Adult learning in political (un-civil) society: Anti-colonial subaltern^1 social movement (SSM) pedagogies of place

DIP KAPOOR
University of Alberta, Canada

Abstract
Through a selective deployment of conceptualisations from subaltern studies, in particular the concepts of political (un-civil) society and an autonomous domain (or a people’s politics that suggests the plausibility of dominance without hegemony), this article distinguishes a subaltern social movement (SSM) formation and related anti-colonial SSM pedagogies of place in rural eastern India (Orissa), from Euro-American cartographies of social movements and learning and their varied liberal-capitalist and/or collective-socialist political commitments to modernisation, industrialisation, development, globalisation and progress. The historical resilience and contemporary proliferation of SSM pedagogies in the age of empire is instructive for similar trans/local movements and anti-colonial and anti-capitalist projects of adult learning in imperial and colonial societies implicated in a politics of capitalist hegemony. The propositions advanced here are based on the author’s practical and research involvements with Adivasi (original dweller) and Dalit (untouchable out-castes) SSMs since the early 1990s and a funded research engagement (2006-2009) pertaining to ‘Learning in Adivasi social movements’ in India.

Keywords: subaltern; anti-colonial pedagogy; political society; Social Movements; India

Introduction
This article considers the significance of a selective reading of subaltern studies for informing and understanding SSM political formations and anti-colonial SSM pedagogies of place (Kapoor, 2009a) in contexts of development-displacement and dispossession of Adivasis and Dalits in the state of Orissa, India. Adivasis account for 40 per cent of the 33 million ‘development-displaced peoples’ (DDPs) in the post-independence
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period (Fernandes, 2006: 113; Rajagopal, 2003: 195). The assumption here is that listening to Adivasi and Dalit subalterns, not as infallible communities but as communities facing an unparalleled existential crisis, and who are more than qualified by virtue of their direct experiences with colonial oppression, is revealing about the ‘ways of outsiders’ (e.g. of the global/national agents and processes of colonial capitalism) (Kapoor, 2011: 141) and subaltern social action and movement learning in colonial contexts.

While the term subaltern is used to refer to several marginalised social groups/classes and rural locations, including Adivasi (see note 1), it should be noted that indigeneity, unlike in settler colonies where the demarcations between original peoples and colonial settlers is relatively conspicuous, is a contested category in India given the different waves of migration and multiple colonisations. Claims to being original inhabitants of an area are harder to establish than are definitions of indigeneity predicated on being prior peoples (Barnes, Gray and Kingsbury, 1995: 2). However, this article acknowledges the indigenous status of Adivasi based on self-declared claims (as recognised by indigenous peoples and the UN) to being ‘mulo nivasu’ (root/origi- nal people). The government of India lists (see Ghosh, 2010 or Kapoor, 2010 for the politics of state-essentialist representations) the same peoples as constitutionally recognised Scheduled Tribes (STs) numbering some 84 million or 8.2 per cent of the total population of India as the second-largest indigenous population in the world (Ghosh, 2006: 505). The state of Orissa alone lists 62 ST groups or some 8 million Adivasi subalterns.

Subaltern is a term attributed to Antonio Gramsci to refer to peasants and labouring poor in early 20th-century Italy and to a subaltern common sense, or the possible basis for a unifying peasant political consciousness, in the context of a class hierarchy in Europe under industrial capitalism. The Subaltern Studies project (a group that initially included, under the founding editorship of Ranajit Guha and Subaltern Studies, Shahid Amin, David Arnold, Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey), on the other hand, sought to revise the elitism of colonialist and bourgeois-nationalist historiography of Indian nationalism and elite interpretations of the Freedom Movement from ‘two hundred years of colonial solitude under British India’ (Guha, 2001: 35), underscoring the inextricable link between subalternity and colonialism. Guha’s contribution was to link subalternity to coloniality and to ‘redefine it as a structure of power in the (modern/colonial) interstate system’ (Guha, 2001: 35). As proposed in this article, this is a significant link for the study and praxis of anti-colonial SSMs and the politics of political (un-civil) society in India today, if not in similar neo/colonial contexts elsewhere and for informing trans/national movements and dissident politics in imperial societies.

Notwithstanding the various critiques of subaltern studies, what defines the preoccupations here with respect to informing adult education praxis and learning in anti-colonial SSMs (Kapoor, 2007; 2009a), is the Gramscian-inspired regional/local focus (South Asia/India) on revisiting subaltern rebellions (Guha, 1983) and the associated conceptualisations of subaltern political space and politics addressing historical and contemporary colonial-capital-imperial imbrications (e.g. trans/national mining and dispossession of subaltern groups in Orissa who are racially-targeted in terms of caste and tribal subaltern locations) (Padel and Das, 2010). These struggles are all the more instructive and noteworthy for the study and praxis of resistance in the age of empire (Biel, 2000; Boron, 2005; Dirlik, 1994; Hardt and Negri, 2000; Harvey, 2003; Neeraj,
2007; Petras and Veltmeyer, 2001) or what Anibal Quijano refers to as the ‘coloniality of power being expressed through a globalising capitalism’ (2000: 215). Recognising the significance of anti-colonial politics, once aimed at the British (a preoccupation of the original Subaltern studies group), the political and educational interest here is in relation to subaltern resistance and contemporary internal and external agents and processes of post-colonial capitalist-development, including an increasingly neoliberal and corporatised Indian state since the introduction of the New Economic Policy in 1991 (Neeraj, 2007; Sanyal, 2010).

