

Reflections on the Ideology of Insecurity

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Ideology means an inverted image, as per Marx. Any discussion on security, leads to the theme of threats to it. So if one overturns the focus then it would be the study of insecurity and not security. In other words security studies need to be looked at in terms of their inversion. One may say that at the heart of security studies is hidden another reality and that is the realm of insecurity. It also needs a mention here that security study concerns itself with preservation of structures, values and processes.

The plea for looking at insecurity is also embedded in a small text produced in the 1980's by the present National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister of India, M. K. Narayanan, on security. He had suggested in that study, based on discussion among elite security analysts, under the aegis of the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, that the liberalisation phase will lead to increased violence owing to the inequity it will engender. Let us say insecurity of sorts among the relatively deprived and the absolutely deprived.

Methodologically, security studies respond to the dangers of attacks on the existing or emerging order from the deprived sections of all categories. As the Security Advisor, Mr. Narayanan and the present Home Minister, Shiv Raj Patil, have referred to this aspect of the problem while commenting on the threat of the Naxals. They say that the lack of development and utilization of the developmental funds have allowed this menace to grow.

Dialectics of Insecurity

That the threats emanate from not absolutely deprived is borne out by the following— the terrorists are from well to do families— with minor exceptions here and there. The majority of such individuals are also educated. The leadership of these is in the hands of middle class or those who have become part of it like Paresh Barua, for instance, in the case of terrorism in north eastern India. The new studies on terrorism show that its root is in relative, rather than absolute, deprivation. In such discourses, the issue of insecurity remains unresolved and largely unaddressed. One has to study the inter-connections and inter-penetrations between 'security' and 'insecurity'. What is insecurity? What is its ideology and is it the same as security or its obverse, though they

may be linked to one another in reverse proportion in some paradigm and not so in others?

The security studies would regard any talk of agitation as an attack on security. It may opt for arbitration from a position of strength. Insecurity studies may focus on struggle and look at their negative and positive impacts on security studies. They may invariably enter arbitration from positions of weakness. The two may be engaged in a battle of wits. But the argument between those who are relatively rich and those who are absolutely poor may not yet enter the discourse on security.

Most of the social movements in India in the post independent India which drew immediate attention of the state did not address these issues. This process began with agitation for linguistic reorganization in the southern India. The old social movements seeking structural reforms even if they have been for fixing rent and imposing ceilings on land have come to a naught.

Conventional Notion of Security

Conventionally, 'security studies' focus on property and rights and 'insecurity studies' on their absence and denial. That security is engendered by property has not been proven without doubt. Philosophers have been divided on the issue from the classical to the contemporary period. The studies that focus on property and its protection are matched as much by studies decrying their negative impact on state and its security.

From Aristotle down to the present, defenders of property have justified it on grounds of values, structures and processes and defined security in terms of it. From Plato down to Marx and Lyotard many philosophers have been critical of this institution for its contribution to insecurity. I would like to bring in here Marx's view of the market as a phenomenon hiding the reality of the modern society (read capitalist society). The apparent niceties of the market in terms of the universal rights leads to a misperception of security for it ignores those and especially those who are producers of wealth but not recipients of it. This sense of alienation and exploitation leads him to propagate his theory of revolution of self-governing institutions with the help of the state. So, for him a fight against the hidden insecurity leads to the condition of change and desire for change. Both these are part of and apart from the concerns of those who are secure in their accumulation of wealth.

'Security' and 'Insecurity'

Security studies are concerned with attacks on property not from the dispossessed but from others who possess lesser property. From Locke to Bentham to Adam Smith the focus has been on preventing those in power to exercise it in an unconstitutional way so that they protect the embedded inequality of possessions. Democracy did little to

nullify the fear of the possessed. It is not just a coincidence that most of the studies on security talk about it in terms of a particular social order which came in after the institution of property was recognized by political philosophy. For example Burke describes the fear psychosis as a product of loss of property. So did Hobbes.

To put it differently, would they, who have not been hypnotized by the institution of property, suffer from fear if they lost something that they did not have. It would also be a moot point for wider discussion that when one would feel insecure if he or she is dominated by another. Marx's writings on the British Rule in India would fall in this category. The 'Hindu' lost his old world without gaining a new one. This was a case of pathos for him.

