Negotiating Cultural Diversity and Minority Rights in India

Gurpreet Mahajan, Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

India is among the most diverse societies in the world. It has people from all the major religions in the world—Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Zoroastrians (Parsis). Even though Hindus constitute about 82 per cent of the population, there are more than 149 million Muslims in the country, making it the second-largest population of Muslims in the world. Religious diversity is coupled with enormous linguistic and cultural diversity. The 1991 census showed that 114 languages were spoken by 10,000 or more people in the country; of these, 22 were spoken by more than one million people. The state lists 630 communities as Scheduled Tribes, and some of the identified communities, such as Kukis, are themselves internally heterogeneous, comprising several different tribes. There is therefore religious and cultural diversity of enormous dimensions in the country. When India gained independence in 1947, the political leadership and the framers of the constitution took note of this diversity, and they deliberated on a framework that would provide for a unified but culturally diverse nation state.

Pursuing Equality in a Diverse Society

In Europe, democracies evolved against the backdrop of considerable cultural homogeneity. The classical liberal wisdom also advocated indifference to social and cultural identities. It suggested that the law should not take note of the identity of a person; instead all individuals as citizens must be treated alike. Identical treatment, or equality before the law, was regarded as the sine qua non of a liberal democracy that signalled the absence of discrimination on grounds of religion, race or gender. This was the liberal model before the Indian leadership, and it received serious consideration. However, in a situation where social and cultural identities had been mobilized, there were several imponderables. Some communities had received separate representation under British colonial rule; moreover, colonial rule ended with the partition of the
country and the creation of a separate homeland for the Muslim community. Even though a significant number of this community chose to stay back in India, there were several anxieties about the future of the Muslims in a Hindu-dominated society.

Independent India had to address these anxieties and its leadership was called upon to make good its promise to ensure equality for all communities. There was also the issue of lower castes—communities that were excluded from the rest of the society and denied access to social and economic goods in society. Faced with this complex reality, the political leadership was confronted with the need to innovate and boldly rethink some of the received truths of liberalism.

What was distinctive in the approach that India adopted at this time was that it linked equality for the individual with equality for diverse communities. It began with the understanding that equality for individuals required that different communities within the polity should exist as equals. The presence of diverse communities was thus acknowledged. Indeed, the existing cultural diversity was deeply valued. It was felt that respect for the individual requires respect for the diverse beliefs and ways of life that these persons embody. Besides, the individual could not possibly exist as an equal if the community to which he or she belongs were disadvantaged or marginalized in the public domain.

It was therefore argued that, while the principle of equality before the law was extremely important, it was not enough. If equality was to be actualized in practice, then members of minority communities should have the liberty to lead a life in accordance with their cultural practices. In concrete terms this meant that minority religious communities needed religious liberty and protection against the threat of cultural homogenization. Similarly, different linguistic communities needed opportunities to promote their culture and identity; and the lower castes had to be assured access to social and public goods. Over the years this orientation has been suitably encapsulated in the slogan Unity in Diversity.

Unity in Diversity articulates the sentiment that India can be a strong and unified country while simultaneously affirming its cultural diversity. Cultural homogeneity is not, in other words, seen as a necessary condition for forging a political identity as a nation state. The commitment to this norm has been put to test at various moments in the country’s history, and the experience of the past 55 years has highlighted the complexities involved in keeping this pledge. The route India embarked upon at the time of independence has been a difficult and arduous journey, but it seems to have been a step in the right direction. In the challenges that have confronted the Indian state, what stands out is that the willingness to experiment with different ways of accommodating diversity has enabled the country to remain a strong and unified whole. Most political analysts in the 1960s and 1970s had predicted the fragmentation of India. If they have been proved wrong it is primarily because the existing framework of democracy makes room for diversities of various kinds—religious, linguistic and ethnic—in many different ways.
Accommodating Religious Diversity

India has no official or established state religion. Most other states in its neighbourhood affirm a religious identity: Pakistan and Bangladesh are Islamic states; Sri Lanka gives a special status to Buddhism; and Nepal is a Hindu state. India, however, has no established religion and this is the first sign of its commitment to treat all communities as equal. This is supplemented by the constitutional provisions that protect religious liberty. Article 25 gives all religious communities the right to ‘profess, propagate and practice’ their religion. It is pertinent to note that the right to propagate one’s religion was included in deference to the concerns of the minority communities, particularly Muslims and Christians, who maintained that preaching and propagating their faith was an essential part of their religion.

