

# Contesting Development: Understanding the Interface between Development Discourse and Subalterns Politics in Bihar

Pankaj Kumar

## Abstract

*Janata Dal (later on the Rashtriya Janata Dal) government under the leadership of Lalu Prasad Yadav in Bihar during its regime, attacked the hegemonic discourse of development by raising the slogan, 'humein vikas nahin samman chahiye' (we need dignity, not development). One should not treat this as merely slogan as the paper will show how anti-development politics has its own materiality, which can be found in concrete practices of the government. So the real issue is not whether anti-development politics is rhetorical or not but how to make sense of it. How can one imagine such a situation especially in the liberalization era, where there is tacit consensus over desirability of growth oriented development across all political spectrum and almost every state government is competing for getting maximum benefit form liberalized economy.*

*This paper tries to contextualize these instances of complete rupture from development through the framework of post development discourses, where the issue of dignity and self-respect overshadows the desirability of development.*

**Keywords:** Bihar, Development, Discourses, Globalization, Liberalization, Post development, Subalterns

## I

To understand such subaltern imaginary of development in general and state power in particular, one need to contextualize it with larger political processes. During the 1990's two simultaneous processes<sup>i</sup>, (often contradictory to each other) one, the subalternisation of politics and the other liberalization of economy vastly changed the political and social landscape of the country. The Politicization of lower castes and their mobilization around Mandal issue<sup>ii</sup> later on culminated in the capturing of state power by the lower castes leaders especially in North India. It was celebrated as a '**second democratic upsurge**' (Yadav 2000). This phenomenal rise of lower castes triggered one of the major debates of that decade between those who saw it as deepening of the democracy and those for whom it was decline in the democratic institutions which resulted in a 'crisis of governability' (Kohli 1990). Lower castes popular resentment against the mode and manner in which state and society was functioning in India were called identity politics and it were held responsible for halting development, causing economic stagnation, mis-governance, corruption and crime. For instance the triumph of Modi – led BJP in the national election of 2014 was celebrated as the end of identity politics (Mehta 2014).

Rhetoric of development has been celebrated and pitched against so called disruptive identity politics.<sup>iii</sup> Almost every party and government uses the vocabulary of development, be it national or regional, to attain legitimacy for its rule. Continuous attempts are being made, especially by voices from the urban middle class, to delegitimize politicization and democratization as impediments to development.

This New Middle Class<sup>iv</sup> has tried to build their hegemony through portraying free market based development to be in the national interest. For them development is irresistible, irreversible and metahistorical, which functions in what Benjamin has called ‘homogenous empty time’<sup>v</sup> (1969: 260-61). And in this process development has become, what Mehta calls ‘rhetorical narcotic’ or an empty signifier (Mehta 2015). It has emerged as a diagnosis which can explain every problem and its failure is seen as a root cause of all deficiencies which ails modern India today. The discourse of development has achieved the imaginary of certainty in such a way that it is becoming difficult to conceptualize social reality outside the development discourse. The situation is such that most of the criticism of development is around conceptualization and practice of it and not an overall rejection of the concept itself. They talk in the language of development but with some suffix like, alternative, sustainable and people centric development.

Through this ‘colonization of reality’ the third world has been produced by the Europe. Development discourses produced its own subjects who (here third world countries) internalized themselves as underdeveloped and poor. It overlooks the crucial question of development as an arena of cultural contestation and identity construction. In this process economy superseded the other pertaining issue like culture, identity and equity (Escobar 1992).

As a result of this desirability of development and the naïve attitude towards it, development has become end in itself and any resistance to it has been and is being silenced (both epistemologically as well as in practice). It is the new substitute for ‘Dharma’ (Paraujali 2001). There are continuous attempts from developmental economists to depoliticize the development discourse, proselytizing it into a domain exclusively reserved for experts and technocrats (Escobar 1992, Sanyal 2007).

