

## ***EDITORIAL ARTICLE***

### **New ‘Governmentality’: The Indian Style**

Sanjay K. Roy

**Abstract:** *This paper unravels the nature of ‘governmentality’ or the technology of power which is in operation under the current regime. The paper revisits the theoretical tradition in social sciences to analyse the present statecraft and illustrates the theoretical principles thus drawn, drawing from realpolitik to argue that the current Indian governmentality presents a rare mix of neoliberalism, elements of globalisation and cultivation of all forms of premodern beliefs and traditions as a means to the reproduction of a capitalist production system and a Kakistocracy.*

**Keywords:** Statecraft, social contract, general will, neoliberalism, consumerism, Hindutva, amoral social order, Kakistocracy.

1

From the social contract theory of modern times (Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau)<sup>1</sup> to the postmodern era of Michel Foucault, there has been a long journey in the social science understanding of the evolution of the State-Citizen relationship. The evolution is ongoing in the recent phase of globalised, all-encompassing, and aggressive capitalism, as well as cultural and trade imperialism. In social contract theory, the State in a democratic setup is conceived as the sovereign supra-body created as an expression of the ‘general will’ by the citizens, which is supposed to look after the well-being of all citizens, following the principles of equality and without discrimination. The spirit of social contract theory found only partial, and at times distorted, expression in modern capitalist democracies, where the State is ideally taken to be accountable and subordinated to the ‘general will’ of the citizens.

The modern democracies thrived globally by (1) subordinating all citizens and State institutions and the top leaders and government officials to a set of universal principles, a set of well-articulated written provisions, (2) granting some fundamental (civil) rights to the citizens, and (3) putting in place an autonomous institutional arrangement (such as independence of the judiciary, free system of knowledge production and dissemination, (4) some arrangement for the common citizens to scrutinise the functioning of the public intuitions and the power elite.

The Marxist theoretical tradition recognised both virtues and unacceptable vices in modern democratic-capitalist States. On the positive side, the modern democratic States offered some limited rights, most importantly, the right to freedom of speech and the right to organisation and protest, and some decency in public life, some accountability of those in power and some free space in the public sphere for the collective critical voices to flourish. Marx called upon the intelligentsia and the working classes to take advantage of this ‘democratic’ space to organise themselves against the capitalist system. On the negative side, Marx and Engels defined State as the ‘executive committee of the bourgeoisie’ (*German Ideology, 1968*); a superstructural instrument, an arrangement of power donned by the bourgeoisie or their representatives to reproduce the free-market capitalism by facilitating the exploitative production relations and unhindered extraction of ‘surplus labour’ and ‘surplus value’, by suppressing the protest movements organised by the exploited classes, by morally, culturally and ideologically legitimising the unjust system with the help of carefully crafted false consciousnesses of different forms.<sup>2</sup> The Marxist scholars after Marx, particularly Gramsci, Althusser and Habermas, updated the Marxist thesis on the capitalist state to capture the developments in governmentality in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Gramsci explained how capitalism in the 1920s and 1930s operated more through the elements of superstructure like culture, education, and social institutions to control the thought process and the behaviour of the people, and thus generate consent in favour of the capitalist economic and political order (read, bourgeois democracies of the 20th-century West). Gramsci also argued that, besides ideological indoctrination, the capitalist State undertakes some welfare programmes to meet some basic material needs of the subaltern classes to instil a ‘happy feel’ in the population.<sup>3</sup>

Taking cues from Gramsci, Althusser emphasised that modern capitalist states combine the Repressive State Apparatuses (the militia, police, court,

and prison) and the Ideological State Apparatuses (traditions, education, family, socialisation, consumerism, and moral order) to reproduce the exploitative and unjust capitalist production system. Proposing the thesis of 'Marxist Structuralism', Althusser argued that there is a grand entanglement between the elements of the superstructure and base, and the whole arrangement has been harmonised to reproduce the capitalist production system uninterrupted.<sup>4</sup> Marriage, reproduction of children, orienting them to meet the labour (manual and technical) demands, loading them with capitalist values and ethics – the activities performed at the social-cultural level - are designed to reproduce the capitalist production system. Habermas argued that the modern capitalist States of the West have monopolised the production of information and communication systems, effectively ending the place for free debates and communication and thus succeeded in colonising the public sphere. Through 'distorted communication', the modern capitalist State controls the process of 'self-formation', thereby controlling the thought process and behavioural patterns of citizens while turning them into active agents of the system. The critical consciousness of the people is therefore blunted before crystallisation into large-scale protest movements for social transformation.<sup>5</sup>

