

Nickeled and Dimed



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COMMODIFIED QUEER SPACES AND WHAT THEY MEAN

By Wyonna Fernandes

A diverse range of establishments, organisations, and spaces could come under the umbrella term 'queer spaces'. The two main categories one could divide 'queer spaces' into are: community-driven and commercial. The former are community-based spaces — support groups, discussion groups, clubs, and societies — that emerge from a need for solidarity or mobilisation. The latter are commercial, profit-based establishments. Henceforth, when the article mentions 'queer spaces', these commercial spaces are being referred to. However, queer spaces as a whole are in no way limited to or defined by these spaces. Furthermore, due to the nature of the demographics of the people that frequent such establishments, in this article the term 'queer' will disproportionately refer to cisgender gay men from an upper class and caste. This does not necessarily mean the LGBTQ+ community as a whole reflects these characteristics.

Delhi hosts a variety of queer establishments, the most well-known being Kitty Su, The Lalit's nightclub with its iconic drag nights. Gay saunas such as Mykonos and Kalph Kaya and queer cafes such as Q Cafe are well-frequented spots. These establishments exist as a result of the 'pink rupee' — the purchasing power of the queer community. The queer-friendly locations are also a popular tourist attraction as they allow for the city to seem more accepting and liberal. A number of pink tourism ventures have sprung up in Delhi since the repeal of Section 377 in 2009 by the Supreme Court. There are also a number of guest houses specifically catering to a queer clientele, such as The Mister and Art House; 'India's first boutique guest house and art gallery for men only.'. The city has a number of gay-only travel operators whose revenues have been rising steadily. In 2011, the Capital hosted the first Asian Symposium on Gay and Lesbian Tourism. For tour operators Out Journeys and Pink Vibgyor, revenues have been rising by almost 100% a year.

It is profitable for companies to cater to the queer community, specifically in the economic atmosphere of Delhi which is characterised by an extremely competitive revolving door of experimental ventures looking to find the next popular trend. According to a 2009 study by Forbes and OutNow Consulting, there are about 30 million LGBT adults in India, a major proportion of which have a double income and no kids. As a result, they have a higher disposable income and would willingly spend for the safe spaces they have an otherwise hard time finding. "Entrepreneurs always look at opportunities that generate revenue and contribute to profitability. Their orientation adds value as a by-product of being affirmative and inclusive of a progressive community," says Keshav Suri, the Executive Director of Lalit Suri Hospitality Group which runs Kitty Su. It is important to note that both these sources analyse the benefits of these enterprises/spaces solely in terms of financial profits and not in terms of social or political gains. *Their aim isn't to be inclusive or progressive, it is to extract money.*

Most marginalised communities face discrimination based on hereditary factors such as caste, race, and religion. Institutional mechanisms prevent people from certain castes, religions, and races, from having equal access to education, jobs, and housing. Thus, a disproportionate amount of these communities remain in lower-income groups as a result of the systemic oppression they have faced. In contrast, it is not as easy to pick out and segregate someone who is queer and cisgender. While certain surnames make you less likely to get into a private school and certain skin colours make you less likely to get a job, it isn't as easy to identify a member of the queer community. This makes it harder to exclude them from these educational and vocational opportunities. A significant factor defining wealth is inherited or accumulated wealth that has been passed down in your family for generations. This makes the queer community the perfect group for business ventures to target. They desperately want a safe space, and there exists large groups of them that can afford to pay a lot of money for it.

However, like all spoils of war, these commodified spaces come with significant drawbacks. Supporting these spaces does not in any way support the queer community, it only supports the company making the money. The primary purpose of these establishments is financial, they will cease to exist if there is no more profit to be made. As a result, the space formed is temporary and provisional. It is hard to find solace or refuge in a space you cannot trust will exist the next time you might need it. These spaces cannot act as safe spaces due to their impermanence. Corporatised spaces reproduce existing heteronormative class, caste and patriarchal structures. They survive by charging high fees and cannot be inclusive to those who cannot afford them. As a result, the attendees are largely homogeneous, sharing cultural, economic and social backgrounds. This creates the notion of the 'appropriate' queer — one who is educated, well-dressed and well-spoken. The experiences of those who do not fit these criteria are disregarded, which only furthers existing class and caste divides.