To make sense of these trends, I find Luke’s third view of power as an important conceptual tool to understand the hidden power dynamics which masquerades the developmental discourse. Lukes argues that (in the third view of power) compliance is secured through controlling thought and desire which in turn is secured through controlling the modes of information, mass media and processes of socialization. In Luke’s words,

*“Is it not the supreme and most insidious exercise of power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perception, cognition, and preferences such a way*

*that they accept their rule in the existing order of things either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it or because they can see or image no alternative to it or because they see it natural or unchangeable or best they value it as divinely ordered and beneficial.” (1974: 28).*

## II

The trickle down model of development, where development is equated with growth, not only failed to alleviate poverty but also had devastating impact on the dispossessed population of the country. Narmada Bachao Andolon is one of the most prominent examples of how executive sponsored developmental approach can have disastrous impact on the masses and eliminate the marginalized. Bhaduri has termed this strategy of development nothing sort of development terrorism (Bhaduri 2007a: 552)

Although hegemonic discourses leave very narrow space for counter hegemony, it is not the case that hegemony can ever be absolute. So in such conditions where development discourse seems irresistible worldwide; is it be possible to imagine subaltern agency, which can not only displace hegemony of development discourse but also replace it with counter hegemonic discourse, mirroring a subaltern imagination? Is it possible to imagine a situation where this homogenous empty time get eliminated by what Benjamin calls ‘messianic cessation of happening’ and beginning of new time and discourse of the oppressed (1969: 263)

It is not the case that project of development has gone unchallenged. The post-developmental school has criticized the Eurocentric notion which implicitly clings to colonial assumptions of superiority of western societies. It questions the endeavor of industrializing, modernizing and uplifting the third world through the expert advises of the west on the behalf of poor and ignorant people (Aram 2001: 184).

The developmental polices which have been practiced since independence came under severe attack especially after the emergence of alternative discourses of development and new social movements based on various issues and concerns. There have been many democratic as well as violent struggles against the mode and manner in which it has been pursued. But somehow most of these struggles are against particular form of its projection. These are mainly against the top down approach to development which is insensitive to local culture and configuration of power resulting in new forms of exploitation and subordination. Instead of that they aspire for alternative development which is decentralized, locally articulated, formulated, ecologically sustainable and in tune with local culture and aspirations. They try to democratize the developmental planning discourse and make it more humane and inclusive (Bhaduri 2007b). Thus they are working for how to make

development better but they hardly reject the desirability of development and thus work within the dominant paradigm of it.

Such a kind of position could also be found in Mehta's articulation. He argued that there is no doubt about desirability and force of development but the problem arises when one sees development as a catch-all hope. It neglects the inner conflicts of development which is a product of its own processes. He identifies two major conflicts one with respect to imagination of development and other around victims of development. Writing in the context of the Patel agitation for demanding reservations in government jobs and education, he cautioned that even if development is inclusive, its hyper competitive instrumentalism can create vast unrest in the society. The language of development in India speaks a transactional language of goods and services, of individual advancement. It does not speak the language of freedom and citizenship (2015).

### III

But most theorization of radical democratic movements has emphasized their exteriority from the party politics and state<sup>vi</sup> (Witsoe 2013). But in this paper I will neither focus on anti-development politics manifested in various social movements nor on alternative development but its electoral manifestation which is unusual and has got less scholarly attention. Except for few writing, most engagements are devoid from peculiar context and dynamic and are intended to evaluate it through abstract normative principles. That does not mean that these kinds of engagement are worthless. The issue is that they are not adequate enough to explain the reality in an impartial manner, due to their false claims of universality.

The case of Bihar is unusual in two senses first contrary to the dominant trend, anti-development was pursued by the elected government, and not by social movements. It is relatively easy for social movements to take an anti-development turn but for a state government it is hard to pitch for any such intention since it might endanger their political legitimacy. Secondly the intensity and vigor of anti-development was not aimed for searching alternative development within the development paradigm but it sought to go beyond the discourse itself, where issue of dignity overtook the desirability of development.

Without too much digression it is pertinent here to deal with the question of how I use the subaltern category and why? The terminology of subaltern is itself contested and it could be debated whether lower caste could be considered as subaltern or not, especially after Spivak's intervention in the field of subaltern studies. Contrary to the earlier writing of the Subaltern Studies group (especially of Ranajit Guha, who claimed that subalterns have their own realm and language of operation), Spivak argued that by definition 'subaltern' lacks agency and the moment they get organized or attain power they cease to be subalterns. Contesting

that subaltern can speak through autonomous discourse she argued that subaltern can only speak within and through the dominant discourse (1988).

Spivak's argument has been problematized by many scholars within subaltern studies who argue that political mobilization does not necessarily results in the transformation of subaltern groups into dominant groups, neither it necessarily transforms the root causes of subalternity. Subaltern groups can only cease to be subaltern once their subalternity is addressed, once they have<sup>i</sup> transformed the relations of their subordination. Subalternity exists in degrees or levels of development (Nilsen and Roy 2015: 14).

