



## **'People without Shadows': Ethnographic Reflections on Identity and Justice in Contemporary India**

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### *Abstract*

While many of our justice-seeking practices are triggered by the demand for recognition of identity, every society has its way of governmentalizing them and subjecting them to the rule of law. This paper draws on some of our ethnographic researches on the 'victims' displaced by the slow yet continuous riverbank erosion in the districts of Malda and Murshidabad located in north central and central West Bengal in India. As the river erodes and meanders, islanders become mainlanders and vice versa creating a complex web of social and legal identities. The paper reflects on the complex interconnection between law and justice in the light of these changing profiles and identities.

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Justice is the dominant language through which much of today's identity politics is conducted. Conflict over identity brings into circulation multiple and at times rivaling notions of justice. The language of justice is constantly invoked and deployed in order to address the question of identity. Thus the assertion of such identities as gender, caste and ethnicity is expressed essentially through demands for justice – although it is true that not all demands for justice are necessarily expressed through the assertion of identity. While many of our justice-seeking practices are triggered by the demand for recognition of identity, every society has its way of governmentalizing them and subjecting them to the rule of law. For, it is only in and through law that one is entitled to one's access to justice and accordingly practices that do not conform to the rule of law are either not entertained or positively disprivileged. Thus to cite an instance, in a multicultural society with a multiplicity of identities the real challenge, according to Habermas, is to ensure that 'different cultural, ethnic, and religious forms of life coexist with equal rights' and to 'dissolve' the 'fusion' of 'majority culture' with general political culture by way of founding the latter on 'Constitutional principles'. In Habermas's famous language, 'Constitutional principles can take the place originally occupied by nationalism'.<sup>1</sup>

In simple terms, justice-seeking practices by virtue of being sanctioned by law and its institutions also confer on us a legal-juridical identity as citizen. Justice-seeking subjects are thereby transformed into objects of law and law-abiding citizens. Our legal-juridical identity also imposes a closure on the otherwise infinite possibilities of our justice-seeking practices. As Upendra Baxi writes:

... [S]tate institutional AP (Access Providers, SKD) formats take a relatively autonomous life of their own via the development of some 'legitimate' languages and some institutional arrangements that in turn structure the most elementary forms of access relationships. These languages and arrangements presuppose and reinforce the grammars of social inclusion and exclusion that define *who* may 'legitimately' seek access, 'when', and 'how'. Indeed, in certain historic contexts what is at issue is not so much access but the patterns of normative and institutional closure.<sup>2</sup>

The problem is sought to be addressed at two not altogether unrelated levels: At one level, Baxi makes a plea for diversifying the normative and institutional bases of access and constantly expanding the ambit of law while trying to accommodate essentially plural and multicultural nature of Indian society. At another, the justice-seeking subject is also involved in finding out what Samaddar calls 'other avenues' to justice who points out "in as much as justice is located in law yet exceeds law, the justice-seeking subject

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<sup>1</sup> Jurgen Habermas, *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*, ed. Ciaran Cronin & Pablo De Greiff (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1998), 118.

<sup>2</sup> Upendra Baxi, "The Renascent Access Notions: Globalization and Access to Justice" in *Justice for the Poor: Perspectives on Accelerating Access*, ed. Ayesha Kadwani Dias & Gita Honwana Welch (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009), 89.

too combines in its subject-hood the reliance on law yet the dialogic capacity to look for other avenues of justice.”<sup>3</sup> This paper seeks to make a preliminary exploration into the ‘other avenues’ which, while not diametrically opposed to the rule of law, clearly however ‘exceed’ its limits. To borrow Samaddar’s words: “... the emergence of the political subject is fundamentally a matter of ‘non-correspondence’ with the dominant reality”<sup>4</sup> of law. The political subject is produced through the dialogue that occurs between what the law stipulates and the illimitable human endeavour at constantly transcending it.

This paper focuses on how notions of justice get articulated under dialogic conditions and how a plethora of new identities get created and recreated in the process. Caught between the world of law and the world of ethnic and identity-based conflicts, articulations of justice take on inescapably ambivalent forms. The paper reflects on the complex interconnection between law and justice in the light of some of our ethnographic researches on the ‘victims’ displaced by the slow yet continuous riverbank erosion in the districts of Malda and Murshidabad located in central West Bengal in India, which has resulted in a complex tussle of competing identities as mainlanders are converted into islanders and vice versa.