The wider significance of the pre-occupation with rural/forest-based subalterns, classes or communities in other locations and their social struggles and movements, is being variously addressed in recent place-specific scholarship attempting to register these politics and their contribution towards addressing colonialism, imperialism and the global designs of capitalism (Barua, 2009; Da Costa, 2009; Ghosh, 2006; Kwaipun, 2009; Langdon, 2011; Mookerjea, 2010, 2011; Menon, 2010; Peine, 2010; Prasant and Kapoor, 2010; Sayeed and Haider, 2010; Swords, 2010; Veissiere, 2009; Wittman, 2010).

It should be noted that while all SSMs and struggles do not necessarily subscribe to an explicit anti-colonial, nor anti-developmental politics or teleology, this article focuses on those SSMs that have predominantly defined themselves as such.

### SSM learning and research: A word on methodology and significance

The research is based on funded participatory research (Kapoor, 2009c) to explore and contribute towards Adivasi (Kondh, Saora and Panos/Dalits) social movement learning in South Orissa, specifically, the Adivasi-Dalit Ektha Abhijan or ADEA movement which germinated in the early 90s and now includes 120 villages or some 20,000 Adivasi/Dalit people as active participants, and a wider trans-local Adivasi/Dalit subaltern activism in the state between 2006 and 2009 (Kapoor, 2011). Insights are also informed by the author's engagements with the ADEA and other groups since the early 1990s. This includes several participatory action research initiatives involving education and organising in relation to food, land, forest and water issues in the Scheduled Areas (constitutionally protected areas). The work is in keeping with recent writing and research into knowledge production and social movements which foregrounds movement actor-generated knowledge and learning that emphasises political integrity and academic accountability to movements (Bevington and Dixon, 2005; Choudry, 2009; Choudry and Kapoor, 2010) through, for instance, long-term engagement and movement-actor determination in all aspects of social movement learning research, especially in relation to indigenous locations and ‘insider-outsider’ approaches to doing critical local research (Kapoor, 2009c; Tuihiwai-Smith, 1999: 177).

The participatory research project, 2006–2009, was jointly conceptualised with some degree of skepticism, especially on the part of ADEA movement leaders given the numerous state survey-research experiences that did nothing to address their concerns. These reservations were re-considered after discussing the possibility of setting up a people’s research institution that would actively address Adivasi/Dalit concerns and were connected to ADEA political interests as well as people’s knowledge, education and social action. The end result was the establishment of a Center for Research and Development Solidarity (CRDS) that became the vehicle for the funded People’s Participatory Action Research (PAR) project in to social movement learning (Kapoor, 2009c). The research engaged 10 Adivasi/Dalit community-based researchers and
involved the following: joint-development of research questions; joint data collection in terms of selection of sites and sources; collective theorisation and interpretation of emergent thematics, distilled from several datasets collected over a 3 year period; several collaborative opportunities for writing and dissemination including in the vernacular for local popular education and politicisation through Amakatha/Our Voice. This resulted in 1000 copy distributions, on 4 occasions, including an eventful dissemination during panchayat/local government elections. Critical incident analysis of specific land occupations/conflicts, community celebrations (where Bakhanis or narratives were shared), central/regional ADEA leadership meetings, focus-group interviews with villagers threatened with land eviction, drama/political poetry and inter-SSM leadership gatherings, are all examples of data collection opportunities and related data sources that were utilised to generate insights into SSM formations, movement learning and organised action (Kapoor, 2009c). One of the key developments from the PAR process was the germination of a trans/local SSM network/association or Lok Adhikar Manch (LAM) (Kapoor, 2011) as frequent data collection visits were utilised as opportunities for inter-SSM dialogue and collaboration for purposes of solidarity action, addressing development displacement and dispossession in the region, while continuing to inform the study.

Subaltern studies have always emphasised the politics of the lower orders and their political consciousness and the central focus of this scholarship has been on subaltern groups and classes, their struggles, movements and activities. Contrary to Western radical democratic versions of 'globalisation from below', that tend to limit the realm of 'the political' and 'resistance' to a modernist-politics of a globalising civil society (equated with globalization from below), subaltern studies extends the realm of the 'political' and 'resistance' by taking note of the myriad subaltern and/or anti-colonial un-civil politics being waged in the trenches and in the debris of rural, water and forest bodies left in the wake of a colonising capitalism.

Subsequently, SSMs need to be differentiated from NSM or OSM (see Holst this issue) and other post/modern movement ideas for conceptual and analytical reasons and more significantly, for the purposes of political visibility and a historically persistent contribution to a radical praxis addressing colonialism and capitalist penetration (Kapoor, 2007, 2009a, 2011). The tendency to absorb, through theoretical slippage, whereby local theories/histories of Europe morph into global theories/histories (see Connell, 2007; Mignolo, 2000; Sethi, 2011) the politics of SSMs into NSM and/or OSM formations by reading them as civil-societarian ethnic/identity, or ecology movements, or as movements concerned with what some have dismissed as the so-called mundane politics of food, survival and livelihood, dwarfs their specific political contributions. This not only misses the mark on the grounds of academic and political inaccuracy, but more egregiously perhaps, obscures the crucial historical and contemporary 'anti/colonial politics' of ever-present subaltern constituencies; a politics which predates the histories of these contemporary strains of western political expression and activism.