Drawing from this third kind of understanding of subaltern politics the paper argues that politics of the lower castes<sup>vii</sup> in Bihar during 1990's can neither be understood as of complete autonomy of subaltern vis-à-vis dominant discourse (as in the case of Ranajit Guha) nor as complete domination of elite discourse (as envisaged by Spivak). The Bihar experience goes against these extreme poles and compels us to think about subaltern agency and autonomy is in its own complexity. On the one hand the Lalu regime, working within the bourgeoisie democratic setup, substantiated the Gramsci's claim that political struggle and mobilization of subaltern groups do not take place in some autonomous arena but in and through the institutions through which hegemony is constituted (Cited in Nilsen and Roy 2015: 20). The act of voting by peasants and poor reflect that the subaltern can speak within the dominant discourses. On the other hand his complete rejection of development and its displacement with the question of dignity goes beyond the dominant idioms of political articulation.

#### IV

The question is why a political party, which champions the empowerment of lower castes, rejects the desirability of development as a whole? It is also unusual and surprising since Bihar is one of the most underdeveloped states in India. It would seem nonsensical to both the upper strata of the society and any proponent of emancipatory politics because ideally subalterns would have needed more development, albeit the nature of such development certainly would have been very different from the dominant paradigm. How to explain such unusual politics where there is a trade-off between the lower caste empowerment and development? How to conceptualize these *anti-developmentalism* and to what extent existing theories and categories, especially of western origin, are adequate? Are these attempt intended merely to bargain and get their larger share in economic pie or are they an attempt on the part of the subalterns to define their, needs, aspirations desires outside the hegemonic discourse of development? The paper identifies the three different, yet interrelated, possible frameworks through which these kinds of anti- development politics can be analyzed.

In most journalistic accounts opposition to development has been seen as a disruptive activity (while it may be interesting to look at the difference in the attitude between vernacular and English newspapers on the issue, if any). Advocates of the development discourse present this anti-development as groups seeking larger share in the economic pie. But these economic reductionists fail to understand that in India disadvantage is seen in collective terms. Resentment in Indian politics is not against poverty and if one sees modern politics as a democratic struggle against poverty it is conceptually absent minded (Kaviraj 1996: 128). Pramod Paraujali attacks this common perception that present social movements is an effort on the part of the marginalized to get a greater share in the developmental process. The basic thrust of these movements, (whether it manifests in social or political form) is to stop the monopolistic control of the rich over their resources (2001: 273-74).

This takes us to a second approach which offers an altogether different picture. In order to understand the reason behind opposition to development it emphasizes the social character of the state institutions. For them social character of holders of discretionary power of the development resources is most significant to understand the politics around devolvement. Upper castes links with the state institutions historically, make them locally powerful and it has continued regardless the change in structuring of state power after independence with democracy in place. As a result lower castes try to block this channel either through installing their own loyalists or by just halting the development itself. So here they intended to weaken the ruling class by cutting their sources of power. In Bihar, Lalu Yadav tried to halt development because of the monopoly of the upper caste over bureaucracy and the discretionary use of developmental resources would have reinforced their domination. They used this mode of developmental patronage to benefit their own constituency. For a meaningful lower caste empowerment it was necessary to transform the local configuration of power and alter it in the favor of the lower castes. This was not possible through state institutions since it was neither efficient nor impartial so rejection of development was imperative. The empowerment of lower castes in Bihar came more from this halting of development than capturing of state power (Witsoe 2013: 187).

The third approach looks at the cultural dimension of anti-development discourses. It caution us that valorization of development will lead to fascism and will further subordinate the oppressed. So rejection of development is an attempt to counter the colonization of life and imagination. In order to build counter hegemony they present the different reality of the world. The emerging consciousness expresses the subaltern desire to conquer not only political and economic autonomy but also the power to define themselves, their aspirations and development process. (Paraujali 2001: 272). It is an attempt to save their local life worlds and culture. It helps us to better understand the politics of Lalu Yadav who was claiming that root cause of our problem is not economic backwardness but

social and cultural. Thus pitching for lower caste empowerment by militantly rejecting the dominant discourse of development. His politics should be framed to be one of not being a mere political opposition to development rather a cultural one. Lalu believed that development is a foreign and polluted ideology that should be rejected.