The availability of private queer spaces in Delhi is not a result of liberal people or the public growing averse to social discrimination. It is because the community can be profited off of. As long as the movement can be commodified, it is valid. This is not to say that these places should not continue to be frequented. They might still be enjoyable for the occasional day or night out. However, it is important to be critical of their nature and the purpose of their creation. Your gratefulness for their existence shouldn't lie with the corporations that built them, but with the activists that made them possible.

BUDGET 2021-22: A PANACEA FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY?

By Aliva Smruti & Arundhati Rajan



At the beginning of this financial year, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman declared that this union budget would be something that “has never been seen before” in a hundred years. Given that the world was tackling and adjusting to the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic that was inflicting widespread economic damage. The lockdown ceased most of the economic activities, repercussion of which were in the forms of unemployment and very low output. There was a general trend of low investment before the pandemic and the loss in demand only worsened the situation. Projects turned NPA’s and bank balance sheet deteriorated. This constrained banks from giving loans even with RBI creating liquidity in the system. In face of these condition, general policy prescription was keeping the fiscal policy loose. The counter cyclical action could mostly be done by expansion of government expenditure. Thus, the significance of the budget rose considerably and it was viewed as an instrument that could provide relief and lead the country towards the path of recovery.

Although the government has not opted for aggressive spending, the finance minister attempted to deliver on the promise of recovery from recession, by focussing on using fiscal stimulus. Additionally, the revenue collected in FY2020-21 were lower than estimated and future projections for revenue more conservative since the economy is in a phase of recovery. Thus, this budget appears to be debt-funded as most of the heavy lifting has been done by expanding the governments balance sheet. However, higher borrowing may push up interest rates and turn inflationary which could dent investment and may prove to lower growth.

With India’s vulnerable position with rating agencies and international market the government instead kept focus on a gradual fiscal consolidation in line with the recommendation of 15th Finance Commission. This decision, however, could prove to be costly affair for India. The plan charted out by the 15th Finance Commission indicates the possibility of the base-effect induced bounce wearing off. Nominal GDP growth is expected to slow down from 14.4% in 2021-22 to 9.5% in 2022-23 — implying a real GDP growth of only around 5%. Given that economic growth had slowed down before the pandemic, the calls for government spending at that point in time were unmet and it is a possibility that by the time growth recovers, the effects of a second round of weak balance sheets of corporates and income losses might work their way into the system. Thus, premature consolidation might hamper growth prospects and end up being counterproductive for debt and growth sustainability.

Given that debt funding was constrained the government plans to generate non-tax revenue through disinvestment and monetisation of assets. Disinvestment plays a pivotal role in the budget which targets to raise INR 175 thousand crore. This target is slightly less than the target for the previous union budget. However, the target seems more achievable and may emerge as a key source of revenue in the coming financial year. This disinvestment will be attained through privatization that might attract prospective buyers and make public sector undertaking (PSU) more efficient. Additionally, The government has decides to privatise two public sector banks and one general insurance company is a significant structural reform towards garnering more efficiency into the system.

Moreover, various ministerial projects and sector-based allocations have been prioritized in the new budget. But expenditure on subsidies were cut and expected direct cash transfer were missing from the budget. Further, with the tax brackets remaining the same, attempts have been made to reduce regressivity and increase efficiency in tax collection. Levying these have been criticised as they are not part of the divisible-pool of taxes. With sectors like health care becoming a key area of expenditure, there is an ongoing debate of reduction in centrally sponsored schemes and more revenue to states in its place. This would allow for more discretion and presumably efficient allocation.