**Contexts of capitalist colonisation and development dispossession in India**

*We fought the British thinking we will be equal in the independent India.* (Kondh Adivasi Elder, Interview notes, January 2007).

*They have the power of dbana (wealth) and astro sbastro (armaments). They have the power of kruthrima ain (artificial laws and rules)—they created these laws just to*
Historically, anti-colonial SSMs and rebellions were faced with the daunting challenge of addressing dominance predicated on the 'double articulation' of two types of governance: one by the British and the other by the Indian elites (Guha, 2001: 11). This is also the case today as the 'double articulation' ties the politics of the local (national) to the global (international, colonial, imperial) and the old and new agents of the globalisation of capitalism. Ranajit Guha acknowledges that the 'colonial experience has outlived decolonization and continues to be related significantly to the concerns of our time' (2001: 41-42). While Subaltern Studies recognises that, despite the formation of new social groups and institutions in rural and urban life under the aegis of British rule and post-independence modernisation and development, collectivities like the Dalits and Adivasis 'have continued to exist vigorously and to even develop new forms and content' (Ludden, 2005: 100).

The British were the first to restrict the customary rights of tribals over land and forests in 1855. The Indian Forest Act of 1878, of 1927, and then the Government of India Act of 1935, successively consolidated the power of the imperial government over forests and emphasised the revenue yield and the resource requirements of British military, commercial and industrial sectors. During 200 years of colonial rule, the British sought changes in land use patterns; exploited forest resources and mineral ores and introduced cash cropping, thus distorting the land structure, ecology, forest resources, and flora and fauna with grave implications for the Adivasi (Behura and Panigrahi, 2006: 35). British colonial rule, in other words, began the process of detribalisation of tribal land and forests, whereby the various Forest and Land Acts reduced the tribal to the status of encroachers on their own territories. This process was met with determined tribal resistance and rebellion (including Chota Nagpur, Munda, Kol, Santal, and Rampha rebellions), which did result in acts of amelioration and legislative measures to recognise some tribal rights (Guha, 1983).

The post-independence scenario in the form of the Forest Policy of 1952 was the reiteration of bureaucratic management of forests and the promotion of state capitalism in the forest sector, a major reason for continued unrest in the Adivasi areas in Orissa and elsewhere (Rath, 2006). Despite constitutional provisions in the 5th and 6th Schedules that recognise tribal ownership rights over land and forests in Scheduled/Protected Areas (a provision that has been re-affirmed in the recent Forest Rights Act of 2006), 'people do not have the right to question the decision of the government on forcible evictions' (Asian Center for Human Rights, 2005: 9). In fact, the Center's report highlights the role of the Land Acquisition Act as being instrumental in the eviction of tribal peoples for more than a century and until recently, there was no provision for resettlement and 'rehabilitation', not to mention right to free, prior and informed consent (contrary to International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 169 requirements which India is a signatory).

Pimple and Sethi (2005) conclude that under the recent turn towards neoliberal land policies, since the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1991 and the more recent plan to open over 300 corporate havens termed Special Economic Zones (SEZs), 'traditional occupiers of the land under customary law confront the
prospect and reality of becoming illegal encroachers on land they have cultivated and sustained for generations—they are vulnerable and subject to summary eviction' (p.239).

The policies that encourage development-dispossession of rural subalterns appear to have crossed party political lines. For instance, the provisions of the NEP and the push to establish SEZs have resulted in policies pursued by the Communist Party of India (Marxist)-led Left Front government in West Bengal [unseated in 2011 state elections] that are virtually indistinguishable from those of other parties committed to the neoliberal agenda. In recent times, the Left-Front government has turned out to be more zealous than many others in dispossessing farmers of their land, and making it available for capital' (Menon and Nigam, 2007: 105). According to one estimate, the acquisition of 120,000 acres of land by the Left-Front over the past five years has been accompanied by an increase of 2.5 million landless peasants (Banerjee, 2006: 4719). In fact, 144,000 acres of land in nine districts have been earmarked for such acquisitions by private industry (Bidwai, 2007: 14).

Under the provisions of the NEP, the state of Orissa has signed Memorandums of Understanding worth $12 billion with South Korean steel giant POSCO Ltd. (single largest Foreign Direct Investment in the country), to exploit the best coal and iron ore deposits for a period of 30 years, is being met with resistance from betel leaf farmers and several constituencies across the state and the country. The Utkal Alumina Industrial Limited (UAIL) consortium of state and transnational mining companies, that has gradually acquired 2800 acres of land since 1993, displacing up to 60,000 Adivasi/Dalits in Kashipur Block, Rayagada district, operates an open cast bauxite mine that has met with consistent resistance over the past 17 years. Mining has become a flash-point for several subaltern struggles (Padel and Das, 2010): Adivasi/Dalit subalterns constitute 22 per cent of the population in Orissa yet account for 42 per cent of development displaced peoples (DDPs in state terminology) whilst throughout India, Adivasi account for 40 per cent of DDPs while constituting 8 per cent of the Indian population (Fernandes, 2006: 113). Relatively better publicised subaltern movements and resistance to such developments of recent note include: Singur (Bengal), Nandigram (Bengal), Kashipur (Orissa), Lanjigarh (Orissa), Kalinganagar (Orissa), and the state level POSCO Pratirodh Manch (engaging Adivasis and Dalits) while other lesser known subaltern resistances continue to attempt to scale up activity through a coalitional trans-local politics aimed at these state-corporate, colonial-capitalist, developments and their implications for the displacement and dispossession of subalterns (Kapoor, 2011).

