

## मेरठ में नमक सत्याग्रह : एक ऐतिहासिक दृष्टि

डॉ० चन्द्रशेखर भारद्वाज

अध्यक्ष- इतिहास विभाग

सी.एस.एस.एस. (पी.जी.) कॉलेज, माछरा

31 दिसम्बर 1929 को लाहौर में सम्पन्न हुए कांग्रेसी अधिवेशन में पूर्ण स्वराज्य की प्राप्ति का लक्ष्य घोषित होने के बाद सारे देश में यह प्रायः निश्चित हो चुका था कि निकट भविष्य में देश को दासता से मुक्त कराने के लिए कोई व्यापक आन्दोलन चलाया जायेगा। आगे चलने वाले आन्दोलन के स्वरूप और उसके कार्यक्रमों के बारे में जानने की जिज्ञासा के कारण जनसमुदाय की नजरें महात्मा गांधी के अगले कदम पर लगी थीं। 26 जनवरी 1930 का दिन पूर्ण स्वाधीनता दिवस के रूप में मनाया गया। इसके पश्चात फरवरी 1930 को कांग्रेस कार्य समिति ने प्रस्ताव पारित किया—“गांधी जी और उनके वे सहयोगी, जो अहिंसा में सिद्धांत रूप से विश्वास करते हैं जिस ढंग से, जिस सीमा तक, जब भी वे ठीक समझें, सविनय अवज्ञा आन्दोलन शुरू करें। इस आन्दोलन में कर-बन्दी आन्दोलन भी शामिल हो सकता है।”

कार्यसमिति का यह प्रस्ताव कांग्रेस महासमिति ने स्वीकार कर लिया। यह गांधी पर छोड़ दिया गया कि आन्दोलन को प्रारम्भ किस प्रकार किया जाय। गांधी जी ने इसके लिए नमक कानून को उपयुक्त समझा, क्योंकि समाज का प्रत्येक वर्ग नमक प्रयोग करता था, जिसके

फलस्वरूप आन्दोलन में जनता के सभी वर्गों की भागीदारी संभव हो सकती थी। गांधीजी ने 2 मार्च 1930 को तत्कालीन वायसराय लार्ड इरविन को साबरमती आश्रम से एक पत्र भेजा, जिसमें उन्होंने ब्रिटिश कर-नीति की शोषक प्रकृति के कुटिल चक्र को स्पष्ट किया था—

“प्रिय मित्र,

अपने बहुत से भाईयों की भांति मैं भी यह आशा लगा बैठा था कि गोलमेज परिषद से ये सब शिकायतें शायद रफा-दफा हो जायें। जब आपने स्पष्ट कह दिया कि आप कोई ऐसा आश्वासन नहीं देंगे कि आप या ब्रिटिश मंत्रीमंडल, डोमिनियन स्टेट की किसी योजना का समर्थन अनिवार्यतः करेंगे, तब मैंने यह महसूस किया कि गोलमेज परिषद वह समाधान नहीं दे सकती, जिसके लिए देश के पढ़े-लिखे लोग और करोड़ों गूंगी जनता, अनजाने मन से तरस रहे हैं — यहां तक कि जनता के जीवन के लिए आवश्यक नमक जैसी चीज पर भी इस तरह का कर लगाया जाता है कि उसका सबसे अधिक भार उन्हीं पर पड़ता है। नमक ही एक ऐसी चीज है, जिसे गरीब लोग अकेले या मिलकर धनवान लोगों से ज्यादा खाते हैं। इस बात का विचार करने से तो यह कर गरीबों के लिए और भी अधिक भार रूप जान

पड़ता है।<sup>2</sup>

नमक कानून को तोड़ने के लिए गांधी जी अपने चुने हुए 78 सत्याग्रहियों के साथ मार्च 1930 को डांडी मार्च पर निकल पड़े।<sup>3</sup> 5 अप्रैल को गांधी जी विभिन्न स्थानों पर सभा और भाषण करते हुए डांडी पहुंचे। 6 अप्रैल 1930 की प्रातः को उन्होंने समुद्र तट पर नमक कानून तोड़ा।<sup>4</sup> इसके पश्चात् सारे देश में स्थान-स्थान पर नमक बनाकर नमक सत्याग्रह चलाया गया।

पुलिस ने अनेक स्थानों पर सत्याग्रहियों को बुरी तरह से पीटा और यातनायें दीं।<sup>5</sup> सयुक्त प्रान्त, गुजरात, बंगाल बिहार तथा मध्य प्रदेश में नमक सत्याग्रह ने उग्र रूप धारण कर लिया।

12 मार्च 1930 को जिस दिन गांधी जी ने डांडी मार्च आरम्भ किया, मेरठ में एक जुलूस निकाला गया, जो कि बर्फखाना मैदान से प्रारम्भ नौचन्दी मैदान में पहुंचकर एक सभा में बदल गया। इस सभा में अलगू राय शास्त्री, चौधरी रघुबीर नारायण सिंह और प्यारेलाल शर्मा आदि नेताओं ने लोगों से नमक सत्याग्रह के लिए स्वयंसेवकों के रूप में भर्ती होने की अपील की।<sup>6</sup> 6 अप्रैल से मेरठ में राष्ट्रीय सप्ताह मनाने का निश्चय किया गया। सत्याग्रहियों ने विभिन्न स्थानों पर जत्थों के रूप में नमक कानून तोड़ने की योजना बनायी।<sup>7</sup>

जिला कांग्रेस कमेटी मेरठ ने निश्चय किया कि 13 अप्रैल 1930 को गाजियाबाद के निकट लोनी ग्राम के पास, जोकि हिन्दन नदी के उस पार है, नमक कानून तोड़ा जाये।<sup>8</sup> इसकी शुरुआत सत्याग्रहियों के दो जत्थों द्वारा की गयी। एक जत्था असौड़ा का तथा दूसरा मेरठ का, विभिन्न मार्गों से पैदल यात्रा करता हुआ लोनी के लिए चला। असौड़ा का जत्था, वहां के जमींदार चौधरी रघुबीर नारायण सिंह और श्री अलगूराय शास्त्री के नेतृत्व में 6 अप्रैल को असौड़ा से चलकर 7 अप्रैल को हापुड़ पहुंचा।<sup>9</sup> 8 अप्रैल को यह जत्था खरखौदा, फफूंडा होते हुए मेरठ शहर