In the reverse order if we construct insecurity studies we will feel that the argument will lead to a support for national liberation studies. The right to life will need to be redefined as rights involving communities and not just individuals or nations. In this context, let us look at the ongoing process of globalisation. We notice that in the name of more and many, almost a quarter of the collective political opinion in the world claims to speak for plurality and so support the case of China as a competitor in the world market or secure foreign markets. The argument of Samir Amin that India and China can offer alternative agenda to globalisation falls within this framework. The plea is that if other firms can be allowed why not Chinese firms. This argument is closer to security studies.

The reason to say so is that globalisation is based on flush finance and it has no yellow or black colour. It is the same in the form of Yuan or Dollar. The fight is among the richer sections. This is also the argument for having a multi-polar world. In Leninist terms, it means that inter-imperialist rivalries exist and they need to be exploited. This is okay as far as it goes.

Unfortunately, it does not go very far, for Lenin's analysis of monopoly capital had another important link, namely, in the context of such rivalries taking on a violent character of war, rivalries need to be linked to the tasks of the revolution since he expected that imperialism will break at its weakest link and in that situation what will the Communist Party do? His answer was, 'turn this into a civil war'.

On its own, the argument on allowing China to enter the Indian market may be dictated by real-politik but not based on the agenda of the left and democratic advance in India. It is also too early to trust the Chinese arguments since all of a sudden they have turned Gandhian for they see no evil in any one, including the Americans, except on the unification of Taiwan. Yet they de-target the US in terms of the nuclear weapons. So the argument is within the strategic framework of multipolarity. It may be good politics within the globalisation framework but not so in terms of insecurity that the world faces from globalisation economy.

Both India and China have taken to the harshest conditions of the WTO. Both are able to offer alternatives to globalization; but what about their own insecurities? The conditions of change do not exist in the trajectory of dialectics of revolution to link these up with the argument of inter-imperialist rivalries. These conditions need to be worked out not keeping in view the interests of the rich and the middle class but also the agrarian poor and rich and the urban poor. We notice that we have reached a stage in India where even the rich farmer is committing suicide. This is definitely not for altruistic reasons, like the traditional Indian cases of *suttee* - self-immolation. So there is a possibility for mobilization of the rich peasantry for the cause of the poor and vice versa for security purposes.

It becomes necessary to look at another dimension. That is to look at the existing 'reason' or rationality behind the present structures. Foucault suggests that the way reason has constituted itself in the world and in western societies, it leaves sufficient space for itself to fight the very regimes that it constructs. He also focuses on difference. The theses of the World Social Forum and the Gramscian arguments are within the domain of the plea for security with a difference in the same globalised system.

The answer to globalisation cannot be selective globalisation but its emotional negation along with its political dynamics. The effort may be at any level— state, sub-state, civil society and individual. This may be considered as autarchic. No, the search for autarky is not fascistic, since the imposition of sanctions on regimes is not considered to be so. It is sanctions for apartheid. Secondly the struggle for liberation may take one to nationalism and not fascistic versions alone.

Historically speaking, one notices that capitalist globalisation was supported ably by the ideology of modernity. The cultural difference was eliminated by presenting the other as a naked cave dweller and primitive without any regard for the indigenous wisdom of the people. WTO represents the same genre of colonial penetration under changed circumstances.

Again the discipline of security studies is focusing on difference within the modernity framework without reconstituting the paradigm to accommodate the concerns of the insecure. Most of the national liberation movements that demanded self-determination and secession take their cue from the paradigm obsessed with security. They want to constitute their polity within the same system and not outside it.

Let us put the argument differently. If one assumes that J&K, or Nagaland become independent. Then will they create a new system and insulate themselves from the globalised world? Second, do they have different foundational principles, namely different from the security-obsessed paradigms that breed such demands?