The question is not that he was rejecting development just because it had foreign origin and he was a cultural relativist but most importantly it was an attempt to break the gaze of development discourse which leads us towards internalization of ourselves as backward. Lalu's attempt could be seen as an attempt to define subaltern, determine their needs and wants (sometimes within the hegemonic discourse and sometime outside of it). It is here that we need to situate the slogan of "*we need dignity not development*" to understand this absurd looking counter-intuitive call more appropriately. Although practically Lalu was relentlessly working to break the hegemony of upper castes (in this respect the second framework is most significant) but it has profound theoretical richness which can only be captured by the third framework which sees it as site of cultural contestation. This was not a romanticisation of the local but the very foundation of their meaningful survival. Although unconscious, Lalu was doing something unusual and revolutionary (not just because he was opposing development) in attempting to redefine the meaning of politics and power for subaltern. By privileging the moral goods like dignity, self-respect and recognition over the material justice, it indicated that justice is primarily moral and not material (Guru 2010). It was assumed by the regime that once the equal social status got recognized that will automatically translate into the material benefits.

## V

Having outlined the frameworks and conceptual tool, a brief historical account of the Bihar would be essential to understand why the question of dignity was more urgent than development. It is pertinent here to situate Bihar in the broad politics of passive revolution (Kaviraj 1988) that panned out at the Centre in post independent India. The central question in this section is how Lalu could manage to remain in power so long despite the lack of any substantive policy changes and rejection of development.

The Republic of Bihar, written in 1992 by Arvind Narayan Das, located the reason for persistent violence in the political economy of the state and its relation with federal government. He argued that lumpen capitalism and failure of land reforms in altering agrarian structure had resulted in lumpen development which was the main reason for the underlying structural bases for violence in Bihar. He argued that distorted capitalism was one of the modes of perpetuation of feudal violence in Bihar. Apart from this social relations were so in-egalitarian and exploitative that Harijan hunting had become the favorite game of the upper castes.

Jeffrey Witsoe's, 'Democracy against Development' is the most comprehensive study of Lalu Yadav's politics. Witsoe is of the view that decline of the west combined with the awareness that democracy in much of the world is not playing out according to liberal assumptions means that we should seriously explore alternative ways for understanding democracy in the 21st century that go beyond the liberal democratic framework. In order to understand the rationale behind Lalu's rejection of development he focused on the colonial process of state formation which resulted in the interpenetration of caste networks of landed elites and state institutions as a result of which upper castes were able to control the local sites of power. In post independent India their dominance were reinforced in the name of development (Witsoe 2013:198). The Postcolonial state was legitimized through the discourse of development as the key agent of change. The Nehruvian state came up with the promise of radical social transformation but colonial state institutions were unreformed and local radical change were contained in the name of national security resulting in the continuation of upper caste hegemony, both at the local level as well as state level. Nehruvian state pursued a passive revolution model of capitalist development and masked it with his rhetoric of socialism (Kaviraj 1988).

While on the one hand passive revolution reinforced upper caste dominance over politics and state apparatuses, on the other hand Congress system based on patron client relationship allowed landlords to control the votes of the cultivators and their local power was maintained through linking with state institutions (Frankel 1997: 373-74). This twin process provided both stability and legitimacy to the system. The case of Bihar also reflects the same story in much more severe terms. During the congress period the landed upper caste were central to the political process in Bihar, resulting in a passive revolution development regime controlled by dominant groups who enjoyed a discretionary allocation of public resources.

But both passive revolution and the congress system faced severe threat during the late 1980's both at the national and the regional level, especially due to lower caste assertion. In Bihar Janata Dal formed the government under the leadership of Lalu Yadav, when social relations between communities were highly inegalitarian and oppressive. Lalu came into power on the Mandal wave, with a promise to ensure social justice and dignity for downtrodden people.

Now the challenge before him was, how to go for lower caste empowerment, since state institutions in Bihar was neither efficient nor capable. Amidst inefficient state machinery, hostile central government, uncooperative bureaucracy (since it was dominated by upper castes) and partisan media Lalu had little choice to exercise.

