built and exploited’ (Ibid.: 48). Being uncompensated for by a wage, its capitalist appropriation (or “superexploitation”, as she termed it) could only be obtained – in the last instance – via violence or coercive institutions. In fact, she wrote, the sexual division of labour was built upon neither biological nor purely economic determinants, but on the male monopoly of (armed) violence, which ‘constitutes the political power necessary for the establishment of lasting relations of exploitation between men and women, as well as between different classes and peoples’ (Ibid.: 4). The basis for capital accumulation in Europe had been laid upon a parallel process of conquest and exploitation of the colonies and of women’s bodies and productive capacities (starting with the witch hunt) from the 16th century onwards. Only after this regime of accumulation had been established through violence, could industrialization begin. With it, ‘science and technology became the main “productive forces” through which men could “emancipate” themselves from nature, as well as from women’ (Ibid.: 75). At the same time, she argued, European women of different social classes (including those participating in settler colonialism) were subject to a process of ‘housewifization’, i.e. they were gradually excluded from political economy, intended as the public space of progress and modernity-building, and secluded into ‘the ideal of the domesticated privatized woman, concerned with “love” and consumption and dependent on a male “breadwinner”’ (Ibid.: 103).

Mies’ work should be seen as part of a larger scholarly effort at laying the grounds for an ecofeminist narrative of capitalist modernity

## **Cleta Lobo: Her father's will be done**



**Cleta Hedwiges Lobo: 4th September 1940 - 17th May 2023**

### **Cleta Hedwiges Lobo**

The guiding light of Mater Dei for over six decades

Passed away peacefully on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023

The eldest of three daughters

Felt it her duty to carry on her father Anaicleto's legacy

Mater Dei School in Saligoan to be precise

In a patriarchal world

That meant being the man of the house

Not marrying the price

While her sister Edna and mother Inez supported her all through

Her youngest sister Yvette a larger world unfolded

When push came to the shove, her colours she did show

Government takeover foiled

Even as the CM boiled  
Sisters stood together as one  
Resisting all those that tried to con  
My father an article to this brave fight dedicated  
As Anacleto faith remained vindicated  
Mater dei created at a time of need  
Evolved as time went by  
Cleta a girl guide provided many a new dimension  
As Mater Dei many heights scaled  
Dark clouds not far away  
Not uncommon for terrain like this  
Many a cloud has come and gone  
What the new wave brings we will see  
For now we know that Cleta in adversity stood firm  
The rock on which Anacleto his legacy built  
Rest in Peace Cleta  
The courage you have shown will endure  
As to the new challenges we seek the cure

## Part I

### Local Models for a viable future

*( I came across Mondragon while working on issues related to the relevance of renewable energy for decentralised governance. The Mondragon cooperative has a ratio of 1: 9 between the lowest and highest paid as against 1:146 in Corporations. Dignity of labour is paramount. Our focus is different since we are looking at the relevance of energy cycles to reduce the pollution and increase sustainability based on the relevance of the local species and traditional knowledge about nature embedded over centuries while looking at modernity and democracy as a way to counter patriarchy and traditional divisions of labour on which patriarchy is based.)*



# The Mondragon Experiment

David Korten | March 22, 2023

As we search for ways to create a viable human future of peace, equality, and environmental health, we are in desperate need of examples that demonstrate such a future is within our human means and suggest pathways to achievement on an ultimately global scale.

I have long followed the work of my friend and colleague Georgia Kelly, who has led group tours to the Basque region of Spain to study the Mondragon Cooperatives for the last 15 years. As Georgia observes "...[T]he Mondragon cooperatives comprise nearly 100 businesses, a university complex, a bank with 380 branches, a supermarket chain, and the largest Research and Development complex in Europe..." All are cooperatively owned and managed by members of the larger Basque community.

Georgia has now written a paper "[The Ethics and Values of Cooperative Culture in the Basque Region of Spain](#)" exploring the history and structure of the Mondragon cooperatives within the larger context of the evolving culture and institutions of the Basque region of some 2.2 million people. It explores their inspiring success in implementing each of three defining principles of the [Ecological Civilization](#) on which a viable human future depends:

1. **Peace:** They resolved a major armed conflict and achieved disarmament and reconciliation through negotiation.
2. **Equity:** They eliminated poverty and achieved significant equality free of disruptive concentrations of wealth and power.
3. **Environmental Health:** They maintain a beautiful healthy environment and are leaders in environmental care.

Prompted by Georgia's previous reports on the Mondragon cooperatives, I've long marveled at how they are structured and managed to secure commitment to community wellbeing. Each worker—including those with management responsibilities—owns just one share in the corporation. Each share comes with one vote. And that share can only be sold back to the cooperatively owned corporation for purchase by a new worker-owner. Because there are no shares available for public sale, control is forever equitably shared and rooted in the Basque community in which these workers live.