While most societies grant individuals the right to religious belief, in India communities enjoy the right to continue with their distinct religious practices. Perhaps the most significant part of this is that in all matters of family, individuals are governed by their community personal laws (see Larson 2001). Religious communities also have the right to set up their own religious and charitable institutions; they can establish their own educational institutions, and, above all, these institutions can receive financial support from the state. Taken together, these are ways by which public recognition has been granted to different religious communities and space made for them to continue with their way of life (Mahajan 1998). On the symbolic plane, policies pertaining to the declaration of public holidays, permissible dress in educational institutions and public jobs, and the naming of public places also acknowledge and give due recognition to the different communities living in India.

Dealing with Linguistic Diversity

While religious diversity was openly celebrated it was hoped that a shared language, in the form of Hindi written in the Devanagri script, would be the binding cement. Hence, the constitution declared it as the national language of the country with the proviso that English, which had been the language of administration, would continue to be used for all official purposes of the Union for which it was used previously. Thus, in the initial years, homogeneity was likely to come through language, and the choice of the Devanagri script subtly privileged the Hindu community.

This framework came under challenge shortly after independence. Several states in the southern part of India resisted the imposition of Hindi as the national language. At the same time there were strong movements across different regions of the country for linguistic reorganization of regional boundaries. The Union state initially resisted both demands but eventually, with some reluctance, agreed to allow English to continue as the language of official communication along with Hindi. If states did not wish to communicate in Hindi they could continue to use English.
Even more significantly, the Union state accorded recognition to linguistic communities so that communities occupying contiguous territory could constitute one state.

The linguistic reorganization of regional state boundaries has been a major instrument for protecting and nurturing linguistic diversity. The creation of linguistic identity-based units, each with political rights to govern itself within the framework of the federal system, meant that a specific linguistic community became a majority within a region. Its language became the official language of that state and the medium of instruction, public examination, communication and media networks. As a consequence, the language of the regional majority grew and flourished. On another plane, the creation of linguistically defined federal units provided opportunities to regional linguistic elites which might otherwise have remained marginalized in the national level. It brought in more and more people into the political process, giving them opportunities to participate actively and debate the issues that concerned them immediately. The growth of regional languages has not only been an asset for the local elites and the regional population; it has also benefited speakers of that language living in other parts of the country. They now have access to literature and information in their own language, and it is so much easier for them to pass on this cultural capital to their children.

Today the constitution recognizes 18 languages as official languages of the Union state in addition to Hindi and English, which enjoy the status of national languages. Recognition for specific languages has not always been easy. It has come after strong popular movements, but what has become evident is that, despite liberal apprehensions, the creation of linguistic identity-based states has not weakened the nation state. If anything, it has strengthened democracy, made it more inclusive, and given opportunities to previously excluded groups to share in the political decision-making process. This has strengthened India and minimized discontent against the Union.

**Special Rights for Tribal Communities**

Besides religious and linguistic diversity, India paid some attention to the diversity embodied in tribal ways of life. The constitution identified some areas where tribal communities lived with some form of ‘protective segregation’ as ‘excluded’ or ‘partially excluded’ regions. Here, the free movement and passage of outsiders was curtailed, and within the identified area tribal communities were given special rights to govern themselves in accordance with their customary law and distinct social and religious practices. In this way, cultural difference and diversity were protected; but to ensure that these communities are not entirely segregated or from the Indian polity, separate representation was provided to members of Scheduled Tribes. Separate representation was intended to bring in the voice of these communities without undermining their cultural distinctiveness. Indeed, it was to protect the latter that certain identified regions, and areas within a regional state, were given special status. Over the years, the special status has enabled vulnerable communities to survive and protect themselves from large-scale influx of ‘outsiders’ (Baruah 1989). In areas, for example in Tripura, where similar provisions for exclusion and protection for tribal communities did not exist,
their share in the total population has fallen enormously, with migrants, particularly from the neighbouring regions both within and outside the country, coming in.

