Institutional discourses and ascribed disability identities

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Abstract   In the present study we asked: how do institutional discourses, as represented in mass media such as newspapers, confer identities upon a traditionally marginalised collective such as those with a disability? To answer our question, we examined Indian newspaper discourse from 2001 to 2010, the time period between two census counts. We observed that disability identities—that of a welfare recipient, a collective with human rights, a collective that is vulnerable, and that engages in miscreancy—were ascribed through selective highlighting of certain aspects of the collective, thereby socially positioning the collective, and through the associated signalling of institutional subject positions. Present observations indicate that identities of a collective can be governed by institutional discourse, that those "labelled" can themselves reinforce institutionally ascribed identities, and that as institutional discourses confer identities onto the marginalised, they simultaneously also signal who the relatively more powerful institutional actors are.

Introduction

Institutions can be understood as products of discursive activity wherein actors produce and consume texts as they shape their social world (Phillips, Lawrence, & Hardy, 2004). As most of what is known is not through direct experience, but through words created by others, institutional discourses shape beliefs and prejudices and thereby the moral and intellectual environment in which one lives (Hayakawa, 1990). Elite institutional actors such as newspapers can particularly shape beliefs and prejudices as they discursively define and portray certain collectives such as minorities within institutions (Haller, Dorries, & Rahn, 2006). Analysing such discourses, especially in mass media such as newspapers, thus allows for an understanding of broader social factors which influence the formation of collective identities and associated social roles of those considered marginalised (Fairclough, 1989, 1992; Haller et al., 2006).

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In the present study, we draw upon newspaper discourse from 2001 to 2010—the time period between two census counts—and outline ascribed disability identities in India. This was a critical period for understanding what is a disability and associated enumeration as there were definitional discrepancies between the governmental census and the National Sample Survey (Jeffery & Singal, 2008; Mitra & Sambamoorthi, 2006). This was also the time period in which the seminal Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act of 1995 was being replaced by the Indian government in harmony with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and thus an opportune time to understand how disability is portrayed (Kumar, Sonpal, & Hiranandani, 2012).

Our specific research question is: how do institutional discourses, as represented in mass media such as newspapers, confer identities upon a traditionally marginalised collective? Our focus is on persons with a disability in India. We draw upon critical discourse theory (Fairclough, 1995) and disability research, both of which have noted the importance of media framing which reflects institutional sociolinguistic practices in the creation of identities of traditionally marginalised people such as those with a disability (Haller et al., 2006; Peters, 1999). Critical discourse theory particularly entails viewing institutional discourse as manifesting ideologies, manipulating which, institutional elites confer social roles and identities onto less powerful institutional actors (Fairclough, 1989).

To understand ascribed identities, we obtained each newspaper article dealing with disability from 2001 to 2010 from the *Times of India*, a leading daily English language newspaper. Present data indicate four specific identities. In order of discursive dominance, we noted articles which portrayed the collective as recipients of governmental welfare schemes, as those with human rights, as vulnerable institutional subjects, and as those who are miscreants who create nuisance in society.

In identifying ascribed identities, our study makes the following contributions. First, data indicate components of discourse that ascribe certain identities onto a collective. For example, when the aforementioned newspaper included articles about "welfare" (a term used by the newspaper and by the Indian government as outlined later), governmental welfare schemes such as disability-specific travel concessions or reservations in governmental jobs were outlined. Sometimes, alongside such disability benefits, articles noted instances of charity that were aimed at the welfare of the "economically weaker scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and persons with a disability". The collective with a disability was thus identified either on its own or by conjoining it with other collectives as being relatively inferior to other collectives as social positioning was based on economic and political factors (cf. Hagendoorn, 1993). Data thus indicate that identities are ascribed through the "othering" of certain groups through use of language (Galvin, 2003) as certain aspects of a collective are selectively highlighted.

Second, related to social positioning, data allude to the creation of institutional subject positions as identities are signalled. Subject positions are institutional roles that afford social subjects rights of communication and authority (Fairclough, 1992; Foucault, 1972). As identities are discursively created for a collective, actors not part of the labelled collective also assume a certain identity, with concomitant implications for social relations within the institutional field (Phillips & Hardy, 1997). In the present data, as the identity of a welfare recipient was constructed, so was the role of the government as a powerful controller of welfare benefits.