In her new paper, Georgia explores how the other major institutions of the Basque region are structured and managed to serve the wellbeing of people and the place where they live.

The Basque region may be the best model we have for deeply democratic local self-management in an Ecological Civilization. It presents us with a compelling contemporary demonstration that the wellbeing of life in community is within our human means to achieve.

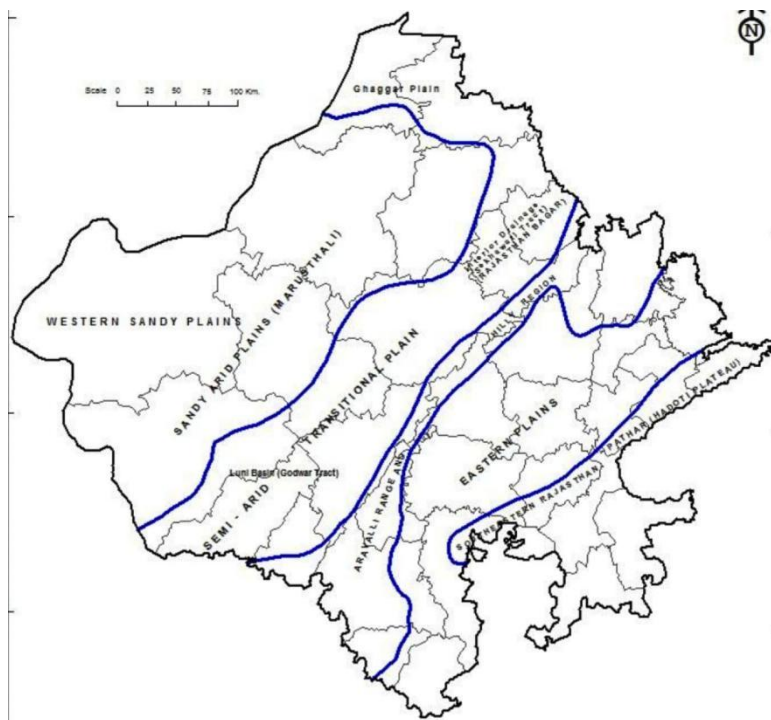
The Basque region has a distinctive history and needs. Its experience is not directly replicable. It is, however, a source of invaluable inspiration and guidance worthy of much deeper examination and sharing.



As Georgia notes at the end of her paper, there are many related efforts underway around the world. And many are engaged in learning together through mutual exchange of lessons from their experience. This gives me hope for the possibility of a viable and spiritually vibrant human future. I urge you to [read her paper](#). Then share and discuss it with friends and colleagues to explore what lessons may be relevant to your community. Or perhaps to a business with which you are affiliated.

## Part II

### A Perspective on Ecology and Livelihood



Rajasthan Map showing the centrality of the Aravallis: Named as the Drude Line after Oscar georg Drude

# Land Use of Rajasthan

## A Perspective on Animal Husbandry and its centrality to the ecology of Rajasthan<sup>1</sup>

### Background:

Following the workshop in September highlighting the importance of the Aravallis to the Eco-tones of the Indian Sub Continent and Rajasthan in particular, how this translates historically in terms of life support systems, demography and livelihoods needs to be properly understood if we want to seriously engage in the burning questions related to sustainable livelihood and climate change.

[http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Workshop-Report\\_Final\\_SPWD\\_IELA\\_PS.pdf](http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Workshop-Report_Final_SPWD_IELA_PS.pdf)

To recap from the workshop. The following demographics are significant for Rajasthan

- a. Two thirds of land area lies West of the Aravallis while one third is on the East.
- b. In terms of population, it is the reverse. One third is West of the Aravallis and two thirds on the East.

Why so ? The reasons are not hard to find

- a. Rajasthan has 1.7% of India's rainfall with areas having 500mm or more lying the East and areas in the West (with the exception of South East Rajasthan: getting the benefit of the rain bearing winds from the Arabian Sea) having 400 mm or less, with the least being in Jaisalmer having 185mm of rain.
- b. The population is 5.6 % of India, more than 3 times the rainfall, the animal population is 10% and land area is all 10% of India. Clearly it is this animal population that can feed of grass and migrate that is central to the desert being colonised. Purnendu Kavoori has captured this colonisation process very effectively in his research on the relevance of pastoralism for Rajasthan in general and the dynamics of the Luni river basin in particular.

### A thumb rule categorisation of Animal Husbandry in Rajasthan:

In terms of Animal Husbandry, Rajasthan can broadly be divided into three regions ( There are exceptions to this thumb rule which will be taken up later).

- a. The Western region which is primarily based on pastoralism having Gujjars in the North and Raikas/ Rebaris in the South.