Unravelling the technology of power or 'governmentality' of the 'demonic' modern States Michel Foucault argued that the States now combine the strategies of (1) the 'city-citizen game' of ancient city states, (2) the 'pastoral power' of the hegemonic monarchies of medieval times and (2) the 'bio-power' of the welfare governance of the neo-liberal democracies to subjugate and govern its 'population'. In the first strategy, the State segregates the weaker and vulnerable sections, disenfranchises them and coerces them to serve the privileged. In the second strategy, although it operates in the name of 'democracy', the State power is centralised into a few hands, if not in one hand, as found in dictatorships of Nazi and Stalinist variants. It disempowers the common people to subjugate them. In the third strategy, namely, 'bio-power', the modern democratic states of the post-World War II period control their 'populations' by creating, through their welfare programmes and policies, a general feeling that they care for them. Foucault also argued that the modern State plays an active part in controlling the self-formation process by monopolising the knowledge production industry while orchestrating the power-knowledge symbiosis. Besides, Foucault argues, the modern States have fine-tuned and operationalised a

comprehensive ‘surveillance regime’ as a part of the strategy of ‘discipline and punish’ the ‘erring’ voices within their populations.<sup>6</sup>

The social scientists thus provide us with vivid critical insights into the technology of power of modern democracies, which follow different shades of neo-liberalism to reproduce capitalist social formations. The ‘active agents’ among the social scientists are aware of these critical insights, and they work out new strategies of disciplining the ‘critical voices’ and the potentially ‘dangerous’ oppressed, disenfranchised working masses. The unjust, exploitative modern capitalist ‘democratic’ States thus find ways and means to withstand the challenges posed by the ‘destabilising’ forces and survive. It is against this conceptual backdrop that we can have a look at the presently followed ‘governmentality’ of the Indian State.

## 2

Ideologically, the present incarnation of the Indian statecraft combines an aggressive free-market economy of the neo-liberal brand (although there is nothing ‘liberal’ here), and some elements of globalisation with religious ‘Hindutva Nationalism’. This is a clear departure from the Nehruvian governmentality, which combined a strong social sector with a socialist flavour, ‘pluralism and diversity’, tolerance and minimal governance, in which, excepting the Emergency period of 1975-77, the critical mind and freedom of speech had a place. The form of governmentality which is in vogue, particularly since 2014, demonstrates an unprecedented entanglement between the ruling elite and the corporate elite, which even C. Wright Mills could not anticipate in his *Power Elite*.<sup>7</sup> In India, at present, the ruling elite takes all its business decisions, makes industrial policies, health policy, education policy, information policy, land policy, media policy, labour laws with the sole intention of creating more and more free space for the corporate elite while the latter returns the favour by donating a part of the profit to the ruling parties legally (through electoral bonds) and illegally (the unaccounted money) and by controlling and using the media (the news channels, the newspapers, journals, other forms of mass media) to generate public opinion in favour of the ruling elite. The corporate giants dictate foreign policy and international relations to expand their business empire to the ‘friendly’ countries near and far. The opening up of health, education, aviation, transport, mines, oil, forest resources and almost all other fields to the corporate capital

within India reinforces the Marxist understanding of the State being the 'executive committee of the bourgeoisie'. The doubters of the Marxist formulation of the base-superstructure relationship must stop yelling.

Empowered with the money received from the corporate houses, and the backing of the administration, the ruling political parties at the Centre and in States take all possible steps to denigrate the democratic values and practices enshrined in the sacred Constitution of India. The individuals with criminal records, tainted for fraud and corrupt practices, find easy entry into party leadership and power. Driven only by self-interest, these corrupt leaders find politics as their happy 'hunting ground' for making fortunes. They do not care for 'value-based politics' or for a minimal definition of politics which demands politicians to rise above self-interest and work for the service of the people and the nation. The money the parties in power receive from the corporate houses is used to purchase the elected members to different Constitutional bodies to capture power, bypassing the loopholes in the anti-defection laws. The money is used to bribe voters during election times and to maintain an army of the lumpen to rig votes or to manipulate the entire electoral process. The top political leaders and ministers resort to various corrupt practices. Yet, they manage to cling to power through a manipulated voting system, maintaining a support base with inexplicable organisational skills. Scam after scam happens, video clippings (of political leaders and ministers taking bribes) appear in public, common people commit suicide (as in the aftermath of the Sarda scam in West Bengal), 26000 school teachers and employees lose jobs because of the recruitment fraud, yet the investigating agencies and the judiciary do not identify the culprits and punish them. Such is the plight of the 'democratic' governmentality in India at present!

