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GANGSTERISM VERSUS INDIGENOUSNESS: IMPLICATIONS FOR 'GREEN IS THE FUTURE'

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Abstract

The cataclysmic destruction of nature and indigenous peoples is owed to the rise of gangsterism and its economics in human history. Its virulent continuation in the present needs to be checked by tapping into the indigenous knowledge systems if we really want to see a green future for life and welfare of all on planet earth.

Keywords: *Gangsterism, indigenousness, Alternatives, India, Northeast India*

Introduction

Economic history over the last 250 years is in a way nothing but the history of gangsterism, which also enables us to grasp the rise of bourgeois economic thinking as distinguished from indigenous thinking. The social origins of gangsterism conveys us that the economic way of thinking is not a natural or inevitable way of understanding things. Davey (2008; 2015) has eminently highlighted this point by contrasting it with the indigenous societies' holistic way of thinking.

Economists implicitly believe that "the natural world is the property of human beings. It is there for the humans to grab, to do with it, to make from it, as they wish. After a conquest or money purchase, large parts of the world can be fenced off and arrangements can be made for access and use rights so as to exclude other people. And with the aid of pesticides, other species too can be booted out." Economists, thus, have imbibed gangster mindset.

By contrast, in indigenous societies (or tribal societies), "people belong to places rather than places belonging to the people. Belonging to a community in a place amounts to meeting a set of obligations and responsibilities which are not to be found in the

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economic religion. When people belong to places, then they accept as a matter of course that they must look after the community, they must look after the place and often they must look after the other species in the place. This is a responsibility which extends to future generations, and it also extends as obligations to ancestors who came before and who are now no more." This is what is meant by indigenousness.

Take, for example, the Ubuntu philosophy of the Bantu speaking peoples of Africa. It is "a triad comprised of the living, the living dead (ancestors), and the yet to be born. The living community answers to the living dead who ensure that the living can provide for the yet to be born. But to provide for the yet to be born, the environment must be regarded as the fourth dimension of the community and it too must be cared for. The past, the future and the place are all thus included in it along with a set of duties and a code of ethics."

No such rootedness exists in gangsterism and its economics because the economic faith emerged in a different kind of society. Consider "William the Conqueror who is sometimes known as William the Bastard from Normandy of northern France. He was the first Norman King of England, reigning from 1066 until his death in 1087. When he invaded England in 1066, he awarded all the land in the country to himself and parcelled it out to his military commanders. Colonial invaders like this do not belong to places. Instead, they intrude into the places occupied by others with an assumption of superiority. The natives are perceived as inferiors. In later centuries, the descendants of William's gangster aristocracy took it on themselves to launch further wars of conquest in alliance with merchants. Traders as another group too operated between places and did not belong to any place. They aspired to take over the places that they operated in so that those places belonged to them."

In this gangster mindset which is integral to bourgeois economics, it is taken for granted that "the people and corporations who own parcelled up parts of the planet can do with it as they wish. Ethical obligations of care and maintenance are no longer primary. The colonialists usually assumed that the people who were in the places that they invaded belonged to them as well. As serfs or slaves, the conquered natives were treated as no different from wildlife that could be tamed and turned into work animals, transported and traded as property. At the best, it is the mission of the theological and economic evangelists of the gangsters to uplift the indigenous people in their own image."

Gangster economics, therefore, emerged and evolved as exclusionary economics right from the beginning of modernity or industrial revolution--a way of thinking about "wealth production in dislocated and displaced societies, for people who were invaders and traders, people who had little understanding of the places and the species and the people that they were taking over. Their exclusive focus was on making themselves richer and more powerful." Adam Smith's idea of "invisible hand" came much in handy as a quasi-religion and as soft-talking to justify like the way now television, radio, newspapers and internet media justify now the political-economic game of the 'economic man' or the self-interested man for unabashedly promoting his welfare as development for the "welfare of all".

