

Centre for Culture and Development, Vadodara

Second Foundation Lecture

**Dialogue between Cultures:
Limits and Possibilities**

By

Professor Bhikhu Parekh

Second Foundation Lecture
Centre for Culture and Development

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Preface

Centre for Culture and Development (CCD) is a Jesuit inspired social research centre established in 2001 with the aim of harnessing the knowledge of social sciences to the service of Gujarat society, more especially to its disadvantaged sections-the minorities, tribals, dalits and women.

Over the 17 years CCD has worked on 27 research projects, held 33 national seminars and published 18 books mostly in English through national and international publishers. Recently it has begun a Series of publications edited by Professor A.M.Shah and Lancy Lobo, “*Indian Anthropology, 1886-1936*” from the archival material of the *Journal of Anthropological Society of Bombay*. In 2017 it began a training programme, ‘*Critical thinking on contemporary India*’ for young Jesuits. It also began Foundation Lecture series in 2018 by eminent scholars. The first lecture was given on 27.2.2018 by the scholar- activist Dr. Walter Fernandes on ‘*Dissent and Contestation as a Social Process in India*’.

The second lecture was given by one of the worlds’ leading political philosophers, Lord Bhikhu Parekh, entitled, “*Dialogue between Cultures: Limits and Possibilities*’ on 26.2. 2019. He is also a well-wisher of CCD. He has given the centre an endowment which enables CCD to run seminars.

We thank professor Yashashchandra for chairing the lecture by Professor Bhikhu Parekh.

Vadodara

Lancy Lobo
Director



Lord Bhiku Parekh is an eminent political theorist in Britain and an active member in the House of Lords. During his tenure, he has contributed immensely towards societal changes that were once a major cause of concern to Britain's culture in the early 70's. He has pioneered many concepts on multiculturalism, collective rights and responsibility and other socio-cultural issues that have influenced the governance in UK. Commonly addressed as Lord Bhiku, he has worked to bring about a non-interventionist and tolerant political view where people of different ethnicities could live in harmony. It was through his ideologies and his unrelenting dedication towards his work that he managed to bring a significant understanding of Indian culture on a global platform

Among some of his previous publications are *Politics and Experience*, *Dissent and Disorder*, *The Morality of Politics*, *Knowledge and Belief in Politics*, *Bentham's Political Thought*, *Jeremy Bentham: Ten Critical Essays*, *The Concept of Socialism*, *Hannah Arendt and the Search for a New Political Philosophy*, *Karl Marx's Theory of Ideology*, *Contemporary Political Thinkers and Political Discourse*. His latest book is *Ethnocentric Political Theory: The Pursuit of Flawed Universals*.

Achievements and Awards: Lord Bhiku has earned Fellowships in a number of well-known institutions such as University of Oxford, Royal Society of Arts and the Academy of Learned Societies in the Social Sciences in 1999 and the British Academy. He has won a number of awards for his work, some of them being Sir Isaiah Berlin Prize (2003) by the Political Studies Association, UK; the Life Peer in 2000 which earned him the title as Baron Parekh; and BBC's Special Lifetime Achievement Award for Asians in 1999. Bhiku Parekh has also earned an honorary doctorate from the University of Essex and in 2007, and he received the Padma Bhushan from the Indian government.

Dialogue between Cultures: Limits and Possibilities

The title of this lecture needs clarification and qualification. First, it implies a dialogue between two impersonal entities called cultures. This is clearly not the case because cultures cannot speak, only the individuals do, and cultures are not reified entities or things but processes. The term dialogue between cultures basically means individuals talking to each other from within their different and fluid cultural perspectives.

Second, no culture is a homogeneous and tightly knit whole. As a historically evolving process, it includes precipitates of its past. Its beliefs and practices are also rarely unequivocal and are capable of different interpretations. Persons speaking from a shared cultural perspective draw on or identify with its different strands and offer different accounts of it. The term intercultural dialogue and its equivalent make the mistake of homogenizing and essentialising the cultures concerned. The dialogue is basically between their different strands and can take several different forms. No dialogue between cultures can be presented as the only possible dialogue between them and used to delegitimize others.