में पहुंच गया।<sup>10</sup> दिन में सत्याग्रहियों ने पैदल यात्रा से थके हुए होने के कारण कुछ समय भोजन और विश्राम किया। उसी दिन सायंकाल को सत्याग्रही जत्था मेरठ के प्रमुख बाजारों से होते हुए एक शोभा यात्रा के रूप में निकला।<sup>11</sup> जुलूस पर, घरों की छतों से फूलों की वर्षा की गयी। महात्मा गांधी, चौ० रघुबीर नारायण सिंह और कांग्रेस की जयकार से बाजार गूंज उठे।<sup>12</sup> यह शोभायात्रा बर्फखाना मैदान में जाकर एक सभा में तब्दील हो गयी, जिसकी अध्यक्षता प्यारे लाल शर्मा ने की। इसमें लगभग 800 व्यक्तियों ने भाग लिया।<sup>13</sup> 9 अप्रैल की प्रातः जत्था मेरठ से रिठानी पहुंचा। गाजियाबाद में जत्थे का शानदार स्वागत किया गया और देवी मन्दिर के पास धर्मशाला में जत्था टिकाया गया।<sup>14</sup> 13 अप्रैल को जत्था लोनी पहुंचा और वहां नमक बनाकर नमक कानून तोड़ा गया।<sup>15</sup>

अलगूराय शास्त्री ने इस घटना के संबन्ध में लिखा है— “13 तारीख को हमने लोनी की भूमि में वहां की मिट्टी से नमक बनाया। पानी में वहां की मिट्टी घोलकर कढ़ाई में चढ़ाई गयी। उसे पकाया गया और पकाने के बाद जब सफेद-सफेद बूरे जैसा नमक पहली बार अपने हाथ का बनाया हुआ हमने देखा, तो ऐसा अनुभव किया कि जीवन सफल हो गया। मेरठ में कितने ही व्यक्ति इस नमक को लेने के लिए आये थे। उस नमक की नन्हीं-नन्हीं पुड़िया हजारों रूपयें में मेरठ में नीलम की गयीं।”<sup>16</sup>

14 अप्रैल 1930 को मेरठ के डी०वाई० एस०पी० श्री महेश चन्द्र धर्मशाला आये और चौ० रघुबीर नारायण को अनेक स्वयंसेवकों सहित गिरफ्तार कर लिया गया। श्री गोपीनाथ, अमन मुख्तार और चौधरी चरण सिंह<sup>17</sup> चौधरी रघुबीर नारायण सिंह को विदाई देने के लिए उनके पास पहुंचे, तो उन तीनों को भी गिरफ्तार कर लिया गया।<sup>18</sup>

दूसरा जत्था 6 अप्रैल 1930 को मेरठ से रामचन्द्र शर्मा<sup>19</sup> के नेतृत्व में चलकर 11 अप्रैल को

बड़ौत पहुँचा। अप्रैल को सत्याग्रही जत्थे ने यहाँ नमक कानून तोड़ा।<sup>20</sup> रामचन्द्र शर्मा को गिरफ्तार कर लिया गया और 6 मास की सजा दी गयी।<sup>21</sup> इसके अलावा सत्याग्रहियों के दो अन्य जत्थों ने हापुड़ और मेरठ से 17 अप्रैल को लोनी सत्याग्रह में भाग लेने के लिए कूच किया, किन्तु उन्हें मार्ग में ही गिरफ्तार कर लिया गया। मेरठ के फ़ैज-ए-आम हाई-स्कूल के कुछ विद्यार्थियों को भी नमक सत्याग्रह में भाग लेने की पूर्व शंका के आधार पर गिरफ्तार कर लिया गया।<sup>22</sup>

नमक सत्याग्रहियों के इन कार्यों से क्षुब्ध होकर सरकार ने प्रमुख नेताओं और कार्यकर्ताओं की गिरफ्तारी प्रारम्भ कर दी। इन गिरफ्तारियों से स्थानीय जनसमुदाय में रोष भड़क उठा। हापुड़, मेरठ, बड़ौत आदि स्थानों पर हड़ताल आयोजित की गयी। हापुड़ में नेताओं की गिरफ्तारी के विरोध में पूर्ण रूप से हड़ताल की गयी। सभी स्कूल बन्द रहे। हापुड़ में एक सभा का भी आयोजन किया गया, जिसमें लोनी में प्रथम जत्थे द्वारा तैयार किया गया नमक 700 रुपये में बेचा गया।<sup>23</sup>

इस प्रकार गांधी जी द्वारा नमक कानून के तोड़ते ही समस्त देश की भाँति मेरठ में भी अनेक स्थानों पर नमक कानून भंग किया गया। महात्मा गांधी ने एक पत्र द्वारा जिला कांग्रेस कमेटी के सेक्रेटरी को बधाई दी। 6 अप्रैल से 12 सभायें आयोजित की गयीं।<sup>24</sup> नमक सत्याग्रह में मेरठ के विद्यार्थियों और महिलाओं की भूमिका भी सराहनीय रही। इस संबंध में मेरठ कॉलेज के छात्र गुरुदत्त और दयानंद के नामों की चर्चा तत्कालीन पुलिस सीक्रेट फाइलों में उपलब्ध है।<sup>25</sup> रचनात्मक कार्यक्रमों में विद्यावती, उर्मिला शास्त्री, कुसुमलता गर्ग आदि महिलाओं में बढ़चकर हिस्सा लिया।<sup>26</sup>

इस आन्दोलन में मेरठ के सभी वर्गों के लोगों ने एकजुट होकर सक्रिय रूप से भाग लिया। इस आन्दोलन में महिलाओं की हिस्सेदारी, इसको पूर्व के आन्दोलनों से एक अलग दृष्टिकोण प्रदान

करती है। इस जिले में राष्ट्रीय आन्दोलन में महिलायें इससे पहले कभी इतनी सक्रिय नहीं हो पायी थीं, लेकिन नमक आन्दोलन में उनका पर्दे से, घरों से बाहर निकलकर सड़कों पर आ जाना एक महत्वपूर्ण और परिवर्तनसूचक बात थी।

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## LITERATURE AND THE THEORY OF ALIENATION : VARIOUS APPROACHES AND CONCEPTS

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**Dr. Kaptan Singh**

Assistant professor, Department of English  
Army Cadet College, Wing Indian Military  
Academy Dehradun 248001

Modern human civilization is passing through a terrible ordeal. With the advent of the twentieth century, the psyche of people has been shattered by the catastrophic consequences of two world wars. Today, mostly people are overwhelmed and overawed due to the growth of science, technology and urbanization. Their work culture and ethics alienate them from their self and society. Alienation, as a feeling of not belonging, has filled the life of modern man with uncertainties and disappointments, obstructions and frustrations.