Gangsterism and its economics as portrayed above is never honestly revealed to people by modern economists. For example, Dierdre McCloskey has celebrated bourgeois goodness in that the bourgeoisie have changed the world in a good way (Allemang, 2010; Bose, 2022; 2024a). She has argued that the "ideas of liberalism—liberty and dignity–were the real backbone of the subsequent institutional changes, technological discoveries and capital accumulation possible for the "Great Enrichment" of the globe over the last 250 years. Modern economic growth could materialise due to the unhindered efforts of the virtuous bourgeoisie (capitalists) that began in the Netherlands and England in the 18th century." She believes that "capitalism has ethically improved its participants as well as its bystanders while materially enriching its participants and even its critics. She has celebrated the bourgeois virtues in terms of faith, hope, charity, justice, temperance, fortitude, prudence, solidarity and altruistic hedonism. These are the classical and Christian virtues which apply to all humanity. Without the virtuous bourgeoisie, humanity could not have arrived at modernity and modernization, and consequently prosperity with equality and dignity. Modernity is a condition of social existence that is significantly different to all past forms of human experience while modernization is the transitional process of moving from traditional or primitive communities to modern societies." Be that as it may, she is silent about the gangster plunder of indigeneous places and communities and how neoliberalism as the pervasive rationality of our recent times has ravaged the society by acute polarisation and cannibalisation of labour and nature, perhaps like never before.

We discern the basic purpose of bourgeois economics as nothing but justifying the gangster practices that dislocated the multigenerational relationships where people looked after each other in places where the invaders sowed destruction, oppression and chaos. These were actually the most relevant reasons for bourgeois economics deserving the name of "dismal science".

Economics of gangster origins is witnessed everywhere in the world in contemporary times as well. It is ethnographically discovered, for example, by the sociologist Levien (2018) in India. Since the mid-2000s, "India has been beset by widespread farmer protests against land grabs. While the postcolonial Indian state dispossessed land mostly for public-sector industry and infrastructure, the adoption of neoliberal economic policies in the early 1990s prompted state governments to become land brokers for private real estate capital. This new regime of dispossession culminated with private Special Economic Zones in the mid-2000s." Using the case of a village in Rajasthan that was dispossessed for one of North India's largest Special Economic Zones, Levien ethnographically illustrates how "the zone's real estate-driven and knowledge-intensive growth intersected with pre-existing agrarian inequalities to generate a peculiar and exclusionary trajectory of social change." Taking us into the lives of diverse villagers, Levien meticulously documents the "destruction of their agricultural livelihoods, the marginalization of their labour, and their exclusion from the zone's "world-class" infrastructure." Most poignantly, he shows "farmers' unequal capacities to profit from dramatic land speculation and the consequences of this for village social relations and politics." There is, thus, no doubt about the exclusionary trajectory of capitalism that underlies land conflicts in contemporary India.

Bourgeois legal systems have also unleashed legal violence on the 'identity' of indigeneous peoples. There are prejudices of the global juridical discourse which are reproduced by the domestic judicial system in India so much so that the struggle for indigeneous personhood is alive sometimes with the aid of law and

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other times through activism from the margins (Bhagabati, 2024), even as gangster-supported governments parade the tribal people for the voyeuristic pleasure of the non-tribal people during their national celebrations.

Indigenous Alternatives

The indigenous traditions and knowledge in South America point to a credible alternative to Western development by gangsterism and its economics as portrayed above. It is focused on the good life or wellbeing in the broadest sense (Gudynas, 2011; Calix, 2017; Bose, 2022).

The classical Western idea of development (industrialization) has become a zombie concept (Bose, 2020), dead and alive at the same time—dead in terms of countless reactions from social movements against its social and ecological negative effects, and alive by way of emerging economies aggressively adopting classical growth strategies, some exporting cheap goods, others trading natural resources.

By contrast, the indigenous traditions and knowledge in South America that were oppressed, minimized or subordinated over centuries, have given rise to a social-philosophical and political platform in the name of Buen Vivir or Vivir Bien (Spanish words for good living or living well). This platform has received broad support and offers valuable pathways to overcome the obsession with Western development and explores alternatives within a pluri-cultural setting. The ideas of this platform are factored into the "new Constitutions of Ecuador (approved in 2008) and Bolivia (approved in 2009)". The ideas from some small, usually marginalized or neglected, critical positions within gangster modernity, which are critical of Western development and its deviations as found, for example, in radical environmental postures like "deep ecology and other biocentric approaches and in feminist perspectives about gender roles and their link with societal hierarchies and domination over Nature", also jell well with the Buen Vivir ideas.

The debate on alternatives to development is still alive in America Latina. Even though the "nonconservative governments in Ecuador and Bolivia have factored Buen Vivir into their Constitutions, they have not yet abandoned the conventional and outdated development models." What emerges out of this flux needs to be seen.