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<sup>1</sup> Viren Lobo: Managing Trustee IELA M:9828270661; Mohan Dangi: Secretary Prayatana Samit M:9649178669; Juned Khan: Programme Director SPWD M: 9928910051

b. The Southern Region which was primarily forest and tribal region, having pasture tracts in the hilly regions but also dependant on fodder from the valleys, so range of movement of the livestock not as large as the pastorals of the West.

c. The North Eastern region which had deep ravines and subject to water logging, making grasslands and trees the dominant land use type in this region prior to the water harvesting systems put in place by the Maharaja of Bharatpur. Gujjars and Meenas dominated this landscape.

Due to formation of Pakistan, closures, allotment of pastures, common lands to landless and mining, the areas under pastureland were severely reduced/degraded causing a loss of production from sheep to the extent of 50% (as per the study done by Sunil Ray of IDS, Jaipur) and reduced importance of pastoral livestock to the economy. The green and white revolution, introduction of tractors led to the promotion buffaloes and cross bred cows for milk production requiring year round irrigation facilities as a pre-condition for survival. The degradation of the pastures led to the increase in the numbers of goats for meat production being the animal suitable for such conditions.

### **Impact of irrigation in general and tube well expansion to land use in Rajasthan:**

This matter will be dealt with only briefly here as it relates largely to other uses the land has been put to. The aspect of transformation of livestock populations have already been dealt with above. Some issues of importance.

a. Water logging in the desert regions due to mismanagement of the water regime for crops rather than animal husbandry resulting in conflicts related to water (tail end users denied water) on one hand and neglect of the habitats on which pastorals depend.

b. Deepening of the water table, transformation of ground water in dark zones and increased costs of production for agriculture and animal husbandry.

c. Neglect of the commons and their destruction. Increase in the conditions of desertification across the State. ,

### **Case studies related to Animal Husbandry across the State:**

SPWD , Prayatana Samiti and IELA have done detailed analysis of the conditions of animal husbandry in different regions of the State as a result of the faulty policies related to land use and destruction of the forests and pasturelands in various regions of the State. Among these case studies, Jaisamand, Ajmer, Bharatpur, Sariska, Bikaner, Jaisalmer and the pastoral regions of Pali and Sirohi stand out. While the essence of these studies are highlighted above, the common thread running through these studies indicate that an ecosystem approach is required to properly understand the reasons for the destruction of the livestock habitats and its consequent impact on livelihood and cost of agricultural/ animal husbandry production.

## **Part III**

### **Spiritual/Ecological Connections & Our Common Home**



Burning forests in Indonesia to plant palm oil

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/forests/world-environment-day-how-our-greed-for-palm-oil-is-destroying-tropical-rainforests-77286>

The tropical forest species index has **declined** by 25 per cent in the last three decades, according to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). Globally, 300 million hectares (ha) of tropical forest were converted for non-forest use during the last 20 years of the twentieth century. Between 2015 and 2020, the rate of **deforestation** was estimated at 10 million ha per year. Several research studies have revealed that most of the world's palm oil plantations are within these converted hectares.

<https://www.asia-palmoil.com/post/malaysia-practices-zero-burning-techniques>

Malaysia, the world's second largest producer of palm oil has been practising zero-burning techniques and has imposed a ban on open burning in 1998.

<https://www.wionews.com/india-news/data-lab-making-sense-of-indias-forest-cover-change-both-gains-and-losses-579663>

India ranked second in the world for the rate of deforestation after losing 6,68,400 hectares of forest cover between 2015 and 2020 and for witnessing the highest rise in deforestation in the last 30 years, according to a **survey** by a UK-based consulting firm called Utility Bidder.

<https://vikalpsangam.org/article/homes-and-hearth-sustaining-ladakh/>

## **HOMES AND HEARTH: SUSTAINING LADAKH**

Posted on Apr. 06, 2023 in **Environment and Ecology**

**Produced by Srishti Films with Kalpavriksh, for Vikalp Sangam, 2022.**

The people of Ladakh, India's northern-most territory, have been searching for sustainable alternatives to promote and maintain their unique heritage and livelihoods, well-suited to the region's cold desert and mountainous ecosystems. Community participation has been key in their attempts to conserve their traditional cultural, food, and hospitality practices, in the face of mass tourism and 'development'.

## Part IV

### Politics of different kinds



Meeting of reporters at Puri, Odisha on the question of free press

## Singapore separates from Malaysia and becomes Independent

<https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/history/events/dc1efe7a-8159-40b2-9244-cdb078755013>

Even before the proclamation of the formation of the Federation of Malaysia on 16 September 1963, Singapore and Malayan leaders were mindful that the differences in the political approach and economic conditions between the two countries “cannot be wiped out overnight”. This, however, did not prevent sharp exchanges between the leaders of both countries throughout the period of the union. The slow progress of the creation of a common market and the difficulty in getting pioneer status from Kuala Lumpur for Singapore industries frustrated Singapore leaders, while Kuala Lumpur was dissatisfied with Singapore's dogged response to the federal government's claimour for increased revenue contribution to combat the Indonesian Confrontation, and for an agreed loan to develop Sabah and Sarawak.