The power of the ruling elite to make ideological penetration into all kinds of public institutions and constitutional bodies is immense. The constitution of the collegium, which is empowered to appoint judges to the apex court, and the manipulation of the justice delivery system by bribing the judges with the promise of positions and favours after their retirement, is highly detrimental to the sanctity and impartiality of the judiciary, which is a must for any healthy democratic system. When the appointment of the members of the collegium (which recommends names for appointing judges to the Supreme Court) is manipulated, the high court judges with suspicious records are appointed as the judges of the Supreme Court, violating all established norms

and conventions. The political elite with a dictatorial mindset bid adieu to the independence of the bureaucracy and crowd the constitutional bodies with bureaucrats of proven loyalty.

In the current technology of power, the State is not the sole instrument of governance; it is rather a network of forces, a combination of civil society and political society organisations and institutions that govern. Control over the knowledge production and knowledge dissemination system is an integral part of modern statecraft. The beholder of the Hindutva ideology at the seat of power has perfected the technology of knowledge production and dissemination by (1) filling all the social science research institutions, the University Grants Commission with BJP-RSS henchmen, (2) reframing the syllabi of all levels of education, particularly the history syllabus and textbooks along the Hindutva line, bidding goodbye to objective historiography and scientific education, (3) activating a surveillance and control regime over the functioning of the educational institutions with the help of education policies and administrative measures, (4) penetrating the thought process of the people through a grand propaganda machinery operated through the corporate-controlled mass media, print and visual media, and (5) penetrating down the social and cultural spaces to control the everyday thought process and activities of the common people. As part of the last-mentioned strategy, the ruling elite takes utmost care in igniting religious passion and confusing pre-scientific superstitions and beliefs with post-truth, thereby undermining the objective, rational, and scientific thought process. This demonic design of the current ruling elite defies the Nehruvian dream of setting the nation on a path of scientific spirit, with a view to building a modern nation free of all forms of superstitions and irrational beliefs.

The reproduction of the world of beliefs and superstitions through the cultivation of post-science and popularising them as 'truth' (like, the epic hero lord Rama was born in Ayodha, lord Ganesh demonstrates the highest level of medical science that ancient India had, Puspok Rath is the proof of the discovery of aeroplanes in ancient India and so on) is a deliberate ploy to legitimise an unjust regime. Such topics are now written about in the media, and universities are instructed to conduct seminars on such obnoxious topics to which the scholars and scientists accord justification.

As a corollary to this, one can see (1) a revival of 'religious culture' in the media and in the everyday life of the people across castes and classes,

(2) a new wave of construction of temples, and grand celebration of pujas of the gods and goddesses, even of those deities which were not so popular until recent times (like grand celebration of Ganesh *chaturdoshi* in Bengal, reading of Hanuman Chalisha), and (3) consolidation of 'identity politics', with State patronage, from the sides of the dominant and the subordinate communities and classes. The proliferation of identity politics helps the dominant national parties in vote mobilisation, as the parties can use the voters organised in the name of caste, religion or language as 'vote banks' or 'pocket societies' by incorporating the leaders of these groups into the party fold (the Dalits and Muslims in Bihar, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, the Jaths and Sikhs in Haryana and Panjab, the Rajbanshis, the Matuas and the Muslims in West Bengal are a case in point). The most damaging of all instances of identity politics is a conscious reproduction of Hindu and Muslim identities, consolidated by the Hindutva party at the Centre and some fundamentalist Islamic groups. With the proliferation of identity politics, a reincarnation of the British policy of 'divide and rule', the unity and movement of the working classes have suffered in a big way, and the dream of establishing a secular democracy has taken a back seat. Apart from the State administration and the political leaders, the lumpen vigilant groups have been formed to foment communal passion through interference in everyday life activities like community-based dress and food habits, rituals, marriage, cow trade and so on. The Hindutva ideologues use Ayurveda to popularise the consumption of cow urine as a panacea for all ailments, campaign against the trading and slaughtering of cows (the cheap source of protein), prescribe early marriage as a means to prevent rape, and set a three-child norm for Hindu couples as a strategy to counter the 'fast-growing' Muslims in the war of demography.