Other key expenditure of the government is the investment in infrastructure. This is expected to provide income opportunities and allow for consumption to recover. Along with these two institutions have been proposed to be set up— Asset Reconstruction Company Limited and Asset Management Company and bad bank, were created to manage the stressed balance sheets of the banks. This will allow banks to give loans and increase investment in the system. This would create a cycle of employment creation, consumption demand increase and further investment leading to higher growth potential.

Therefore, to summarize, the focus of the budget lied on increasing expenditure to revive growth. Adherence to the implementation of counter cyclical fiscal policy tax rates remained the same and various measures of disinvestment were taken. Lastly, to keep the interest rate and inflation from increasing, a fiscal consolidation pathway was specified that targets a time period of three years; this was done to keep debt sustainable and to keep the outlook of international markets and rating agencies favourable. However, experts are far from satisfied with the measures taken by the budget and are sceptical about its sustainability. Hopefully, the unravelling of the financial year may align with the predictions made by the government, or cast more doubts on India’s financial future.



POWERPLAY- EXPLORING US MILITARY BASES AS A FORM OF NEOCOLONIALISM

By Diya Narag

Introduction

Military bases can be defined as enclaves that have some of the characteristics of extra-territoriality. They are militarized areas under the control of another state for the purpose of training, troop deployment, as well as the amassing of equipment and soldiers. Men of foreign nationality are posted at these bases and are permitted to bring their families to live near them. They have an impact on the national territory of the host state and, primarily, on the local community.

Hard power is generally defined as the ability to compel a state to act in a certain way. Hard-power strategies focus on military intervention, coercive diplomacy, and economic sanctions to further one's national interest. Joseph S. Nye contends that soft power instead relies on the ability to persuade others to do something, where consent is moulded according to the needs of dominant power over a subordinate state. In turn, the most recent literature has introduced the term 'smart power'. Understanding one's goals and capabilities are critical, as is the proper selection of tools and the timing to deploy them. The deployment of foreign troops has combined both hard and soft power tactics to keep anti-militarist factions in Japan at bay and the locals tolerant to the occupation for decades, shaping the base's economic, social and cultural profile over 60 years.

Neo-colonialism

According to Gayatri Spivak, neocolonialism is not just an economic world order but the political, military, and ideological facets involved. Okinawa is a site of multiple US bases and suffers from a political status referred to as "double-colonization" first colonized by Japan and subsequently by the USA.

Economic militarization followed physical militarization. Roads leading to the gates of military bases began to be filled with small businesses catering to U.S. military personnel, such as bars, souvenir shops, hotels, etc. Hence, patron-client relationships between U.S. personnel and Okinawans were established. Here the idea of 'smart power' politics emerges, where an economic system is built around the base.

The biggest flipside is that the bases occupy about 20% of the main island of Okinawa, strongly constraining traffic, which is constantly congested. With the urbanization of the last forty years, the bases have increasingly impinged on local communities in terms of noise and pollution. They represent a real obstacle to the implementation of an economic development policy or urban planning by some municipalities.

Army Wives, Sex Trade Nexus and Sexual Assault

Alexandra Hyde did a study on military wives in a British army base in Germany. She pointed out how the military establishment had made several moves to make the base more 'family friendly'. She noted that women felt they exercised autonomy, though their area of action was constrained by expectations of the command, their husbands, and other wives. Yet while no explicit command existed that prevented women from doing anything they wanted, a subtle nexus of pressure was present that deprived women of their free choice.

Social militarization led to the US military forces establishing a licensing system to issue an 'A sign' to local establishments approved for US forces and their families. Such segregation took place in special entertainment public places, where hygiene was seen as a problem for US personnel only.

Conclusion

Not only do the global designs of a male-dominated, masculine and patriarchal institution like the military has impacts on the spaces of everyday life but also they are enabled by the practices in those spaces, according to Cynthia Enloe. Given this, these spaces are also sites of resistance to those practices. Activists in communities adjacent to bases have long challenged the idea that the security of their bodies, homes, and communities should be sacrificed for the cause of 'national security'. Women scholars have questioned the scale at which security ought to be considered but also how security might best be promoted through demilitarization.

