

# Flawed Idea of Justice

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The questions of antagonism, hegemony and imperialism are missing in Amartya Sen's treatise *The Idea of Justice*. One cannot comprehensively understand the notions of justice and injustice without addressing these core issues.

Distinguished professor and Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, in his recent book, *The Idea of Justice* has taken a pragmatic approach by pondering over the idea of enhancement of justice by removal of injustice instead of imagining an a priori perfect just society, or identifying "perfectly just" social arrangements or just institutions. Sen has also emphasised public reasoning and public debates for alternative visions of removing injustice. Thus, Sen's idea of justice is pluralist in character with a democratic engagement with varied positions and yet with possibilities to arrive at certain collective outcomes. Sen's book holds merit as it only seeks to search for an idea of justice rather than answering "what is justice" and does not make a grand claim that "this is justice". Sen's approach is not to provide an "ideal, perfect, just society theory" but to look at alternative ways of removing injustices or how injustices can be minimised in comparative approaches or "realisation-focused comparison" as he claims in extending the legacies of Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Marquis de Condorcet, Mary Wollstonecraft and Karl Marx while differing with the "transcendental institutionalism" of contractarian theorists like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant and John Rawls. According to Sen, the contractualists believed in an ideal, perfect, just society theory on the basis of transcendentalism to find perfectly ideal, just social arrangements while the comparative framework theorists were interested in removing injustices in varied ways. The merits of Sen's approach to justice lies in the fact that it tries to make a distinguished contribution by differing with Kant's notion of "perfect justice", Aristotle's "universal justice" and Rawls' preoccupation with justice and moral rights.

The book, in this writer's opinion, however, has several deficiencies. In this article we will critically engage with Sen, and

try to point out some ontological, epistemological and methodological limits in Sen's idea of justice. As Sen himself says, quoting Bernard Williams, "disagreement does not necessarily have to be overcome" (p 14). Before one starts theorising about removing injustice as Sen has done, it would be worth asking first about the ontological and existential question of injustice itself. That is to say, how injustices occur and exist in society? One can argue that injustices are functions of specific power relations in society, where the unjust conditions of plebs are the results of certain policies of the power bloc. Hence, antagonism is a constitutive part of any society. We cannot therefore address the question of justice while focusing on removing injustice without analysing and removing antagonism prevalent in society. The present crisis in the form of economic inequalities, unemployment, global capitalist exploitation of environment and the crisis of "global violence" (or global terrorism) would be unresolved if the antagonistic power relations across the world continue to exist.

Regarding "public reasoning", one can ask the following questions: who would decide the rules and regulations of public debates and public reasoning in a world controlled by the corporate media? Who would win public debates in favour of justice and against injustice? Can there be such an ideal situation of democratic dialogue between utilitarian, egalitarian and no-nonsense libertarian as Sen has portrayed in his ideal scheme of things? Or would not the pragmatic reality be very different – that of an "impossible dialogue" precisely because the very different positions on justice fundamentally disagree with one another and has an inbuilt narcissism within each one of them, claiming: "our path is the right path", based on their reason. Therefore, reasoning as a value is neither autonomous nor impartial, but whether a hegemonic universal reason is dominant or ruling the society is a significant question to pose. In this respect, we can remind Marx-Engels' famous proclamation in *The German Ideology*: "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas". In that case,

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“the idea of justice” and “ways to remove injustice” become a game of contesting positions struggling for hegemony. Therefore, setting the rules of such a game of contesting positions and the final outcome of that game is dependent on winning and losing parties of hegemonic struggle of contesting positions. Moreover, there cannot be any “neutral authority” setting the rules of public reason and public debates because authority by definition is linked with power and the historic experience of human existence shows us that power is never innocent or impartial but has a motive to fulfil, and thus open to manipulation by the dominant power bloc for its own vested interests. In this respect, Sen does not engage with the concept of hegemony, which actually derives from the antagonistic nature of human society fractured with varied ethico-political positions and distinct politico-ideological articulations.