The vulnerabilities and uncertainties manifest in the form of a lack of economic and social security, inflicted on the masses by the market economy and the State combine, create a space for 'religious' and other forms of 'false' consciousness to thrive. In line with the Marxist thesis on religion, the 'opium of the masses', we observe, more distinctly than ever before, that the people in distress fall back upon supernatural beliefs and primordial identities as a falsely conceived escape route from the precarities of everyday life. For the people who suffer from 'hopelessness' or 'culture of precarities' apart from religion and tradition, drugs and sex could also serve as places of relief from the pains of real life. Those whose lives are economically relatively stable find escape in consumerism, and those who live in poverty

live with the unrealised fantasy of consumerism, the new religion of globalised market societies. It is thus easy for the vulnerable masses to fall prey to the technology of new governmentality and ideological indoctrination. This explains why the underclasses participate in party programmes, in religious activities and even in communal and other forms of inter-community violence with great enthusiasm; it explains why, despite being the direct victims of the present governmentality, the ‘lumpen’ classes (in the Marxist sense) function as the private army of the leaders and political parties for doing all the unlawful, undemocratic and amoral activities.

These are all a part of the use of the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA, to use Althusser’s phraseology) used for the ideological integration of the masses into the fold of Hindutva-nationalism and neo-liberalism. However, a few more strategies that the ruling elite put to use with precision as a part of sustaining and consolidating its hegemony over the masses are:

- (1) Integration of a section of high officials in the bureaucracy, the media influencers, and judges into its fold by distributing undue favours, positions and promotions while in service or after retirement.
- (2) Integration of the masses with the help of ‘bio-power’ (to use Foucauldian terminology), which combines a whole range of populist welfare programmes, like subsidies for housing for the poor, free ration, free gas connection, pension for the low-income widows and senior citizens, 100-day work for the poor, and extension of some superficial relief in the name of welfare programmes, and so on. However, such populist welfare schemes appear without substance, given the fact that India is the home of 234 million people who live in acute poverty (ranked number one in the world), and it ranks 111 among the 125 countries in the world in terms of Global Hunger Index (GHI, published in October 2024). In Alkil Gupta’s terms, poverty and hunger are the worst forms of structural violence.<sup>8</sup> The pro-rich bias of the market economy is evident in the fact that the wealthiest 10 per cent of Indians control 72.5 per cent of the nation’s total wealth, and Mukesh Ambani is ranked among the top 10 richest men in the world.
- (3) Following the laws of the city-citizen game, which was at play in the ancient Greek and Roman cities, where the citizens or the property owners living in cities monopolised the decision-making process and

the administration, disenfranchised the non-citizen nonowner slaves living outside the cities, and used the latter's labour to ensure good life to the citizens, the present day ruling elite identify some groups of population, such as Muslims, Christians, the 'intruders' (the *ghusbaithiya*) from the neighbouring countries, disenfranchise them, put them under the threat of scrapping their citizenship and deportation, when the responsibility of checking infiltration lies exclusively on the central government, and subject them to atrocities and violence of different forms.

- (4) Following the thesis of Robert Michels<sup>9</sup>, one can argue that whatever the form of government (socialist, authoritarian or democratic), the actual power is centralised in a few hands, a carefully selected oligarchy. This is similar to what Michel Foucault called pastoral power or the absolutely centralised power, as was evident in the monarchies of the medieval era. Although India has been widely recognised as a stable democracy, the actual power in the present governmentality is centralised in the hands of the Prime Minister, the Home Minister, a couple of corporate elites and the head of the RSS. In this new incarnation of oligarchic rule, all the Constitutional bodies are attuned to legitimise their will.
- (5) The edifice of power has quickly adapted to take advantage of the digital age by accumulating personal data and using the big data thus generated to establish a grand surveillance regime. With the help of Aadhar card, PAN card, EPIC, digitised ration card, digitised land data, property information, digitised banking, insurance and all kinds of online purchases, the communications through the media and with the help of malware, the State is now able to monitor and pre-empt the movements of the population, their activities and even their thought process. The access to personal data helps the state to enforce a mechanism of surveillance-control-discipline and punish along the lines apprehended by Michel Foucault. The fraudsters use the personal data to rob the common people of their savings, the professional agencies use the data to help political parties frame the line of their electoral campaign, the international trading companies use the data to predict and control consumer behaviour, and the State uses the data to discipline and punish its own citizens. The common Indians are now an integral part of a surveillance capitalist regime,