The special status accorded to these communities and regions brought into effect what has since been called *asymmetric federalism*. What this means is that the constituent units of the federal polity do not all enjoy identical powers. Some, on account of their socio-cultural needs and political history, enjoy special powers. Article 371, clauses A and G, of the Indian Constitution, for instance, gives the states of Nagaland and Mizoram special rights to govern themselves in accordance with their distinct social practices, customary laws, and community control over ownership and the transfer of land and its resources. Special status has also been granted to the state of Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the accession treaty signed at the time when this state joined the Union of India.

Over the years, the Indian state has also introduced new political and administrative structures, in the form of *multi-level federalism*, to accommodate the special concerns of communities within a region. To take an example, in response to the demands of the Bodos—tribal populations living in the plains of Assam as distinct from the hill tribal communities—the Bodoland Autonomous Council was formed in 1993. This was intended to give the Bodos within the state of Assam an institutionalized structure of autonomy, with powers to legislate on 38 identified subjects, including matters related to education, ethnic and cultural affairs, and social and economic issues (Dasgupta 1998). Institutional arrangements of this kind have also been applied in other parts of the country: the Telengana region in Andhra Pradesh is a case in point. Such frameworks of governance have, by and large, been developed in response to popular mobilizations and struggles. The success of these arrangements is heavily dependent upon the attitude of the different levels of the federation. But there is little doubt that the willingness of the state to experiment with such frameworks of federalism and decentralized governance has played a significant role both in meeting minority aspirations and minimizing ethnic discord.

**Asymmetric and Multi-level Federalism**

Even though there is no coherent policy in this regard, attempts to grapple with identity-based ethnic conflict and competing claims for recognition have led to experimentation with *multi-level federations*. The success of these new institutional arrangements has varied but, in a region where diverse communities have coexisted for long periods of time and where movement across boundaries has been relatively more free, this may well be a way of accommodating diversities.

Contemporary theories of multiculturalism often recommend self-governance rights for communities that have lived on a particular territory for long periods of time with their distinctive way of life. However, such forms of accommodation are possible only when a given community constitutes an overwhelming majority in a given region. In areas such as north-east India, where many communities that are a minority in the national
context live close together and see the land they occupy as their homeland, separate territorial jurisdiction for each cultural community only produces unsustainable constituent units. What is needed is alternative ways of accommodating different groups and communities in the region. Multi-level federalism could offer a viable option in just these circumstances.

Multi-level federation entails the creation of what might be called sub-federations—a separate structure of governance with powers to deliberate on issues that contribute to the distinctiveness of a cultural community. In a culturally diverse region, one option is to have separate representation in legislative bodies and other decision-making institutions for different communities. But here the minorities remain a minority in each unit and may have only limited opportunity to influence policy. By contrast, in multi-level federalism, territorially concentrated minorities in a region can enjoy certain rights to govern themselves on matters that are considered central to the survival of those communities as a distinct cultural groups. This gives the elites within the community power to influence decisions on crucial cultural and political issues, and the opportunity to access valued resources and positions. Thus, a kind of dual membership is constructed: the community exists as a separate entity in a defined area, but for purposes of participation and representation it remains a member of the regional state.

**Frameworks of Accommodation: A Synoptic View**

The complex framework India has used for accommodating different kinds of diversity can be summarized briefly as follows. Religious communities enjoy extensive cultural rights but no separate political rights. Identified linguistic communities enjoy cultural rights as well political rights. In many regions they form the federal units which have some degree of political autonomy to govern themselves. Tribal communities, particularly in the Hill regions, have special cultural rights, political rights of separate representation and the right to govern themselves. There is a lingering mistrust, or liberal anxiety, about granting political rights to religious communities. In any case, most religious communities are scattered through the country. Linguistic communities and tribal populations, particularly when they are concentrated in a given region, enjoy some political rights. These rights have promoted diversity while simultaneously deepening democracy.

**Lessons from India**

The experience of the past five decades has underlined the need to accommodate cultural diversities in the public arena. But the path India has pursued has also drawn attention to the problems that we may confront in realizing this goal of accommodation. The cumulative experience has yielded some valuable lessons that we should reflect upon as we confront issues of peaceful coexistence in democratic polities today.

The common tendency when addressing questions of cultural diversity is to treat given communities as near-natural groups, with clearly identified boundaries that demarcate
them from other communities. Similarly, when we speak of cultural diversity, it is usually assumed that the communities to be accommodated are empirically given and there is little room for dispute there. These are assumption in the contemporary discourse on cultural diversity that must be scrutinized and interrogated.