Important questions to be asked are how you define the line between impunity enjoyed by men in and why this should be an integral aspect when defining the impact of hard-power politics in host countries. In Cynthia Enloe's words 'The International is Personal too' and one needs to look at the legal ramifications of such exploitation and how exactly they would take place.

LATENT GENDER NORMATIVITY – A ROADBLOCK FOR FEMINISM

By Riyosha Sharma



In 2018, Freddy McConell, a transgender man, gave birth to a son. It was a fascinating anomaly, challenging gender roles in the extremist form. Even though he lost the case to be legally recognised as his son's father instead of mother, the objection stems from the argument that the parent who undergoes the physical and biological process to deliver a baby must be deemed the mother, regardless of the person's gender. In either case, there is no denying the fact that a man gave birth, displaying the most defining and 'feminine' traits of all. Freddy McConell and Thomas Beatie, while taking these historical steps, challenged one of the most fundamental gender roles – child bearing – which prompts us to question our understanding of gender and ask, what makes one a man or a woman?

Earlier conversations around this issue started with Simone de Beauvoir. She made a radical claim in 1949, in *The Second Sex* – “One is not born, but rather becomes, woman”. It propounded that the quality of being biologically female does not automatically make one a woman. In fact, according to her, “not every female human being is necessarily a woman”. It says that biology does not determine the condition of being a woman or feminine, but one's situation and social conditions do. And although Beauvoir does not explicitly claim it, the same clause applies to men too. In simpler terms, gender does not come naturally, but its ideals are structurally fed into men and women, giving the illusion that masculinity or femininity are natural or essential features of men and women. In mainstream media, a man is 'too feminine' if he wears nail polish, a woman is 'not feminine enough' when she does not remove her body hair. Such ideals restrict an individual to a very small space of expression. Interestingly enough, these restrictions are actually ironical and contradictory to the notion of biology or natural gender. If indeed one's gender is biologically determined, and I, for instance, am a man, then none of my actions could possibly be anything but masculine. Just like every characteristic displayed by a tree is automatically its natural characteristic, so should have been the case with gender. But it is not. Instead we can see how society tries to enforce gender norms on different people, based on their sex. Humans do not decide what properties or traits any non-human objects or beings have – we merely observe and note them, whatever they may be, and deem them natural. Why is it then that a man wearing a skirt does not determine what masculinity is, but the other way round?

Alternatively, let us say that the ideas of femininity and masculinity drastically change but are still exclusive and normative. Taking the same example of career fields, one may value feminine traits over masculine and another masculine over feminine, leading to the first field hiring majorly women and second majorly men, creating local hierarchies. Again, an illusion of overall balance will be created, yet discrimination based on gender would certainly not be avoided.

This obviously does not imply that the concept of gender needs to be forgotten. It exists and has very real implications in our lives, but we must empower individuals to comfortably define what their masculinity, femininity, or other gender expression is. Rather than society enforcing a standard definition of the genders, each individual should have the power to subjectively define what their gender and gender identity is. Thus, it is not enough to demand equality without a complete reassessment of gender categories and traits. But this idea has been slow to be accepted. Some radical feminists, for instance, strongly oppose the inclusion of trans women as women. In 1978, the Lesbian Organisation of Toronto wrote that 'a person cannot just join the oppressed by fiat' and that biological males cannot speak for women by calling themselves women. These feminists are called Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists (TERFs) who largely believe that trans women's inclusion in women spaces masks their male privilege. At the same time, they still consider trans men to be women. Lierre Keith claims that femininity is behaviour that is ritualized submission resulting from women's socialisation since birth, and gender is more an unchangeable caste position than identity, which is deeply problematic. It yet again propounds a definitive idea of femininity and womanhood, and even evokes absurd questions – would one cease to be a woman if they do not exhibit such submissive behaviour?