Third, present data may help understand why certain institutional subject positions or roles can be sticky. In the present data, the human rights discourse did not overcome the welfare discourse. Present observations suggest that the collective which seemed to be classified as recipients of welfare often sidestepped demands for empowerment and instead chose to demand more welfare benefits thus reinforcing a particular identity they were endowed with. Further, the welfare discourse was more specific (e.g., types of governmental schemes) as compared with the human rights discourse (e.g., noting importance of rights). It is possible that the relative permanence of identities based on longevity and social impact of media (Cooren, 2004; McPhee, 2004) is replicated at the individual level as institutional discourses inscribe certain subject positions and lead institutional prejudices to become part of individual schema (Ybema et al., 2009). Even when some institutional actors may wish to question assumed social relations, they may not be able to articulate objections as these may make little or no sense within extant patterns of speech and thought (Galvin, 2003). Present data thus reinforce the notion that discourses can create social categories and have practical implications for those categorised as well as those involved in the categorisation (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004a; Hacking, 1986).

Overall, present data help outline the discursive underpinnings of institutional functioning by noting how collectives are socially positioned within institutions. Data shed light on how social definitions are governed by institutional discourse, and identity is thus not only about individual claims based on personality or character (cf. Ybema et al., 2009). Even when institutional narratives are beyond one's awareness, they can shape how actors see themselves and others (Somers, 1994) and thereby reinforce social categorisations (Galvin, 2003).

Literature review

In this section, we discuss what we mean by discourse and ascribed identities, and how news media in particular can influence the creation of ascribed identities. We then present the research question.

Discourse and ascribed identities

Discourse refers to a collection of texts and speech, or a vocabulary, which supports certain ways of thinking and behaving. When texts can be distributed widely, they are prone to influencing actions and can serve as a coercive form of influence (Phillips et al., 2004) and social domination (Foucault, 1972). Discourse, as representative of social practice, can represent reality, enact social relations, and establish identities of a collective (Fairclough, 1992; Gee, 2005). Written texts in particular contain implied judgments that can shape readers' thoughts (Hayakawa, 1990).

Since the present study is focussed on discursive construction of identities, and not individual identity, we understand identity from a sociological and structuralist perspective as a set of roles created for individuals by society (Czarniawska & Wolff, 1998) including institutional actors such as the media (Brown, 2006; Fealy, McNamara, Treacy, & Lyons, 2012). Such a social constructionist approach maintains that collectives are social artefacts or entities moulded in accordance with prevailing cultural scripts and power centres (Cerulo, 1997). We thus view identity as a discursive construct, as a social and cultural rather than an internal psychological phenomenon (Brown, 2006; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

A key theme in discourse-based studies of identity is the notion of self-other difference, who the "others" are, who they are not (Ybema et al., 2009) or the "othering" of certain groups through language (Galvin, 2003). Distinctions or otherness can be achieved through processes of discursive positioning (Garcia & Hardy, 2007), or binary or linguistic categorisations (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004b) which implicitly or explicitly highlight who is "normal" or accepted more so in society (Galvin, 2003), and which types of collectives are considered powerful or otherwise (Brown, Ainsworth, & Grant, 2012; Hall, 1997).

Such discursive positioning serves to magnify differences and indicates that identity construction is not a neutral process; instead it is a process coloured by emotions, moral judgments, and political or economic interests. Discursive regimes or the meta-discourses within which identities are formulated are thus based on power and hegemonic workings (Ybema et al., 2009). What discourses contain or suppress through selective silences (Ng & Cock, 2002) and which identity-specific discourses dominate can be contingent on the institutional distribution of power. Discourses thus can be limited and culturally specific, and discursive struggles can be struggles over crafting of identities (Somers, 1994).

In an example of discursive struggles over crafting of identities, Maguire, Phillips, and Hardy (2001) outlined how new categories of identities were discursively created as actors such as pharmaceutical organisations and HIV/AIDS community organisations collaborated to note the collective comprising "patients" in the HIV/AIDS treatment domain. The discursive construction of "people living with HIV/AIDS" was reformulated as "treatment activists", implying a change in the identity of a group that was not passive and awaiting expert opinion (e.g., from doctors). They were now active in shaping their medical outcomes.