Interestingly even the victims who lose their hearth, home, land and livelihood as a result of erosion consider it as only ‘natural’ and plead for allowing the rivers to swing and overflow into the floodplains instead of the presently followed policy of keeping them confined to their beds. But the nature and extent of such erosion particularly in the wake of some major development works including the laying of railway tracks and establishment of surface connections cutting across the natural north-south flow of rivers, the commissioning of the Farakka Barrage<sup>5</sup> etc. and rapid industrialization throughout the 1970s are usually reckoned as both unprecedented and alarming so much so that one of the central demands of the victims today is to get this phenomenon declared by the state as ‘a national disaster’. The paper, intends to problematize the distinction commonly made in theoretical circles between the legal and the just, between the legal subject and the political subject and argues that much of what it takes to become a legal subject verges on the implicit constitution of a political subject with its perception of the just. Moreover political struggles that such a constitution of the legal entails are often enmeshed in the same metaphor of law and governmentality. The just in other words does not lie outside the legal, but is inspired by and implicated in it. Yet, in all these continuities the just still appears as the unacknowledged deficit that perpetually eludes law or ‘the supplement’ - as contemporary Social Theory would have

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<sup>3</sup> Ranabir Samaddar, *The Materiality of Politics: Subject Positions in Politics* Vol.2 (London: Anthem, 2007), 102.

<sup>4</sup> Ranabir Samaddar, *Emergence of the Political Subject* (New Delhi: Sage, 2010), XV-XVI.

<sup>5</sup> Farakka Barrage was made fully functional in 1975 and its main purpose as mentioned in various policy papers of the Government of India was to flush about 40000 cusecs of water through a feeder canal connecting a 38-km stretch of the Ganges in Farakka with the Bhagirathi in Jangipur in Muslimabad. With the ‘death’ (thinning flow) of the Bhagirathi, the Calcutta Port was gradually losing its navigability. One of its main purposes was to flush water through the river so that the Port could be revived. Insofar as the water flow was slowed by its construction, the silt that it carried started settling in the riverbed – reducing thereby its depth and water-carrying capacity.

put it - that law is unable to appropriate and absorb fully. To borrow a phrase from Pierre Bourdieu, justice is what turns into a game and takes away from law its 'theorization effect'.<sup>6</sup> As Bourdieu argues, one does not win the game simply by observing its rules. What is necessary in order to win it is to be able to outplay the other while continuing to play by its rules.

### The Fictive World of Law

At one level, the victims find it impossible not only to establish themselves as legal-juridical personalities and to enjoy the rights that emanate from them as corollaries but also to get them recognized in the eyes of the state as concrete people who have ever lost their hearth and home, land and livelihood in the first place. On 7 December 2008 as we descended on a little-known island called Hamidpur after a more than two hour ride by motorboat from Panchanandapur (Malda), the nearest point in what both the mainlanders and the islanders refer to as the 'mainland', we hardly had any idea that even the frequent swings of the Ganga make 'mainland' an extremely protean and fuzzy concept. We had no idea that each of the few hundred households was living there till it formed part of the 'mainland' and was completely washed away in 1997 when they took shelter in what then became a newly redefined mainland. As the old local proverb would have it, 'the river never takes away anything', the new mainland got washed away in 2003 - by which time the mainland - once lost - resurfaced, not as mainland but as a river island; a *char* or sandbar as the locals would call them - one that remained separated from the mainland by two of its formidable channels surrounding it on all sides. The people from the mainland as a result now turn into islanders. Consequently a new set of legal and political identities comes into play.