Even if one tries to define a woman (or a man) according to certain experiences, according to Butler, there would be many discrepancies across different social groups like class, race, caste, nationality and more, which would make it impossible to settle on one single definition. She argues that in pursuit of replacing biologically deterministic definitions of women, feminism has created different socially constructed definitions that are equally restrictive. The expectations and experiences of different genders in different social groups are different. The social reality of a lower caste woman and an upper caste woman are different – one set of experiences cannot define their femininity. In the same way, no one definition can cross-culturally define men. In the end, it is futile and erroneous to even try and define who a woman or a man is. Any attempt to do so could construe latent gender normativity.

These arguments show how an inclusive feminist movement cannot successfully thrive on the pillars of gender normativity. It forms the foundation of patriarchy, and it is essential to discourage standard gender ideals not only in the most blatantly sexist forms but in every form. Otherwise, we will face many ideological roadblocks and will cease to be inter-sectional and inclusive.



COVID VACCINE: A NEW FORM OF INEQUALITY

By Shikar

The pandemic, for as long as it goes on, becomes more and more likely to create more resistant mutations that can give rise to further waves of the pandemic. The virus cannot be eradicated in only select parts of the world while allowing it to rage on elsewhere. This is because there is no guarantee that the current vaccines will protect the inoculated against new strains that can develop in the future. So it makes sense that countries should unite and fight to eradicate the virus across the globe in an equitable fashion.

The COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access facility (COVAX) is an initiative by the WHO which was established for the distribution of the vaccine throughout the world in an equitable manner. The plan is to distribute the vaccine into phases. In the first phase, countries will get vaccines according to the proportion of the population, enough to vaccinate 3% of the population most vulnerable to contracting the disease like the frontline workers treating patients. Then the vaccine will be made available to 20% of the population who are at the highest risk such as the elderly and people with comorbidities.

In the second phase, the vaccine should be given to people according to how the disease is spreading after the first phase and how the country's healthcare system is able to cope with it. Eventually, the global population would be vaccinated. 190 countries had joined this program by January 2021. The USA, after Biden was elected, joined the program in February. The plan is that higher- and middle-income countries will be paying for their vaccine doses while the lowest-income countries would be given the vaccines for free. As this is a worldwide global health problem where eradication is absolutely necessary, this is quite a fair way of vaccine rollout.

Sadly that is not what is happening. There is a new form of inequality that is being observed which can be termed as "vaccine inequality". Under COVAX, countries can also make bilateral agreements with vaccine manufacturers to directly buy vaccines outside of the program for their own country. This meant that as soon as regulatory approval was given to vaccines, richer countries rushed in to place massive pre-orders for the vaccines that are to be produced. In terms of numbers, for example, richer countries comprising only 14% of the world population had already pre-ordered 80% of the estimated entire production of Pfizer's vaccine for 2021.

Vaccine companies are making the vaccines available to richer countries that are able to purchase higher quantities and that pre-ordered at an early stage at lower prices. For example, European Union members will pay \$2.16 for individual AstraZeneca shots while South Africa will have to pay \$5.25 (about two and a half times more) for the same. Richer countries with much more spending power can afford to make pre-orders on vaccines that have less than a hundred per cent guarantee of working. As a result, vaccine companies looking to fund their own manufacturing will be agreeable to make these deals with these countries. Now, after the vaccine has been released and proven to be effective, the company will have less incentive to offer the vaccine at a lower price. The variation in prices of the vaccines available is exorbitantly large: from \$2.19 to \$44.

The companies that are manufacturing vaccines have received an unprecedented amount of public funding and therefore, it is perceived by many global organizations like the WHO and Doctors Without Borders that the public has a right to get these vaccines at a nominal rate. For example, six of the most popular vaccines: AstraZeneca/Oxford University, Johnson&Johnson/BiologicalE, Pfizer/BioNTech, GlaxoSmithKline/Sanofi Pasteur, Novavax/Serum Institute of India, and Moderna/Lonza has been given about \$12 billion dollars of public funding that has gone into the research and development of the vaccines. But the deals that the companies are now making with governments are shrouded in secrecy, regarding the terms of payments and such other integral details. The companies are also not willing to disclose the cost of making each vaccine, so it is difficult to gauge how much they are profiting from them.