If we take the example of India, what we have are diversities of religion, language and culture. Each kind of diversity, whether of religion, language or tribe, has been subject to construction, both by the state and by the agents themselves. Through its practices of enumeration and codification, the state has created categories that form the basis of recognized diversity today. The Hindi language includes within it several dialectics and related languages, such as Bhojpuri and Maithli. In the case of personal laws, too, the Hindu community includes Sikhs and Buddhists—communities that see themselves as distinct religious groups. The state is not the only actor here. Identities have at times also been constructed and reconstructed by the agents themselves. The Nagas, for instance, have created an identity for themselves by forging together and bringing into one fold seven different tribes. Examples of this can easily be multiplied. The relevant point is that identities that exist and which are seeking equal space in the public arena are far from natural entities. We need to approach the issue of coexistence and accommodation by taking note of this, and recognizing that issues of identity cannot be settled by merely referring to history or the original position. What we need are political—normative and institutional—solutions that take note of communities and identities as they exist and assert their claims.

However, addressing issues of identity and cultural diversity is never a simple affair. In developing societies, like India, identities not only define who we are; they also operate as objects that are open to manipulation and instrumental use. Identities can be mobilized to secure access to valued social and economic goods. In other words, claims for due recognition of a given identity-based community may come both from the desire to seek some redistribution of goods as well as deeply felt expressive needs. Most often the two are combined, and this poses serious challenges. The tendency on the part of the state is to ignore these demands and treat them merely as claims for more resources. The point that is forgotten in the process is that, when identities are mobilized, it is necessary to address concerns of recognition. Ignoring the latter often alienates a community. At the same time, when recognition is accorded in the form of political autonomy in a given region, these communities tend to become exclusivist and to recreate in the region a kind of cultural nationalism that has no place for internal minorities. In situations of considerable scarcity, therefore, recognition given with a view to accommodating diversity can often pose new challenges. The task that confronts developing democracies then is to find ways of accommodating differences in the public arena while simultaneously protecting the rights of other minorities.

This is not an easy task, and there are few universalizable answers. The only thing that can be said is that when the state endorses and expresses the identity of one community, other communities within the polity are disadvantaged. This is a common source of ethnic conflict at the national and the regional level. To minimize these conflicts the
state has to explore ways of accommodating all communities as equals. According formal recognition to the language of minorities can be an important way of opening opportunities and giving access to valued social and economic positions in society. It can, to put it more pointedly, be a means of combining recognition concerns with those of redistribution. Conversely, de-recognition of a language can limit the opportunities available to a community. It is therefore almost always met with resistance from the affected minority and often it becomes a cause of simmering and persistent discontent. Emerging democracies therefore need to move in the direction of greater linguistic diversity. If the Indian experience tells us something it is that recognition of linguistic identities can coexist fairly easily with national identity. The two can be mutually reinforcing. After all, a strong nation requires its citizens to have a sense of identity and belonging. This sense is best nurtured when communities receive recognition, respect and opportunities to enter the public arena. Language policies that can accommodate diverse communities are for this reason always desirable.

Over the past 55 years India has moved in this direction, albeit with some initial reluctance. The problem that persists is that, in a country where there are more than 100 languages in use, it is almost impossible to give equal status and recognition to all languages. Hence, which language receives official status or a territorial jurisdiction of its own has been subject to political construction. It is communities with a greater degree of political and economic power that have succeeded in obtaining recognition. So far, no tribal language has been given the status of an official language, even though some of them have more than 1 million users. Likewise, recognition has taken many different forms. Not all languages that are recognized in the Eighth Schedule of the constitution have a demarcated territory (Kamat 2003). While languages that have what may be called a ‘home state’ have consolidated and flourished, the status of languages that have been recognized but have no corresponding state is dependent primarily upon the rights granted to internal minorities within a region.