It is interesting to see how the legal identity plays itself out in this binary between the mainland and the river island, between people secured in settled existence and their nomadic and footloose counterparts. Law has been privileging the settled over the nomadic since the late-colonial times for reasons not unknown to us. If this happens today in case of ever shifting river islands of Malda and Murshidabad, the same has been happening for centuries to the wandering mendicants, migrating Jews and nomadic Gypsies or Romas of so-called 'developed' Europe. As long as the 'islanders' from what had been Malda and Muslimabad were part of the mainland till 1997, they had everything - land titles, ration cards, voter identity cards - all that one's establishment as a legal-juridical personality calls into existence. The moment they lost their mainland identity, these documents were of no value to them. Yet they preserved them. I will come back to the use of archiving legal documents that apparently ceased to have any material value. As I will argue, this contributes to the formation of what I prefer to call a counter-governmental archive. As they migrated to the new mainland and stayed there till 2003, they were 'illegal' settlers - again a complete legal category, for, it is precisely through the instrumentality of law that one is rendered legal or for that matter illegal. Yet as they now 'resettle' themselves in 2003, they have nothing. They have all the documents, which have no correspondence to the fiction of legal reality that

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<sup>6</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Polity, 1997), 81.

has been created during the intervening years – they hold titles to land - which do not exist, they have ration cards for which rations are not available, they have voter identity cards against which there are no votes. The river has washed away not only their home and cultivable land but also their identity as legal-juridical personalities. By then law has created an altogether fictive world to which their documents do not apply.<sup>7</sup>

The newly resurfaced island, according to the Farakka Barrage Authority that has only recently been vested with the responsibility of looking after the problem of erosion, forms part of the swing area of the river where no human habitation is supposed to exist. To further complicate the matters, both West Bengal and Jharkhand stake contentious claims to the jurisdiction over this tiny river island so much so that the Census of 2001 by a special order of the Registrar-General of India held a double count on them on behalf of both these states.

If they had had everything by their side, then the subsequent loss, I wondered, must have left the pale shadow of whatever they lost including their own selves in the archive of law. If law is what endorses the metaphysics of presence, it should not have failed so miserably in explaining their absence – nevertheless an equally important metaphysics that cannot but be accounted for without law. Back in 2006 when I first landed in Malda for conducting my research, I was enthusiastically checking with the district authorities the exact number of the victims who have been displaced by riverbank erosion. The numbers matter and more so in matters of governmentality, I told myself. As I approached the irrigation department officials, they were scandalized. They are there to assess the toll that erosion takes on civil structures and properties but not on the human beings. Of course they were sincere enough and willing to help me. They advised me to inquire with the department of relief and rehabilitation. I did not know that I was in for another disappointment. This department would provide figures of people who have actually been provided with relief and obviously the figure of victims, I surmised, would be no match for the number of people affected by erosion. Governmentality, as I learnt, casts an intricate web that incorporates everyone into it and accordingly spares none. The simple thought that there might be numbers and quotients of all kinds and some of them might be un-enumerable never crossed my mind. Not all are tied in what Foucault would call 'the governmental web' and certainly not as firmly since the people without shadows remain outside it. The displaced persons in this instance are those who cannot be classified into the vast repertoire of any of the governmental categories and identities whether as voters, or as title-holders of land or as BPL-cardholders or any combination of them. They are the first-order victims of power for whom power impinges more directly - not through the governmental web of classificatory schemes and identities but through an absolute denial and deprivation of rights that their incorporation into the web would have otherwise brought in its wake. They lack what Hannah Arendt might call the basic right – 'the right to have rights.'<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Samir Kumar Das, 'Introduction' in *Blisters on Their Feet: Tales of Internally Displaced Persons in India's North East*, ed. Samir Kumar Das (New Delhi: Sage, 2008), 11-43.

<sup>8</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1951).

Law thus creates a fictive world in which the *problem* of riverbank erosion exists without as it were the victims - without anyone actually having to suffer it. They are the 'people without shadows' whose existence does not matter in the eye of the state and hence leave no residue behind them - who exist and perish, come and go, live and die without the sovereign gaze ever being fixed on them. It is by way of being reflected in the eye of the sovereign that one acquires one's visibility. Law recognizes one's presence by making one's legal identity visible, by enumerating one into any of its complex categories and thus subsuming one under the grids of governmental rationality. Sovereign gaze lights up those who otherwise remain out of focus and who cast no shadows. We prefer to call the people out of focus as the 'people without shadows'. While much of contemporary Political Theory dwells extensively on how the sovereign gaze is fixed, and how the sovereign constantly calibrates the density and distribution of gaze while turning an unwieldy mass of people into identifiable and governable objects, the paper instead focuses on those who remain outside the gaze and those who are not considered as governable at all in the first place. Much of the existing literature focuses more on the optics of the sovereign gaze than on what remains outside it and as we argue, what remains outside it does not stand in a state of splendid isolation but is implicated in it.