Reportedly, Bill Gates too had thrown his support against the proposal. Gates had argued that approving the proposal would not have made any difference because it would have taken a lot of resources to make generic versions of these vaccines because of their complicated nature. But Doctors Without Borders stated that Pfizer and Moderna vaccines can be produced much more easily provided that they share their knowledge. There are tens of thousands of factories in the developing world that can scale up production rapidly if only the companies share the technical know-how. Another possibility that could have been was the Covid-19 Technology Access Pool (CTAP) proposed by Costa Rica and supported by the WHO. But the richer countries have refused to join in and only 40 developing countries have joined. Thus, it has not proven to be effective but it shows what could have been if things had taken a different path. Strong institutional support and global cooperation could have allowed for equitable vaccination which would have been beneficial for all. But the pharmaceutical industry successfully lobbied for higher profits and continued to keep the world on its incompetent, unjust, and inequitable path.

HEIGHTENING HYDROPOWER: DEVELOPMENT OR DEVASTATION IN THE HIMALAYAS?

By Anaya Vhavle



The Himalayas includes some of the highest mountain peaks in the world and covers an area of about 5 lakh km², approximately 16.2% of the country's total geographical area. Being one of the world's youngest fold mountain ranges, the Himalayas are prone to flooding, seismic activity, erosion, and severe landslides, which makes the region vulnerable and ecologically fragile. Despite the environmental risks, the mountain range has the highest density of dams as the flow of the Himalayan rivers makes them ideal for tapping hydropower. While hydroelectric projects are seen as a way of creating economic growth in the region, the negative impact and negative externalities outweigh the benefits received by locals. The socio-economic activities of the locals are heavily dependent on their interaction with the rich and diverse natural resources in the area and are characterized by the sustainable utilisation of these resources and indigenous practices. There is no doubt that this region is in need of economic improvement.

The Himalayas as the Holy Grail for Harnessing Hydropower

Hydroelectric projects are projected not only as a way to meet India's growing energy demands at a low cost but also as a mainstay for increasing economic activity and tax revenue. With the aim of harnessing the power potential promptly, the state government, such as that of Himachal Pradesh, decided to adopt a multi-strategy for hydropower development through its private, state, central, and joint sectors. Despite dams being a clear risk multiplier, the pro-dam discourse acknowledges hydropower as a simple, sustainable, and clean alternative energy source that is requisite for development objectives such as poverty reduction.

Economic and Environmental Risks

There are two sides to the economic impact of dams can have positive effects, such as higher income and better infrastructure if the revenues from electricity generation and shared with local communities. They can equally have negative impacts if private players and middlemen derail revenues from local communities, along with the costs associated with negative externalities such as the loss of arable agricultural land, loss of biodiversity due to deforestation and recuperating from natural disasters.

Moreover, damming seismically sensitive areas is counterproductive — when disaster strikes, both labour and capital are destroyed. In fact, in the recent Tapovan Tragedy, the Vishnugad Hydroelectric Project, a large-scale project, was greatly damaged. Its construction began all the way back in 2006 and it was scheduled to be commissioned in 2012–2013. The 2013 disaster caused severe damage to the infrastructure and the project is yet to be completed even today. There have been countless delayed projects and they all incur high overrun costs and this challenges their economic viability.