Hegemonic or prejudiced underpinnings of identity categorisations were noted in another study by Phillips and Hardy (1997) who outlined how the identity of a "refugee" was discursively constituted within the UK refugee system. In this study, four institutional actors, the British government, the Refugee Legal centre, the British Refugee Council, and the Refugee Forum tried to construct the notion of a refugee, based on their goals and interests. While the government had formal power and resources, other actors discursively determined the refugee identity (e.g., someone who may need support services).

News media and ascribed identities

News media, as a central spectator and actor within an institution, can structure and stratify fields as it observes and publicly evaluates field happenings (Lamertz & Heugens, 2009). When public media is engaged in any discourse, it shapes how involved actors as well as bystanders interpret the situation. Media narratives are important more because of the meanings they evoke than because of any truths they may represent (Chen & Meindl, 1991; Selsky, Spicer, & Teicher, 2003). Though individuals pen specific textual content, the collective process of information checking, editing, and so forth ensures the voice of the media is finally what readers consume (Chen & Meindl, 1991).

Discourse can particularly imply relative permanence of identities when the actors who create such (e.g., key newspapers within a society) (Haller et al., 2006) have a degree of longevity, legitimacy, and social impact (Brown et al., 2012; Cooren, 2004; McPhee, 2004). When actors possess formal power (e.g., the right to speak), important resources (e.g., information and credibility), network links (e.g., links with other actors for information gathering), and discursive legitimacy (e.g., the right to be heard) they can especially ascribe identities onto collectives, and leave minimal scope for disagreements (Brown et al., 2012). Discourse in such cases is performative as it crafts social reality (Ford & Ford, 1995).

Media discourse can particularly signal self-other differences and discursively position collectives. For example, Fealy et al. (2012) noted how identities were conferred onto the elderly through language that highlighted categorical distinctions. Specifically, newspaper data revealed explicit and implicit ways of collectively positioning older people (e.g., little old ladies) that conferred a distinct identity upon them (e.g., those who are frail). Such public discourses reveal dominant institutional assumptions, overall public attitudes, and inform legislation and policies (e.g., who can be recipients of state support).

Pertinent to disability, news media has been noted as having the power to define disability groups as it acts as an opinion leader about disability information. Haller et al. (2006) examined disability terminology in two elite newspapers—*The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*—to explore how the news media frames the disability community. Data indicated that terminology (e.g., persons with a disability as sufferers) implied pity and a certain identity, even when narratives included exceptional accomplishments.

The very notion of disability is a social phenomenon as it allows people to be perceived as a group (Harris, 1995). For example, the minority group approach sees those with a disability as an oppressed group who may want special benefits. Social policies (e.g., a category of people), cultural processes (e.g., stereotypes), and research methods (e.g., classification in surveys) also serve to cast the group as a distinct institutional subject group (Shakespeare, 1996). In the present paper we note how institutional discourses, as represented in mass media such as newspapers, confer identities upon a traditionally marginalised collective.

Method

We first outline the specifics of the empirical context, that is, who is someone with a disability and how disability is understood in India. We then explain how we collected and analysed data.

The Indian context

There are debates in India on how many and who are seen as those with a disability. Specifically, while the latest (2011) census data notes that there are 26.8 million people with a disability (Dhar, 2013) the number could be as high as 100 million (Hindustan Times, 2016). Within the country, the two national enumerators, the census and the National Sample Survey Organisation view disability as particular bodily limitations and as overall activity limitation respectively with consequences regarding disability prevalence estimates (Mitra & Sambamoorthi, 2006).

Regarding who is someone with a disability and how disability is understood, medicine and medicalisation of disability continues to control the disability-specific legal discourse though, in theory, legislation (e.g., the seminal 1995 Persons with Disabilities—Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation—Act) is said to adopt a rights-based approach. Policy largely rests on the understanding of disability as a "personal tragedy" which needs to be compensated, and government-controlled welfare benefits are determined on medical grounds. Further, those with a disability are seen as "paying for past sins". Societal attention is thus distracted from socio-structural barriers and is instead focussed on the charity and medical model of disability (Addlakha & Mandal, 2009; Hiranandani & Sonpal, 2010; Kumar et al., 2012). Policies driven by the welfare state have led to disability-specific governmental welfare schemes such as scholarships, reservations in jobs, disability insurance schemes, and other disability benefits (Hiranandani & Sonpal, 2010). Societal inclusion yet remains patchy given negative or ambivalent attitudes towards persons with disabilities (Dawn, 2012; Kumar et al., 2012).