Yet at another level, the paper proposes to take a more nuanced view of the victims and concentrate on how the so-called victims negotiate their victimhood while trying to become legal-juridical personalities. Interestingly whoever I met in any of the river islands I could visit, insisted that they did not want any special favour from the state. They instead want their identity as common citizens at par with others to be recognized and thereby be entitled to rights that others enjoy. But in order to make this claim, they need to constitute themselves as political subjects. While much of political subjectivity consists in their attempts at establishing them as legal-juridical subjects, there is reason to believe that the very process of constitution itself seldom remains bound by the legal norms and rules. Law per se does not constitute one into a legal-juridical personality. Behind every legal subject, there is a political subject and a political subject that invariably tells us a story of political struggle. The paper draws our attention to three related moments in the construction of distinct yet intertwined aspects of people's identities.

### **Justice as Counter-Governmentality**

First, as we have already seen, although displaced in 1997, the victims take particular care in preserving such documents such as deeds of conveyance, ration cards and voter identity cards that once invested them with legal-juridical personalities. These documents apparently do not mean anything and seem to have lost all legal validity. Article 11, Clause 2 of the West Bengal Land Revenue Act 1955 in its original form enables the owners who lose their land to regain ownership - provided the land reemerges on the river within 20 years' time from the erosion. This provision was abolished in 2000 and any land reemerging on the river, according to the new amendment, automatically becomes a vested land of the government. As a result, the law permanently rules out the claims of those who lose their land as a result of erosion.

But they serve one important purpose. Once the island resurfaces and they resettle themselves on it, they do it exactly as per what their deeds of conveyance stipulate. Individual deeds add up to the geography of the island's privately owned part. If what resurfaces is smaller than what once formed part of the mainland, then the private owners have to share the loss in proportion to the size of their ownership. If it is large, it creates no problem. Land allocation is done by the villagers themselves without the mediation of any land surveyor or authority appointed by the government. The survey is done from a point of origin situated invariably in mainland with the help of a measuring tape stretched from it over the water. Significantly, the mainland continues to serve as the point of origin of their idea of justice. The survey implies some form of community allocation of cultivable land and homestead that is privately owned and used and perhaps the common property resources. The river gives back (*payosthi*), roughly - if not as much as, it takes (*shikhosthi*) - the villagers take it to be an inviolable axiom. So, they feel that if nature offers a fair deal that is inherent in it, why then does the state create so much fuss about it? All that the state needs to do is legalize what they have done for themselves. They want the state authorities to allow them to pay taxes; this will confer legality on what they have been doing by way of resettling themselves. But their persistent entreaties have failed and the state authorities have refused to accept their payments. All they do is not ineffective but continues to lack the official sanction. The new dispensation that is ushered in, in the island is not ineffective. Nor do people who resettle them have any iota of doubt about its justness. The people without land remain landless in the new social dispensation. They continue to remain as much vulnerable as before.

In local parlance, it is known as *khadir*. *Khadir* is a just social order that is created in newly formed islands exactly in accordance with the land map of the 'mainland' that once got washed away as a result of riverbank erosion. The exactitude of the creation leaves no one in doubt and the geographies of resurfaced island and lost mainland appear to be perfectly substitutable. The resurfaced island becomes a shadow of the lost mainland - its reenactment. What they perceive as just reappears through the spectrality of the lost mainland. The island now constitutes a world where only shadows of legal-judicial personalities of the mainland exist without the personalities coming into play. People without shadows create shadows without people. Counter-governmentality builds on the shadows that the death of legal-judicial personalities leaves behind them.<sup>9</sup> It thrives on the insurgent archive of shadows. While allocating land and dividing the island amongst themselves, they seem to mimic an order of ownership including that of common property resources that in the eyes of the state is a thing of the past and they create a legal world - by and for themselves - without of course any official mediation. *Khadir* is just precisely because it claims to mimic a legal order that remained valid till it forms part of the mainland. The more perfectly it does, the more just it turns out to be. There is nothing immanent in their perception of justice and what is called people's perception never predates their entry into the world of law for it too is lodged in the legal. The just is not necessarily imagined as chaos that inevitably fractures the legal order. The just is not opposed to the legal - as some commentators would have us