Locating political (un-civil) society and anti-colonial SSM pedagogies of place

As noted above, SSM responses to these developments have been escalating, given the import of Menon and Nigam's observation that,

*There is no understanding of communities as the subjects of dislocation or ways of life that are destroyed. There is an abyss of incomprehension on the part of the Indian elites toward rural and tribal communities. Ripping them out from lands they have occupied for generations and transplanting them overnight in to an alien setting (which is the best they can expect) is understood as rehabilitation and liberation from their backward ways of life (2007: 72-73).*
Conditions of impoverishment arising from displacement and dispossession then entail 'disciplining the subaltern who are presented as inhabiting a series of local spaces across the globe that, marked by the label "social exclusion", lie outside the normal civil society.... Their route back is through the willing and active transformation of themselves to conform to the discipline of the market' (Cameron and Palan, 2004: 148).

Partha Chatterjee (2001: 177), contrary to Gramsci’s usage in relation to political parties/formal politics, refers to these local spaces outside normal civil society as constituting political society or populations that are not bodies of citizens belonging to the lawfully constituted civil society but are populations in need and deserving of welfare and who are not proper citizens under the law, consequently having to make collective demands on the state founded on a violation of the law, or who survive by side-stepping the law.

Anti-colonial SSMs constitute and take root in political society as movements that are primarily located outside and against the state-market-civil society nexus and the laws and institutions constructed and strategically deployed by this nexus. The impact of the later is to legalise and normalise displacement and dispossession and to encourage post-displacement disciplining into welfare, re-settlement and rehabilitation and market-related schemes, or to subject subalterns to abject poverty in urban slums and constant migration in search of work, i.e., what Adivasi refer to as becoming ‘lost peoples’. For instance, the ADEA’s response to displacement and dispossession is discussed as follows:

We are giving importance to land occupation (padar bari akhtiar) and land use (chatriya chatri). We are now beginning to see the fruits of occupations. Before the government uses anawadi land to plant casew, eucalyptus or virtually gives the land to bauxite mining companies, we must encroach and occupy and put the land to use through our plantation activities and agricultural use. This has become our knowledge through joint land action. This knowledge is not only with me now but with all our people—what are the ways open to us—this is like the opening of knowledge that was hidden to us for ages (Kondh man, Interview notes, 2007).

They are fighting against those who have everything and nothing to lose. We will persist and as long as they keep breaking their own laws—this only makes it easier for us! That is why even after the police firing in Maikanch (South Orissa, India) in 2000, over 10,000 of us showed up to oppose the UAIL (Bauxite mine/refinery) project the very next month (ADEA Leader, Focus Group notes, February, 2008).

Adivasis have subsequently learned to take collective extra-legal action in order to achieve their ends, as the law is perceived to be a disciplining and colonial instrument of the state. For instance, there are numerous examples of state and corporate breaches of constitutional and legal stipulations pertaining to the Adivasi and Scheduled Area provisions. In the case of the UAIL project, with the help of the Orissa Mining Corporation, a state organ, the companies continued development activities despite the expiry of the lease, while environmental clearances were not obtained prior to the issuance of mining leases and when issued, site clearance was given to UAIL within 18 days by the Ministry of Environment and Forest, when the norm is closer to a year (Kapoor, 2009b: 64–65). What's more, market violence through forced dispossession or development repression is not uncommon either when SSMs
resist the project altogether, in keeping with their constitutional and human rights (Rajagopal, 2003; Kapoor, in press):

_There were at least 5000 of us when they fired. I too was one of the 12 injured (pointing to scar on the thigh) but I never spoke up for fear of police retaliations. I have endured my lot in poverty and silence and could not get treated... but we will never back down... even in Chilika, after Tatas got shut down by the Supreme court because they violated the Coastal Regulation Zone with their aquaculture project, their mafias came and destroyed people's fishing boats... it seems we act non-violently and use the law and the courts but they always respond with customary violence and break their own law (Adivasi man, Focus Group notes, February, 2008)._ 

According to the convenor, a Dalit ADEA leader and movement representative, ‘we are the most burnable (expendable) communities and by this I mean we, the Dalit, the Adivasi, the farmer and the fisherman are always forced to give up what we have and suffer and sacrifice for the sake of their development... we are in the way of their process of exploitation of natural resources for this development’ (Focus Group notes, February 2008).

Following Chatterjee, it would seem that anti-colonial SSMs are agents of and simultaneously constitute political society since: a) they face unequal treatment under the law or are victims of the law, b) are expendable or burnable through multiple and racial/ethnically-targeted dispossessions and subjected to other forms of violence if need be (since they are not lawfully constituted civil society), and c) are compelled to resort to extra-legal collective activism through land occupations by stealth or un-civil activism and transgression of laws that are there to keep them out.