Alienation has become one of the most pivotal issues of the time, and the modern age has rightly been called 'the age of alienation'. In every affair of the world, today, man feels alienated and isolated from self and detached from the center of his world. Erick Fromm rightly observes, "the alienated person is out of touch with himself as he is out of touch with any other person. He, like the others, is experienced as things are experienced; with the senses and with common sense, but at the same time without being related to oneself and the world outside, productively" (Fromm: 111). Lack of time and heavy work burden compels him to

work as a machine. He has no time to think about his 'primary self' and remains busy to make his 'secondary sense of self' meaningful and worthwhile. His journey from human being to a sophisticated modern man has alienated and isolated him from his own being.

The motif of literature, as observed by Jean-Paul Sartre, is "both to disclose the world and to offer it as a task to the generosity of the reader. It is to have recourse to the consciousness of others in order to make one's self be recognized as essential to the totality of being: it is to wish to live this essentiality by means of interposed persons" (Sartre. What is Literature?: 45). So exile and alienation of the modern man from society and self have ever been the major concern in world literature. Basically, alienation is, "the state of feeling of estranged or separated from one's milieu, work, product of work or self" (Encyclopedia Britannica: 270). So, in alienation, a person is out of touch with himself as well as from society. On the other hand, though exile appears as a synonym of alienation yet it has some deferent connotation.

The term alienation is used not only in literature, but the term is used as significant

devices to all social sciences, i.e. Theology, Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy, Economics, Politics, Education and Anthropology, etc.

Alienation encompasses very old roots. Saint Augustine defines that due to their sinful nature, human beings are alienated from God, and theologically he believes that reconciliation could be achieved only through belief in Christ or spiritual God.

Hegel, the famous German philosopher, has also explained alienation in his theories. The concept of alienation is one of the most important and fruitful legacies of Hegel's spiritual philosophy. For him, the concept of alienation is the central account of the development of the spirit. In his famous books *On Christianity* and *The Phenomenology of Mind*, he has thoroughly discussed the concept of self-development and self-consciousness of human being. According to him, the soul or self can be developed only through a process of alienation. He explains alienation as a journey of finite human spirit towards the infinite spirit, i.e. God and in this process his subjectiveness apart from him, and ultimately he becomes an object. Hegel observes-

The objectivity of deity increased in direct proportion to the increase in the corruption and slavery of men, and this objectivity is, in reality, no more than a revelation, a manifestation of this spirit of the age.... The spirit of the age was revealed in the objectivity of its God when... it was introduced into a world alien to us, in a realm in which we had no share, where we would not acquire a place through activity, but at most by begging or conjuring our way in; it was an age in which man was a non-ego and his God another non-ego... In such an age the Deity sheds all its subjectivity and becomes nothing but an object (Lukas: 69).

After Hegel's death, the Hegelian movement splits; it divides into some new

groups. Some old Hegelians remained loyal to the conservative view of Hegel's spiritual approach. Later on Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) neglected Hegelian views to contemporary society and developed a new and radical approach known as socio-economic approach.

Marx, Comte, Spencer and Hobhouse have developed modern economic theories. They analysed the matter of alienation as the result of faulty economic structure. Karl Marx is considered as the most prominent thinker of the nineteenth century. His approach to alienation is basically socio-economic. As a radical socio-economic thinker he forcefully emphasizes on the issues as industrial labour, private property, social class, political power and communist society, etc.

Marx and Engels, in their famous work *Communist Manifesto*, expose the alienation of the labour force throughout the capitalist world. In reference to the modern world of industrialization, they argue, "the lower strata of middle class - the small trades people, shopkeepers and retired tradesmen generally the handicraftsmen and peasants - all these gradually sink into the proletariat" (Blanc: 23). Moreover the proletariat, the modern working class, does not have any means of their own production, so they are compelled to sell their labour in order to exist in society, which deteriorates their standard of living. Ultimately, the wide gap of living standards between bourgeois and proletariats alienate the proletariat class from the capitalist society.

Thus the incredible changes in the fundamental mode of 'material production' have affected the class structure of the society. It divides the society into dominant and subordinate classes and consequently, in their struggle for economic, political and social advantage, subordinate class feels alienated

from the world of the dominate class. Marx and Engels have eloquently discussed the solutions of all these problems in their works. They neglect the then thinkers' interpretation that it is the consciousness of man that determines his living. Marks and Engels oppose the idea and establish the fact that it is 'one's social being that determines his consciousness.' Undoubtedly it is necessary to change the condition that isolates people from each other and arrange them into new social groups (communism, capitalism and working class) and referring them, "the categorical imperative to over throw to all conditions in which man is a degraded, enslaved, neglected, contemptible being" (Blanc: 23), and where he is isolated and alienated. Despite socio-economic approach to alienation, Marx has deeply discussed political alienation of human being where man feels alienated and neglected by the state. He remarks -

The state does not care about the individual's society without communion between people and that individual in his relation to such a state does not experience a feeling of solidarity; he is only able to relate himself to it as an isolated nomad, an individual. Man's inner life is divided into a world split up as such a way. (Blumenberg: 15).

So Marx suggests that the faulty political and economic conditions of any state where the works of the labour are not kept in focus, and capitalists are free for mass production, consequently, the rich become richer and the poor remain poor and the latter are ultimately bound to live an alienated and humiliated life. He observes -

The alienation of the worker in his object is expressed as follows in the laws of political economy: the more the worker produces, the less he has to consume; the more value he creates the more worthless he

becomes; the more refined his product the more crude and misshapen the worker; the more civilized the product the more barbarous the worker; the more the work manifests intelligence the more the worker declines in intelligence and becomes a slave of nature. (Blumenberg: 61).