So he sought to concentrate power in the political elite and halted development process. Lower castes saw development as an impediment in their empowerment precisely because of the ways in which state directed development reinforced

upper-caste territorial dominance. This politically calculated move overturned the passive revolution with his quest for lower caste empowerment and in the process, democratization and development came into tension. This rejection of development could be seen as a post-development moment. Development for what and for whom became the prominent question. Lalu asserted that he is not in power to give development to poor but ensuing *ijjat* (respect) to downtrodden (Witsoe 2013).

This gave rise to several unanswered questions like was the anti-development politics only imagination of leadership or electorate as a whole? What was the interconnection between politicization of development discourse and lower caste empowerment? Why development is seen as antithetical to lower caste empowerment when commonly it is believed as necessary to sustain empowerment? “Who were the potential beneficiaries of development process” – became the more pertinent issue. How to identify the backwardness of lower castes, are they simply poor who needs economic upliftment or are they socially and culturally marginalized, who equally needs recognition and representation? And what are the limitations of economic indicators to explain the exploitation and marginalization of the subalterns?

It is true that most of them (here lower castes) are poor but their principle self-identification is not poverty but discrimination. The problem with reducing them to poor is that, poverty is a universal category which brackets out differences in social base (Kaviraj 1996: 128). The caste system is the source of multiple kinds of dominations. In such situations where economic backwardness is inadequate to explain social reality then how can one think about growth centric development as sole thing, as an end in itself? The question that arises here is development for whom, and at whose cost. It compels us to ask the question what are fundamental human needs? Is it concerned with just material survival or meaningful human flourishing with dignity? It also helps us to understand the rationale behind Lalu’s rejection of development. He saw it as an impediment in lower caste empowerment as opposed to dominant view which treats development as necessary condition for meaningful survival because it provides material basis of self-respect and thus supplements the empowerment of subalterns. The crucial question is Can one sustain the momentum gained by social alteration of power without substantive redistribution?

The politics, be it of Lalu or Mayawati has been criticized for hampering the prospect of a proletariat class and has reduced it to issue of recognition and representation. Taking clue from Fraser, Zoya Hasan argues that group identity has supplanted class interest as the chief vehicle of political mobilization: hence the increasing dependence of all political parties on ethnic appeals. But great material inequalities have persisted in income and property. She asks “Was this democratic upsurge merely symbolic, in which questions of redistribution were absent?”

Even if one accepts that social discrimination is the major contradiction then the question emerges, how far one can empower subalterns without minimum level of economic development. I have already dealt with how the of inefficient state mechanisms and electoral compulsion make it impossible to go for radical kind of redistribution. Although no one would deny that redistribution is crucial, but the problem with these kinds of articulation is that they overlook the possibility of redistribution which can manifest without direct policy level initiatives from the state. It does not take into account the economic manifestation of democratization itself by altering the local configuration of power in the favor of subalterns. This can be said with more gravitas for a context like India where symbolic and psychological aspects are inseparable from material impacts, where lower castes faces humiliation and economic exploitation at the same time.

According to Witsoe, in a context where state institutions are intertwined with territorial dominance, issues such as voice and honor become central because of the prevalence of social exclusion, humiliation and subjugation. But we must recognize that they are not merely symbolic issues in opposition to concrete material interests of economic growth and development related public goods. Rather issues such as voice represent very material interests for the poor:

*The interest of freedom from arbitrary assault, molestation, rape, economic freedom to work where one want to do (leading to labor mobility), to collectively bargain for wages, to freely cultivate one's own land, to receive a fair share of development related resources (since local power tilts in their favor (2013: 170-71).*

He further argues that lower caste politics cannot be reduced to identity politics divorced from material interests and structures of power. For him the dramatic reduction in poverty rate despite adverse tendencies of capital flight, low investment, can only be explained by recognizing that democratization can have economic impacts independent of policy interventions. It shows that substantive change can occur only through change from below.

## VI

Bihar's experience has shown that development practiced in the past was certainly not for the subalterns. This was precisely the reason behind the electoral success of RJD despite suchmis-governance and anti-incumbency. This shows that the politics of lower caste empowerment has gained centrality over development and law and order (Witsoe 2013: 3).

RJD was able to ensure voice and dignity of the subalterns displacing upper castes in a manner that it is very difficult for them to return into political power by their own strength. All this happened precisely because of their rejection of development discourse. But demand for development did not cease. Nitish Kumar

came up with a new hegemonic alliance of lower OBC's and with a promise to deliver material benefits to lower castes. But the electoral setback of Lalu cannot undermine his contribution to lower caste politics. Witsoe has argued that Lalu's regime provided the conditions upon which Nitish could go for his development agenda. Through restoring state institutions and law and order Nitish tried to translate symbolic empowerment into substantial one. But he has also not been able to push for land reforms which can prove to be the boldest step for lower caste empowerment.