Third, dialogue is a focused and more or less structured exchange of ideas between two or more individuals. It is not a free floating ‘conversation’ in which the participants’ remarks are often only marginally related to others but rather a discussion in which they advance ideas directed at what others have said in a spirit of serious mutual engagement. Dialogue is not an intellectual boxing match either in which the sole concern is to challenge and refute each other but rather a probing exploration of each other’s beliefs with a view to achieving better mutual understanding. In a dialogue no party monopolizes or dominates the discussion because it is then reduced to a monologue occasionally interrupted by the remarks of an interlocutor. This is why Plato’s dialogues are wrongly so called. They are basically critical interrogations of a largely passive participant by a philosophically trained mind with a view to showing why and how he is wrong. For the same reason *Gita* too is not a dialogue. Arjuna asks a question and Krishna replies with a long lecture. There is no *pariprashna* or mutual critical engagement. Without a broad equality of competence between the participants there can be no dialogue.

Culture

In the course of making sense of themselves and the world, human beings ask questions about the meaning and significance of their lives, activities and relationships. To ask what is the meaning of an activity is to ask questions about its nature and point or purpose; and to ask what is its significance is to ask questions about its worth or value, the kind and degree of importance to be assigned to it and its place in human life in general.

The questions about meaning and significance can be asked about every human activity such as writing a book, making money, following a career, voting and protesting against an injustice; about every human relationship such as being a father or a son, a husband or a wife, a neighbor, a colleague, a citizen and a stranger; and also about human life in general. The beliefs or views human beings form about the meaning and significance of human life and its various activities and relationships shape the practices in terms of which they structure and regulate their individual and collective lives. I shall use the term culture to refer to such a system of beliefs and practices. Culture is a historically evolving and commonly shared system of meaning and significance within a particular community or, what comes to the same thing, a system of beliefs and practices in terms of which a group of human beings understand, regulate and structure their individual and collective lives. It is a way of both understanding and organizing human life.

Culture is articulated at several levels. At the most basic level it is reflected in language, including the ways in which its syntax, grammar and vocabulary divide up and describe the world. Societies sharing a common language share at least some cultural features in common. And when a group of individuals acquires a wholly new language as many colonial subjects did, they also learn new ways of understanding the world. The culture of a society is also embodied in its proverbs, maxims, myths, rituals, symbols, collective memories, jokes, body language, modes of non-linguistic communication, customs, traditions, institutions and manners of greeting. At a slightly different level it is embodied in its arts, music, oral and written literature, moral life, ideals of excellence and visions of the good life.

Many writers mistakenly dissociate morality from culture and argue that while culture is local and varies from society to society, morality is inherently universal and only contingently related to culture. Morality is concerned with what kind of life is worth living, what activities are worth pursuing, and what forms of human relations are worth cultivating. It presupposes criteria of worth or significance, which in turn presuppose a system of meaning or culture. Every system of morality is embedded in and nurtured by a wider culture. Culture shapes and structures moral life including its scope, content, authority and the kinds of emotions associated with it. In some cultures food is seen as God's gift or a means of sustaining the God-given body, and what one eats, how and with whom are moral matters; in others they have no moral significance. Many Protestant cultures stress the internal dimension of morality and treat it as a separate autonomous aspect of life: others such as the Chinese, the Hindus and several African societies embed culture in a system of rituals and social conventions, and some of them do not even have a separate word for it.

The cultural embeddedness of morality is evident in the way in which the customs, ceremonies and rituals of a culture embody and give meaning to its moral values. Respect of human life, for example, does not remain an abstract moral principle but gets embodied in such things as the customs and rituals surrounding how we dispose of the dead, what we wear and how we conduct ourselves at funerals, how we treat strangers, help the old and the poor, and celebrate the birth of a child. These practices give the relevant moral principle concrete content and deep emotional roots, build up a body of appropriate taboos and inhibitions, and relieve the harshness and impersonality of moral demands by integrating them into everyday life.

Human beings are culturally embedded in the sense that they grow up and live within a culturally structured world, organize their lives and social relations in terms of its system of meaning and significance, and place considerable value on their cultural identity. This does not mean that they are determined by their culture in the sense of being unable to critically evaluate its beliefs and practices and understand and sympathize with others, but rather that they are deeply shaped by it, can overcome some but not all of its influences and necessarily view the world from within a culture, be it the one they have inherited and uncritically accepted or reflectively revised or in rare cases consciously adopted. This is what we mean when we say that human beings are cultural beings and face the world from within a culture. All their responses to the world have a cultural context and meaning, and cannot be understood without understanding the latter.