and for them, it is impossible to escape this all-around surveillance and sanction. The State can now control digital platforms to monitor communication and penalise individuals who circulate critical notes and anti-government content. Digitisation of financial transactions with direct State initiatives is also a ploy to help the corporate elite for two reasons: (a) it helps the corporate elite to spread consumerism and bind people of all classes with capitalism by producing waves of fantasies around unfulfilled consumption desires, and (b) by making common people pay ‘processing fees’ on digital transactions.

- (6) The ‘democratic State’ now uses the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA, in Althusser’s phraseology) or force and violence at free will to silence the working class and the critical voices, the artists, writers, the civil rights activists, and the top leaders of the opposition parties, through legal and administrative measures and by misusing the State investigative agencies.

To supplement the peaceful and cultural modes of integration of the masses into the order, the present Indian governmentality uses force and even violence against its ‘erring’ and ‘unruly’ citizens. Illustrating the use of RSA as a means to silence the creative-critical voices further we can cite (1) the killing of free-thinking individuals, the writers and social activists, namely, Narendra Dabholkar (2013), M. M. Kulburgi (2015), Govind Pansare (2015), and Gauri Lankesh (2017) allegedly by the criminals of a right-wing Hindutva group Sanatan Sanstha, (2) the arrest of several top writers and five activists, namely, Varavara Rao, Arun Ferreira, Sudha Bharadwaj, Gautam Navlakha and Rona Wilson in August 2018 on charges of instigating the Dalits for violence and for having Maoist links in Bhima Koregaon incidence<sup>10</sup> of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018, under the non-bailable sections of the UAPA, and (3) the recent government act of banning 25 books on Kashmir, written by prominent writers of the country.

The last two examples of State repression need some elaboration. In the aftermath of the Bhima Koregaon violence of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018, those who were arrested from the non-Dalit groups, who actually instigated the violence, were protected by the State administration. On the other hand, on 22 April 2018, a 19-year-old Dalit witness had her house burnt down and was found dead in a well. On 25 January 2020, the National Investigating Agency (NIA), an agency of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, took over the

charge of investigation. In its ten-thousand-page charge sheet, the NIA identified some Dalit intellectuals and social activists as the 'conspirators'. In its charge-sheet, the NIA named Jesuit priest Stan Swami to a long list of intellectuals, who were already detained under non-bailable UAPA clauses, for conspiring with the Dalit and Muslim groups to 'bring down the government at the Centre'. Prominent writer and Dalit activist Teltumbde (70) was arrested on 14 April 2020 on NIA charges of having links with the extreme-left Maoist rebels and conspiring against the government, including 'plotting the assassination' of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. However, a report by Arsenal Consulting, a digital forensics firm based in Massachusetts, exposed that incriminating evidence against Rona Wilson was placed on his laptop by a yet-to-be-identified attacker using malware while his laptop was compromised for over 22 months.<sup>11</sup>

Banning of books is another form of suppression of critical voices; such actions of the State could be considered as an attack on the freedom of speech guaranteed in the Indian Constitution. Writing in *Times of India*, 7 August 2025, Naseer Gani in an article titled "J&K bans circulation of 25 'secessionist' and 'radical' books" reports that the Home Department through an order circulated on 5 August 2025 under section 98 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, banned 25 books on Kashmir by prominent Indian and foreign writers from selling or owning in Jammu and Kashmir labelling them as 'false narratives and secessionist literature' which 'endanger India's sovereignty and integrity by potentially radicalising the youth' and on the apprehension that dissemination of such literature could 'deeply impact the psyche of the youth'; by promoting 'a culture of grievance, victimhood and terrorist heroism'. Prominent among the list of banned books are Arundhati Roy's *Azadi*, Tariq Ali and others' *Kashmir: The Case of Freedom*, Christopher Snedden's *Independent Kashmir* and Imam Hassan al-Banna's *Mujahid Ki Azan*.<sup>12</sup>

