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Social Arrangement with reference to Social Distance and value of Poverty

Molly Charles
Andrew Mohan

Social arrangements shape the process of power struggle and accumulation of wealth by a few groups within the society. While poverty is often considered to be a problem that contributes to slowing down the development process, this paper attempts to look at the manner in which poverty contributes to change in society without being acknowledged, compensated for and its presence being tolerated within varied social distances depending on the functionality of such arrangements.

Social Distance and land Development

Poverty in the city is often seen as an ugly scar and to veil the same from the tourists the main route for transportation is cleared of any manifestation of this disfigurement. Yet these migrant workers have contributed to the development of the city at a faster pace and within financial constraints. From the time of landing in the city, the migrant workers offer a counterpoint for any forceful workforce asking for legitimate rights of work force. Besides slashing the investment on labour, the work force also finds a place to set up their shelter, this invariably is in marshy land which may or may not be within the government plans for city development.

On identification of this space for their future habitation plans, the immigrant invests their money, time, labour and survival innovation towards changing the nature of marshy or tough terrain to be friendly towards human habitation. The change is a gradual process of experimentation and interventions to deal with hazards such as seasonal fluctuations like heavy rainfall. Along with the development of land meant for housing, the surrounding area develops as there is scope for small business ventures. To facilitate trade and transportation, at first a mud road and then tarred roads connect these areas to other spots in the city. Gradually the profile of the area changes and soon the value of land increases and estate agents send fliers for the purchase of the land, the possibility of earning a large sum makes many sell their residence and shift to cheaper spots. The cycle of city development follows various phases: maintaining social distance with migrant labour force, development of land by the labour force, reintegration of a geographical space within the acceptable social milieu as per the values set by the upwardly mobile and middle class and displacement of the migrant labour force to geographical spaces outside the standard of social acceptability. The extent of social difference opted for may vary depending on the need for a comfortable setting away from the city centre or being a part of a temporary structure adjoining roads and stations.

Social Distance and Governance

Democratic process of governance assumes that offering a context to express an individual's choice or act of selection of a representative ensures that a leader with mass support will be elected and he/she will be

accountable to the public and represent their aspiration. This is far from the reality that shades the process of selecting a leader and the supposed accountability to the governance of the electorate who elected the leader.

Unlike use of mass media for creating propaganda and public support, another means for manipulation is the presence of social distance and cultural adherence to existing power structure, which ensures that the elite representative or their candidate can win, at times declared winner unanimously. This is assumed to be the sign of total support and in some instances the leadership is handed down through generations and it is a matter of pride to state that "it has never gone to anyone outside our family circle".

The reality surrounding such democratic representation is but the presence of social distance that has implications of power structure, dependence on elite or certain castes/clans for livelihood and perception that situation cannot change and so the acceptance of the same is the best option. What is portrayed as people's support is but channelling of power to ensure that democratic process is used for ensuring that wheels of power stays within a specified clan/caste or geographical milieu.

Areas where social distance has been overcome through macro and micro level changes are locations where social movements used conflict to bring about change. Here the process of traditional handing over of power is not accepted as normal and done thing and public do have a say in the public expenditure. Movement towards achieving any form of redistribution cannot occur through administrative directives and it is the social distance and exclusion that is creating a comfortable ground for the elite to rule that too within the guise of it being a viable democratic system. The false presentation that there is scope for individual freedom and growth is used to strengthen the present political structure and ideology.

Social Distance and Live Training Field

Another instance where social arrangement ensures that social distance contributes to vested interests is seen in the area of bio technological advancement and nuclear waste disposal process. Social distance offers scope for reducing the adverse consequences for political, social, health and moral implications of such ventures. This is seen at level of the nations and state level.

From the stage of conducting experimentation, to holding trials in different setting and its final marketing products from innovation in pharmaceutical industries, agro industries and nuclear or arm industries the skewed impact of social distance is very evident though manifestation differs as to whether it is across nations, states or across class/caste. The standards of justice is set by the powerful under basic assumption that they are refined and capable of making distinction as to when and where is the appropriate moment to experiment with their innovations, use products or strategies for self protection or to dispose of outdated products under the guise of some functional purpose during crisis situation when reason take a back seat.

Instances of disposal of expired medicines during disaster in developing countries is an illustration of the same, where disproportionate value of live based on region, race and class is evident. Another instance of such differential status given is seen in use of missiles and other means for self protection based on skewed logic of political and cultural intolerance. The casual manner of response or accountability when facts illustrates that these assumptions are based on convenient perceptions of truth to create an self indulgent global picture for intervention also indicates that there is a difference in right to justice.

It is the presence of social distance and imbalance based on monetary level that gives the advantaged group, to conceive, to experiment, to market and popularise their products. The advantage the presence of social distance gives to the powerful is clear when it is acceptable by all that only compensation the disadvantaged group can demand is money in return for loss of human lives, environmental damage and long term harm on quality of human existence.

Social Distance and Sedating through Dreams

Marketing of dreams through films and other media, especially through visual imagery reduces the risks of social conflict bringing about change. As visual imagery can be controlled and marketed utilising psychological techniques, behaviour modification becomes a lucrative industry and creates an acceptable form of opium for the masses. Instead of information dissemination it is seen as a tool for marketing sensuality of various forms and creating myths of success that are linked to consumer goods and the associated imagery of a successful life.

This visual industry provides scope for self-identification and an associated feeling of success whether through original products or their imitation. In addition to this virtual reality is taking over as a safe mechanism to deal with difficult life circumstances that can bring social change. The dream industry facilitates a small percentage of the population to reap benefits and those who bear the brunt of present social distance are purchasing these dreams at the cost of giving away any scope for conflict and probable social change.

Organising and marketing systems of control within existing social arrangement ensures myths based on race, clan or ethnic identity can be marketed and maintained and is emerging as a lucrative industry. Associational factors that evoke strong emotions are used to create, exaggerate and generalise fears linked to cultural and clan differences. The ecological niche carved by marginalised population based on available resources and social acceptance strengthens these myths and increases their marketability. To maintain control legal measures are put in place, which contribute towards maintaining this distance directly or indirectly. Often members of disadvantaged groups are also available as disposable actors in the extensive system of the control machinery.

Conclusion

At different levels the existence of social distance and disparity is contributing towards the strengthening of the position of power of a select few groups or countries. These social arrangements have been possible because social constructs have emerged as to what is to be considered to be criminal or unethical, and who has the right for self-preservation, extent of permissible political tolerance and the right to disassociate from actions based on resources available and implication of these acts on environment across geographical space and time period.

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