### Question of Political Struggle

It is indeed surprising that even if Gramsci is listed as a “political radical” (p 121), Sen only places him within the categories of “entanglements, language and communication” and describes him as an influence on Cambridge economist Piero Sraffa, who, in turn, influenced the great 20th century philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein (pp 119-21) and not as an original Marxist thinker, who introduced the concept of hegemony as a key tool to understand politics.<sup>1</sup> We can further clarify that the struggle to ensure justice or removing injustice to arrive at relatively more just conditions via Sen’s approach is intricately connected to the question of political struggle to win hegemony over the rest of the population. The population in a society can be politically convinced for a particular version of justice or ways of removing injustice by consultations, consent, democratic participations, etc. If a particular version of justice is superimposed from top, then hegemony nonetheless can be established, but with coercive mechanisms, which in a way can also invite resistance/challenge to the hegemonic formation/power bloc and thus can limit its scope of operation. In that circumstance, the very notion of a hegemonic idea of justice and its moral authority that is established through an

authoritarian imposition from above than hegemonic formation from below with people’s consent and active participation in championing a version of justice can be questioned/collapsed with new possibilities of struggle for liberation from a repressive notion of justice.

In case of a repressive power, the normative idealism of “just society” itself becomes relegated to redundancy with the emergence of realism, where only power, and remaining seated in power becomes an ideal. Thus, ideals like justice or removing injustice only become an illusionary veil to camouflage the hidden goal of the political act of achieving power. In such a situation, the promise and hope of establishing a just society or removing injustices is a political project of the present. The promise of justice or removing injustice is made to the people at the current conjuncture (now) for political mobilisation to establish a “relatively new just society” in the near future. Now, regarding the absence of hegemony as a core concept in Sen’s work, there are two more issues which need to be addressed. First, any normative concept such as justice, liberty, equality, freedom, etc, are historically specific and are therefore contingent on specific time and space. For example, there was a point of time in human history where the verdict of a clan leader or emperor was seen as justice from a legalistic point of view. Similarly, ancient Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle did not argue that the existence of slaves in their societies is fundamentally unjust. Secondly, any normative concept like justice, liberty, equality, freedom, etc, also has a class/group underpinning. Thus, which class/group gets justice at the expense of whom and furthermore, who decides what is just and what is unjust, much akin to the Nietzschean problem of who decides good and evil (Nietzsche 2003, 1997) is a significant question to pose, which Sen has not asked precisely because of his complete debunking of the concept of hegemony in his writings.

Now, one might argue that Sen’s project of removing injustices instead of giving the call for a transcendental perfect just society has merit because the history of human existence has so far shown that no society has been absolutely just and even

after eventful political transformations such as the Spartacus slave revolt, English Revolution, French Revolution, Russian Revolution, Chinese Revolution, Iranian Islamic Revolution, national liberation and decolonisation. After the transformation of the post-war welfare state to the retreat of the welfare state with the emergence of neo-liberal consensus, justice has not been ensured to significant sections of population in those societies and indeed we find new forms of injustices haunting the world. However, it can be definitely argued that some of the above-mentioned political transformations have made advancements in making societies relatively more just, while eliminating certain injustices like abolition of slavery, disbandment of private armies of propertied classes, concentrated focus on social sectors like health and education, etc. On the other hand, in the current neo-liberal dispensation, we find just concerns for environment and “right to information” by carving out a space for governmental accountability and responsibility to the public, but at the same time, we can also witness new forms of injustices with financial crisis and its negative effects on employment and income, socialisation of corporate losses by bailing out big capital with public money, offering “social bribes” (Patnaik 2006) in the name of corporate tax concessions, land grabbing and expropriation of the peasant economy coupled with agrarian crisis in many developing countries, the retreat of welfarist policies, etc. Since, Sen’s book is written for our times, he does not offer us any solution how we can make societies relatively just in the midst of neo-liberal hegemony. Rather his arguments can well be sufficient to sustain a neo-liberal dispensation as we will see next on the question of imperialism.

### Vehicles of US Imperialism

Sen argues that the United Nations, many non-governmental organisation’s (NGO) and parts of the news media have a positive role to play in ensuring global democracy characterised by global reasoning (pp 408-09). One can raise an empirico-factual question as to how the UN, NGOs and media are going to facilitate global democracy when more often than not, they are sold to corporate interests

and have been the vehicles of us imperialism for quite sometime now. Therefore, Sen's idea of justice cannot be plural but partial, since the prevalent conditions of several forms of antagonism expressed in the phenomenon of poverty, inequality, illiteracy, health hazards, undemocratic international (dis)order are consequences of corporate model of neo-liberal capitalism. Already, Partha Chatterjee has incisively shown us that "empire's vision is a global democracy" (Chatterjee 2004: 100). In fact, institutions like the UN, NGOs and media that Sen has so much hope for and trust in, have themselves contributed in sustaining the current unjust imperialist system. Thus, it can be argued that Sen's vision of furthering the reach of global democracy basically overlaps with the project of American empire (remember, the rhetoric of successive American presidents in favour of "global democracy" even with unjust wars but justifying those heinous acts in the cause of democracy, peace, freedom and justice). One can identify the logic of empire in the intellectual

argument in the idea of "global democracy" and "global justice" mediated through imperialist agencies like the UN, World Trade Organisation (WTO), NGOs and corporate media.