The core of common ideas of the above alternatives to Western development can be summarised as follows: Economic growth as the means of development should be rejected. The conventional domination of utilitarian values, particularly expressed in the reductionism of life to economic values and the subsequent commoditization of almost everything should be rejected. There are several ways to give value, such as aesthetic, cultural, historical, environmental, spiritual and so on. The Society-Nature dualism leading to the view that human beings as the only source of values should be rejected. Nature is part of the social world, and political communities could extend in some cases to the non-humans (animals, plants, ecosystems or spirits) having will and feelings. Thus, the concepts of polis and citizenship should be widened to include these other actors within environmental settings. The prevalence of instrumental and manipulative rationality should be rejected. The modern stance that almost everything—persons or Nature--should be dominated and controlled so as to become a means to our ends is rejected. The classical understanding of a unidirectional linear progression of history, following a precise path, should be rejected. Several directions are possible. The alternative path is not restricted to a material dimension. The non-material dimension of sharing feelings and affections as is expressed in the experiences of happiness and sadness, in rebellion and compassion, as illustrated in the experiences of many social movements, should also be included. Social ecology is the way of achieving ecological society as good society. In the social ecology thinking, ecological problems are inevitably the results of social dysfunctions in human society. Unless social issues like industrial expansion, class structure designating certain sections of humanity as 'inferior' and distorted views of what constitutes 'progress' are addressed, we will fall into the superficial understanding of the environmentalists singling out particular problems like overpopulation and deforestation. Without establishing a more egalitarian social system that is driven by equality and cooperation, and not by individual profits, and without there being collective action and equal concern for all aspects of life, the environmental cause will not be realized.

Environmentalists usually identify the primary ecological problem as "being the preservation of wildlife or wilderness. In the process, ecological problems are separated from social problems. The argument of social ecology is that unless we examine the way human beings deal with each other through hierarchical mentality and class relationships, whereby we pinpoint trade for profit, industrial expansion and the identification of progress with corporate self-interest as the root causes of environmental crisis, we will only tend to focus on the symptoms of a grim social pathology rather than on the pathology itself, and our efforts will be directed only toward limited goals whose attainment is more cosmetic than curative. The obsession with free markets is dangerous. Market is a blind social mechanism and it turns soil into sand, covers fertile land with concrete, poisons air and water, and produces sweeping climatic and atmospheric changes."

The various forms of domination from capitalistic economic growth, gender oppressions, ethnic domination, corporate-state-bureaucratic interests and the like must be confronted by collective action and by major social movements that challenge the social sources of the ecological crisis. Or else, if we go by the superficial environmentalists, we will only argue for changes in personalistic forms of consumption and investment that often go under the rubric of "green capitalism", and the present highly cooptative society is only too eager to find new means of commercial aggrandizement and to add ecological verbiage to its advertising and customer relations efforts.

The executive secretary of the Latin American Centre for Social Ecology in Uruguay, Eduardo Gudynas, conveys the characteristics of Buen Vivir in terms of "(a) harmony between human beings, and also between human beings and nature; (b) subjugation of the rights of the individual to those of peoples, communities and nature so that collaborative consumption and sharing economy can materialize; (c) consume less; (d) Environmental and social costs should be incorporated into the final price and not externalized; (e) small is beautiful. Small-scale production can reflect and enhance local culture, include local people and protect the local environment, and serve local needs too. The days of industrial agriculture geared for export should be numbered; (f) production processes should use low levels of raw materials and energy and should be oriented towards regional markets; and (g) modern corporations cannot combine private profits and social

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responsibility really well. Corporate Social Responsibility is just a good strategy for improving the brand of a company and generating profits."

Indigenous Economics

There is "indigenous economics of biocultural heritage", which is diametrically opposite to the principles of gangster economics. Swiderska et al. (2022) elaborate as follows: "We have to remember that we are facing a double extinction crisis – biological and cultural. Indigenous languages are disappearing really fast, so biocultural heritage is really critical for us to protect nature and culture, to achieve multiple sustainable development goals, and to ensure that the negative impacts of development and conservation on the poorest people, like Indigenous peoples, are avoided. It's really essential for equitable and effective conservation and human rights to be respected, both in development and conservation spheres."