At the political front, the grossly imbalanced Malay-Chinese population in both countries made each vulnerable to communal prejudices which were played up by political leaders. The two major political parties in Malaysia, the People's Action Party (PAP) and the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), were soon accusing one another of communalism. The accusations escalated into tensions until they erupted into racial violence in Singapore on 21 July and 2 September 1964. Despite agreeing to a two-year truce in September 1964, the acrimony between UMNO and PAP soon flared up again. At the heart of the rift was Lee's multi-racial slogan, “Malaysian Malaysia”, which sowed deep distrust among UMNO leaders, especially the “ultras”, who viewed his vision of a non-communal Malaysia as a challenge to their party's raison d'être of undisputed Malay dominance.

### Special Protection for Malay Community

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Article\\_153\\_of\\_the\\_Constitution\\_of\\_Malaysia#:~:text=Article%20153%20of%20the%20Constitution%20of%20Malaysia%20grants%20the%20Yang,to%20do%20this%2C%20such%20as](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Article_153_of_the_Constitution_of_Malaysia#:~:text=Article%20153%20of%20the%20Constitution%20of%20Malaysia%20grants%20the%20Yang,to%20do%20this%2C%20such%20as)

Article 153 of the **Constitution of Malaysia** grants the **Yang di-Pertuan Agong** (King of Malaysia) responsibility for "safeguard[ing] the special position of the 'Malays'(see note) and natives of any of the States of **Sabah** and **Sarawak** and the legitimate interests of other communities" and goes on to specify ways to do this, such as establishing **quotas** for entry into the **civil service**, public **scholarships** and **public education**.

Article 153 is one of the most **controversial** articles in the Malaysian constitution. Critics consider Article 153 as creating an unnecessary and **racialist** distinction between Malaysians of different **ethnic** backgrounds, because it has led to the **ethnocentric** implementation of **affirmative action** policies which benefit only the **Bumiputra**, who comprise a **majority** of the population. Critics also consider the preferential treatment to be against both **meritocracy** and **egalitarianism**. Technically, discussing the **repeal** of Article 153 is illegal[1]—even in **Parliament**, although it was originally drafted as a temporary provision to the Constitution. Despite this prohibition on discussion (in order to ostensibly manage **race relations**, thus appearing to defuse and avoid **ethnic hatred**, **ethnic conflict** and **ethnic violence**), the article is hotly debated, both privately and publicly among **Malaysians**, against



the continued perpetual retention and implementation of the article although ostensibly maintaining support for the special race-based privileges. Nevertheless, the article is viewed as a sensitive matter by many, with politicians who are in favour or opposed to it often being labelled as [racist](#) and engaging in [social exclusion](#).

## **Freedom of Muslims in Malaysia to convert and its later political fallout**

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/03/malaysian-court-upholds-right-to-convert-from-islam/>

The latest ruling offers relief to the beleaguered Christian community, who make up nine per cent of the 30 million population. They have increasingly felt their faith under attack; in recent years Bibles in the Malay language have been seized, churches and the [Catholic Herald newspaper barred from using the word 'Allah'](#) to describe God, and places of worship desecrated.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom\\_of\\_religion\\_in\\_Malaysia#:~:text=Freedom%20of%20religion%20is%20enshrined,to%20Muslims\)%20to%20propagate%20it.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_religion_in_Malaysia#:~:text=Freedom%20of%20religion%20is%20enshrined,to%20Muslims)%20to%20propagate%20it.)

**Freedom of religion** is enshrined in the [Malaysian Constitution](#). First, Article 11 provides that every person has the right to profess and to practice his or her religion and (subject to applicable laws restricting the propagation of other religions to Muslims to propagate it. Second, the Constitution also provides that Islam is the [religion of the country](#) but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony (Article 3)

Since 2018, Malaysia has witnessed a total of 5 prime Ministers. Following the loss of the Umno to the Pakatan Harapan in the 14<sup>th</sup> General elections, there has been unprecedented instability in the leadership of the country, seeing a change of 5 Prime Ministers during this short period. The report by Bridget Welsh below provides some insights into this deepening communal divide.

## **Malaysia's political polarisation**

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/08/18/malaysia-s-political-polarization-race-religion-and-reform-pub-82436> : Bridget Welsh

Malaysia's polarization feeds on three primary divisions, each of which has deep historical roots. The country's main dividing line is ethnic. Ever since independence, the dominant narrative of national identity has been that Malaysia is for the Malays—the country's largest ethnic group, which comprises 50.8 percent of the population. Other communities—namely the Chinese and Indian Malaysians, whose families immigrated to the country before independence, and the plethora of smaller indigenous ethnic groups on the island of Borneo—have not enjoyed equal rights and status in various ways. The country's prevailing racial hierarchy has faced repeated challenges, which have exposed ethnic cleavages and led to different levels of inclusion over time.

<https://en.themooknayak.com/dalit-news/50000-dalits-in-gujarat-to-embrace-buddhism-on-ambekar-jayanti-in-one-of-the-largest-conversion-ceremonies-ever-seen>

Geetha Sunil Pillai

Published on :

5 Apr, 2023, 1:15 pm

On April 14, a momentous mass conversion ceremony is set to take place in Gujarat's capital Gandhinagar, wherein approximately 50,000 Dalits from various cities and towns will formally adopt Buddhism and renounce Hinduism. The event, to be held at the Ramakatha Maidan in Gandhi Ground, promises to be one of the largest gatherings of its kind as more than one lakh people are expected to participate in the event. Tribal families from Dungarpur too would be attending the event, sources said.

The Swayam Sainik Dal (SSD), a voluntary organization established by 50 like-minded Dalit social workers in Rajkot in 2006, will be facilitating the mass Deeksha ceremony. Baudh bhikshu Pragya Ratna from the Great Ashoka Buddh Vihar in Porbandar will preside over the ceremony and administer the deeksha to the thousands of participants. SSD expects 1 crore persons from the dalit communities to embrace Buddhism by 2028.

## A conversation on Jivika

Maria Mies has been so much a part of the mindscape of feminist thought that her passing is felt personally even by those who knew her only through her writings.

Her pioneering theoretical ideas on capitalist patriarchy were grounded in her empirical experience of Narasapur, Andhra Pradesh. In *Lacemakers of Narasapur*, she argued that women's poverty arose not only from their material conditions but from how women's work was conceptualised. (This also deepened her chosen methodology of action-research, with which many members of jivika would identify).

In *Ecofeminism*, Mies and Shiva interlinked European colonialism of other lands, scientific 'colonization' of nature and male 'colonization' of women's bodies. The difficulty with this as Bina Agarwal and others have pointed out is that the thesis conflates all 'Third World' (i.e. colonized) women, does not differentiate women by their location (class, caste, region, religion etc.), and locates patriarchy in a particular conceptualisation of western science and developmental models. This leads to an essentialist and uncritical valorisation of pre-colonial societies and subsistence lifestyles.

Mies held that Marx's concept of productive labour was not intended to be 'biologically loaded', but that it contributed to the 'naturalisation' of women's work in the familial sphere. Mies' own nuanced approach to masculine/ feminine dichotomies and to male domination of women through their control of technology and science was not intended to be 'biologically loaded'. But some of her assertions - 'to create a child is quite different from constructing a car or other machine' - did come across as biologically deterministic. Many of those who followed in her path have been far more 'biogistic' in their interpretations - such as advancing ideas of a supposed female 'sexual spirituality' as the pervasive unifying principle in nature (which I have critiqued).

This strand of ecofeminism is much closer to that of a Carolyn Merchant than to the feminist science perspectives of a Hillary Rose and Sandra Harding or an Evelyn Fox-Keller.

As my friend Chhaya Datar (an early disciple of Maria Mies) and author of *Ecofeminism Revisited* has often said, we may or may not agree with all of Mies' path-breaking concepts but her contribution to the richness of the South Asian feminist discourse on patriarchy (and I may add to the methodology of action-research) needs to be appreciated.

Sumi Krishna

.....

Thanks for this Sumi,

Traverses much more ground including some of the ground you have been meaning to do for some time. Have the following points ( not necessarily related to Maria Mies but flowing from this discussion).

a. In the era of Finance Capital, more than Colonisation of Nature and Colonisation of Body, Colonisation of the mind and with it the replication of the exploitative nature of Capital on Nature and Body (inclusive of mind) even where apparent 'freedom' exists.

b. In a context where production per se leads to stockpiling. Monopoly Capital has resorted to the curtailment of production on various grounds. Despite this, conditions for reproduction of means of production/ life not taken into account the way it should. Separately control over body also now means the right not to reproduce as well.

Where does quality of life and a non patriarchal/ non Capitalistic approach fit in all of this ?

Is there sufficient evidence to guide us as to what women free of patriarchal/ survival compulsions would do ? If such evidence is impossible in given circumstance then what is the direction of struggle pointing to ?

Regards

Viren

.....

Yes, Viren, I had intended to respond to the questions you raised in your March 8 post on the Nature of Nurture and the Nurture of Nature. But moving on, briefly -

‘Colonization’ of the mind and body are interwoven, internalised by historically oppressed (caste/ gender) groups and expressed in our everyday bodily performance. None of us is free from the naturalization of oppressive norms. In recent decades we have learnt a lot about the gender-biases embedded in institutions and processes of knowledge creation. But we are much less aware of the inequities of caste-biases and the contemporary re-workings of caste/ castes.

We also need to rethink the concept of gender. Contemporary research has raised questions about what it means to be a man or a woman, how this binary itself is a social construct. The complex interplay of hormones and genes in shaping a person’s biological sex, sexual orientation and gender makes human nature infinitely diverse. Patriarchal societies find it difficult to grasp the inter-relation between human biological and social life, and that women and men do not necessarily have essential and distinct natures.

Today, the three-pronged nexus of ‘finance capital’, big data, and the digital world is almost beyond comprehension. How does this feed into the visible increase of faiths/ religiosity in our fissured social groupings? Can we address class-caste-gender without addressing this? The difficulty is that our earlier approaches, methodologies and terms of discourse are inadequate to unpack the ways in which patriarchy is being reinforced through these challenges. I believe the answers will come from more conversations on the ground, in the field.

(Even in her passing Maria Mies provides an impetus!)

Sumi

.....

Dear Sumi,

Thanks. without this background which we are covering here, it would be difficult to respond to what I posted on 8th March and earlier too. Basically I am pointing to two worlds where the complex interplay you are talking about here plays itself out. One the Capitalist world and the other a world which human beings hope to create one day. You are right, men and women do not have essentially different natures. The segregation is mostly a social construct.

What we are doing is actually action research, One where the proposed task, forces those participating to unpack many preconceived constructs not conducive to a participatory approach on the ground. The choice of subjects relates more to the space where women are allowed relatively more freedom so that topics having 'social taboos/ restrictions' can be discussed freely. If women are clearer about the space they already have, space they need to have and the necessary collective space required moving into the future, discussions can take place on more even terms. Even when it came to assessing technology, we had to first create the confidence in the women's own knowledge so that technology can be understood for what it is, merely a tool to achieve/enhance capacities that already exists within and if not, the on ground process to understand/ grasp the questions to be pursued.

Patriarchal societies rely on the known/ 'unquestioned truth' to keep itself in the driver's seat. Unknowingly women too absorb this approach when in positions of power. Seeking the unknown with the help of the known, being able to do away with the initial crutches at the 'appropriate' time to further delve into the 'unknown' is an art which only those with a hunger for change will venture into. The high levels of insecurity that 'independent thinking' women face (as they relate to thoughts/ ideas hitherto unexplored) is also something we have to deal with a lot. However this is matched by the burning desire for change by the concerned individual.

Here my point Sumi is that it is not just discussions, but concerted challenging tasks (hitherto not taken up) that provide the impetus for the 'dialogue' you talk of.

regards

Viren

## **All India Union of Forest Working People(AIUFWP) statement on the ongoing struggle of wrestlers against sexual harassment at the workplace.**

"Today as an Indian we all are in grief as our young women wrestlers took the decision to immerse their medals in river Ganges as Indian authority and Government has turned deaf ear to their demand of arresting rapist Brijbhushan Sharan Singh, The WFI Chief. This reminds us and takes us back to

1960 when young Mohammad Ali the Olympic Boxing Champion was also forced to throw his gold medal in Ohio river due to discrimination faced by him due to his black skin".

We a national level Trade union working on the issue of forest and land rights are appalled by the atrocity unleashed by Delhi Police on the struggling women wrestler on 28th May, 2023 in Jantar Mantar when they were participating in the peaceful protest against the sexual harassment by the WFI Chief Brijbhushan Sharan Singh. It is a matter of grave concern and utter shock the way our national pride women athletes were treated by the Indian Govt where they were beaten brutally and arrested with non bailable criminal charges. As it is known all over the world that after knocking all doors of justice the wrestlers opted to sit in peaceful dharna in Jantar Mantar New Delhi from 23rd April to protest against the WFI Chief who has sexually molested not one, two, ten or twenty but Hundreds of women athlete and many being minor. It is of great concern that wrestlers like Sakshi Malik, Vinesh Phogat, Bajranj Punia and Sangeeta Phogat the internationally famed sportsperson has to protest on streets to get justice that is their right according to the Constitution of India and also under various laws that guarantees and upholds women's respect and esteem. They were abused, beaten, dragged and insulted badly. This has touched the hearts of millions of our country people and the world across after the shocking pictures were aired in the media on 28th May. Despite such fierce fight against demanding justice the wrestlers were made criminals and the criminal Brijbhushan was treated like a hero in the inauguration of the new Parliament by our Prime Minister on the same day. The statement made by this molester against the Medals won by the young women, his purported remark in which he said the protesting grapplers should return their prize money instead of medals as "they are only worth ₹15". This shows a complete disregard to the country's honor, talent and the Sports Ethics and the hard work that was put in by the wrestlers against all the odds of the Society. It is well understood in the Country like India that how the women, who are among a very few individual medal holders in international sports events from India, must have struggled for this particular sport in the patriarchal society. The struggle for fighting for the democratic right and right for dignity is not new in the history of the Olympics. It is well known that on October 16, 1968, during their medal ceremony in the Olympic Stadium in Mexico City, two African-American athletes, Tommie Smith and John Carlos, each raised a black-gloved fist during the playing of the US national anthem. While on the podium, Smith and Carlos, who had won gold and bronze medals respectively in the 200-meter running event of the 1968 Summer Olympics, turned to face the US flag and then kept their hands raised until the anthem had finished. The gesture was not a "Black Power" salute per se, but rather a "human rights" salute. The demonstration is regarded as one of the most overtly political statements in the history of the modern Olympics. In India the WFI chief is dictatorial and governing his status with power

and money rather than following the Olympics rules and norms. Though India is signatory to the international Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) that is an international legal instrument that requires countries to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in all areas and promotes women's and girls' equal rights. The powerful position held by the WFI chief is violating all such national and international covenants yet no action is being taken by the present regime against him. Rather than promoting for the civil rights and justice the WFI Chief is instead saying to remove Act like POSCO that was enacted to protect children and adolescents from Sexual Abuse.

We as a concerned citizen of this country are deeply sad over the crushing of the voices of our women wrestlers who are raising their voices in the Constitutional frame. It is also utter shame that the Retired IPS officer NC Asthana reportedly said that while protestors were being dragged like bags of trash for now, police retain the right to open fire under Section 129 of the CrPC. He should be immediately arrested for making a statement that is against law and our Constitution.

We demand that wrestler's demands should be immediately met with

#Arrest of Brijbhusan Sharan Singh. He should be immediately arrested and put in jail.

#All the false cases against the wrestlers be withdrawn unconditionally.

# The wrestlers should be compensated for the loss of their practice time and should be given extra care and treatment to face the upcoming sports events nationally and internationally.

#The WFI post should be headed by a sports person and should not be a political post.

#There should be a separate body for the women sports person for the grievance redressal.

Jarjum Ete	President Emeritus
Sokalo Gond	President
Ashok Choudhary	Vice President
Roma	Gen Sect
Teesta Setalvad	
Munnilal	Vice President

## Part V

### Health, Happiness and the Hope Gene



With Genny's Malaysian family. L to R Anne, Parimala Devi, Vijaylaxmi, Namrata, Bridget, Kishan, Denis, Kanapati, Usha, Selvadurai, Viren and Genevieve



<https://www.google.com/search?kgmid=/g/11tt5660g5&hl=en-IN&q=Unseen&kgs=d2be4acd02da3aad&shndl=17&source=sh/x/kp/osrp/4>

The cleaner in search of her missing husband takes the underworld on unknowingly. The relentless search for her husband and later for the killer of her son Ezulu she indirectly penetrates the mess giving the Police enough rope to take them down. Based on the Turkish Serial Fatima, the ending indicated has been blurred over Does Zenzi Mwale live after taking down the underworld..

[https://www.rottentomatoes.com/tv/who\\_were\\_we\\_running\\_from/s01](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/tv/who_were_we_running_from/s01)

This Turkish serial, tracks a young women who fell in love with a driver's son and had a daughter from him. Her struggle to protect her daughter from all danger results in her training her daughter to fight danger too. The story is patterned around the book Bambi written by Felix Salten in 1922 was the subject of controversy in Nazi Germany which banned/ burned the book.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2023/mar/21/gunned-down-burned-nazis-bambi-walt-disney-holocaust-allegory>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extraordinary\\_Attorney\\_Woo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extraordinary_Attorney_Woo)

This story is about a genius Woo Young-woo who is autistic. She is brought up by a single parent father. In comedy form, it very sensitively brings out not only issues related to autism but also a struggle for a life of dignity. When does the father realize his daughter is all grown up ? The questions related to love very realistic and sensitively handled through comedy. The scenes related to Woo Young-woo with her mother who has abandoned her as a child and her choice to stay by her father, later the support of her half brother are very lightly but expertly and touchingly dealt with. Most importantly, where did contradiction help in shaping the growth and development of Woo Young-woo? How she found her dignified place despite her disability is an important thread to track.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mrs\\_Chatterjee\\_vs\\_Norway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mrs_Chatterjee_vs_Norway)

The film follows Debika, who lives in Stavanger with her husband Aniruddha, son Shubha and five month old daughter Shuchi. Two Norwegian Child Welfare Services employees visit them regularly before taking Shubha and Shuchi during the last visit. The Chatterjees are told that they are unfit to hold custody of their children, so Debika decides to sue the government and win back custody of her children.

## Fr Cedric Prakash comes to Udaipur

None of us need introduction to Fr Cedric Prakash sj, the diminutive Jesuit priest from Gujarat province, whose work related to the Gujarat riots made the Government sit up. He was recently in Udaipur for the Chrism mass and met up with the Lobo/ D'Souza family.



Lobo\_D'souza family with Fr Cedric Prakash



Fr Cedric Prakash with priests of udaipur Diocese at the Chrism mass

<https://www.mangalorean.com/women-must-arise-now-and-embrace-equity/>

<https://countercurrents.org/2023/03/selling-ones-soul-the-betrayal-of-christ-and-constitution/>

chrome-

extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://cpn.nd.edu/assets/158118/prakashnd.pdf

The three articles above cover a number of dimensions related to human rights issues raised by Fr Cedric Prakash. Prior to the Chrism mass, Fr Cedric Prakash discussed with the priests of udaipur diocese, critical aspects related to critical aspects of practise of Christianity and democracy in India.

## A story of Mangoes and Corn

It was the Alphonso mangoes from Pune that attracted Kishen the tour leader of this Malaysian group to interact with Genny on the flight. As is the tradition of Lobo/ D'souza hospitality, they were duly invited over to Eden at Rani Road. All three families are currently from Taiping. Though they all have roots in India and children have studied here.



Genny's Malasian family with Claude on left

**Taiping**, town, northwestern Peninsular (West) [Malaysia](#). The town is situated on a coastal plain just west of the Bintang Range. It originated as a Chinese mining settlement in the Larut district, where large-scale [tin](#) mining developed in the 1840s. Its importance as a mining centre ended some time ago, and tin production in the area has largely ceased; agriculture and rubber, manufacturing, and tourism are now the economic mainstays. Taiping is a neatly planned town with [suburbs](#) at Au Long and Simpang. Industrial development includes the large Kamunting Industrial Estate, with factories producing a variety of goods. The town lies along the main western peninsular road and rail lines and also has an airfield.

The [State Museum](#) includes collections of Malay weapons and archaeological specimens, and its Lake Garden has a small zoo. Taiping is picturesquely situated at the foot of [Bukit Maxwell](#) (formerly Maxwells Hill; about 3,399 feet [1,036 metres] high), Malaysia's oldest hill station, accessible only to four-wheel drive vehicles and noted for its cabbages, tomatoes, and flora. Tourists often climb to Cottage, the resort's only accessible summit. Pop. (2000) 183,320.



Dinner at Rani Road



Viren Lobo who was influenced by liberation theology during his college days did an MBA from Institute of Rural Management Anand. He has been working the development sector since he passed out from there in 1985. Employer, employee and other contradictions observed by him during his thirty year stint at Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development (SPWD) forced him to examine the relevance of Marxism as a way of looking at reality in relation to change he sought to bring. During the course of his work covering more than twenty States, he noticed a link between the livelihoods and ecology which he pursued strongly as Executive Director SPWD. The limitations of existing organisations to deal with the complex questions society posed motivated him to set up Institute of Ecology and Livelihood Action as the transition needed to address issues he was looking into at that time. The contradictions arising out of the a series of Bills that were passed during the last five years encouraged him to use the enforced sedentary life imposed on him to use his creativity to write plays. These were the first of a series which have helped serve the purpose of putting on paper the complex dilemma and diverse social opinions he came across.

## About Especioza Trust:



Especioza Trust is named after my great, great grandmother who widowed at an early age brought up her only son Aogustinho (seated in centre). Shortly after a family reunion in December 2013, we got news that the family home at 84 Porvorim had been illegally sold to a builder. My aunt Marie stepped in and after getting the required mandate from the family not only got the family home back but the previous ancestral home of 85 Porvorim as well. Since then it became her project in memory of her widowed great grandmother till her death on her mother Amy Lobo's 117<sup>th</sup> birthday (25<sup>th</sup> July 2019). Since the informal trust set up by her could not achieve fruition I decided to keep the struggle and memories alive by carrying on her mission to bring unity within the family and dedicate the work of the Trust to all widows and single women of the world. My Aunt/Cousin Hazel Cardozo the daughter of Liban Pinto one of the two brothers born on my birthday (6<sup>th</sup> September) has helped me to give this project shape. The other brother Lucian in whose name the house was, also happened to be born on my birthday as well. The spiritual connection and the necessity for me to step in also come from a lot of other quarters which need not be documented here.

Viren Lobo