Sen tries to make a happy harmony, arguing in favour of a global dialogue between the imperialist power bloc alliance of Washington, London, Paris and Tokyo with "anti-globalisation protests" (p 409). Since events like invasion of Iraq, Afghanistan, "global terrorism", global economic crises, activities of transnational corporations and thus "institutions and policies of one country influence lives elsewhere" both directly and indirectly, Sen argues for a global dialogue with the voices of affected people (p 130). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988: 308), "the quintessential argumentative Indian" and Sen's "lifelong friend"<sup>2</sup> famously announced that "[t]he subaltern cannot speak". Extending Spivak, we would argue that even if the subaltern speaks with an "authentic voice", dominant loud voices of the metropolitan self (read the empire)

suppresses/silences the voices of the other (read plebeian victims), which gets either displaced or unheard.<sup>3</sup> In this connection, Sen's "global dialogue" is impossible precisely because of the antagonistic nature of global power relations and can only exist in the imaginations of an idealist thinker, who ironically is not interested in providing a transcendental ideal just perfect society. Factually, such "global dialogue" has been proved to be counter-productive as evident in the UN deliberations, WTO negotiations and climate change summits with concerns of "world of the third"<sup>4</sup> and their conflict with the alliance of imperialist power bloc. When UN, WTO and climate change talks fail, the imperialist power bloc coterie does not engage in self-introspection, rather it continues to pursue the same sets of oppressive and exploitative policies that affect the lives of significant sections of the world's population. In this regard, the idealism of "global dialogue" based on reasoned argument is effectively reduced to "disengaged toleration", with the comfort

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of such lazy resolution as: “you are right in your community and I am right in mine” (p x), which Sen himself criticises. This only exposes the self-contradiction of his argument. We would also add that the impossibility of global dialogue particularly in an antagonistic atmosphere of savagery of war, economic inequalities between rich and poor countries, and the injustices of poverty, lack of educational opportunities and poor health conditions in developing nations is a result of exploitation and oppression of the shining world towards the suffering one.

### Political vs Practical Utility

One can also ask about the duality of political versus practical utility of Sen’s approach and whether we can argue for a distinctive political utility for just society in an age of empire. If we can argue for such a case, then what would be the feasibility of any theory of justice? On the question of gap between theoretical and philosophical premises/promises with that of practical performances in ground realities at the grass roots, and how we can overcome this gap between academic engagements and real political activism, Sen’s solution of global democracy and global justice mediated through UN, NGOs, WTO and media is unimpressive. Sen argues in favour of activism but does not elaborate on the nature of activism and its specific direction – whether political activism in favour of an imperialist status quo or an activism negotiating with the imperialist power bloc or political struggle against the very form of imperialist order to transform the imperialist system would ensure a relatively just society. At best, Sen is arguing in favour of negotiating with imperialist power bloc by getting some doles/concessions if possible, and not at all favouring transformation of unjust imperialist system to a radical democratic alternative of just society.

Even Sen’s observations of US invasion to Iraq as “mistaken” (p 3) and American response to 9/11 “affecting hundreds of millions...in Afghanistan” (p 402) carefully avoid using the term “imperialism” which has perhaps become old-fashioned in American intellectual circles as it embarrasses the imperialist power bloc<sup>5</sup> On the question of Taliban and 9/11, Sen