Eventually, if diversities have to be nurtured, there is a need for various supplementary policies: formal recognition must be buttressed with such policies as second-language status, the option to receive education and official information in the language of the minority, and the facility to address the authorities in one’s own language. In India, space for diversity has been appropriately made in the constitutional and legal structure, but policy measures needed to back that structure have often fallen short of expectations. The constitution, for instance, provides that in areas where a minority community constitutes more than 30 per cent of the population, education should also be provided in the language of that minority. But this provision has not always been implemented; in some cases second-language status has not been accorded to the language of the minority for long periods of time. Hence, the task of protecting diversity is more complex and challenging than meets the eye. In the first instance, formal recognition for the language/s of the minorities is itself contested within the nation state. Even when this hurdle is overcome, a web of policies is needed to ensure that formal status translates into actual reality on the ground. This is not always easy and is dependent upon the will of the political party in power and the extent of mobilization on the issue.
Thus, accommodating diversity requires not just innovation and bold initiatives, but also sustained commitment.

Despite these failings, linguistic diversity has been nurtured in India and in many regions, even when the government has done little, internal minorities have sustained themselves. This has been possible because minority communities, both religious and linguistic, have the right to establish and administer their own institutions. There are today a growing number of minority institutions using their own language as the medium of instruction. This has helped to provide options for minorities within the region as well as the general population.

At one level, it appears that the general framework India has used to accommodate different kinds of diversity can have wide applicability. Linguistic diversity is formally recognized and brought into the public arena; specific linguistic communities have also been transformed into regional majorities through the territorial reorganization of state boundaries. Hence, many more citizens have the option of receiving education and competing for public jobs in their mother tongue. Similarly religious diversity is duly acknowledged and communities enjoy considerable religious liberty; and the diversity of tribal ways of life is also acknowledged. Yet, even as we take note of this, it is necessary to add that accommodation of diversity can take many different forms. What is the appropriate form for a particular country depends on a number of coexisting conditions, the most important being the history of the nation state and the relationship between the state and the community in question. Whether religious communities are to be accommodated with some special political rights, and whether linguistic communities are to be granted special cultural rights but no corresponding jurisdiction in a given territory, are matters on which a the decision taken needs to be context-based.

What can, however, be said at the general level is that states that are unable to formally recognize their internal diversity, and those who seek to weld a strong nation state on the basis of a single cultural identity, are increasingly faced with identity-based conflict. And, perhaps even more importantly, when such conflicts are ignored or suppressed with the might of the state, they tend to take on a more violent and intractable form. The longer and more violent the conflict is, the less will it be possible to resolve it by granting some special cultural rights. Often what is needed is special political rights along with accommodation on the cultural and symbolic plane.

Giving communities cultural rights brings with it a different set of anxieties. The most significant of these relate to the treatment of women. Almost all cultures, the world over, place women in a subordinate position. Hence, not only can granting special political rights, or self-governance rights, to a minority community raise concerns of minority nationalism (which is as dangerous as majority nationalism) but cultural community rights can be a source of unfair treatment for women and other vulnerable groups within the community. Hence, even though there is a compelling need to accommodate diversity, the concern for diversity has to go hand in hand with the equally important concern for equal rights for all citizens. Diversity, in other words, is not intended to
supplant equality. It must supplement it, and for this there is again no one policy that can be recommended.

In India, on matters of family—marriage, divorce, inheritance, alimony, the custody of children and so on—individuals are governed by the personal laws of their community. The constitution recognizes the personal laws of four communities—Hindus (which includes Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists), Muslims, Christians and Parsis. The personal laws of each of these communities, as they existed at the time of independence, disadvantaged women. The Union state legislated and reformed the Hindu personal laws, which are now more gender-just. It refrained, however, from interfering in the personal laws of minority communities. Respect for the religious liberty of minority communities thus translated into unjust treatment for women. In response to the women’s movements the state eventually framed the Special Marriage Act; now, at the time of marriage individuals could choose not to be governed by the personal laws of their religious community. This gave individuals a choice; they could opt out of their religious community laws and be governed by the state civil law.

Giving individuals exit options can be a viable way of reconciling diversity with equality. However, in India, where the level of literacy is fairly low, most people did not know of this law. Even those women who were aware of this option felt that they were in no position to exercise this choice at the time of marriage. Making a choice assumes a degree of empowerment in social and economic terms, and this is what is missing for most women. Hence, this option has not been very effective; on the whole the Special Marriage Act has done little to improve the status of women. Some women’s groups are now asking for what has been termed ‘reverse optionality’: that is they would like the state civil code to apply to all citizens unless individuals make a choice at the time of marriage and opt out—that is, ask to be governed by their religious personal law—the assumption being that large number of people, unaware fully of the options available to them, will then be governed by the more just state civil law on matters pertaining to family. This suggestion has found little favour with the state so far.