However, discourse in this context is beginning to critically reflect on the experience and understanding of disability. For example, Kumar et al. (2012) have outlined that underlying conceptions of disability based on notions of ableism and the karma theory may explain why, despite affirmative actions (e.g., reserved government employment, incentives and subsidies for employers and those with a disability), there is discrimination in the Indian workplace. Others (e.g., Jeffery & Singal, 2008) have engaged in textual activity to urge caution in using aforementioned estimates for understanding of disability aimed at policy-making. Disability identification is seen as a political issue and researchers have called for studies to better explicate current understanding of disability in the Indian context (Jeffery & Singal, 2008).

Data collection

In the Indian context, mainstream English language newspapers have been instrumental in shaping public views about minorities such as economically backward classes (Weisskopf, 2004). Following prior research (Haller et al., 2006) we focussed on daily newspapers which had large circulation. We specifically got circulation data for the period of our study (2001 to 2010) from the Audit Bureau of Circulation, a not-for-profit, voluntary organisation that verifies circulation data of newspapers. Data indicated that the top four English-language national daily newspapers are *The Hindu*, *Hindustan Times*, *The Times of India*, and *Indian Express*. Specific

articles were gathered from the Lexis-Nexis database using search terms such as "disabled", "disability", "disabilities", "differently-abled", "handicapped", "mentally challenged" and "physically challenged". To ensure we were comprehensive in our search, we also leveraged Dow Jones and Company's Factiva database which contains business information and research including newspaper data.

The aforementioned four newspapers contained 1041; 1134; 4730; and 1057 disability-specific articles respectively. Choosing a national newspaper with the maximum reporting and country-wide distribution can help address any geographic or other particular event-based reporting biases (Earl, Martin, McCarthy, & Soule, 2004; Roberto, 1987). Thus, we could side-step the fact that Indian states view and treat their respective minority populations differently (Haq & Ojha, 2010) and focus on the broader institutional discourse. Further, while a degree of idiosyncrasy may be maintained, competing newspapers may not necessarily compete via diversity (cf. Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992). Finally, practical constraints of making inferences from large data across (possibly) diverse newspapers drove us to one newspaper—*The Times of India*.

Articles that are not directly applicable were eliminated. For example, an article which focussed on the plight of refugees in a slum area also included a quote from a resident who works at a non-governmental organisation for persons with a disability. This article was eliminated. As another example, another article briefly mentioned the temporary disability of a national cricket icon. This article was also eliminated. We also removed duplicate articles. This took the final count of articles to 3176.

Data analysis

We operated from the understanding that social experience and identities are constructed through language (Cunliffe, 2002) especially as underlying meanings and implications contained in written texts construct reality within particular contexts (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Critical discourse especially helps explicate discursive identity construction as it exposes the ideological bases and hidden structures in macro discourses (Fealy et al., 2012). Given our focus on outlining how language manifests identities (Fealy et al., 2012) and the generally understood broad categories of disability identity in the literature as explained below, we followed a theoretically driven coding approach.

While conceptualisations of disability have not been complete, stable, or comprehensive, the most common definitions followed by researchers, producers of statistics, and governmental policy makers are: disability as functional limitation (e.g., classification of disability based on a medical diagnosis) and the related administrative definition(s) of disability that focus on distribution of welfare benefits (e.g., who is/is not eligible for benefits), a subjective definition of disability (e.g., disability declaration as voluntary), and the related social model of disability (e.g., that the environment is disabling) (Altman, 2001; Grönvik, 2009). These views of disability have generally been subsumed under two main approaches in identifying those with a disability as a collective, the medical model (based on a physical or medical understanding of disability) and the social model (based on a

socio-cultural understanding of disability and a concomitant understanding of rights) (Mitra & Sambamoorthi, 2006; Shakespeare, 1996).