Sociologists viz. Herbert McClosky, Richard Schachat, Jan Haida, Michael Aiken, Jerald Huges, Melvin Seeman, Benjamin Zablocki and Emile Durkheim opine that alienation is a result of men's powerlessness, meaninglessness, cultural estrangement, social isolation and self-estrangement. From sociological point of view, alienation can be divided into two realms; structural and socio-psychological. Structural alienation refers to the situation where a person feels alienated from society due to its societal structure, i.e. a distance between an individual and work product and an individual's treatment on the basis of class, caste, race, gender, etc. The universal differences between privileged and non-privileged classes alienate and isolate the non-privileged who find it very hard to come out from the vicious circle of poverty. In this reference, Jan Haida rightly remarks, "Alienation is an awareness of non-believing or non-sharing (which) reflects (one's) exclusion of self-exclusion from society, its social and cultural participation" (Haida: 764). Richard Schacht in his book Alienation convincingly differentiates between social exile and alienation. He pinpoints, "an individual who tries unsuccessfully to establish meaningful contact with others is in a different situation from one who chooses to live alone in order to achieve some special purpose"(Schacht: 157).

The socio-psychological feeling of alienation begins with one's realization of his powerless, meaningless and rootless existence, which gradually estranges and isolates him from

self and society. The feeling of powerlessness is the beginning point of one's identity crisis or a precursor to self-estrangement. The domination by the superiors makes him feel powerless, and the feelings of inferiority complex alienate him from the powerful group of superiors. The feeling of meaninglessness is related to the emotions of individual, when he realizes that he does not have any real purpose of his own. He feels disillusioned with the whole system because his expectations are not being fulfilled.

The social isolation is basically an inability to feel connected to the society. The constant rejection and degradation of a person isolate him from the world around. In reference to social isolation, Benjamin Zeblocki (1941) rightly remarks -

the individual's low expectancy for inclusion, for social acceptance, expressed typically through feelings of loneliness or feelings of rejection or repudiation (found for example among members of minority communities, the aged and handicapped, and various kinds of fewer visible strangers - the neglected natives, neglected ones on the basis of class, gender, caste, race and colour of the skin, etc.) (Zablocki: 9).

Thus the experience of negligence isolates man from society. The loss of self-esteem and individuality generates the feelings of self-estrangement which makes him feel unable to find a self-reward in society or his work.

Psychological approaches to the term (alienation) stimulate its meaning and explicate its reasons and its problems. Time and again, psychologists have suggested adequate solution to all these problems. The eminent analytical psychologists, Frank Johnson, Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustav Jung and Erick Fromm have presented the more detailed and analytical way

to interpret the problems of alienation, and they have analysed its psychological effect on the psyche of man.

In his limitations about nature man feels sensorial and emotional inconvenience. Sensorial and emotional inconveniences are the two psychological methods to deal with alienated psyche of man. The former (sensorial inconveniences) are the product of direct painful relation with nature, and the later (emotional inconveniences) are actually the product of the reflective relationship with the nature. The realization of all these inconveniences develops the feelings of fear in human being, which ultimately alienates him from his self -

Alienated determinations form in the man a conception of the conveniences and inconveniences which creates an alienated respect toward the power in nature, alienated emotional states, alienated needs, alienated actions. In this way subjective consciousness develop an alienated knowledge. Alienated knowledge is false and, therefore, forms an alienated mode of the man's living. The alienated mode of living alienates the man from the nature and thus the process develops cyclically. ( Psychology of Alienation:1 & 2).

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), father of psychology, refers alienation as 'a self-estrangement' caused by the split between conscious and unconscious parts of the mind. The constant blocking and suppression of a person's feeling, emotion and sexual instinct make him less effective and detach him from his real nature; alienate him from his actual being. Freud defines neurosis as a result of alienation from his own being and nervousness, stress, disappointment, depression and mental breakdown as the effects of constant alienation.

Erich Fromm (1900-1980), a prominent psychologist, in his famous book *The Sane Society* presents a detailed and impressive



thesis about alienation of man from self and society, and he analyses alienation, as an experience where man feels estranged from society and self; neither he feels himself as the 'center of the world' nor develops an attachment with his own self. He defines alienation where man, "acts and feels like an automation, who never experiences anything, which is really his, who experience himself entirely as the person who thinks he is supposed to be, whose artificial smile has replaced his genuine laughter, whose meaningless chatter, has replaced communication speech, whose dulled despair has taken the place of genuine pain" (Fromm: 24).

In his next book *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, Fromm explains that man's estrangement from himself is a real cause of his alienation. The growing gap of communication and reluctance of man to share his joys and sorrows to others alienates him from the world around.

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), a Swiss psychiatrist establishes a new psycho analytic school of psychology that is called, 'Analytical Psychology'. He develops a distinctive approach to the study of the human psyche. The ultimate goal of his works is the reconciliation of the life of the individual with the world of the supra personal. He analyses the individual's encounter with the world around where shocking consequences of present life, alienate him from his being. He explains -

He [man] has seen how beneficent is science, technology, and organization but also how catastrophic they can be. He has likewise seen how all well-meaning governments have a thoroughly paved the way for peace on the principle 'in times of peace prepare for war' that the world has nearly gone to rack and ruin. And as for ideals, neither the Christian church, nor the brotherhood of man, nor international

social democracy, nor the solidarity of economic interests had stood up to the acid test of [grin] reality. (Jung: 460).

Undoubtedly, the two world wars and the impending danger of the third have casted a dark shadow on the sensibilities of modern man.

Existentialism has become a very striking point of discussion in the modern phenomenon. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) have propagated some issues of existential philosophy and later on in the twentieth-century European existential philosophers, mainly Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) have elaborately discussed about the complex life-style of modern human being.

A syllogism that 'all humans must die; I am a human; therefore, I must die', though seems very common but when it is analyzed from the experiment viewpoint of any individual, who is about to die a very real and solitary death, the consequence of the experience of truth would be different. Consequently, nobody would like to die but simultaneously death of a human being is certain despite all his efforts to exist in the world.

In nineteenth-century Danish thinker Soren Kierkegaard and the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche argue about the religion and the meaning/existence of God. Kierkegaard in his famous book *Fear and Trembling* (1843) describes that one may save himself from alienation only by surrendering himself to God. He further advocates that individual is absolutely alone in the world therefore to avoid loneliness, he must generate some irrational notions about the existence of God. Thus he won't be isolated. Nietzsche opposes the idea of Kierkegaard. He was an atheist having a nihilistic vision. He believes nihilism as the logical end-point of Western philosophy.