in fact forgets to mention the common knowledge that it was America’s own Frankenstein created as a strategy of cold war politics, which is now haunting the empire. So, America has to account for much of the present crisis in the wake of global terrorism. Similarly, Sen also does not assess America’s unjust historic wrongs, most crudely expressed in decimating Hiroshima and Nagasaki with atom bombs, its military interventions and the Central Intelligence Agency sponsored coups in parts of Latin America and the Muslim world, and its proselytisation of several third world nation states with Fund-Bank market led economic policies that only sustained the problems of poverty, inequality, unemployment, lack of educational opportunities and health hazards. Today, this neo-liberal consensus is facing a crisis of legitimacy owing much to the discredited economic agenda of global power elites facing a massive financial crisis in the west. In this context, as one of the respected public intellectuals of our time, Sen stops short of advising the imperialist power bloc to reform itself, and not to repeat its mistakes of historic wrongs and injustices to the world population. Sen is soft on the question of imperialism and avoids vehemently criticising it as a system of injustice. To summarise the above three fundamental disagreements with Sen, we can say that the questions of antagonism, hegemony and imperialism are absolutely missing in his book and one cannot comprehensively understand the notions of justice and injustice without addressing those issues.

### Misreading of Marx

How do we address the gap between academic philosophy and political practice, which in a way, Marx tried to resolve the issue? Sen might argue that Marx’s communism is not feasible and Marx treats humans as animals, while Sen values reason and treats human rationality as an important tool in dealing with both philosophy and practice of removing injustice. In this respect, particularly Sen’s reading of Marx as a comparativist than an ideal perfect just society thinker is a misreading of Marx with a profound epistemological problem in his thesis. The framing of Marx among the comparativists, more interested

in removing injustice than having an ideal just society is a selective reading by Sen. It is not clear, why Sen decided to pose Marx, not as an ideal perfect just society thinker? In his (Sen 1990) Bengali book, *Jibonjatra O Arthaniti (Living and Economics)*, Sen has referred to the classic Marxian text: *The German Ideology*, where Marx-Engels (1947) argues about the notion of human freedom in “communist society” and “true socialism”. Then we know about Marx’s (1999a) idea of distributive justice in a communist society: “from each according to his ability to each according to his needs”, which can be seen as Marx’s own justifications of perfectly ideal just social arrangements. Similarly, the ideal of communism, which by Marx’s own admission is also a “real movement” by “transforming capitalist mode of production” can be seen in his other works as well.<sup>6</sup> The finality of Marx’s (1999b) political imaginary of ideal perfect just society is expressed in one of his most famous quotes: “communism is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be this solution”.

Now, it is a legitimate question to ask that why Sen does not read these Marxian texts as transcendental ones. Sen’s treatment of Marx as a thinker interested in removing injustice is correct,<sup>7</sup> but as we all know, Marx was also interested in establishing an ideal just perfect society in his vision of communism.<sup>8</sup> From a Marxist standpoint, the critique of “transcendental” by Sen invariably reinforces a bourgeois assault on the very idea of revolution since he is prescribing that there is no point to look for a revolutionary change with an ideal of a perfect just society. Rather for Sen, it is preferable to try and remove as much injustices as possible within global capitalism or better say, to the extent capitalism gives that scope for removing injustice. Therefore, Sen’s critique of the transcendental is appended with a non-critical approach to capitalism as well. This acceptance of capitalism by Sen without a transformative agenda and in fact being critical to such a transcendental approach only makes him soft on the issue of imperialism as we have noticed earlier.

For Sen, the bourgeois modernity of the European enlightenment project is an

emancipatory one in fighting traditionalism and conservatism. There is no denying the fact that the European modernity has been successful in many ways to fight traditionalism and conservatism. However, the prioritisation of bourgeois modernity project without challenging the exploitative and oppressive nature of such a project only makes him less critical about the imperialist onslaught of global capitalism since the imperialist project in itself argues for exporting modernity to traditional and conservative societies. Today, when the world is sharply divided between the imperialist power bloc and its victims, it is expected from an intellectual of Sen's stature, to take a clear position with no ambivalence or ambiguity. Recalling Lenin (1999), we can say that today, "the only choice is – either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for mankind has not created a 'third' ideology), and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or an above-class ideology."

### **Justice as Relative, Relational or Necessary?**

Justice for Sen is a relational concept. That is to say, we cannot comprehensively address the question of justice without relating it with other normative concepts like liberty, equality, freedom, democracy, capability, reason, etc. But for Sen, justice can be also relative, as he demonstrates about the three children and the flute story discussed in the introduction of his book while illustrating that relative notions of justice can disagree on utilitarian, egalitarian and libertarian grounds.