The Ideology of Insecurity

Ideology of insecurity has to begin, where the ideology of security stops. It stops at the concept of security as constituted by regimes of property in their quest for more property. This ideology is further made to sip into mass consciousness through the media and advertising slogan of '*dil mange more*' (or the heart wants more) and the innumerable advertisements that figure the human body in most sexually aggressive motifs and frames for consumer items.

They also reflect the upper middle class boredom and project luxury cars as a way out of that boredom. It is not just about coca colas. It is about power of visa cards, it is about the lipstick, lingerie and common day use of commodities, apart from the ramp walks, dance competitions etc. The urban crime graph is also a pointer to the same boredom that leads to crimes or worse than heinous crimes. The reference here is to nudity not nudes. Michaelangelo did portray the human Christ with his drooping head, as did Rembrandt. These were far removed from the nudity that is decried by feminists as the male gaze. Shall we say it is the gaze generated by the consumerist sexist image of the hero or the heroine. The difference between the two is removed very subtly.

Today both actresses and actors say they are actors. Earlier they were actors and actresses. The film studies reveal the modern malaise as commercial masala or new-wave and presents it as the urban commodification of concerns of insecurity. Films commodify man's fear of death or his trust of eternity of the human race; the basic issue being the threat to human existence through social or natural disasters.

In this country, i.e., India, even the national movement and its phases are up for grabs. Both, the right wing and the colourful film media commodify its motifs and phases. These films have nothing of the revolutionary élan of the national movement but use selectively aspects that touch on the memory of the people to sell their products. Is cinema outside the argument of fetish of the capital— formal and black?

Marx had talked about the revolution in culture. Sergei Eisenstein had to go out of the system of capitalism to produce his film called "October". He was not a realist as Andre Bazin was. The latter focused on man. The former on the masses. He was a revolutionary. There may be realist cinema in Bollywood; not a revolutionary one, despite the old and the emerging new wave, if the later is evident.

The insecurity studies need to focus on these dimensions of the break from the dominant paradigm— first incrementally, and then in a revolutionary way. Otherwise it is surrender of what we have for a future that does not exist.

Raymond Williams says that Marx had written very little about culture in terms of aesthetics but his position that new culture must be created from outside the present society is as true as to say that socialist revolution cannot be the product of the existing

society. Further, Marx talked of culture in terms of the restructuring of social whole as inevitable from the family to class to strata and to movements.

The problem with studies of security is not that they do not identify their targets, as does the expression that terrorism is a multi-headed hydra, recently mentioned by the Prime Minister, who has also warned the paramilitary forces to be ready for a 'mini war'. The ruling ideology of security studies is excessively focussed on the terrorist threats to political systems as well as the civilians.

The trouble is that insecurity studies have not even made a start for they do not know where to go. In other words under the present positions they need to look at the realm of insecurity that advancement of human reason has now created. They have to start with adopting a historical approach and search for a new meaning of dialectics. If reason talked about the right to property as basic then insecurity studies need to talk about right to life or livelihood and not property as basic. When one focuses on the right to livelihood it need not violate the right to life and entrepreneurship. It is much larger than that. These are not just related to the misuse of developmental funds but also to the lack of developmental funds. Let us have a closer look.

Those who manage property enjoy the right to livelihood. But let us see what it means for those who are outside the property regime. The Vedas were concerned about community rights over grazing grounds. The people composing the Vedas felt insecure about the loss of grazing grounds. This right to livelihood will get linked to the community oriented vocational rights and ways of life. If the modern capitalist societies retain their community-oriented consciousness there will be no problem of revivalist orientation.

The modernist argument had a racial temper and reduced the question of security to *us versus them*, the developed versus the wretched of the earth. It was the basic problem of modernity that it allowed reason to constitute itself in terms of property in the domain of security. That led to alienation and revivalism in an attempt to solve the problems engendered by modernity in a non-modern way.

The insecurity studies would attempt to draw from this community-orientation that forms the basis of many movements today and provide the rationale for individuals to fight for their rights as well as the rights of the community they represent. Call it class, gender, ethnicity, caste and nation, there is a tendency on the part of the individual to define himself or herself in collective terms.