Since culture is concerned with the meaning and significance of human activities and relations, and since this is also a matter of central concern to religion, the two tend to be closely connected. Indeed there is hardly a culture in whose creation, constitution and continuation religion has not played an important part, so much so that we have few if any examples of a wholly secular culture. Although modernity, especially its western form, might seem to qualify as one, it is in fact an heir to, and is deeply shaped by, the values, ideals, beliefs, and myths of Christianity. This is not to say that we cannot defend such values as human dignity, personal autonomy, equality and choice on secular grounds, but rather that these are not conclusive and are not the reasons why these ideas have become an integrated part of our lives. One of the reasons why we face a moral crisis today is because we cherish these and related ideas but not their religious rationale.

Culture does not exist in a vacuum. It is embodied in the society's economic, political and other institutions and both shapes and is shaped by them. Neither can exist nor be understood without reference to the other. No system of economic and political power can rely on physical force alone. It needs to legitimize itself in the eyes of its members, especially the oppressed and the marginalized, by suitably shaping their cultural and moral beliefs. Not surprisingly, no dominant class ever leaves culture alone. For their

part the oppressed and marginalized groups cannot rely on protests and force alone to secure justice, and need to reinterpret and challenge the prevailing culture. Since culture is a source of legitimacy and power, all political and economic battles are fought out at the cultural level as well, and all cultural struggles have an inescapable political and economic dimension.

Dialogue

Having briefly discussed the nature and importance of culture, we may now turn to the related question of the relationship between cultures, especially whether a dialogue between them is possible and necessary. It is pointless to say that the dialogue is necessary if it is for some reason inherently impossible. Equally it is pointless to say that it is possible if the possibility can never be exploited to social advantage and remains abstract and purely formal. We need to show both that a dialogue is possible and valuable or necessary, that cultures can and should speak to each other.

For some writers a dialogue between cultures is inherently impossible. Relativists take this view but they are not the only ones. They argue wrongly in my view, that every culture is a self-contained whole, relies on its own unique concepts and language to understand and organize the world, and that there is simply no common language available in which they can talk to each other. As I argued earlier human beings are shaped but not determined by their culture, and hence they are able to reflect on and identify its strengths and weaknesses. To say that all cultures shape their members is to make a statement about other cultures, and thus to claim at least a minimum access to them. More importantly all human beings share certain basic capacities in common, and these provide a basis for commonalities between them at other levels. Furthermore all human beings share certain common experiences to which they respond in their own different ways. They grow old, die, witness the deaths of their loved ones, develop attachments to different persons, build up bonds of affection with them, must find ways of earning their livelihood, regulate their propensity to quarrel with each other, and so on. All societies have to respond to these and countless other experiences. No doubt they do so differently but their differences are responses to shared experiences. Their concepts and languages too are different but their differences have a common underlying structure. Insofar as this is the case, they have available to them a deeper vocabulary in which to talk to each other. We may not immediately understand the beliefs and practices of other societies, but given patience and mutual questioning we can come to make sense of them. This requires empathy, humility, willingness to persist, and the capacity to rise above our own beliefs and practices. We may still run into pockets of unintelligibility and opacity, but would have made enough progress in the direction of mutual understanding.

A dialogue between cultures is not only possible but also necessary for various reasons. At the most basic level, it is necessary because a society often includes several cultures and needs to build up mutual understanding to sustain the required degree of social cohesion and mutual trust. It helps us to see others in their own terms and to appreciate what their beliefs and practices mean to them, not just intellectually but at a deeper existential level. In so doing it brings them within our cognitive and emotional reach and guards us against the all too common tendency to dehumanize and demonize them.

Every culture is broadly structured around a particular vision of the good life and benefits from a dialogue with others with their own different visions. Different cultures interrogate and probe each other, borrow ideas and sensibilities, and often throw up wholly new ideas and sensibilities that none of them could have produced on its own. They give rise to unexpected sources of creativity including new skills, forms of organization, ways of looking at things, sense of humour and psychological and moral energies that can be harnessed into different areas of life, and add to society's richness and resources.

A dialogue exposes our ideas and beliefs to others' scrutiny, and helps us to appreciate their strengths and limitations as well as to discover the common grounds between us. It requires us to defend our beliefs and practices, and in so doing it creates a necessary distance between us and our beliefs and enables us to look at them from the other's point of view. A dialogue is not just an exchange of ideas and arguments or even feelings. It is also a way of discovering and reaching out to the person behind the words, and catching glimpses of our shared humanity. No culture is perfect. Each cultivates some intellectual and moral qualities but not others. At its best a dialogue leads to the fusion of horizons of thought and generates novel and unanticipated ways of doing familiar things and organizing familiar human relationship. A culture shapes and limits us; a dialogue between them helps us overcome these limitations. There is no release from a culture other than through it.