Basically, his efforts were to challenge Kierkegaard's religious views of the existence of God. He says that for the sake of asceticism, constant suppression of desires leaves a person alienated because, "we imagine a truer and better world beyond appearance. When we fail to grasp that true world, we fall into despair or nihilism, for we have lost the higher world that we never had" (Colebrook: 19). So the feelings of loss, alienates man from his surroundings.

The existential thoughts of Heidegger and Sartre render to the authenticity and unauthenticity of human existence. By authentic existence, Sartre means that a person does not live in a state of denial whereas he fails to achieve the mode of being. According to him, the conscience of man is eager to achieve 'authentic existence' but due to some external factors or his own internal dilemma, he is detached from 'authentic existence,' and his situations compel him to live in 'unauthentic existence' and ultimately it becomes a reason for his alienation. He justifies, "the point, as I choose myself as a tearing away from the other I assume and recognize as mine, this alienated me" (Being and Nothingness: 285). On the other hand, Martin Heidegger defines alienation as a result of failure to live an authentic life. Man is everywhere in chains, and his limited freedom and choices make him helpless and alienated from the real existence.

Franz Kafka (1882-1924), an existential thinker, time and again through the fictional characters, has exposed the complex and psychological states of the modern man. He analysed the life of modern human beings and their transformation into some 'other' being i.e. an insect, and an animal. He argued the loss of humanity in modern existence of human being. Their sense of loss of the present and presentable world alienates them and compels them to live an alienated life. Gregor Samsa,

the protagonist of his famous treaty *Metamorphosis*, presents the existential dilemma of modern man. His deliberation to transform himself into a beetle is probably a "symbol or allegory of inhumanity, alienation or displacement at the heart of all finite human life" (Colebrook: 138). In *The Hunger Artist*, he interprets the submission of a man who feels alienated and guilty, and perceives a notion that law, justice, and good are beyond any conception or measure and any attempt to represent or articulate this law defines its essential purity. So under the flux of his self-deprivation and alienation finally he "decides to starve himself in order to inflict punishment upon himself precisely because any law will always be out of reach, always cruel and arbitrary" (Colebrook: 38). Thus Kafka through his psychic character tries to expose the modern condition of complex human existence.

All these approaches of alienation have become prominent part of modern literature. Literature as a mirror to society helps to expose the alienation of man through its genres, i.e. novel, drama, poetry, prose, etc. Time and again writers have pointed out the term alienation as a social political and psychological evil, and they have portrayed a real picture of the pessimistic views of sad realities of life.

Thinkers, critics and academicians have put different opinions regarding the alienated state of modern humanity. But all of them unanimously agree on one common belief that as man is a social being so communication, emotional and social bonding are essential for healthy mental state, and the lack of communication has negative repercussions. Significantly, literature, all over the world, abounds with the themes of alienated beings who feel it very hard to overcome their problems due to lack of communication.

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## PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN INDIA

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**Dr. Sanjay Sharma**

Asst Prof, Political Science

Army Cadet College,

Indian Military Academy, Dehradun

### **Disaster Management**

Disaster management can be defined as accumulation of various activities undertaken by the government and civil society aiming towards the prevention of disaster and to meet the infrastructure need once disaster takes place. Disaster management is a continuous process which requires multidimensional activities to rehabilitate the affected person and rebuilt the damaged infrastructure. It is a continuous and integrated process of “planning, organising, coordinating and implementing measures which are necessary or expedient for:

- i) Prevention of danger or threat of actual disaster
  - ii) Mitigation or reduction of risk of a disaster or its severity or consequences;
  - iii) Capacity building;
  - iv) Preparedness to deal with any disaster;
  - v) Prompt response to any threatening disaster situation or disaster;
  - vi) Assessing the severity or magnitude of effects of any disaster;
  - vii) Evacuation, rescue and relief;
  - viii) Rehabilitation and reconstruction.<sup>1</sup>
- In nutshell disaster management is a

three stage process of.

(i) **Mitigation:** i.e. to mitigate the reasons responsible for disaster. It is a stage in advance planning which either checks the causes of disaster or reduces the effects of disasters.

(ii) **Infrastructural preparedness:** i.e. stage of alert to cope up with the actual occurrence of disaster. This involves administrative and economic preparedness, on advance outlay of resources which can reduce the loss of sufferings, both human and infrastructural.

(iii) **Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Resettlement:** The basic concern at this stage is to save lives, to restore infrastructure and communications and to restore normalization as early as possible.

### **Constitutional Provisions for Disaster Management in India**

Disaster is a post constitutional development. Therefore one doesn't find any exclusive entry on disaster management in either list of Seven Schedule. Union Government draws it legislative and regulatory authority under the provision of Article 248 which reads as” Parliament has exclusive power to make

any law with respect to any matter not enumerated in the Concurrent List or State List”.<sup>2</sup>

It was as late as in 1999 that Union Government had constituted the High Powered Committee (HPC) to prepare draft guidelines for disaster management. The HPC has undertaken comprehensive study on various aspects of disaster in India such as nature of disasters and vulnerability profile of India, disaster management culture and organizational framework in India, and planning and finance of disaster. HPC has submitted its report in 2001. Besides its other recommendations, the Committee has underlines the role of local governance and community participation as important instrument of managing and mitigating the consequences of disaster.

In its opinion Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) can perform multiple functions in disaster management such as early warning system, relief distribution, shelter home preparation, providing medical and above all moral support to victims of disaster. It is observed by the Committee that community participation is essential feature for the disaster management and all local bodies including urban can lend their support in terms of disaster preparedness and mitigation, coordinating the action at community level and creating awareness about disaster in their respective areas. It is stated by the committee that to achieve the local participation they need to be involved in formulation and implementation of disaster plan at various level. The allocation of funds needs to be taken care of to enable the local support to come in to effect without any delay. The Committee further recommended that *“For effective implementation of disaster mitigation strategies, training and awareness needs to be provided to the members of local bodies as well as the gram*

*panchayats, thereby setting up a trained task force that would be immediately activated should a disaster strike”*<sup>3</sup>..