"Biocultural heritage is really about food sovereignty – it's about local control over farming systems, crops and markets. Biocultural heritage territories are reviving traditional crops for nutrition, climate resilience and food sovereignty. It empowers Indigenous peoples and local communities to be the ones who decide over which farming practices to use, which crops to use, and which foods to consume. They are increasingly rejecting modern industrial farming models that are pushed by governments and industry, which have led to worsening health and arising non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes and cancer, as well as increased vulnerability to climate change. Biocultural heritage makes it more difficult for the agricultural industry to extend their model and their market for products, such as fertilizers, agrochemicals and seeds, into Indigenous territories."

Concretely speaking, consider the potato park in Peru. "The park involves six Quechua communities, comprising thousands of people, who sustainably manage almost 10 thousand hectares of land. Together, they've been able to conserve about 1400 different varieties of native potato, thanks to traditional knowledge and Indigenous cultural values and beliefs. The indigenous, cultural values of solidarity, reciprocity, and balance with nature, which underpin their efforts to conserve biodiversity, have been fundamental to these successes. For these communities, the goal isn't economic development, but the well-being of both people and nature. And this well-being requires balance between the human, the sacred and the natural worlds. The Quechua Peoples have worked in partnership with scientists, in order to link traditional knowledge and science, establishing a community seed bank and several micro-enterprises that sustain biocultural heritage. The foundation of the Potato Park was driven by a combination of three threats: 1. The external threat posed by mining; 2. The disappearing native potato diversity in the region; and 3. The erosion of local culture. The area where the Potato Park was founded is of incredible importance, in terms of global food security. Traditionally, it offers very rich native potato diversity – it's a globally important centre of origin for potatoes. The exceptional cultural values of local communities made it a more enabling context for a biocultural heritage-centred conservation initiative. The Potato Park has had multiple impacts: It has revitalized biodiversity and culture; It has protected land rights against mining for 20 years now; It has strengthened livelihoods and enhanced food security; It has strengthened resilience to climate change."

There are challenges in replicating this Peruvian biocultural heritage approach elsewhere, though. "The main challenge in the context of working in Kenya, India, or in China, is that the indigenous culture, values, and beliefs have weakened as the communities have become more modernized. For example, in the Mijikenda communities in the coastal area in Kenya, the elders protect Kaya Forests, but other members, particularly the youth, are becoming less and less interested in the traditional knowledge and culture, as well as the Kaya Forests conservation. What is more, there have been a lot of Western development projects in the region. Because different actors in the communities have different views on their biocultural heritage, it is more difficult to introduce a biocultural heritage initiative. In China, a loss of traditional culture results in similar obstacles. However, in this context, there is also a challenge of centralized government control, which makes it more difficult to support the emergence of autonomous, local institutions, which are at the heart of biocultural heritage territories. Similarly, in India, apart from a loss of culture, the challenges result from multiethnicity in the area, the restricted access to forest, traditional uses and traditional livelihoods, due to protected areas, and the promotion of modern agriculture. In comparison to Kenya, China, and India, in Peru, the cultural challenges aren't quite so acute."

Swiderska et al. (2022) want us to do bottom-up research in this regard through decolonising and interdisciplinary tools like this: "Mapping while walking through the territory to strengthen the sense of place and identity, and show the diversity of food crop varieties and animals breeds, locations of wild food plants and animals, and how the whole territory contributes to the diet. Communities can use GPS to construct a three-dimensional map and introduce some "modern ways" of biodiversity inventory. They can use traditional calendars to show the availability of different foods at different times of year, when to plant different crops, when not to disturb wild animals in the forest and fish in rice fields and rivers to give them time to mate and reproduce and other indicators for changes in seasons. Another medium is using storytelling to show how certain food is valued and why; changes in food production and consumption; and how wild areas are protected and seeds are conserved. Comparing and contrasting, for example, to show how community elders/leaders were more proactive in the past in investigating community issues and concerns and addressing these for the common good, abundance or scarcity of certain foods and health of the environment in the past and today. Learning by doing, for example producing organic farm inputs, conducting soil tests with scientists, using/testing traditional indicators, and introducing innovations in rice farming systems. Collective analysis of the results, which can lead to community policy formulation and action, for example, banning junk food from entering the community and restoring backyard gardens in every home." (Bose, 2024b; Bose, 2022).

Without doing such participatory research par excellence in the landscapes of the indigenous peoples, the non-indigenous journalists and researchers often "trivialize and misinterpret the indigenous cultures and knowledge systems" (Gurlhosur, 2023).