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<sup>9</sup> I coin the term 'counter-governmentality' to refer - not simply to the remainder of the 'governmental web' that the state is either unwilling or unable (or both) to appropriate and 'colonize' but also to the way the now-redundant legal-judicial identities are invoked and pressed into action to 'govern' the people (that is to say, the islanders).

believe, for it too emulates the order that law creates and like law has its own self-disciplinary technologies.

Law per se cannot address the question of vulnerability. There is nothing that law can do to make one love another and be loved by her. How does vulnerability get into the legal discourse? To translate it into our parlance, how can we fit people with their shadows that will establish their presence? The answer certainly cannot be found in the world of law. Vulnerability probably takes a 'virtuous' state that promises to practise justice as a virtue. It is predicated on a modern state's self-recognition that is impelled more by contingencies of power than by the imperatives of law. Justice, as we argue, cannot be dissolved in law.

### Justice as Recognition by the Sovereign

Second, *khadir*, one must note, is not a 'liberated area' à la Mao. Unlike a 'liberated area' that has the requisite resources of being self-sufficing, victims' world, as our ethnographic work suggests, insists on that critical official mediation that stamps the order established by them with legality and is intent on being integrated into the sovereign's world of law. Now this integration is not easy. Nor can it be explained in terms of 'political society' that, according to Chatterjee's formulation, enters into some form of 'strategic politics' with the state and 'civil society'.<sup>10</sup> The relation of *khadir* to the state is not one of 'strategic politics', but one of integrating the former into the sovereign's order of law not so much through a sovereign decree made at will by the state but as Deleuze and Guattari tell us in their *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, by refashioning the whole of which it is going to be a part. Sovereignty, to borrow their words, is - "no longer the transcendent law that governs fragments; it must fashion as best it can a whole to which it will render its law immanent. It is no longer the pure signifier that regulates the signifieds; it now appears behind them, depending on the things it signifies".<sup>11</sup>

In simple terms, integration of the people without shadows is bound not only to redefine the 'whole' but also to reorient state sovereignty. A few years back, Ganga-Bhangan Pratirodh Nagarik Action Committee (Citizens' Action Committee for Resisting Erosion of the Ganges) went to the district collectorate (administrative headquarter) for submitting a memorandum to the then executive engineer of West Bengal Government's irrigation department. The memorandum highlighted the futility of the engineering measures hitherto undertaken by the department and urged on it to immediately stop all such work. While significantly describing flood as a natural phenomenon, it attributed riverbank erosion to the department's exercise in controlling it by keeping the river within its existing bed and finally allowing its vengeful fury expressed through the sudden surge of water during monsoons by eroding the banks. Spurs and boulders spread out on the banks only cut into the depth of the riverbed. The shallowness of the

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<sup>10</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 1998), 10.

<sup>11</sup> Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. from the French by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen Lane, Preface by Michel Foucault (London: Continuum, 1984/2004), 241.



bed - the villagers argued - causes tremendous 'wheeling' of huge monsoon water - that the river carries throughout its course - from within and cuts into the inner crusts of earth underneath the topsoil of the banks. This makes the banks fragile and allows huge chunks of earth to cave in and erode. These 'futile' works are undertaken - the villagers continued to argue - at the instance of and in league with the corrupt contractors, politicians and bureaucrats. Here was a piece of engineering knowledge that overstepped its conventional disciplinary boundaries and got entwined with politics. Their engineering knowledge was not blind to politics and vice versa. The executive engineer - an engineer both by training and profession - lost his cool as the 'unintelligent' victims came in a herd and got into an argument with him on a point or two about the finer aspects of complex river and civil engineering - which evidently require specialists' knowledge. "How far have you studied? What is your IQ?" he thundered. The villagers had no words to answer the question. Indeed, they belong to a world where knowledge refuses to be transformed into 'studies' and accordingly does not render itself liable to be measured by 'IQs' and modern quantitative techniques. Victims have a knowledge that is of no use to the officials of the irrigation department or maybe interrogates theirs.