Although an intercultural dialogue is possible and necessary, it presupposes certain conditions without which it either does not get off the ground or fails to yield the desired result. Some of these conditions are external to the dialogue, others internal to it. Dialogue involves speaking and listening, and the latter might be absent. Participants might be too nervous and diffident to speak, or too angry to speak coherently or too bewildered and disoriented to follow the basic rules of a dialogue. They might be mocked, ridiculed, browbeaten, subjected to a battery of irrelevant questions, and in these and other ways terrorized into silence or conformity. This has been a common experience of women, blacks, Muslims, workers and others in the presence of their opponents, resulting for decades in the absence of any kind of meaningful communication.

Dialogue also requires mutual respect and a broad equality of status and power. A culture might be dismissed as backward or primitive, and not taken seriously or deemed worthy of respect. This tends to happen when there is a great inequality of power between two cultures. Inequality is then attributed to the character and abilities of the people involved. Some are declared inherently talented and clever, others inherently defective and needing the guiding hand of their betters. This kind of all too common attitude leads to the summary rejection of some cultures, and either rules out any kind of dialogue or reduces it to preaching and sermonizing. The so called white man's burden underpinning the colonial discourse is an obvious case of it.

The internal limits of a dialogue are far more intricate and elusive. For lack of empathy and willingness to enter into another's world, one might simply dismiss or be unmoved by its experiences and arguments. Limits of imagination too play a part. One might be so conditioned by one's experiences that one is simply unable to appreciate that things could be different. The cultural practice of women going out to work was long resisted on the ground that it would lead to sexual promiscuity, indiscipline, rivalry among men, and so on. Having had no experience of working with women, men had built up all of kinds of fears and phobias that no argument could dispel. This kind of resistance is common during periods of cultural transition or change. Lack of personal experience is yet an important internal factor limiting the transformational potential of a dialogue. A person who is born rich and has no experience of poverty and humiliation finds it difficult to grasp what it means and feels like to be poor. A white man has a similar handicap in relation to black men and their culture of protest and defiance.

A dialogue with others is closely bound up with a dialogue with oneself, and cannot long be sustained without the latter. One cannot have a fruitful dialogue with others unless one is in principle willing to change one's views. This means that one is able to detach oneself from one's views, is not so identified with them that changing them appears as or amounts to changing one's very identity. One should regard one's beliefs as important enough to hold and hold on to them. But equally one should not so define them that one is identified with and unable to define oneself independently of them. This requires a constant dialogue with oneself in order to weaken the hold of and create different degrees of distance from one's beliefs.

In the light of our discussion intercultural dialogue requires common experiences, a shared world, mutual respect, empathy, humility, imagination and a broad equality of status and power. It is interesting how changes in each of these factors often change our perception of a culture. The Japanese and Chinese cultures, for example, were looked down upon until a few decades ago. The subsequent Japanese and later Chinese rise to power has led us to approach them no longer in a patronizing and superior manner but

rather with admiration and humility, and to see elements in their ways of life that we had not cared to notice before. A culture derives its power not only from its inner intellectual vitality and depth, but also from its economic, political and other sources of strength.

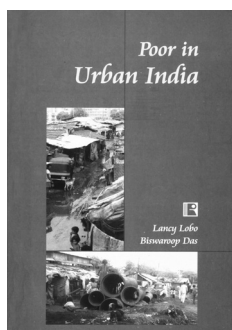
Dialogue including intercultural dialogue plays an important role in human life. It reduces differences and promotes mutual understanding. It builds bonds between people and creates an intercultural and moral community. It expands the consciousness of those involved and gives them access to the rich resources of other cultures. It widens the range of sympathy, deepens the capacity for empathy, and generates a common sense of belonging based on the shared experience of initiating and participating in collective deliberation. It takes the individual out of himself and helps him to take a relatively detached and critical view of his beliefs. As we saw earlier intercultural dialogue is one of the most important paths to human freedom. At its best, it ensures that we do not remain prisoners of our culture, and has a tremendous creative or transformative potential. A good society needs to make dialogue its guiding principle in every area of life and create the conditions of its success.

An ongoing dialogue with itself and with others is the hallmark of a free and self-critical society. The dialogue with itself generates interest in and stimulates dialogue with others. The converse is just as true. Such a dialogue is a necessity in a multicultural society, indeed an important condition of its stability and even survival. Multiculturalism, understood as valuing the presence of several cultures, is a vital precondition of intercultural dialogue and enjoys an important place in a dialogically structured society.