These movements learn to engage in an extra-legal politics by utilising, for instance, strategic knowledge gained through direct experience with land occupation and an anti-colonial politics of Adivasi/Dalit ‘place’ (i.e., we will not move for the mining project) with respect to the colonising and dispossessing implications of a capitalist-developmental state and a complicit, modernizing, Indian civil society. In the words of a Saora leader of the ADEA:

_If the government continues to control lands, forest and water that we have depended on since our ancestors came, then through the ADEA we will be compelled to engage in a collective struggle (ame samohiko bhabe, sangram kariba pahi badhyo hebu). ADEA is building a movement among us from village to panchayat to federation levels. I think this movement (andolan) should spread to the district and become district level struggle. The organisation is always giving us new ideas (nothon chinta), new education (nothon shikhya), awareness (chetna) and jojona (plans). We believe this will continue (ao yu cha kari chalibo amaro viswas)._ 

Or in the words of a Kondh woman:

_The ADEA is there to fight collectively (sangram) to save (raksha) the forests and to protect our way of life. The ADEA is a means of collective struggle for the forest (ame samastha mishi sangram o kariba). We are all members of the ADEA and our struggle is around khadyo, jamin, jalo, jangalo o ektha (food, water, forest and unity)._ 

As populations outside the law (political society) as opposed to ‘lawfully’ constituted civil society, SSMs germinate and subsequently seek to address, amongst other things, the loss of the means of reproducing their material existence as rural land/forest-based
self-provisioning agri-economies, subsequently engaging in a social movement politics that resists, erodes, blocks and precludes the reproduction of capital through struggles in and around the fields, forests and water bodies targeted by global and national capitalist colonial development in the 'post-colony' (Kapoor, 2009a, 2011). According to a study on resistance to Industrial Tree Plantations in the global South, for instance, popular struggles have been successful in interrupting or stopping projects in a fifth of the cases examined (Gerber, 2010). In Chatterjee's terms,

The usual features here are the intrusion of new extractive mechanisms into the agrarian economy, often with the active legal and armed support of colonial political authority, leading to a systematic commercialization of agriculture and the incorporation in varying degrees of the agrarian economy into a larger capitalist world market... with varying contributions of foreign, comprador and national capital; the growth of new political institutions and processes based on bourgeois conceptions of law, bureaucracy and representation. (1983: 347)

In contrast to NSM middle-class politics of identity or sympathetic environmentalists who 'consume resources here while aiming to protect nature over there' (Kapoor, 2009a: 80), SSM constituencies are agents motivated by the direct and immediate material impacts of colonial trans/national developmental displacements and disposessions e.g. dam displacement and resulting poverty, hunger and loss of meaning—the ‘unique unfreedom of uprooted subalterns’ or ‘lost peoples’ (Kapoor, 2011: 140). Chatterjee describes this modernising Indian civil society as ‘bourgeois society... and the mark of non-Western modernity as an always incomplete project’ (2001: 172),

set up by the nationalist elite in the era of colonial modernity (though often as part of the anti-colonial struggle) ... these institutions embody the desire of this elite to replicate... the substance of Western modernity... a desire for a new ethical life conforming to the virtues of the Enlightenment and bourgeois freedom and whose known cultural forms are those of Western Christianity (2001: 174).

Chatterjee suggests that while civil society was the most significant site of transformation in the colonial era, in the postcolonial period it is political society that is the most significant site of transformation and that in ‘the latest phase of the globalization of capital, we will be witnessing an emerging opposition between civil society and political society’ (2001: 178).

Such postulations help to assess and inform the politics and learning of dis/engagements between civil societal social movements (NSMs) and NGOs (civil society actors) on the one hand, and anti-colonial SSMs or political society movements, on the other. The former tend to define justice and possibility as a project of inclusion and equity within modernity and a reformed capital. The latter, however, take exception to the colonial implications of the project of capital displacement, dispossession and loss of material, cultural and spiritual place and a Eurocentric modernisation (or an Indian bourgeois version of the same) that compels Adivasi/Dalit subalterns to change their ways of life/being in exchange for the mantle of civility and legal citizenship/recognition. In the words of one ADEA member,

NGOs often try to derail the people's movement by forcing them into Constitutional and legal frameworks and by relying on the slow pace of legal avenues to make it seem like they are working in solidarity with the people but all the while using the delaying tactic to help UAIL.
...they make us in to programme managers and statisticians concerned with funding accountability and the management of our people for the NGO... what they fail to realise is that we are engaged in an Andolan (movement struggle) and not donor-funded programmes (Focus Group notes, February 2008).