Interestingly, the law cited in the ban order was passed by the BJP government in 2023, and the report on which the ban was executed was prepared by Manoj Sinha, the lieutenant governor of Jammu and Kashmir, who was appointed by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) under the prime minister, Narendra Modi. Sinha was previously a minister in Modi's BJP government.

Covering the same issue in *The Guardian* (7 August 2025), Hannah Ellis-

Petersen reports that Arundhati Roy's book *Azadi* includes essays on the thousands allegedly killed and disappeared in Kashmir by Indian forces in recent decades, and *Independent Kashmir*, by the Australian political scientist Christopher Snedden, explores the Kashmiri fight for independence. Other titles the government ordered to be banned included *Colonizing Kashmir: State-building Under Indian Occupation* by the US-based academic Hafsa Kanjwal and *Contested Lands: Israel-Palestine, Kashmir, Bosnia, Cyprus and Sri Lanka* by Sumantra Bose, a professor at the London School of Economics.

Hannah Ellis-Petersen records the reaction of one of the writers of one of the banned books. Expressing frustration at the ban, Angana Chatterji, a scholar at the University of California, Berkeley, who co-authored the now-banned *Kashmir: The Case for Freedom*, said the order 'underscores the state's intent to criminalise scholarship and render it seditious.' 'The symbolic and material impact of this ban stands to be extensive,' said Chatterji. 'It restimulates psychological operations to terrify and isolate Kashmiris, and silence their pain and resistance.'

She alleged that the decree of censorship was part of a wider agenda by the Indian government to 'erase the decades-long history of state violence, terror, and impunity in Kashmir.' The order, she added, had 'signalled that it fears critique and will not tolerate the free exchange of ideas.' Instead of banning books, the State should engage writers in a dialogue that upholds the spirit of democracy and free debate.

It has been further reported that allegations of attacks on free expression and press freedom in Jammu and Kashmir have mounted since 2019, when the Modi-led government unilaterally stripped Kashmir of its decades-long autonomy and statehood, brought it fully under the control of the central government and began a widespread crackdown on dissent. In February, police in Kashmir raided dozens of bookshops and seized more than 650 books, alleging they promoted a 'banned ideology'.

The hegemonic ruling party and the public institutions under its siege, the Sangh Parivar, which operates through the civil society (in the Gramscian sense), the giant Corporate Houses with all their money power, control

over the archaeology of knowledge and communication system, and the reserve army of the lumpen together control the present-day art of governance or governmentality in India. The technology of power prevalent in present-day India shrewdly combines the ISA and the RSA, the power-knowledge game, the city-citizen game, and pastoral power and biopower. Although these strategies were developed in the West, they have been adapted to India's unique geopolitical context, taking into account the country's local economic, social, and cultural conditions. The result is that the vision of the leaders of the freedom movement to establish a modern, Constitutional, and pluralist-federal democracy with conscious, critical, creative, and patriotic citizens, empowered with agency and citizenship, stands betrayed. The hope of having a social-cultural order based on reason, brotherhood, tolerance, and high morality looks bleak. The forces in charge of present governmentality that question the citizenship of its people, make their life precarious, inflict violence on the oppositional individuals and groups, and declare war against the best creative-critical minds, scientists, artists, and writers, label them as 'urban naxal' and hunt them, deserve to be called 'antinational'.

The present Indian governmentality is a peculiar mix of free-market economy, where the State, instead of representing the 'general will', surrender to the interest and will of a few corporate houses, hoping that a growing neo-liberal economy will be the panacea of all social ills, a premodern aggressive religious (Hindutva) nationalism and an exercise in 'logicalizing the non-logical' to borrow Pareto's phraseology.