India and Northeast India

There are valuable lessons to be learnt from the indigeneous peoples of India and Northeast India, and there is no reason why indigeneous culture cannot be taken as a complement to the best ideas and values of mainstream culture.

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According to Mawroh (2023), the "Indigenous peoples' food system of Meghalaya is a biodiversity-rich system made possible by the long-held contextual, experiential and oral knowledge system of the indigenous communities. This has allowed for a high degree of diversity of land uses and species (along with traditional landraces), which is continuously being enriched. Economic sustenance and ecological sustainability are both achieved by the rich biodiversity still available in indigenous territories. Such diversity is crucial for imparting resilience to food systems and climate change adaptation. This is critical in light of the challenges climate change is creating (predicted to intensify) for global food systems. This includes India as well where food security is highly vulnerable to climate change disruptions. In this regard, the food system developed and nurtured by indigenous communities of Meghalaya has important lessons not just for India but for the world as well."

As pointed out by Mawroh and Gurlhosur (2023), viewing indigenous communities in Northeast India in particular and in India in general "as primitive, backward and needing guidance has echoes of "the White Man's Burden", which can be attributed to the Occidental gaze of describing the world, which has infiltrated many cultures, including ours. Internal colonialism in India, where the state is anti-indigenous by origin, views indigenous cultures as 'other cultures'. Modern science, anthropology and worldview stems from the Occidental approach, and thus the criteria to define what is and isn't indigenous itself comes from outside. As a result, although there are many important constitutional provisions for educational, economic, public employment-related and political safeguards, and agencies for monitoring the safeguards, the country witnesses numerous atrocities perpetrated on indigenous groups by non-indigenous groups (which include the modern state). This includes displacement and dispossession of millions from their lands. This was starkly brought out in 2019 when India's Supreme Court ordered that more than a million tribal families living on forest land be evicted. Our ontological understanding of the world is one-directional; it is through the West that we see the rest of the world. There is always a mainstream to which there is always an 'alternative' named and categorised by the mainstream (in this case, western science and anthropology) in an attempt to 'discover' the world. Even by the highly restrictive current definitions, i.e., as Scheduled Tribes, indigenous communities constitute approximately 8.6 per cent of the total population of the country. Found to be living in about 15 per cent of the country's geographical areas, they are among the most marginalised in the country. These populations are found practising unique traditions retaining social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from the dominant societies in which they live. This includes local knowledge systems and worldviews, which were initially recognised in global United Nations and World Commissions events in 1980s and 1990s as traditional ecological knowledge. Marginalisation of indigenous communities has had an adverse impact, especially on how their knowledge systems have been viewed and treated."

They also point out that there is drastic erosion of indigenous knowledges due to gangster attacks, promoted by the Indian government for example, on indigeneous peoples. "Take indigenous farming practices, for example, which as a result of the Green Revolution are not as widely accepted as global technology, chemical fertilisers and pesticides today. If government subsidies, global technology and politicians helped scale up indigenous practices by making them economically and logistically viable, indigenous farming practices would be as universal as the damaging use of chemical fertilisers themselves. The extent of disappearing indigenous knowledge and practices and its impact can be seen in indigenous fishing communities like the Kolis of Maharashtra's coast. Over the years, many of the artisanal fishers have stopped fishing using indigenous science. They now depend on modern technology such as GPS tools. Little to no financial support, low subsidies, unsustainable infrastructure projects and the worsening climate change further push the fisherfolk out of practice and thus out of business. Today, the government is asking and trying to convince indigenous fishers to replace open-sea fishing with commercial fish cultivation. With whole topographies and demographics changing along the coast, the way of living of the Kolis and other fisher communities is drastically disrupted. So are their food systems, culture and consequently their future. The death of indigenous languages and dialects is also directly linked to disappearing indigenous communities and their knowledge systems. The loss of language is a loss of culture, of a people's way of understanding, communicating and making sense of the world. The UN Permanent Forum of Indigenous Issues report of 2018 estimates that more than a half of the world's approximately 6,700 languages will become extinct by 2100 and with them, whole repositories of undocumented oral knowledge and histories will vanish. This is an unfathomable loss."

This is not all. The above erosion is connected to the larger issue of discrimination and marginalisation of indigenous peoples. There is no rudimentary democratic temperament to even consider that "indigenous knowledges may complement, rather than compete with, the dominant cultures, with their interaction benefiting all."