Seeing Through the Development Narrative

“Development” and “industrialisation” are often used interchangeably, but it would be dangerous to equate the two. The frequent natural disasters in the region are a testament to the fact that “development” is anything but sustainable. As per a DownToEarth article by Sunita Narain, most hydroelectric projects do not plan to release water in the river during lean months. Large-scale construction of dams involves blasting to build tunnels and barrages and have devastating impacts on the mountains. Adding to the environmental risk, construction usually takes place without the necessary safety and environmental precautions. Further, most projects don't take the key aspect of the capacity of a structure to endure intense seismic shocks. Even the EIA reports are inadequate assessments of geological and environmental impacts. Disaster management is abysmal, governments and dam developers pay no heed to geological assessments and repeatedly ignore risk warnings. The cost of environmental degradation is a hidden, invisible cost; the economic costs associated with these environmental risks may not seem obvious at first or have immediate effects but become evident in the long run.

There is a gap between the proposed benefits of dams and the actual outcomes. The uneven distributional effects and lack of equity question the usefulness of dams in meeting energy and water supply requirements. Hydroelectric projects have exacerbated income inequality in the region. As stated by Dufflo and Pande, Dams epitomize the fact that economic gains often come at the cost of making some groups worse off. Dam construction has created identifiable losers — locals whose land has been used for these projects, and the people who depend on forests (that have been destroyed to make way for these projects) for their livelihoods.

The trade-off between economic development and the environment can't be a dichotomous case, policymakers and governments must look to strike a balance between the two. The important question to ask here, is, who is the “development” for? Who will be the real beneficiaries of these projects?

TECHNOLOGY V/S MANUAL LABOUR: THE LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT

By Vidhi Gupta



Technology has always been considered as the path that would open a world of new opportunities for people and increase their standard of living. However, work, which today, can be done using new technology, was earlier done by manual labour. How then, has the advent of technology affected the employment trends in India? This case of Technological Unemployment has been on the rise ever since machines were introduced to 'reduce' manual labour. As a result, many labourers and daily wage workers were left unemployed. It can be seen that when there is a mismatch between the skills of the employee and the skills demanded by the employer, there exists an involuntary unemployment called Structural Unemployment. The most common example can be that of the decline of the handloom industry with the advent of the mechanized loom.

Technology has brought rapid growth and industrialization to the economy. While it has increased the number of jobs and founded IT as a whole new sector, however, because of this growth, the skills of the employees and the demands of the employers drastically changed. As more jobs were created in IT, the requirement for the same decreased in other sectors like manufacturing or agriculture. In the case of daily wage workers, they have a limited set of skills and usually lack access to improve them. So, when IT created more jobs, it also, as a consequence, increased unemployment. The gap between the haves and the have-nots kept increasing because the daily wage workers, employed in factories or farms, did not have the financial resources, access or even the motive to gain these skills. The most basic requirement being education was not fulfilled as the common belief held was that immediate money was better than an investment like education.

For many years now, Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee have argued that rapid advances in computer technology has resulted in the declining rates of employment in the last 10-15 years. They claimed that technology is destroying jobs faster than creating them. This is true even more so for the manufacturing sector. In 2015, a report by Carl Benedikt Frey, Michael Osborne and Citi Research found that innovation had disrupted jobs for mostly middle skilled workers and that in the next 10 years would also impact the low skilled workers. In recent times, due to the pandemic, while the economy stagnated, the world shifted to digital platforms. In some sense, it can be said that it led to greater development, however, the impact it left on the daily wage workers was far greater. As dependence on technology increased, almost every industry switched to online platforms to continue work. This greatly affected people in remote areas who did not even have access to the internet. Schools started using online learning as a method of continuing education and a work-from-home culture was adopted by offices. However, a daily wage worker whose only skill was manual labour could no longer continue working and thus lost his only source of income. Additionally, many students decided to leave school because they did not have access to computers, smart devices or the internet. This only strained the financial situation of the labourers even more. While there are some industries like the construction industry which have not been significantly affected by the advent of technology, the numbers are really less.

Technology is a multifaceted and complex industry and no one reason can be called the cause of a situation. It is a boon and a bane, and in today's scenario, I would call it the latter. Though an idealist's perspective, no development at the expense of someone else's livelihood can be seen as the betterment of society.

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