The story in brief is of the following:

[W]hich of three children – Anne, Bob and Carla – should get a flute about which they are quarrelling. Anne claims the flute on the ground that she is the only one of the three who knows how to play it (the others do not deny this), and it would be quite unjust to deny the flute to the only one who can actually play it...In an alternative scenario, it is Bob who speaks up, and defends his case for having the flute by pointing out that he is the only one among the three who is so poor that he has no toys of his own. The flute would give him something to play with (the other two concede that they are richer and well supplied with engaging amenities). If you had heard only Bob and none others, the case for giving it to him would be strong. In another

alternative scenario, it is Carla who speaks up and points out that she has been working diligently for many months to make the flute with her own labour (the others confirm this), and just when she had finished her work, 'just then', she complains, 'these expropriators came along to try to grab the flute away from me'...Having heard all three and their different lines of reasoning, there is a difficult decision that you have to make...[T]heorists of different persuasions, such as utilitarians, or economic egalitarians, or labour right theorists, or no-nonsense libertarians, may each take the view that there is one straightforward just resolution that is easily detected, but they would each argue for totally different resolutions as being obviously right. There may not indeed exist any identifiable perfectly just social arrangement on which impartial agreement would emerge (pp 13-15).

Now, one can suggest an egalitarian notion of distributive justice to counter this problem in the above example by arguing that the flute can be simply shared among three children with equal amount of time; let us say rotating the flute by eight hours among Anne, Bob and Carla per day. To this solution, Sen can argue that this might not happen because each child has a right to get the flute and might not wish to share on the ground of their right based on their reasoned claims. However, if we assume that we live in an ideal perfect just society of say Marx's communism, then justice can be achieved on two grounds. First, as Erich Fromm in his analysis has shown that in Marxian philosophy, the transformation of society coincides/converges with the transformation of human being/self who would emerge as a different being, and a socialist man would be different from the bourgeois man of individualist-selfish character (Fromm 1961). Thus, a close reading of Marxian texts on alienation and the nature of communist society ponders us to think that a person in a communist society would be more favourable to the idea of collective sharing and would be devoid of envy. Even today, an ideal communist would be more favourable to share things than claiming a monopoly over a certain thing. Secondly, Sen's example deals with a society of scarcity (one flute but three claimants) whereas Marx's communist society is a society of abundance. In Marx's communism, each one of the three children would get their respective flutes and can do whatever they like with their flute:

Anne would enjoy playing it while Bob and Carla would perhaps get lessons on how to play the flute. Bob might be sharing his happiness with both Anne and Carla that finally he got a toy to play, and Carla would be satisfied that she got the thing (flute), which she has herself made with rigorous labour efficiency and can give lessons to both Bob and Anne on how to make such a flute. Thus, instead of finding a rights-based solution to the three children competing for possession of the flute, we might look for a cooperative way out, whereby the children learn to share the flute. Thus, we can argue for a collectivist cum cooperative approach to justice than simply individualist rights-based approach. So, it is the task of radical political struggle to create structural conditions under which such a cooperative approach in ensuring justice is possible.

### **Relational and Relative**

Justice is relational as well as relative in Sen's version, and also the "identification of fully just social arrangements is neither necessary nor sufficient" (p 15). Here, we differ with Sen's argument against "just social arrangements" and we are not sure about his concept of justice as neither necessary nor sufficient". Before making an incisive methodological demarcation by Sen between two prominent schools of justice, namely, "transcendental institutionalism" and "realisation-focused comparison", there are relevant questions to pose which are of the following. Can "ideal just social arrangements" be regarded as unnecessary for human existence? Can justice itself autonomously offer anything concrete and substantial? Can justice be seen as an illusion but still a necessary political utopia, a kind of unsatisfied Lacanian desire<sup>9</sup> which is unachievable yet necessary for political mobilisation? Can justice be regarded as both contented/value loaded and at the same time, contentless abstract empty concept, which has nothing to offer except "hope" and "promise" and thus necessary for justifications of either sustaining the status quo or for a call of transcendentalism, and hence the rhetoric of ideal just society in both secular and religious ideologies as distinct as communism and Islamism? A neo-liberal status quo can justify, defend and sustain

itself in the name of justice and thus it promises justice to the people<sup>10</sup> and the people in turn might get politically convinced to defend and sustain the status quo, which is the synonym of political mobilisation behind such a status quo. In an alternative situation, secular and religious ideologies like communism and Islamism might assert that the present state of affairs is unjust and hence can give a call for revolution or transform society into an ideal just one, which is a transcendental quest. Sen does not offer us any answers to these sets of questions. Rather he avoids asking these questions which makes Sen's *The Idea of Justice* neither a Marxist reading of justice nor an existential reading of justice but ends up as a neo-liberal reading of justice, which has potentialities/possibilities to justify the current injustices occurring in an imperialist world order.