It is in above totalistic perspective that one need to examine the role of PRIs in disaster management. However in order to relocate the role of local bodies one need to examine disaster management Act

### **Disaster Management Act, 2005**

The increasing need for legal framework on disaster management, because of increasing disaster events, and recommendations of High Powered Committee in this regard has inspired the Government to enact the Disaster Management Act in 2005. This Act provides for the constitution of Disaster Management Authority at three level namely National, State and District. The Chairperson of Zila Parishad shall be the co-Chairperson of the District Disaster Management Authority. A Plan has to be prepared by the District Authority and it has been assigned 39 functions which also involve local bodies in it. District Authority has to identify the vulnerability of the District and prepare adequate response to mitigate it. District Authority has to coordinate the response of local bodies as per the direction of National Authority. The local Bodies shall cooperate and to be involved in multiple way such as capacity building, immediate response and relief, distribution of food arranging shelter and establishment of effective communication and proliferate the information among the public and so on. It is provisioned in the Act that District Plan shall demarcate the roles and responsibilities of local bodies. In this regard Section 41 of Chapter VI is worth mentioning:

#### **1. Subject to the directions of the District Authority, a local authority shall –**

- (a) “ensure that its officers and employees are trained for disaster management;
- (b) ensure that resources relating to

disaster management are so maintained as to be readily available for use in the event of any threatening disaster situation or disaster;

- (c) ensure all construction projects under it or within its jurisdiction conform to the standards and specifications laid down for prevention of disaster and mitigation by the National Authority, State Authority and the District Authority;
- (d) carry out relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in the affected area in accordance with the State Plan and the District Plan.”<sup>4</sup>

**2. The local authority may take such other measures as may be necessary for the disaster management.**

Therefore it is evident from the provisions of Disaster Management Act that local bodies are given due importance in disaster management. In conformity to the provisions of this Act many States have legislated the Disaster Management Act they are Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Mizoram, Punjab, Tripura, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Bihar and Puducherry have constituted their respective state Disaster Management Authority. However Orissa is the first state in India to constitute disaster management authority on 28 December, 1999 known as Orissa State Disaster Mitigation Authority (OSDMA). It is an autonomous organisation which looks after the reconstruction and rehabilitation works. It was created just after the advent of Super Cyclone in Orissa. The objectives of organisation are to act as the nodal agency for disaster reconstruction works, to coordinate with the line departments involved in reconstruction, to coordinate with bilateral and multilateral aid

agencies, international, national and state level NGOs, to promote disaster preparedness at all levels in the state and to set up a network with similar and relevant Organisations for disaster management.<sup>5</sup>

Department of Revenue is the administrative department of OSDMA. The main objectives of OSDMA are:

- “Act as the nodal agency for disaster reconstruction works;
- Coordinate with the line departments involved in reconstruction
- To coordinate with bilateral and multi-lateral aid agencies.
- To promote disaster preparedness at all levels in the state and
- Net work with similar and relevant organizations for disaster management.”<sup>6</sup>

Gujarat was probably the next state to establish Gujrat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA) 2003, (Gujarat Act No. 20 of 2003). This act seeks to establish Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority, which is a body corporate with perpetual success and common say. By virtue of which it is a highly powerful body vested with such powers as to; “(a) act as the central planning, coordinating and monitoring body for disaster management and post-disaster reconstruction, rehabilitation, evaluation and assessment; (b) assist the state government in formulation of policy relating to emergency relief notwithstanding that the implementation of emergency relief shall be the responsibility of the Revenue Department and other departments of the Government; (c) Inform the state government and departments of government on progress and problems in disaster management; (d) Promote general education and awareness on disaster management emergency planning and response; (e) and matters incidental thereto.”<sup>7</sup>

Madhya Pradesh has announced policy on disaster management in 2002. A committee has been established under the chairmanship of Chief Minister. This committee is known as the Cabinet Committee on Disaster Management. In the event of occurrence of any disaster, specified or unspecified, this committee meets as frequently as it may decide similar committees have been constituted at division and district level under the chairmanship of the divisional commissioner and the district collector respectively. The Revenue Department of state is designated as the nodal agency for all types of disasters at the state level. At the state level, the Revenue Department is the nodal department for all types of natural calamities. The Labour Department is the nodal department for all industrial and chemical disasters, public health for epidemics, and the home department is the nodal department for all accidents and man-made disasters.

Uttarakhand, which has come in to existence in 2000, has legislated Uttaranchal Disaster Mitigation, Management and Prevention Act. This Act also provisions for the participation of local bodies as the Section 221 of the Act says that the local bodies shall assist the District Magistrate in preparation of Disaster Management Plan for the District. Further Section 21(1) provisions for the specific role of the local bodies to lend their support to District Authority in Disaster affected areas. This Act also provides for the training of the personnel of local bodies and to ensure that all buildings in their area should comply with the established norms.

### **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)**

Second Administrative Reform Commission was constituted by Government of India to recommend reform in public

administrative system. Commission in its third report 'Crisis Management: From Despair to Hope' has used term crisis and disaster interchangeably and submitted its report in 2006. It has recommended many changes in the Disaster Management Act particularly it maintained that the 'role local governments should be brought to the forefront for disaster management'. The commission has observed that local governance both urban and local has emerged as the important centre of self rule. These local bodies are nearest to the community and responsive towards the public demands and in the event of disaster local governance can provide instant relief and effective disaster management. Therefore Commission has recommended that there should be subsequent amendment in the Union and State Act to provide specific roles and responsibilities to the local bodies in disaster management. Commission has specifically maintained that "State Governments may examine the need to incorporate provisions in the State Disaster Management Laws and also the State Laws governing the local Bodies to provide for a well defined role to the municipalities and the Panchayati Raj Institutions".<sup>8</sup> Further Commission has observed that community participation is an integral part of disaster management as the application of traditional wisdom with management of disaster can provide vibrant result in it. In this regard commission has recommended that 'Location specific training programmes for the community should be executed through the Panchayat'.

Thus the concern for the participation of Panchayati Raj has been raised from various corner and in this regard Second Administrative Commission in its third report has recommended necessary changes in the State Panchayat Act so that role and responsibilities of Panchayati

Raj in disaster management can be clearly demarcated.