Right to Livelihood and Right to Dignity

The liberal polity will have to deal with it in a serious way. The focus on 'development funds' by governments all over the world is good as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. It does not restore to the deprived poor their livelihood. It may

get them temporary doles. But it will not get them an assured existence with assured healthcare and a sense of dignity. The right to livelihood will naturally take us to the right to dignity. That right is an absolute right, for violence against dignity of person is the most inhuman of all. When it comes to the issue of 'dignity', the issue of women's right to dignity comes naturally to the fore as the most violated rights of all in all societies. The best way to take revenge in traditional societies was to violate the women of the opponent's family. In modern day also women are yet to find their justified place in society.

Feminist studies malign Marx for not paying much attention to the home market for he focused only on the labour market. Marx raised the issue of inequality against the women in the labour market and also mentioned the need to restructure family in the revolutionary society. He critiqued the bourgeois attitude towards women and their position in the modern family. He did not uphold the values of the bourgeois family. He raised the issue of equality of the men and women in socio-economic terms and of restructuring the family.

This issue of providing equality to women has drawn the bourgeois world and led to legislations to protect women workers on the basis of the principles of protection, equality and promotion, as per the ILO laws. But is there a minimum wages act for women in the unorganized sector? Do they, along with their male counter parts, even have a living wage?

There is however an uneasy feeling that this is no solution to the problems that society imposes on women in general. Some of the legislations to address the issue of violence against women are already in place. However, recent high profile cases of violence against women in the Courts shows that mere legislation is inadequate to provide relief especially to those women who are unable to have access to law and order. Let us not forget that this route is available to the well to do with difficulty. The recent Priyadarshini Mattoo murder case shows how slow, complex and tortuous the process is.

While defending the rule of law, political parties committed to revolutionary change will have to work this out within the realm of social dialectics. One will have to go back to Marx for theory of development and initiate social movements.

Lenin in his own time was critical of movements that were sponsored by the west. However, there is nothing wrong in raising the issue of the veil or the condition of women in the Islamic society. But the solution will have to come from within the society through struggle of the common people. In India the *purdah* system is also prevalent among the Hindus. The *purdah* is a symbol of something deeper. If the sign goes, the liberal says, the society will change. But for the women suffering the inequity, mere lifting of the veil or *purdah* may not mean liberation for them. Only well-directed social movements can do wonders.

Take for example the role that women have played in the Polisario movement in the Maghreb region of Africa. They perform public functions in the Muslim society. This is the result of the liberation movement in the refugee camps. Look at the role that in 1934 women played in Bihar to protect the peasants from the attack of the agents of the landlords. The greatest empowerment agency is the social movement and not the legislations pledged to empowerment alone. Legislations are products of movements and not vice versa. If the demand for these were the outcomes of movements no body could resist them.

The right to livelihood extends to the right of households to dignity, to equality and that can be extended to the rights of children. Even that issue raised very early in independent India has to be resolved in practice. Generally, the rights of children need to be redefined. The issues of female foeticide and child labour need to be taken seriously.

The right to education has been very often proclaimed in theory and denied in practice. Linked with this is the medium of instruction and this issue is still ablaze for the Bodos and for others as well. They need the sanction of a mass movement for it. These are not just family-related issues. One cannot afford to make a distinction here of between the public and the private sphere. Every aspect of the right to livelihood gets minutely focused there.

The Plea

The plea here is to construct an understanding of insecurity that security studies are unable to envision. There should be a change in the focus of security studies. Most of the writings by Indians on the issue of security miss out on the issues that engender the sense of insecurity in individuals, groups and societies.

Otherwise we will remain stuck with the security agenda defined by the high and the mighty, removed from the real world problems of insecurities. Here a social revolution is called for. We will need to develop our critique of the current theories of security and not just remain apathetic to the domain of security, built around us, imperceptive to our concerns. The masses need to reconstitute their movements for issues that need urgent attention and secure their most basic rights.

It is also necessary to talk about insecurity studies in terms of various forms of violence that one is witnessing in the world today. Violence is the dreaded hydra that needs to be tackled. It is not a plea for Gandhian studies. It is an appeal to begin a movement of people in a dedicated manner, involving all segments of society and reiterate the futility of employing coercion or violence as a means to resolve problems.