What is evident across the board is that special cultural and political rights, once they are granted, are exceedingly difficult to withdraw. Even when something is done for the sake of promoting equal treatment for all, state actions meet with suspicion and mistrust. It is for these reasons that the Union state has refrained from reforming the personal laws of the minority communities. Over time, the personal laws of both the Parsi and the Christian community have been reformed internally through the initiatives of the members themselves. The same has not, however, occurred in the case of the Muslim Personal Law. The question what role the state can play in ensuring more just treatment for Muslim women is an issue that has divided the community and the nation. Respect for diversity suggests an absence of direct state action and greater room for communities to govern themselves, but can the state act as a catalyst in this process of reform? Should it set targets and timetables for reforms to be undertaken by the community? Should it lay down the boundary conditions, or the parameters of what is acceptable, and within those parameters allow communities to govern themselves? Which of these strategies
should the state adopt? Which will be an effective way of combining the concern for diversity with equality? Judgements on these questions are likely to vary from context to context. What we need therefore is an affirmation of the principle while the policies by which we give effect to that norm can be deliberated upon keeping the specifics in mind.

The experience of India highlights two other elements that also need to be mentioned here.

First, formal recognition of diversity by the state is indispensable; it can minimize the disadvantages faced by a community in the public arena and create new opportunities for it. But state policies of cultural homogenization are just one site of disadvantage and discrimination in society. Often minority communities suffer because they are stigmatized and represented negatively in the cultural history of the nation. Hence, policies seeking to promote cultural diversity need to be accompanied by a positive acknowledgement of the contribution of minority communities. Multiculturalism can best flourish when there is an accompanying spirit of inter-culturalism. Greater exposure and interaction between communities needs to be fostered in order to overcome negative stereotypes. If multiculturalism suggests official recognition for different languages, inter-culturalism requires that the majority be encouraged to learn the language, and with it the literature and culture of a minority, and vice versa, and that the minority be encouraged to learn about other minorities as well as the majority.

Second, the commitment to cultural diversity has been challenged very fundamentally by episodes of communal violence, where members of one community are systematically targeted by another. Even though incidents of communal violence have decreased over the years, they remain a permanent reminder of the vulnerability of the minority communities. Communal violence not only vitiates existing bonds but also generates a feeling of mistrust among communities. It thrives by systematically demonizing the ‘Other’, and this undermines even existing structures of interaction. What is strengthened, on the one hand, is intra-community rather than inter-community bonds and, on the other, a traditional and more orthodox leadership, which is more insular and hostile to the expression of differences within the community. The paradox then is that, while cultural diversity finds space in the public arena, inter-cultural dialogue and interactions have diminished. The majority community sees the accommodation of diversity as ‘appeasement’ of the minority and the minority remains vulnerable and diffrdent, unable to contribute significantly to the public and political life of the polity.

The point that must be emphasized here is that policies that promote cultural diversity are not in themselves sufficient to check communal violence. Ignorance about the Other certainly provides a fertile ground for breeding sentiments of hatred and animosity. But the presence of diversity in the public arena is not a sufficient deterrent against systematic victimization of the Other. In situations of communal violence, what victims require is strong and quick action by the state to protect the life and property of the targeted
community while simultaneously punishing the guilty. In seeking this, the victims are not asking for special treatment; rather they wish to be treated like all other citizens. They want their basic rights as citizens to be protected. Communal violence suggests that they are not being treated like others; they are being singled out on account of their identity. In sharp contrast to this, to protect cultural diversity, sameness is de-emphasized. The reference usually is to the predicament and special needs of a minority community. The latter seeks recognition for the difference it embodies.

Peaceful coexistence of different communities therefore requires both a vigorous defence of the basic rights of individuals as citizens and an institutional and normative framework that acknowledges and values diverse ways of life. The latter often entails special consideration for members of a community, in the form of exemptions from existing legal codes or recognition for specific cultural institutions and practices. In other words, it is not an either/or situation. If individual rights by themselves provide little protection against forces of cultural homogenization, then accommodating diversity through special consideration for vulnerable groups also neglects the primary concerns of individuals as citizens. It is only when both sets of concerns are suitably addressed that democracy is deepened and multicultural polities are nurtured and made more sustainable.

References and Further Reading