Notes:

1. This essay took much longer to complete than planned. I am most grateful to my good friend Prof. Lancy Lobo for his patience and understanding.
2. For the next few paragraphs I draw on *my Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (Palgrave MacMillan, Second edition, 2002).

Books Published by The Centre for Culture and Development, Vadodara



Poor in Urban India

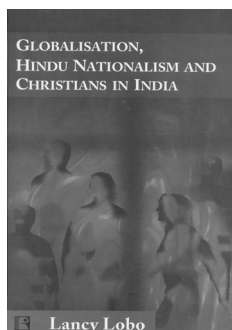
Author : Lancy Lobo

Pages : 201

Price : Rs. 400/-

Published : Rawat Publications, 2001

The prominent features of urbanisation in India have been the increase in population, the growth of slums, swelling labour force and its marginalisation, and increasing pressure on the urban space and infrastructural services. A growing need has been felt to investigate the reasons for the decay of our large cities and for the extremely unsatisfactory living conditions even in our non-metro as well as smaller and medium-sized towns. The book deals with the modes, means and mechanisms through which the poor in urban India cope with their lives. By providing a portrayal of the lives of slum dwellers through an exhaustive database on the slums of Surat and an intensive analysis of one of its slum localities, it captures the socioeconomic world of the urban poor in India. The book will interest anthropologists, sociologists, human geographers and city planners.



Globalisation, Hindu Nationalism and Christians in India

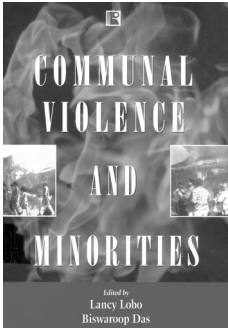
Author : Lancy Lobo

Pages : 237

Price : Rs. 450/-

Published : Rawat Publications, 2002

Growing economic fundamentalism triggered by the process of globalisation and rising religious fundamentalism at the micro as well as macro levels have emerged as a complex area of analysis. This book deals with such a problematic by examining the position of the Christian minority group in India within the fast changing socio- economic milieu of the subcontinent. It argues that marginalization of the minority groups through legitimization of a reductionist religio-economic model has been on the rise. And, the brunt of this mix of economic and religious fundamentalism is borne by the poor, the underclass and the minorities who may eventually be left out of the modernization project altogether.



Communal Violence and Minorities

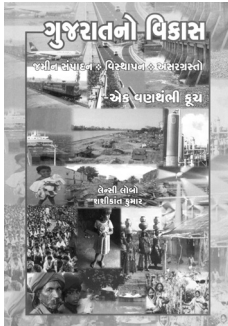
Editors : Lancy Lobo and Biswaroop Das

Pages : xi + 226

Price : Rs. 525/-

Published : Rawat Publications, 2006

The 2002 Gujarat riots witnessed the rise of a spate of writings on related issues in India as well as abroad. The present volume, though deals with the same subject, add some newer dimensions to its understanding. These include an analysis of the spread of these riots; contents, causes and nature of violence; actors and agencies perpetrating and facilitating its sustenance; response of tribals and Dalits to these events; socio-political determinants of perpetuating as well as thwarting the effects of such riots and the cognitive construction of communal images among the rural population in Central Gujarat during the aftermath of these unprecedented riots in the State.



Gujaratno Vikas (Gujarati)

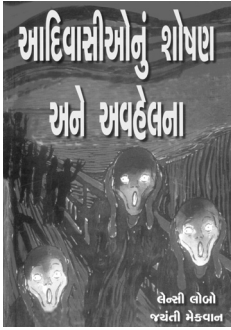
Authors : Lancy Lobo and Shashikanat Kumar

Pages : 116

Price : Rs. 100/-

Published : Centre for Culture and Development, 2008

This book is a first-ever detailed analysis of the land acquired for development projects and their impact on the displaced and project-affected people of Gujarat, from 1947 to 2004. It begins with a debate on the meaning of the term 'development' and focuses on displacement, marginalisation and impoverishment as direct consequences of admittedly debatable methods of progress adopted in Gujarat in the name of development. The book presents a comprehensive account of land acquired for water resources, industries, mines, HRD, transportation/communication, and urban development projects and focuses on the people displaced and affected by them. Additionally, it pays special attention to the legislative hurdles in rehabilitation and compensation procedures which follow displacement.