### **Panchayati Raj in India**

Panchayati Raj Institutions, in India, are provisioned under Article 40 of the Directive Principles of State Policy. However it was after the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional amendments that Panchayati Raj was given the Constitutional backing and the constitution of Panchayati Raj become mandatory in all the States. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional amendment has provided a three tier structure for Panchayati Raj at District, intermediate, and the village level. The major objective of the amendment was to promote community governance. Panchayati Raj Institutions have worked as institutions of social justice, women empowerment and social and economic planning and justice. Panchayats acquires its power and responsibilities from Article 243(g) which empower State Government to devolve such power and functions to Panchayats to empower them to function as the institution of community governance. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment added IX part and eleventh schedule in Constitution which include 29 items and disaster management is not included in these items.

On the basis of the recommendations of Bhuria Committee on the enactment of Panchayati Raj in Schedule and Tribal area in 1996 Panchayat Extension to the Schedule Areas Act (PESA) was enacted. The objective of PESA is to provide self governance in the Schedule Areas.<sup>9</sup> This Act provides for the establishment of Gram Sabha in the Schedule Areas along with the adequate provisions for the reservations of seats.

The preparedness and quick response is the key feature of disaster management. The effective and strong response towards the disaster demands for coordinated response from

overall government system including the local governance and community participation. Disaster management should be result oriented, having professional approach focusing the victim of disaster. Therefore role of every level of governance and community participation is very important to manage the disaster in vibrant manner.

The importance of local governance and community participation is evident in many events such as village Panchayats have provided instant relief in the form of rehabilitation and medical facility when tsunami has taken place in the southern States in December 2004. Thus the importance and need of Panchayati Raj in disaster management is well proved from various events of disaster.

### **Provision of Disaster Management in Panchayati Raj Acts of certain States:**

The Disaster Management Act 2005, specifically provides for the inclusions of local governance in the disaster management process, therefore it is expected from various States to make necessary amendments in their Panchayati Raj Act so that Panchayat can be included in management of disaster. However after the careful scrutiny of Panchayati Raj Acts of various States it can be concluded that hardly any State has undertaken the required amendment to include Panchayat in Disaster management; however West Bengal is the only State which has specifically empowered the Upa Samiti of Gram Panchayat to deal with Disaster Control and Management by West Bengal Panchayat Rules 2004. A brief analysis of Panchayat Raj Act of various States is discussed to locate the provisions of disaster management in these acts.

### **THE ANDHRA PRADESH PANCHAYATI RAJ ACT, 1994**

There are some provisions in the Act which are related to disasters. Under **section**



46 deals with power of Gram Panchayat to provide for certain other matters; Item viii: the provision of relief to the crippled, destitute and the sick; Item xx “the provision of relief against famine or other calamities”.<sup>10</sup>

#### **THE ASSAM PANCHAYAT ACT, 1994**

IN this Act following provisions are related with disasters

**Chapter IV** deals with Gaon Panchayat and Section 19 provides for functions of the Gaon Panchayat; **Section 9(3)** Mobilisation of reliefs in natural calamities; **Chapter V** deals with Anchalik Panchayat and Section 49 provides functions of the Anchalik Panchayat; **Section 49(c)** to assist the Government in relief operations in natural calamities; **Section 53(1)** the Government Standing Committee shall perform functions relating to the establishment matters, communications, buildings, rural housing, relief against natural calamities, water supply and all miscellaneous residing matters.

In **chapter VI, section 83 (i)** of the Act mentions that “the General Standing Committee shall perform functions relating to the establishment matters and functions relating to the communications, buildings, rural housing, village extensions, relief against natural calamities, Rural Development Programme of Government of India and allied matters and all miscellaneous residuary matters”; **Section 90 (i)** of the Act deals with Powers and Functions of Zilla Parishad. Item 19(vi) control of fire out breaks, Item 20(e) adopt measures for relief to the people in distress.

#### **THE BOMBAY VILLAGE PANCHAYATS ACT, 1958 AND THE MAHARASHTRA ZILLA PARISHADS AND PANCHAYAT SAMITIES ACT, 1961**

*(As modified in 1994 and subsequent notification)*

However there is hardly any provision related with disaster management still **under chapter III section 45** Administrative powers and duties of Panchayats; **sub section 3**; “A Panchayat may also make provision for carrying out within the village any other work or measure which is likely to promote the health, safety, education, comfort, convenience or social or economic or cultural well being of the inhabitants of the village”.<sup>11</sup> Under **Section 100** Two Schedules are given under which subjects are enumerated for Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samities. These subjects are quite exhaustive but do not speak about Disaster Management. However, some subjects have direct or indirect link with disaster scenario. Nevertheless, specific provision can be inserted.

#### **THE GUJARAT PANCHAYATS ACT, 1993**

(as modified up to 2000) interestingly the Gujarat Panchayat Act has some references which relate to disasters as functions of Panchayats. **Schedule I** under **section 99** Matters in Respect of which it is the Duty of a Village Panchayat to make Provision I (s) extinguishing fires and protecting life and property when fires occur. **Schedule II (section 130); Part I** Matters in Respect of which it is the Duty of a Taluka Panchayat to make Provision ; (12) In the sphere of relief – Providing immediate relief in cases of floods, fires, epidemics and other natural calamities on a small or large scale. **Schedule III, Part I (section 154)** Matters in respect of which it is the Duty of District Panchayat to make provision; (10) In the sphere of relief – Establishment and management of relief centres in times of natural calamities such as famine and scarcity, floods, fire and earthquake.

#### **THE ORISSA ZILLA PARISHAD ACT, 1991**

#### **THE ORISSA PANCHAYAT SAMITI**

**ACT, 1999**

**ORISSA GRAM PANCHAYAT ACT, 1964**

*(As modified upto 2002)*

In this Act also one hardly find provision relating to disaster

However, under **section 45** discretionary functions it is stated that “the gram panchayat may, if a majority of its members so decide by a resolution with the previous approval of the state government undertake within the Gram the control and administration of and be responsible for the following matters, namely; relief from famine or other calamity”.

<sup>12</sup>**Under Section III (3)** enumerates the power of the Zilla Parishad and **Item X** ‘adopt measures of the relief of distress. **Under Section 20** of Panchayati Samiti Act, powers of Samiti are given, but Disaster Management is not included. However it provides power to review Action plan of Block level officers entrusted with Disaster Management. The Orissa State Disaster Management Authority authorises Sarpanches / Panchayats to distribute relief and construct godowns and roads damaged by floods and disasters.