Yet the knowledge of the 'unintelligent' villagers is of immense use for their own survival. No one - to my knowledge - loses life as erosion takes its toll on homestead, cultivable land, cattle and livestock, other critical, life-bearing resources. As the huge monsoon water 'wheels' from inside with a silent roar, the villagers have the knowledge necessary to hear it and thus feel alarmed by it. The alarm reaches those for whom it is meant. They relocate themselves hours before their land gets washed away. This is a 'knowledge' that knows the inevitability of floods, that knows how to cope and live with them, that also knows that the anti-erosion measures are futile - all without the mediation of the sovereign state and its vast engineering and technological repertoire - a knowledge that remains fiercely autonomous and is therefore relentlessly censored by the state functionaries. While their 'ignorance' saves them and positively helps them in bearing their life, the 'all-knowing' sovereign bodes their destruction by dispossessing them and devouring their livelihood. The sovereign may be 'all knowing' but is singularly unable to embrace and 'overcode' the knowledge that the villagers have for themselves. They bare the King and point to the limits of the sovereign. The social order of the island that mimics the legal order of the mainland may be orderly and just, but can never enjoy the recognition by the sovereign - although villagers envisage no problem on the state's part in legalizing it.

### Justice as Negotiated Distance

Third, between counter-governmentality and recognition by the sovereign, there is patience. Patience as a factor is of critical importance, for, the question is: how long will the victims wait for their social order to be recognized by the sovereign? Or else it persists as what it is - merely as an island that reenacts yet remains ever so distant from the mainland. One of the islands has been named by the victims as 'Calcutta Char'. Its bizarre resemblance to the largest metropolis of Eastern India amused me for a while. As I broached the issue with some of my acquaintances, I could sense that my hunch was correct. The naming of a char is an act of insubordination and mnemonic of distance - if

not the stark opposition – that obtains between metropolitan Calcutta (now Kolkata) and Calcutta Char.

As I keep visiting these islands of varying sizes off and on, I came to realize that distance is neither a benign nor an apolitical concept. The 'governmental web', by definition, spares nothing and even distance that is so crucial for the assertion of autonomy of the insurgent counter-governmentality needs to be fought and negotiated at every step and wherever necessary with force and violence. I will never forget my experience of 8 December 2007. I was accompanied by some of my old contacts and spent the whole day with the villagers in Khasmahal Char - one of the newly emerged islands. It was a pleasant winter day and a good escape for us. The sun was about to set in, in the silhouette of over 14-kilometer meandering belt of the river. As darkness was slowly setting in, we were about to take leave from the villagers – whose hospitality we had thoroughly enjoyed for the whole day. The boat, fitted with a motor presumably discarded from a bike, started roaring and as all of us leapt one by one into the narrow keel, we looked back one last time towards the villagers including the elderly women and little children who flocked in their tens in the *ghat*. Have they come, we wondered, for seeing us off? None of them – even the child of 3 years - was wearing any woolen in that punishing cold, but to our utter surprise, we discovered that each of them was armed with whatever they had – lathis, machetes, spears and sickles etc. The eldest amongst them – a lean, shadowy skeleton of a man with only one hateful eye came forward and slowly became audible. He seemed to speak on behalf of the villagers and bluntly wanted to know the purpose of our visit. We were groping for words for we had no real answer. 'Research' was meaningless for them. Thankfully, he himself broke the eerie silence that was becoming unbearable for all of us: "You (*aapnera*) come and go. But our life remains unchanged. We are yet to figure out why outsiders come to visit us." It had already become dark. The boat started inching forward. We felt relieved. After a while, the faces turned into what they look like from the mainland – ghostly pale shadows. As we conduct our research on them, we conveniently objectify them – turn them into objects of our research without any agency.

All of them value distance and refuse resolutely to be investigated upon as mute objects. Certainly they do not want to remain objects of outsiders' gaze. They want to remain distant and probably bask in their being out of focus. But, how do they seek sovereign recognition if they seek to preserve the distance? There are many different albeit ambivalent moments in the journey of the people without shadows to the world of law and what Samaddar calls 'other avenues' do not stand either at an unbridgeable distance or in complete opposition to the legal world.

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