The differences between civil society and political society locations for respective movements and agents, and their politics, helps to explain and inform SSMs about what they might come to expect in such knowledge or political engagements. The ADEA has learnt, for instance, that partnerships with NGOs and NSMs can be depoliticising and disabling and have subsequently become more discerning and skeptical about the possibilities for solidarity around an anti-colonial politics. For instance, a purist indigenous human rights activism that seeks to 'eco-incarcerate' (Shah, 2010: 130) Adivasi/Dalit subalterns is often viewed with incredulousness and bemusement given the shrill attempts of 'Adivasi-outsiders' (civil society activists) to legally institutionalise 'subaltern spaces' (amounting to 'restriction' of Adivasi to Scheduled Areas) as physically fixed and frozen in time in cultural, social and political-economic terms; a white-stream ecological activism that has also been critiqued in North American settler colonies (see Grande, 2004). Despite these stifling implications, this civil society eco-politics can be simultaneously re-enacted in an anti-colonial SSM politics when strategically necessary (Kapoor, in press).

Partha Chatterjee (1983) discusses the implications of the intermingling of contradictory power systems or modes of power: communal, where entitlements are allocated on the authority of a whole community collective; feudal, where the same is derived from direct domination and the use of physical force; bourgeois, where property rights are guaranteed by general law and indirect domination through institutions of representative government. These modes of power were associated with, but not reducible to, Marxist conceptions of modes of production (communal, feudal and capitalist). Chatterjee attempts to highlight the interplay and transition between these modes since in India, different modes of production are operational simultaneously and may be discontinuous or antithetical. For example, these observations become apparent in the relations between forest-based community swidden ('cut-and-burn') cultivation, horticulture and hunting or self-provisioning moral economies, on the one hand, and agro-industrial capitalist development on the other, where capital tends towards the extinction of communal modes of power and production. This is evidenced by Adivasi/Dalit subaltern expressions of 'loss'—being scattered—which is reflected in the content and socio-political directions for learning in anti-colonial SSMs.

It is time we seriously start to think about this destruction in the name of development... otherwise, like yesterdays children of nature, who never depended upon anybody for their food, we will have no option but to go for mass transition from self-sufficient cultivators and forest and fish gatherers to migratory labourers in far away places. After displacement we stand to lose our traditions, our culture and own historical civilization... from known communities we become scattered unknown people thrown into the darkness to wander about in an unknown world of uncertainty and insecurity (Adivasi Leader, Field notes, April 2009).

The convenor of the ADEA points to the significance of learning to organise to meet this threat.

We are forest dwellers, poor people, peasants and fisherfolks and we are in all aspects of our life, different from them. Let us get involved in campaigns to save our forests, land
and water which sustain us. Let us occupy land... because I know that the government will never think about us seriously... if the companies like Tata and Vedanta ask the government for land, it is ever ready to oblige them at throw-away prices... this is how the government plans and acts against our interests.

On the other hand, as Chatterjee points out, capitalism can incorporate and intensify feudal structures of domination e.g. micro-credit interventions through NGO actors and feudal capture of labour and profit from these ventures in certain locations or multi-national corporate/feudal elite interventions in agriculture that have been partially responsible for the agrarian crises. Symptomatic of this has been the 241,679 farmer suicides connected to the introduction of genetically modified (GM) Bt cotton between 1995 and 2009, (Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, 2011: 3) and the neoliberal state's propensity to promote GM crops patented and produced by global agri-business. This is not unlike Stuart Hall's (1980: 320) description of 'an articulation between different modes of production, structured in some relation of dominance' where Hall goes further with this, suggesting that capital benefited from older forms of exploitation and ethnic and racial hierarchies constructed by pre-capitalist modes, e.g. European plantation slavery ensured the provision of cheap labour for modern European capitalist expansion. This is recognised as such by Adivasi in the current juncture—'Who wants to go to join the Oriyas and do business and open shops and be shabaris (city folk/moderns) if they make you labour like donkeys for one meal? Even if they teach us we do not want to go to the cities...' (Adivasi Elder, Interview notes, January, 2007).

We cannot leave our forests (ame jangale chari paribo nahi). The forest is our second home (after the huts). There is no distance between our homes and the forest. You just come out and you have everything you need.... My friends and brothers, we are from the forest. That is why we use the small sticks of the karanja tree to brush our teeth—not tooth brushes. Our relationship to the forest is like a finger nail to flesh (nakho koo mangsho)—we cannot be separated.... That is why we are Adivasi (Interview notes, Village D, 2007).

In keeping with these observations regarding multiple modes of production and power, spaces of transition and related implications for the various, shifting, structural locations of SSMs in political society (being mostly outside and beside the state-market-civil society nexus), SSM movement teleology and associated pedagogies are, out of strategic and political necessity, a multi-faceted praxis and political strategy. Anti-colonial SSMs, often located in forested/interior regions and organised in communal or semi-feudal modes of production and power, subsequently:

(a) make overt political claims that might range from and between outright secession (very rarely), sovereignty, pluri-nationalism, degrees of self-determination or autonomy as these movements have become aware of the impacts of mining development in neighbouring regions for instance;

(b) could decide to engage in a coalitional politics with certain political parties, usually from the Left, other SSMs (that may not openly espouse an anti-colonial position), Old Social Movements or labour (e.g. Maoist peasant movements and versions from the left) and/or NSMs (e.g. human rights and environmental NGOs) or at times, even corporate initiatives (especially with Corporate Organised NGOs (CONGOs) seeking to bait, fool or persuade Adivasi/Dalit subalterns in to projects), while
keeping an eye on their specific political interests by improving prospects for shutting down the projects of capital-state developmental interests; and