In the new governmentality, fraud and corruption are the new normal, and the top leaders set the standard. We are a part of the politics where the political leaders amass enormous wealth in no time while the sources of their income is never disclosed; the top leaders boast of the highest level of education on fraudulent degrees and the biased court orders exemption for them and to the university concerned to produce their 'original' degrees in the public; the top leaders seen taking bribes on camera escape probe and punishment and continue winning elections and holding positions in the parliament and administration. It is a democracy where the highest probe agencies produce untrue and biased reports to fix the best critical minds of the country; we have a judiciary where the top judges are appointed on the will of the top administrators, where the apex court delivers judgements not on facts but on beliefs of the people (like lord Rama was born at the site

where Babri Masjid stood). It is a democracy where MLAs and MPs, and the elected members of the local self-government, are bought and sold in the free market; it is a democracy where politicians have made a mockery of the ‘rational-legal-moral’ authority and banished all ethical standards from personal and public life. Indian democracy, under the new governmentality, is rapidly progressing towards a Kakistocracy, transcending the limits of logic. One can apprehend, having a careful look at the present statecraft or governmentality, that we as a nation are moving towards a corrupt, non-logical, pre-modern social order composed of people bereft of morality, dignity and a collective dream of progress.

### Notes

1. An overview of all the theories about the origin of the State can be found in J. W. Gough, *The Social Contract*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936.
2. For a comprehensive view of the Marxist theory of the State, see Draper, H. 1977. *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution: State and Bureaucracy*. New York: Monthly Review Press; F. Engels, 2000. *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Marx/Engels Internet Archive (Marxists.org). ([https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/origin\\_family.pdf](https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/origin_family.pdf)); and K. Marx and F. Engels. 1968. *The German Ideology*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.
3. For a brief view of Gramsci's theory of State and Hegemony, see Valetiano Ramos, Jr. ‘The Concept of Ideology, Hegemony, and Organic Intellectuals in Gramsci's Marxism’. *Theoretical Review*, No. 27, March-April, 1982. (<https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/nem-7/tr-gramsci.htm>)
4. For details, see Louis Althusser. 1971. ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses’. In L. Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press: 121-176.
5. For Jurgen Habermas's explanation of how the modern state operates through communication and the public sphere, one can see *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. (edited by Graig Calhoun). 1992. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

6. For details on Foucault's discourses on power, see Michel Foucault. 1991. *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. (edited by Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press; Foucault, Michel. 1979. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Harmondsworth: Penguin; Foucault, Michel. 1980. *Power Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon. Brighton: Harvester Press; Foucault, Michel. 1981. *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: *An Introduction*. Harmondsworth: Penguin; Foucault, Michel. 1982. "The Subject and Power." Afterword in *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
7. The American Sociologist C. Wright Mills explains how the political elite, corporate elite and the military elite join hands to monopolise power in the USA, where the common people outside these groups do not have any access to the decision-making process. C. Wright Mills, 1956. *The Power Elite*. United States: Oxford University Press.
8. See, Akhil Gupta. 'Poverty as Biopolitics'. In Akhil Gupta, *Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence and Poverty in India*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012: 3-39.
9. Robert Michels argues that whatever might be the form of government, the actual power in all political systems is controlled by a small coterie of people. Robert Michels. 2009. *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.
10. The Bhima Koregaon riot refers to violence that occurred in the Indian state of Maharashtra during an annual celebratory gathering on 1 January 2018 at Koregaon Bhima to mark the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Koregaon Bhima. The violence and stone pelting by a crowd at the gathering resulted in the death of a 28-year-old youth, and five others were injured. The day is celebrated every year to mark the victory of the East India Company's Bombay Presidency Army, primarily composed of the Maratha soldiers, over the forces of Maratha Peswa Bajji Rao II in the Battle of Koregaon on 1 January 1818. A victory pillar (*Vijay Sthamb*) was erected in Koregaon by the British, commemorating the dead soldiers. In 1928, B. R. Ambedkar led the

first commemoration ceremony here. Since then, on 1 January every year, Ambedkarites gather at Bhima Koregaon to celebrate their victory against the upper caste regime of the Maratha Empire, whom they see as their oppressors. The nationalist Marathis see the incident as an attack on their national pride.

11. *The Washington Post*. 10 February 2021. Retrieved 11 February 2021; 'Evidence planted in Bhima Koregaon accused Rona Wilson's computer: US firm.' *The Tribune*. 11 February 2021. Retrieved 11 February 2021.
12. See, [http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/123149794.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/123149794.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst))