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"The worst form of inequality is to try to make unequal things equal"

Inequality is all pervasive in society. whether in economic sphere - top 10% owning more than 70% wealth in India (Oxfam report); in social sphere - caste and gender inequality or in political sphere - only 14% women parliamentarians, it's everywhere. However, the biggest injustice that it does is to ignore inequality, assuming equality and even if it accepts, the dominant try to make unequal things equal in their own way and in ^{own} self interest - taking agency away from those who are already

unequal and weak.

One such example is trying to make everyone equal regardless of their customs and practices. Decline of tribal knowledge in Africa is a direct consequence of this.

In this essay we will see the manifestations of this phenomenon in different fields of life. We will also see how, if at all, we should try to make unequal things equal and steps taken in that direction.

Making Unequals Equals

Governments all over the world aim for one magic number the number of GDP, equating this with development and doing everything

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to increase that number without having any regard for the actual needs of people. Cutting down of forests mindlessly to promote agriculture in the Amazon forests by Brazil is an example of how leaders try to make unequal things equal. Here, the effort is to make the pristine ecology, the lungs of the earth into food bowls of the earth.

We see similar approach in India as well. Widening of roads, cutting down of trees and diverting rivers in Himalayas is essentially an effort to make them equal

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to plains in terms of infrastructure. The only problem however is that they are not equal. Himalayas have a fragile ecology and the crisis in Joshimath is not only an example of this but a warning too.

Trying to make tribals equal to city dwellers by making policies in air conditioned rooms, without knowing the needs and full impact of doing this is another such example. British policies in this regard are considered as injustices ~~of~~ ^{done} ~~and~~ to tribals and signify the worst form of inequality.

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In recent times, the demands for reservations by dominant castes trying to equate themselves with the ones who have faced injustices for centuries show utter disregard for justice and is only a form of ~~type~~ inequality. This is so because, they are using their dominant position which is due to inequality to perpetuate the inequality.

Bhagat Singh, a martyr at the age of 23, a scholar and an unparalleled personality of ~~the~~ his time is equated with terrorists by many British historians. Gandhiji is equated with someone who only

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created chaos similar to modern day protesters who harm public property.

Having no regard for the intention is ^{thus} also a way of making unequals equal.

Recently in the 2022 WTO summit, India demanded for a 25 years transition period for developing countries to phase out certain subsidies on fisheries sector.

Not granting that waiver, WTO showed that it treats developed and developing countries equally when they are actually not. Treating a fisherman who catches only 5 kg of fishes per day with a "farmer"

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of developed world who is no less than an industrialist and catches 250 kg of fishes per day is injustice. And this injustice comes from trying to make unequals equals which is thus the worst form of inequality.

Developed countries running away from the common but differentiated responsibilities, trying to install puppet governments in the garb of promoting democracy and leading to many civil wars, Europe using carbon tax without assuming historical responsibility for the emissions are all ~~but~~ examples

of how the powerful try to make unequals equal.

This attempt to make unequals equal attract ~~now~~ a lot of opposition. Chipko movement is one such example. Loss of tribal culture as can be seen from the extinction of Bo language and threats to their traditional knowledge is a direct consequence of this attempt.

However, sometimes due to morality and for the sake of justice it is essential to make unequals equal. But the way in which this must be done must take into consideration all possible

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effects of such attempt. Moreover, the purpose must only be their welfare and there should not be any conflict of interest.

Indian way

India introduced Tribal Panchsheel policy with an aim of integration of tribals in the mainstream society.

However it was on democratic principles of giving agency to tribals by allowing them to excel in their own genius and emphasis was laid on no-overdevelopment.

In order to make poor equal to rich in terms of development India has programmes such as PDS, National Food Security Act, Right to

education Act etc. For doing justice with schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes India has world's largest Affirmative action plan in which 15% and 7.5% reservation is provided in higher education and government jobs.

A target of 33% forest cover, schedule-V and schedule-VI provisions in constitution to ensure development in a customised way as per the actual needs of people, focus on CBDP principles in Global South Summit, introduction of Forest Rights Act - 2006 and changing the wording local phase out to phase down in Glasgow summit - are some other ways in which we are trying to reduce inequality by democratic methods.

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Therefore, inequality should not be treated as inferiority. Diversity in all forms must be appreciated.

Role of governance is to provide opportunities, empowering people to take their own decisions. Forcing one's views because of dominant position and trying to make others conform to our views and thus making unequals as equals is a grave injustice. Forcing a poor man to not take help of his 12 year old child in the field is essentially mocking him. It does not serve any purpose.

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The most humane thing that citizens can do is to accept that there is inequality, accept their privileges and treat others with empathy and not seeing them with pity. Society should embrace the principle of tolerance for differences and should only intervene in cases of grave injustices.

State should focus on good and ethical governance, widen opportunities and bureaucrats should work with the principle of "Seva Parmo Dharma" and having compassion for the vulnerable.

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"The only way to go beyond things,
is to go through them"

Intellectual Property Rights are condemned by many on the ground that they are not suitable for a developing country like India. They reduce the affordability and accessibility for masses of Indians of essential medicines.

However, the intellectual property rights incentivise innovation and encourage risk taking. When a culture of scientific exploration develops, it can lead to competition and eventually better and more affordable products come into the market.

Therefore, in order to move beyond the issues of availability, accessibility and affordability of drugs we have to go through them.

This is also necessary, because ^{only} when we go through pain, we truly understand that and do not want to ~~come~~ go back into that pain. Strong anti Fascist opinion in Germany is an example of this.

In this essay, we will look at how the statement that we need to ~~not~~ go through things in order to go beyond them is applicable in different spheres of life.

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We will also see how that going should be and introducing safeguards so that we don't slip back into where we were.

Going through to go beyond

India aims to reduce its fiscal deficit to 3% of GDP in the long run. However, in order to do that we need to increase our GDP and reduce Government expenditure. Now, if we have a high fiscal deficit, then we can use that money to improve our infrastructure which can improve productivity and thus our GDP. With this, the income of

citizens will increase and Governments' obligations on subsidies can be reduced. Thus, the only way to go beyond high fiscal deficit is to go through high fiscal deficit as can be seen from the examples of most European countries.

In the aftermath of Greece's default on its debt, concerns were raised on the high government debt in other European countries. These countries such as England,

went through austerity measures for prosperity in the future. Thus, the citizens of England

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had to go through pain in the short run to move beyond it in the long run.

Politically, Nehru was a firm believer in Democracy. He insisted and Adult Franchise was included in the constitution. However, this has not ^{been} a smooth experience. We have witnessed President's rules on flimsy grounds, National emergency that threatened the basic liberties of citizens and regularly see protests that prevent progressive reforms for eg against farm laws, Uniform Civil Code and Sabarimala

judgement.

But going through this chaos we are slowly but steadily moving towards a resilient democracy.

As supreme ~~sa~~ court has said that "dissent is a safety valve of democracy", we are trying to embrace dissent and are moving towards a democracy where there is social, economic and political justice.

In our personal lives, when we face a loss of some loved one, we try to keep our mind distracted. We avoid accepting that loss and try to ignore the negative emotions

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coming because of that. This may not be the best strategy though.

Research suggests that in order to truly move on from an unpleasant happening is to accept that, talk about that and to cry if need be. Similarly, in order to remove the stage fear one should get on that stage and faces the audience. In order to improve the score in tests, one should practice as many tests. Thus, the only way to move beyond something is to face that and go through that. Gandhiji, truly grasped the essence behind this, when he said:

"First they will ignore you, then they will laugh at you, ^{then} they will fight you, then you will win."

In the domain of environment, India aims to become net carbon zero country by 2070. But that will not be possible with ~~its~~ millions of its citizens under poverty. Therefore, India's emissions will rise before they will actually come down to zero.

This statement is even true in the fields of health and spirituality. Dengue does not have a vaccine at present. Thus, only way to not get affected by dengue ^{forever}.

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is to actually catch that virus and go through the pain. Similarly, although we all aim for spirituality, we look for materialistic pleasures. This may not be as bad. Because ^{only} after experiencing the materialistic pleasures we can see the pointlessness in those and can move towards spirituality. As it is said:

"A true atheist can only become a true devotee."

India had high birth rates and death rates at the time of independence. In order to get to a place where both the

death rate and birth rate are low, it had to go through a phase of population explosion. However, now with improved life expectancy at 67.6 years, lower IMR, CMR rates, India's

Total fertility rate has reduced to 2.0 and it is moving towards population stability. Thus, moving beyond the problem of ^{high} population growth required India to go through that problem.

However, the going through should not be such that it may reduce the possibility of going beyond. For example - the fiscal deficit

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should not go to such levels that it may threaten the growth in GDP itself. The ~~a~~ Pakistan and Sri Lanka crises are cases in point.

Similarly, going through a phase of sadness should not lead one into a permanent state of depression. Facing the ridicule of people and not doing any effort to improve the speaking skills will not serve any purpose.

In order to avoid getting caught in a spiral, there are certain ways of ~~a~~ going through a period of turbulence.

FRBM Act sets realistic targets for Government to discourage it from using populist measures.

There are efforts to develop vaccines for various diseases so that people do not have to lose their precious life days in getting sick.

Professional help, if needed must be taken in order to get out of mental health issues. One should try to acquire capability, if he thinks that he can do something and really wants to do that. Constant skilling and re-skilling in the era of 4th Industrial revolution is necessary to avoid ^{structural} unemployment.

India has announced in ~~this~~ its Intended Nationally determined contributions, that it will increase the share of renewable energy to 50% of its total requirements. Thus, focus on sustainable development along with the principle of common but differentiated responsibility is needed to prevent irreversible climate change.

The constant debates on institutions' independence for ensuring that populism does not destroy democracy are also essential.

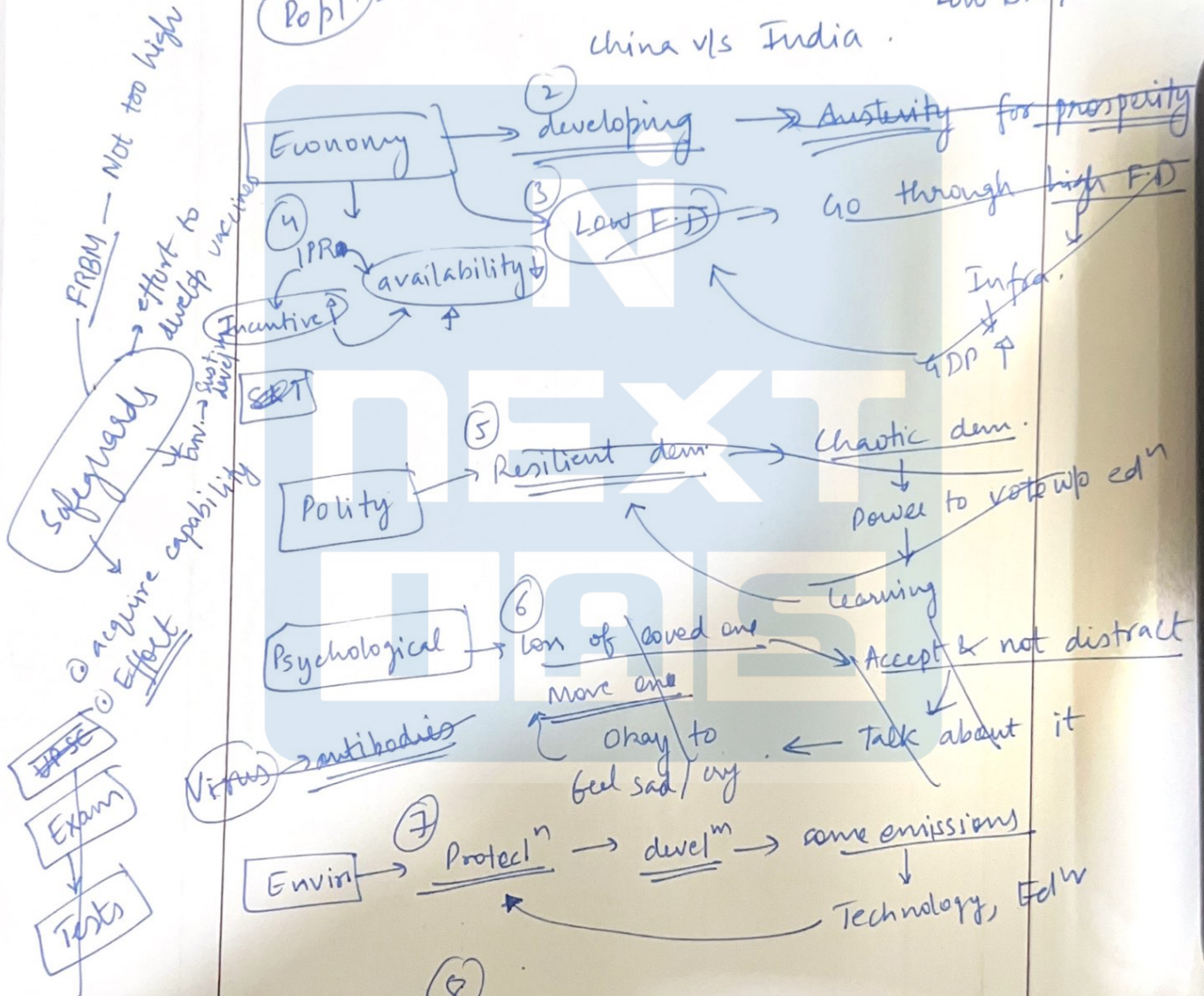
Therefore, individuals, society, and state must recognise the inevitability of going through things to go beyond them. However, the safeguards mentioned must be implemented so that we actually get out of things and don't end up in a spiral. Because, existence may be a science but living is an art - an art of walking, running, falling down, removing obstacles and then running back.

~~USDA~~ Indi ^① Fear of getting ridiculed
 Ignore, laugh, Oppose, Win
 Go through the process.

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The only way to go beyond things, is to go through them.

① $Popl^n \rightarrow Low\ BR, DR \rightarrow Popl^n\ expl^n \rightarrow Stability.$
 Low BR, DR.
 China v/s India.



⑧ Spirituality $\rightarrow$ God does not appear to a hungry man except in the form of a bread.
 Going through materialism & seeing the ^{pointlessness} redundancy of too much.

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