(c) selectively engaging and some times, losing strategic/anti-colonial direction/ objectives with the various politics in the locale including: class (e.g. left-peasant/ Maoist guerrilla versions in Orissa); feminist/gender; environment; indigenous human rights, peace and justice; good governance; empowerment/emancipation (e.g. the World Bank strain or various NGOised-Freirean antipolitical-politics); participatory/alternative development; charity/service (e.g. humanitarian NGO versions); various religious appeals (e.g. Saffron/Hindu fundamentalisms and numerous Christian missionary possibilities in the rural districts) etc. At the core, anti-colonial SSMs subscribe to a political learning content and process that is embedded in ‘our ways learning’, with epistemic starting points in Adivasi ontologies. In the event that strategic deployments of outsider rights discourses help to open up political space in the interests of the anti-colonial project in the locale/region, they are taken up, despite the mutual caricaturing this often entails (Kapoor, in press).

These insights on anti-colonial SSM political praxis are in keeping with Ranajit Guha’s insights regarding the links between notions of an autonomous domain (and dominance without hegemony) and the significance of a people’s politics, which is always at the core of SSM politics, i.e., ‘our ways learning’. In *Dominance Without Hegemony and its Historiography*, Guha suggests that the Raj never achieved hegemony and was based on coercion and a façade of legality and that the end of the universalising tendency of bourgeois culture, based on the colonial expansion of capital, finds its limit in colonialism: ‘in India subaltern politics constituted an autonomous domain which neither originated from the elite politics nor did its existence depend upon the latter’ (1989: 46). He sees ‘subaltern classes and groups as having roots in the pre-colonial period and which continued to operate vigorously under the British, even to develop new strains in both form and content’ (1982: 4), a position not dissimilar to James Scott’s work (1990) on infra politics and hidden transcripts in Asian contexts (positions that have extended the realm of the political, however impotent or radical the implication of such politics).

Guha (1997) identifies the subaltern domain of politics as including a wide variety of generally autonomous modes of thought and action, expressed particularly in rebellions, riots and popular movements through the political expression of subaltern cultures and world views that are seen to be largely autonomous from the elite (British and Indian). David Hardiman, for instance, in speaking to the relative autonomy of tribal movements in India suggests that ‘divine commands were a powerful program for Adivasi assertion’, what he references as ‘this fundamentally religious ideology of peasant action’ (cited in Ludden, 2005: 113) or what Alpa Shah refers to as ‘democracy as sacral polity’ (2010: 62).

SSMs demonstrate a unity of the sacred and the political that cannot be simply dismissed, as has been the case in colonial anthropology, as purely ‘backward’ superstition and subsequently relegated to the realm of the immaterial and irrational or an ineffectual pre-political anti-politics. As a moral politics, endorsed by the spiritual realm, the spiritual has material and non-material implications. An SSM anti-colonial pedagogy of place, then, is defined and determined by a historical and spiritual sense of place, rootedness and belonging, despite the plausible critique raised by Shah.
around an exaggerated human rights politics tending towards ‘eco-incarceration’. This sense of place is evident in a pedagogy that relies on the spiritual-intellectual resources of Adivasi/Dalit living and ancestral communities. Such appeals are marked by an emphasis on an apparent physical-metaphysics of Gods and ecology-human-animal relations, and a pragmatic sense of colonial politics concerning outsiders, that has been sharpened by a long history of direct experience with multiple colonial invasions and material dislocations (Kapoor, 2010). Contrary to certain Marxist (Brass, 2001, 2007; Das, 2007) and colonial/racist dismissals or relegations of this spiritual praxis to the sphere of irrational or mad politics (Jesson, 1999) (or as non-material and therefore politically docile, mystifying, conservative, traditional, barbaric or even post-modern), the dominance without hegemony proposition and related notions of autonomous domain and a people’s politics embedded in local knowledge and existence rationalities are simultaneously, and always spiritually and materially, politically relevant to subaltern ecological relations and the reproduction of subaltern political economies.

For instance, narratives, lamentations and rituals of ‘our ways learning’ (Kapoor, 2007, 2009a) establish a powerful historical continuity with ancestral anti-colonial struggles and current movement-motivation through spiritual sanction and political nourishment. This provides a crucial sense of political balance established through spiritual oversight with respect to an exaggerated sense of political mission and recognises the limits to a subaltern politics. In the event of extreme conflict, violence and destruction, this spirituo-political restraint is essential at times, despite the magnitude of political and economic adversity wrought by colonial capitalist displacement and dispossession or similar invasions. It constitutes a pedagogy of the recognition of limits to what should be done in the name of the political (material), even in the face of constant provocations—an antithetical stance or understanding to a ‘rational’ and informed material politics of unrelenting capitalist colonisation of place, people and ecology.

_Ob friends let us go to the aggressors and bow our heads before them and also tell them that we too can become wild like oxen..._

_Ob brothers, come to this paddy field and let us sit together with our aggressors and seek forgiveness from each other..._ (excerpt, from a Kondh Adivasi lamentation, Field notes, February 2007).