This point is elaborated by Gurlhosur and Marwoh (2023) thus: "In India, legislations like the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001 and Biological Diversity Act, 2002 have admitted that indigenous communities in the country have played an important role in maintenance of the rich biodiversity (natural and agrobiodiversity) present in the country. But regarding the knowledge system itself, the emphasis has been on documentation and preservation due to the former's link with the cultural identity of the specific indigenous groups rather than their intrinsic worth as an important source of ecological knowledge. A good example of this is the landmark Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. This has the effect of consigning indigenous knowledge systems to a lower scientific position compared to the conventional dominant knowledge systems. Documentation, therefore, is not enough. As such, an important question that arises is: Apart from documentation, how else can we ascertain preservation and transmission of evolving indigenous knowledge as science to next generations of indigenous as well as exogenous populations? Some suggest formalisation of indigenous knowledge by including it in school curriculum. But formal education of science and fixed curriculums of learning invalidate other cultural "processes, purposes, structures of learning"… there are challenges at the policy level: The new National Education Policy (NEP) proposes to integrate traditional healthcare knowledge of AYUSH into the mainstream academic curriculum. The AYUSH ministry announced it will implement this with special attention to colleges in the northeastern states. While modern medicine practitioners and researchers are asking for science-based evidence for integration of this traditional medicine, some have warned that hybridising the healthcare industry might be "dangerous" for patients. Some have even commended the move.However, such an attempt has to be

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analysed in the context of the history of marginalisation of indigenous communities in the country. Declared as the first education policy of the 21st century, the aim of the NEP-2020 is stated to be "revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure… while building upon India's traditions and value systems" (page 3 of NEP-2020). But the "rich heritage of ancient eternal knowledge" being referred to in the NEP document is the Hindu (Vedic) tradition, without the mention of any other knowledge system, especially that of autochthonous tribal communities. Not surprisingly, in terms of languages, Sanskrit – which is part of the Indo-European language family — is given preference. Dravidian languages get mentioned but Austro-Asiatic and Sino-Tibetan languages (spoken by a large portion of the indigenous communities in the Indian subcontinent) are subsumed under 'local' languages, consigning them to a lower status. Two important issues emerge from such a move. Firstly, the Ministry of AYUSH has validated that it is promoting Hindu (Vedic) culture and knowledge as Indian traditional knowledge. Who does this benefit and who does this exclude in the process of 'integration'? In actuality, it benefits the nationalist Hindu state and it excludes thousands of indigenous/ tribal communities in the central and northeastern tribal belts who have been practising evidence-based science for millennia. Secondly, how the NEP would combine knowledge systems in pedagogy and practice is unclear."

Concluding Remarks

In this paper, we have distinguished gangsterism from indigenousness and consequently the economics of the former from the economics of the latter. The realization in doing so is that we cannot have freedom from gangsterism and its toxic economics unless we embrace knowledge systems of indigeneous peoples of the world.

In saying so, we recognise a tragic contradiction in what the Indian government is doing. On the one hand, the Indian Knowledge Systems Division of the Ministry of Education in India has the motto thus: "Let us strive for the wisdom that leads to the welfare of all." The knowledge traditions of Bharata since immemorial times, it believes, have the practical utility to solve the current and emerging problems of not only India but also the entire world. On the other, the Indian government is not freeing itself from gangster economic policies of decimating the indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems in India.

The truth, though, is that the knowledge systems of indigeneous peoples in India and elsewhere have the wisdom to save life and promote welfare of all on planet earth. As such, it must be recognised that indigeneous internationalism is not a sectarian political activism.

We think, without any conflict of interest in writing this paper, that it is sensible to conclude this investigation as Heinrich Boll Stiftung, New Delhi, does: "The interplay of democratic imaginations and spaces of governance among indigenous communities, contextualized in bio-directional and plural senses requires a sustained enquiry…It can inform modern governance systems at a global level, and the indigenous knowledge systems are co-produced. They are not essentially competing with dominant modern cultures." It is high time, therefore, that the dominating elites of mainstream India respected the cultures of all the indigeneous peoples of India including Northeast India.

One thing is clear. Gangsterism can never be truly green. It is indulging in reputational laundering by green extractivism which is actually anti-green (Bose, 2025). And, drawn into the war on them from the gangsters, the indigeneous peoples, having already suffered immensely, will have no option other than fighting to the end the systemic attempts of expropriating their lands for capitalist development and recasting their bodies for the labour and sex markets of gangster-capitalists.

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