What is the meaning of the fall of Lalu Yadav for the post-development school? A central concern of post-development is how a new social order can be grounded by a possibility that is absent in the imaginary of development. Are the alternatives to development merely poor substitutes or do they offer genuine viable perspectives for the people involved? Can post-development be satisfied with building up local alternatives or is a global strategy needed? Is it inadequate to provide any substantive alternative of the world after development? If yes, then what is the need of such theorization which is not able to provide a future society according to its own formulations? These are the questions which are part of the ongoing debate within the post-development school (Ziai 2007).

But one cannot deny the contribution of post-development thought in raising questions, motivating new debates, present alternative examples and it can be seen as a discourse in construction, open and permeable, sensitive to day-to-day realities and analysis. Critique is the first step towards an alternative served to illuminate the political and power dynamics of what was earlier seen as a neutral and practical problem: how to deliver development to poor people.

It is true that RJD experiment was episodic but it has displaced the primacy of development discourse with lower caste empowerment. This is precisely the rationale behind Nitish Kumar's slogan, *Nyayakesath Vikas*, (Development with justice). Here justice gains primacy over development. He started a new politics of development with justice which did not tried to compromise the hard earned *Ijjat* (respect) of the marginalized but tried to combine dignity with improvement into the day to day life of people. His development model is not an end in itself but a means towards the vision of an egalitarian society, which is based on populism and immediate benefit to the electorate. Caste based democratization despite its limitations did have transformative impact that has facilitated lower caste economic expansion but the shift to development discourse had unintended consequences. Avinash Kumar concluded that despite its claim of good governance and development Nitish Kumar has failed to legitimize the state and the state continues to serve being a mechanism by which the perpetuation of the exploitation of the old order continues without change. The weakening of regional political society closed opportunities for bottom- up political mobility (Kumar 2015).

I will conclude by arguing that the need is to understand Bihar politics not through abstract western categories and principles but through contextualizing these categories in tune with socio-economic specificity and power dynamics. The future of post development is uncertain and difficult due to capitalist sway of the world economy from which Bihar is not immune.

### **Endnotes**

- <sup>i</sup> There were many equally significant events like Ram Janambhoomi issue, decentralization of power in the form of 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendments, era of coalitional politics at the center level etc., but for the sake of my argument I had focused on Mandal and Market phenomenon
- <sup>ii</sup> The Mandal Commission headed by B.P Mandal was established by Janta Party government to identify the socially and educationally backward classes other than scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Commission along with other provisions recommended 27% reservations in employment and education for other backward castes. Prime Minister V.P Singh applied the commission recommendation in employment in 1990. Anti- Mandal agitation by upper castes triggered the counter mobilization by lower castes.
- <sup>iii</sup> Ironically even Supreme Court in one of his verdict, dated on 4<sup>th</sup> January, has made it illegal to seek vote on the basis of language, caste, religion.
- <sup>iv</sup> New Middle Class is very ambiguous and contested category which has been posed in contrast with old middle class. The newness of middle class consists in their negative attitude towards state and their cultural practice with special reference to monopoly over English education.
- <sup>v</sup> Even those claimed to be champion of emancipatory politics like Marxist showed similar attitude when it comes to development? Instead of denouncing it they claim to ensure development with human face. Here I found Benjamin critique of ‘Social Democrats’ of Germany as important philosophical tool to understand the development discourse. Benjamin attacked the notion of progress (which resulted in both totalitarianism and immiserisation of labor) which was regarded as irresistible, meta-historical, and transcendental and works in ‘homogenous empty time’. He contested and argued that time is always heterogeneous and particular (Benjamin 1969: 260-61).
- <sup>vi</sup> The rationale for this could be found in Sheldon Wolin’s, conception of fugitive democracy. Democracy for him is a “moments of commonality”, where people putting their identities aside come along with others and for common cause. These moments are fugitive and any attempt to institutionalize them will kill the democratic spirit of the moment. (See Wolin, 1994)
- <sup>vii</sup> For the sake of understanding I will generalize the subaltern category and will consider lower caste as subalterns.

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