Adivasionu Shoshan and Avhelna (Gujarati)

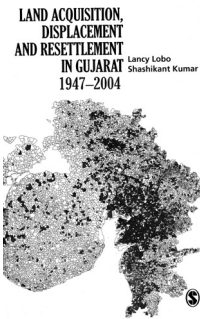
Authors : Lancy Lobo and Jayanti Makwan

Pages : 125

Price : Rs. 100/-

Published : Centre for Culture and Development, 2008

This book contains the history, culture, society and economic status of tribals in Gujarat. Tribals are spread in the in the eastern, hilly and forested Gujarat with dry and subsistence agriculture. They also rely on forest products for survival. The eastern Gujarat is poorest as compared to other parts of Gujarat. Forests, water resources and underground resources being plenty in this region commercialization and market forces have displaced and marginalized the tribals over a period of time. Hence tribal rights have been infringed over their land, water and forests, leading to disintegration of their identity. The main questions that face them are: 1) How to safeguard their livelihood rights and 2) how to protect themselves from being absorbed in competing identities.



Land Acquisition, Displacement and Resettlement in Gujarat 1947-2004

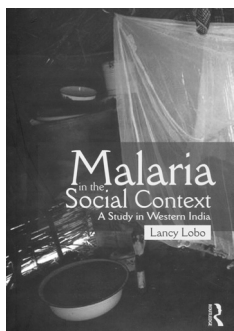
Authors : Lancy Lobo and Shashikant Kumar

Pages : xxii + 304

Price : Rs. 895/-

Published : Sage Publications, 2009

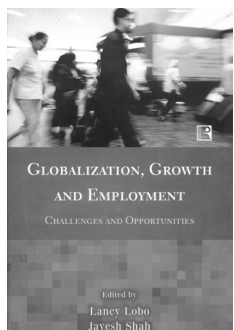
This book is a first-ever detailed analysis of the land acquired for development projects and their impact on the displaced and project-affected people of Gujarat, from 1947 to 2004. It begins with a debate on the meaning of the term 'development' and focuses on displacement, marginalisation and impoverishment as direct consequences of admittedly debatable methods of progress adopted in Gujarat in the name of development. The book presents a comprehensive account of land acquired for water resources, industries, mines, HRD, transportation/communication, and urban development projects and focuses on the people displaced and affected by them. Additionally, it pays special attention to the legislative hurdles in rehabilitation and compensation procedures which follow displacement.



Malaria in the Social Context

Author : Lancy Lobo
Pages : xv + 211
Price : Rs. 595/-
Published : Routledge, 2010

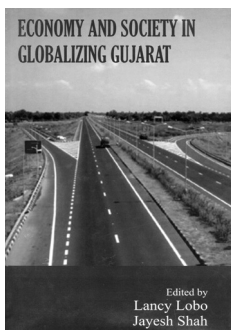
This is a path-breaking book in medical anthropology, a field of study which is in its infancy in India. It examines traditional knowledge systems in conjunction with biomedical elements to promote effective health education. An empirical study of malaria in the social context, it explores folk beliefs, attitudes and perceptions affecting various aspects of incidence and treatment of malaria in south Gujarat, in a culturally and socio-economically stratified population in three ecologically differing rural zones - coastal, irrigated plains, and dry highland - and one urban site. Based on intensive fieldwork and extensive surveys, the book brings out the importance of medical pluralism, including the role of indigenous ideas and practices, and analyses the role of private and government appointed doctors at the village level while examining the impact of allopathic medicine. The book aims to assist health interventionists in spreading efficacious health education and awareness to eradicate malaria.



Globalization, Growth and Employment

Editors : Lancy Lobo and Jayesh Shah
Pages : xvii + 298
Price : Rs. 795/-
Published : Rawat Publications, 2012

Globalization and subsequent changes are affecting all national economies irrespective of whether it is a transitional, controlled, socialist, or market economy. The result of this change is a paradigm shift in the employment structure of most of the countries. This volume makes an attempt to evaluate the employment scenario in different sectors of Indian economy after the reforms period. It also makes a comparative study of employment scenario between Gujarat, one of the developed states, and the country as a whole. Employment intensity of economic growth with focus on rural transformation, social security, quality and employability, survival of marginalized labouring poor and social income throws light on the realistic scenario. Retail boom, establishment of SEZs and SIRs and social security schemes like MGNREGA have suggestive thrusts in the domain of employment and consequences such as migration and their effects on society and culture.



Economy and Society in Globalizing Gujarat

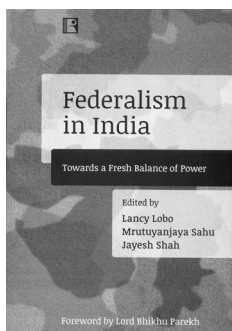
Editors : Lancy Lobo and Jayesh Shah

Pages : 276

Price : Rs. 950/-

Published : Shanti Prakashan, 2012

This book attempts to capture the nature of changes in the economy and society of post-liberal Gujarat. While the growth-centered developmental model operating in Gujarat has mesmerized many, both in India and abroad, this book critically examines this model with reference to infrastructure development in fields such as water resources, transport, communications and industry, especially their impact on agriculture and services. The book highlights the other side of development, namely, the costs of globalization resulting in uneven regional development, destruction of natural resources, and negative impact on the environment and on the status of women, and marginalized groups. The book also looks at labour, education, and human development indicators. All in all, it shows the extent to which Gujarat illustrates the growth centric India of tomorrow.



Federalism in India

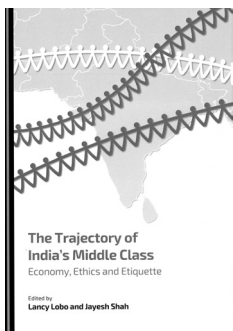
Editors : Lancy Lobo, Mrutyanjaya Sahu and Jayesh Shah

Pages : xiii + 301

Price : Rs. 895/-

Published : Rawat Publications, 2014

Federalism is one of the most important and effective political institutions in India. However, the late 1990s witnessed a weakening of national political parties, the emergence of coalition politics and a shift in the center-state power balance. Politically, however, with the rise of regional parties and coalitions, states seem to have gained an upper hand in many spheres of governance, whereas the center finds itself restricted when there are serious problems regarding law and order issues, foreign policy matters or fiscal decentralization. Hence, provisions and articles narrated in the Constitution of India demand revisit as India needs a fresh balance of power looking to the new 'low' in center-state relations. The volume critically brings to the fore the fact that the championing of federalism by the regional parties at the state level works against decentralization further down in reality. Chapters in this volume address a wide range of complex issues affecting the center-state relations in the context of political, social and economic developments. It carries a Foreword by Lord Bhikhu Parekh.



The Trajectory of India's Middle Class

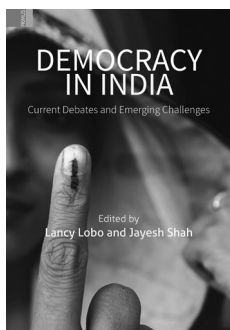
Editors : Lancy Lobo and Jayesh Shah

Pages : xv + 351

Price : Rs. 5300/-

Published : Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015

The Indian middle class has grown rapidly over recent years, and constitutes a significant proportion of the global workforce, as well as a substantial market for consumer goods, given India's status as one of the most populous countries in the world. However, the growth of India's middle class is not merely an economic phenomenon. This volume, containing nineteen essays, an editorial introduction, and a foreword by Lord Meghnad Desai, examines the role of the Indian middle class in the country's economic development, as well as in social, cultural and political change. The volume also focuses specifically on the social, political and economic articulation of the middle class with regard to historically marginalized social groups such as the Dalits, the tribal communities, and the religious minorities. This book will be of interest to economists, political scientists, sociologists, social anthropologists, and historians, as well as to specialists in current affairs.



Democracy in India

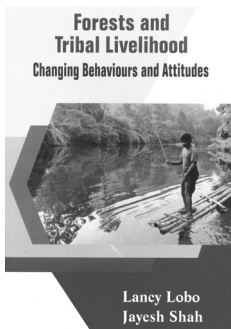
Editors : Lancy Lobo and Jayesh Shah

Pages : xvii + 191

Price : Rs. 795/-

Published : Primus Books, 2017

Democracy in India deliberates on the various challenges confronting parliamentary democracy in India as well as provides new critiques of the manner in which democracy has functioned besides focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of Indian democracy. The volume contains essays on the theory and practice of democratic governance; the role of the judiciary in strengthening the legislative and executive functions of the state; the role of the media as the fourth estate; the rise of social movements and civil society; the critical role of economic development in sustaining democracy; and the role of democracy in containing ethnic conflicts. It also includes an essay analysing electoral behaviour at the grass-roots level and another that examines democracy from the gender perspective. This book also provides a platform for discussion of crucial issues and alternatives, put forth by the intellectual comity of civil society activists and the academia.



Forests and Tribal Livelihood

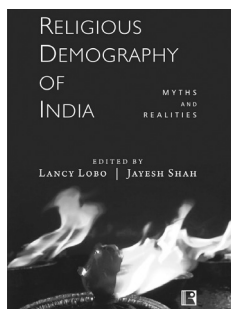
Authors : Lancy Lobo and Jayesh Shah

Pages : xxiii + 283

Price : Rs. 1050/-

Published : Concept Publishing Company, 2017

This book is about the changing character of forests and of livelihood of the forest-dwelling tribal people in India since Independence, with particular reference to Gujarat. It analyses the impact of a number of interventions by the Central and the State Government, such as construction of dams, setting up of industries, and other developmental activities in these areas. It reviews, in particular, various laws adopted by the British colonial Government as well as the government of Independent India regarding forests and the tribals, and how the tribal customary laws conflict with the laws of the modern state.



Religious Demography of India

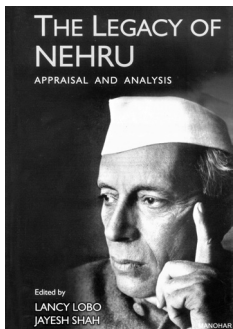
Editors : Lancy Lobo and Jayesh Shah

Pages : 185

Price : Rs. 750/-

Published : Rawat Publications, 2018

Much of public life in India is characterized by the forces of its religious demography. This volume aims at unravelling its complexity. Each of these essays reflect the truism that religion unites as well as divides peoples. Religious demography not only decided partition of India and Pakistan, but also continues to play a major role in India's democratic politics. The subject has become more emotional especially in the context of electoral politics. A great anxiety about the Hindus being outnumbered has been kept alive in India, especially before the elections. The differential growth rates of religious communities have therefore become a sensitive issue. It is an established fact that there is an illicit dramatization of misrepresented statistics of the Census. Data on population has been especially 'used' to generate 'nationalism'. Newspapers, magazines, television and even caste journals have propounded myths, with catchy titles. This volume tries to probe into these myths and realities.



The Legacy of Nehru

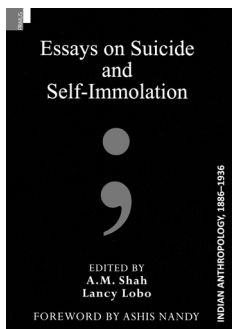
Editors : Lancy Lobo and Jayesh Shah

Pages : 209

Price : Rs. 1045/-

Published : Manohar, 2018

Even after 127 years, Jawaharlal Nehru remains a beacon for India. He was a titan who provided the architecture of contemporary India. The credit for much of India's progress in myriad fields goes to him. This volume, however, is not a eulogy to that great visionary. It provides rather a critical examination of his legacy in various fields, such as his promotion of India as the Union of federating states, building up of the structure of democratic institutions, enunciation of viable foreign policy, laying the path of economic development on the foundations of equality and cultivating secular ethos. The primary objective of the book is to assess the imprint that Nehru has left behind, and the impact that his thoughts and actions produced on the people of the present and succeeding generations. The volume deliberates on the question whether Nehru had a well-defined economic ideology or foreign policy which could be given a recognized label. It also focuses on how Nehru handled the various sectors and institutions of society. While this volume praises Nehru for providing a durable basis for India's democratic institutions and for endowing them with much legitimacy, it also evaluates many of his negative legacies, such as license *raj*, the border problems with China and Pakistan, divisive domestic electoral politics, politicization of minorities as vote banks, the Kashmir problem, and corruption in public life. The volume is a collection of insightful essays by distinguished scholars in various fields. It will be of interest to all those seeking to understand modern India with particular reference to Nehru.



Essays on Suicide and Self-Immolation

Editors : A.M. Shah and Lancy Lobo

Pages : xxiii + 207

Price : Rs. 1095/-

Published : Primus Books, 2018

This book is a collection of papers on suicide and self-immolation, reprinted from the almost forgotten Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, published in 1886-1936. The book carries a Foreword by Professor Ashis Nandy on death and self in culture. Part I includes nineteen papers, analysing statistics of suicides committed in Bombay (now Mumbai) from 1886 to 1907,

classified by religion, gender, age, month, date, cause and means of suicide, etc. The data is presented in a number of tables, often with remarks on individual cases. Launched by Edward Rehatsek, a Hungarian scholar who had made Bombay his home, the papers were continued after his death by the Parsee scholar, Bomanjee Byramjee Patell. Part II includes seven general essays: one is on suicide and old age in a comparative perspective, and another on suicide in ancient India. The question of self-immolation of Hindu widows, commonly referred to as sati, is discussed in three of the essays. Of special interest is the essay on the Sati of Ramabai, widow of Madhavrao Peshwa. Two essays deal with the issue of selfimmolation of persons in religious contexts.