We would argue that if the Rawlsian (1999) treatise was an advocate of a liberal idea of justice, where benevolent welfare capitalism could still offer some optimism with a reformist agenda, Sen's idea of justice is written in the global context of crisis of capitalism. The concurrent capitalist crises in many parts of the world right from mid-1970s with the advent of neo-liberalism (Harvey 2005a) have transformed the ideological manifestations of bourgeois order from an optimistic future to a pessimistic and uncertain one. In the context of such a pessimistic environment with imperialism engaged in gross unjustifiable wars and capitalism taking refuge to more coercive tactics of primitive accumulation (Harvey 2005b, Patnaik 2008: 108-13) the sensitive defenders of bourgeois order like Sen cannot give a transcendental call for abolishing or moving beyond capitalism. In such a scenario, Sen, who has always tried to portray a humane face of capitalism, at best, gives a call of negotiation with global capitalism and the imperialist power bloc. Thus, we are being advised by an argumentative Indian of great calibre like Sen to forget about radical social transformation and rather concentrate on how to remove existing injustices, if at all they can be removed in a world dominated by corporate capital. As a towering intellectual, Sen has thrown light on the remarkably rich intellectual tradition of Indian past in his books, but he

forgets to remind us about modern India's exceptional stature in its glorious anti-imperialist struggle followed by independent foreign policy, which is currently reversed by capitulation and genuflection of Indian political establishment to become the new "subordinate ally" (Karat 2007) of empire. Imperialist system as a manifestation of global capitalism is currently immersed into "blood and dirt", "dripping from head to toe, from every pore", to use Marx's phrase (Marx 1977: 926). It is a morally degenerated system, somewhat like the tale of the naked emperor, but unfortunately, a public intellectual like Sen, who has often claimed himself publicly, to be on the side of the Left,<sup>11</sup> does not play the role of the innocent child as a rational conscience keeper to speak up that "the emperor/empire is naked!"

## NOTES

- 1 The innovative concept of hegemony can be seen in Gramsci (1971). The post-Marxist elaboration of Gramsci's concept of hegemony can be found in Laclau and Mouffe (1985). A further theoretical elaboration of the concept of hegemony particularly in postcolonial contexts can be seen in Chaudhury et al (2000).
- 2 *The Argumentative Indian*, p 86.
- 3 Here, the point is that whether the voice of the subaltern gets heard, registered or taken into account has been decisively settled or not. In this regard, the importance of an audience is crucial as who is listening or not listening to the subaltern becomes significant. As long as the power bloc gives space to the subaltern, the subaltern speaks. If we take symbolically the subaltern space as a "blank" within a particular given discourse, then that "blank" also connotes some meaning, it also partly speaks. That is to say, silence may have its own voice and say. Therefore, within the subaltern space, both dissemination and insemination can be located.
- 4 The "World of the Third" is conceptually different from the mainstream academic discourses of "third world". Thus, it is newly coined and introduced in a fascinating book by Chakrabarti and Dhar (2009), an original contribution to the discipline of development studies and in fact has potentialities to open a new discipline, namely, dislocation studies.
- 5 Partha Chatterjee honestly tells us that Americans did not like to be described as neocolonialists during the cold war period and "[n]aturally Americans were stung when they were called imperialists". See Chatterjee (2004: 97).
- 6 See Marx (1999b); Marx and Engels (1969).
- 7 For a detailed enumeration on Marxian theory of justice see van der Veen (1991), Verma (2000), Cohen (2008).
- 8 For a detailed exposition and commentaries of Marx on communism see Marx-Engels-Lenin, *On Scientific Communism* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1967).
- 9 To be brief, Lacan uses "desire" as "essentially insatiable". See "Translator's Note" in Lacan (1979: 278).
- 10 Here, the people is not simply meant as population but the Laclauian interpretation as plebs, underdogs, and underprivileged. Equating population with people might be flawed since population is the sum total of power bloc and the plebs and hence masks the internal antagonism between them. See Laclau (2005).

- 11 See front page news report by Hasan Suroor, "I am on Left", says Amartya Sen', *The Hindu* (Wednesday, 29 July 2009).

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