A SSM anti-colonial pedagogy of place is also informed by a grounded-experiential theories of the wider political economy and their implications for the unfreedom of Adivasi/Dalit communities with related pointers for specific movement learning requirements including critical, strategic, tactical and informational learning (Kapoor, 2009b, 2009c, 2011). These are in constant engagement with macro-micro linking and analysis, including intra-movement critique/analyses (as with respect to the significance of Adivasi-Dalit unity or ektha or a gender politics introduced by NGOs in the region and taken up by the ADEA as a significant politics) (Kapoor, 2009b). In the words of an ADEA leader on ADEA learning and education (Interview notes, 2007):

_Acting together has given us a different direction/vision (bbinna-diga). The ADEA has become a platform for us because we have made it so... we have to teach each other (bujba-sujba), explain to each other and that is how education has happened and made
things possible for us.... we have created a learning environment for our people and a political education around land, forest and water issues and we debate courses of action...

SSMs are also increasingly engaging in a scaled-up, trans-local activism, which raises the decibel level of a SSM anti-colonial pedagogy of place with other SSMs in the state of Orissa (Kapoor, 2011), to face the mammoth task of addressing the colonial capitalist development invasion for minerals and agro-industrial opportunity in the state, village by village, and region by region. As expressed in the People's Manifesto of the Lok Adhikar Manch (LAM), a trans-local alliance or loose network of 13 SSM organisations (April, 2009):

We, the people's movements present here representing people's struggles from South and coastal Orissa have discussed and debated our issues and are hereby resolved to stand as a broad-based platform known as Lok Adhikar Manch (LAM) in support of the following manifesto (people's statement):

... we have nothing to gain from mukto bojaro (liberalisation), ghoroi korono (privatisation) and jagathi korono (globalisation), which are talked about today. We want to live the way we know how to live among our forests, streams, hills and mountains and water bodies with our culture and traditions and whatever that is good in our society intact. We want to define change and development for ourselves (amo unathi abom parivarthanoro songhya ame nirupuno koribako chaho). We are nature's friends (prakruthi bandhu), so our main concern is preserving nature and enhancing its influence in our lives.

Concluding remarks

Subaltern studies have attempted to make the importance of the subaltern to history known by uncovering forms of popular protest, including grain riots, small scale peasant insurgencies and struggles over forest rights and uprisings of hill and Adivasi peoples—they have [arguably or attempted to] defined a subaltern consciousness separate from hegemonic cultural forms... realized in the practice of rural resistance' (Sivaramakrishnan, 2005: 217). Subalterns are recognised as subjects of history and the makers of their own history while such studies also demonstrate 'the extent to which peasant politics possessed autonomy within ... encompassing structures of subordination' (Arnold, 1984: 169). In other words, while SSMs need to be understood on local terms in specific contexts, they also need to be understood in relation to social orders, institutions and the history of material relations that mediate, shape and influence SSM formations (Arnold, 1984; Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992). These preoccupations are germane to a critical adult education that concerns itself with learning in social movements and struggles and questions of political consciousness, knowledge engagement, agency and social structures at local, national and global levels.

This article has focused on demonstrating the conceptual and political significance of a selective reading of Subaltern Studies as it pertains to understanding and informing political society SSM formations and the learning implications of an anti-colonial SSM pedagogy of place. As a movement learning and politics in/about political society and as a partially autonomous and arguably distinct subaltern people's politics,
SSMs continue to make a conspicuous case for pluri-nationalism (and pluri-modalities of production and power) by exposing and resisting the machinations of colonial-capitalist dispossession in forest and rural spaces where 80 per cent or more of Orissa's 36 million people reside in 55,000 or so villages.

...we are laying a claim on the government who is supposed to serve all the people in this land. We are demanding a place for ourselves. ADEA's idea is that our livelihood should be protected and our traditional occupations and relationship to the land and forest be protected in the form of community control over land and forests in our areas and this is our understanding of our Constitutional rights too. There is no contradiction. Once this is understood, we can cooperate and when necessary, work with the government to take care of land and forests. If they can help the shabaris (moderns/urban peoples) destroy the forests, then they can and should help us protect it and listen to our story to. (Kondh ADEA Leader, Interview notes, 2007).

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Notes

1 Using the term interchangeably with 'people' (and 'subaltern classes' where industrial/agrarian capitalism has classed subalterns) Guha acknowledges the historical specificity of this empirical judgment - 2000: 7), subaltern loosely defined in the Indian context and with all its ambiguities, refers to the rural landless poor (migrant un/der employed labour), poor (small) peasants, pastoralists/nomads, Adivasis (original dwellers or Scheduled tribes in state parlance), Dalits ('untouchable' castes or Scheduled Castes), Other Backward Castes (OBCs) and development displaced people (DDPs) specifically from these former categories, including women in any of these groupings. Subalternity, is also understood as a social location and in terms of the dialectics of super-ordination and subordination (between these groups and class, caste, gender, urban and/or ethnically dominant/elite groups embedded in and across multiple modes of production) in global and national hierarchical social relations of exploitation (including but not restricted to those that reproduce capitalist property relations).


3 For instance, see Sumit Sarkar (2005) on critique pertaining to post-modern and cultural slippage (in later works) from founding Marxist/Gramscian structuralist (materialist) positioning and the waning of the subaltern, including Partha Chatterjee's general silence on economic themes (free markets, International Financial Institutions and MNCs) in recent works.

References


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