**THE TAMILNADU STATE PANCHAYAT ACT, 1994**

*(Modified up to September 30, 1999)*

The Tamilnadu Panchayat ACT as most of the other Panchayat Act hardly include provisions for disaster, still the Chapter VIII contains Functions, Powers and Property of Village Panchayats, Panchayat Union Councils and District Panchayats. This Chapter starts with Section 110 stating duty of Village Panchayat and ends with Section 166 with district panchayat.<sup>13</sup> It is classified into duties and powers. In the absence of such provision it is necessary to insert some clauses in the Act, as the State is highly vulnerable to tsunami, cyclone, etc.

**UNITED PROVINCES PANCHAYATI**

**RAJ ACT, 1947 AND THE UTTAR PRADESH KSHETRA SAMITIS AND ZILLA PARISHADS ADHINIYAM, 1961 AND**

**UTTAR PRADESH PANCHAYAT (LAWS) ACT**

*(As modified in 1994)*

The close scrutiny of Uttar Pradesh Act reveal hardly any specific provision dealing directly with the disaster/natural calamity, however Section 15 of the Act provides for powers and functions of Gram Panchayat and thirty items are listed. However, there is no mention about disaster management. However, Section 32 of the Act mentions about the powers and functions of Kshetra Panchayats and Zilla Parishads. Schedule 1 describes about Powers and Functions of Kshetra Panchayat, Item No.32 “Providing relief furring natural calamities”. The Section 32 in Schedule III Part (a) deals with Powers and Functions of Zilla Panchayat. Item No. (31) Relief Work: Construction, repairs and maintenance of famine preventive works, establishment and maintenance of relief work and relief houses and adoption of such other measures of relief in time of famine and security as may be considered necessary.

**THE WEST BENGAL STATE PANCHAYAT RAJ ACT, 1973**

*(As modified up to November 1997)*

One can locate some provision for disaster management in the West Bengal Act, **Chapter III** of the Act mentions about the powers and duties of gram panchayat. **Section 21 (s)** in chapter III mentions that “rendering assistance in extinguishing fire and protecting life and property when fire occurs”. **Section 28:** In the event of an outbreak of cholera or any other water-borne infectious disease in any locality situated within the local limits of the jurisdiction of a Gram Panchayat, the Pradhan

may, during the continuance of the outbreak, without notice and at any time, inspect and disinfect any well, tank or other place from which water is, or likely to be, taken for the purpose of drinking and may further take such steps as he deems fit to prevent the drawing of water therefrom. Chapter IX deals with Powers and Duties of Panchayat Samiti. Under Section 109 (1) (d) “adopt measures for the relief of distress”. Chapter XIV, Section 153 deals with powers, functions and duties of Zilla Parishad. Section 153 (d) “adopt measures for the relief of distress”.

**The West Bengal Panchayat (Gram Panchayat Administration) Rules, 2004**  
**Part-II**  
**Gram Panchayat Administration**  
**Chapter XI**  
**Upa-Samitis and Gram Unnayan Samitis of a Gram Panchayat**

66. Subjects to be dealt by Upa-Samitis.—The Upa-Samiti of a Gram Panchayat shall deliberate upon and deal with the subjects specified below against the corresponding entry of the Upa-Samiti specified in the column (2) of the Table:

Sl. No. (1)	Upa-Samiti (2)	Subjects of Upa-Samiti (3)
1.	Artha 0 Parikalpana	(i) Finance, (ii) Budget, (iii) Accounts, (iv) Audit, (v) Taxation, (vi) Resource-mobilization, (vii) Establishment and office management, (viii) Preparation of Gram Panchayat Plans, (ix) Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all Poverty Alleviation including Employment Generation Programmes, (x) Food Security and Public Distribution Programme, (xi) Preparation of resource inventory and database of the Gram Panchayat Planning, (xii) <b>Disaster control management</b> , (xiii) Management of hat, bazar, ferry service of Gram Panchayat, (xiv) Coordination of works assigned to different Upa-Samitis and any other work not entrusted with any other Upa-Samiti.

**Conclusion**

There is one effective alternate until the amendment is worked out that is in most of the State Panchayat Act have the provision for the constitution of Standing Committee (at all the three tiers) to deal with any subject provided to it. Therefore according to this provision General Body of the Panchayat can pass a resolution to constitute one committee at each level to deal with disaster management or any existing committee such as Finance and Planning Committee can be endowed additional function of managing the disaster. Standing Committee on disaster management can look after many issues such as drawing up disaster management

plan at local level, providing training, conducting exercises to deal with disaster situation or other such function related with disaster management. Thus necessary amendment in the existing Panchayat Act may result in effective and vibrant management of disaster.

**End Notes**

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(Deemed University) Agra-282005

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Rajabpur, Gajraula

**Dr. Pooja Nermaniya**

M.Sc. M. Phil.Net .Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
R.B.D.Degree Collage, Bijnor (U.P.)

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Haldwani (U.K.)

**Ms. Kanchana Verma**

M.A., Ph.D.

Haldwani (U.K.)

**Manoj Kumar & Prerna Kainthola**

Research Scholar

Department of Political Science

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**Mr.Amar Singh**

IFTM University

Moradabad

**Dr. Sanjay Mehrotra**

IFTM University

Moradabad

**Dr. Avtar Dixit**

Assist. Prof., Commerce Deptt.

Govt. P.G College, Bilaspur (Rampur)

Phone No. 9411007679

**Dr. Saraswati**

Assist. Prof., Economics Deptt.

Govt. P.G College, Bilaspur (Rampur)

Phone No. 9411007679

**श्रीमती राधिका**

असिस्टेन्ट प्रोफेसर- राजनीति विज्ञान विभाग

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Research Scholar  
Govt. Girls (P.G.)College, Rampur

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Govt. Degree College, Bhojpur  
Moradabad (U.P.)

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Asso. Professor  
Department of Political Science  
I.N.PG College, Meerut

**Dr. Sanjay Sharma**  
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Deptt. of Political Science  
Army Cadet College, IMA, Dehradun

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**Dr. Brahma Autar Sharma**  
Principal & Head, History Deptt.  
L.R. Mahavidhyalaya, Jsrana (U.P.)  
283136  
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**Dr. Kaptan Singh**

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Academy Dehradun 248001

**Dr. Sanjay Sharma**

Asst Prof, Political Science

Army Cadet College,

Indian Military Academy, Dehradun