In the context of the present study, though the understanding and experience of disability is negotiated by socio-cultural constructions that give meaning to impairments (Ghosh, 2010), those with a disability are seen as beneficiaries of government schemes, such as travel concessions, scholarships, disability pension, and so forth (Dalal, 2006). The disability certificate, a gateway to governmental benefits, is based on a medical understanding of disability. The discourse of empowerment or striving for human rights is swept aside in favour of the charity or welfare approach that is aimed at bettering circumstances of the "deserving" (Jeffery & Singal, 2008). Alongside, while the legal discourse is also based on the platform of social welfare, courts have begun to leverage unincorporated international treaties and other non-binding international instruments to inform their decision-making (Kothari, 2010) and judgments have partially shifted attention to social and other "effects" of disabling conditions (Mandal, 2010).

Following this understanding of disability (e.g., medically driven welfare schemes, socially imposed barriers on someone who should have rights) and considering the magnitude of data, we first synthesised each article into a few sentences that conveyed the key essence of the article. This was done for each article across all years. For example, if an article outlined specific rupee amounts for disability insurance, we did not focus on the magnitude of aid or the types of governmental schemes. Instead we noted if the article conveyed a type of identity (e.g., in this case "welfare" schemes of the government aimed at "recipients").

Initial coding was based on references to physical or mental impairment, references to welfare schemes, social barriers faced by those with a disability, and physical barriers faced by those with a disability. We noted that when physical or mental impairment was mentioned, it was sometimes in conjunction with explications of charity. For example, an article in 2001 noted how entities had joined hands to financially help a girl whose face needed reconstruction. While the article noted physical impairment, the focus was outlining donors and the donation aimed at persons with a disability. We thus focussed on the main thrust of the article as it outlined a particular identity, that of a donation recipient. Alternatively, mention of the Indian Right to Education Act and how persons with a disability should have access to education was noted as comprising an identity of a collective that had rights within society. We also noted that articles portrayed vulnerability of the collective (e.g., mention of rapes of girls with a disability) and how the collective was a societal nuisance (e.g., articles about how those with a disability engaged in scams and hoodwinked societal members). Coding was done independently by two authors, and we ensured agreement on findings by discussing each article.

Findings: the (dis)abled collective

We noted articles which portrayed the collective as recipients of governmental welfare schemes or more generally as welfare recipients (1417 articles), as those with human rights (1037 articles), as vulnerable institutional subjects (613 articles), and as those who are miscreants who create nuisance in society (54 articles). Below we note discourses that conferred a particular identity. Specific articles, that is, exemplars for each type of conferred identity are also noted in following sections. Authors of articles were often undeterminable as no name was mentioned or the name did not inform readers if authors were paid reporters, if they were persons with a disability who had written an opinion piece, if they were members of any non-governmental organisation, if they represented the government's voice, and so forth.

Welfare recipients

The focus here was portraying a collective as recipients of welfare, which was predominantly controlled by the government. We noted three types of articles. First, articles outlined various governmental schemes focused on "welfare" of a subset of citizens. These schemes included quotas or reservations in employment or educational spaces, railway and bus travel concessions, reduced fees or concessions for vocational training, exempting those with a disability from otherwise mandatory job transfers in governmental jobs, disability-specific scholarships, leniency in exam paper corrections, giving students with a disability more time and separate seating in examinations, lower grade cut-offs for entrance into institutes of higher education, incentivising able-bodied people to marry someone with a disability, and lower land lease rates for setting up schools for those with a disability.

As specific examples, we noted that articles had outlined how state governments had decided to reserve three per cent seats in various educational institutions or that admission in professional colleges including engineering, pharmacy, master's in business administration and so forth were based on certain concessions such as lowered cut-offs for grades. We also noted articles which outlined that those with a disability could appear for certain examinations without paying the examination fee. As an example, an article outlined some governmental welfare benefits,

> The Karnataka government will provide free bus passes to nearly 20,500 disabled persons this year, minister for Women and Child Welfare C. Motamma said here on Friday. . . Nearly 13,000 disabled students were given scholarships during 2000–2001 with Braille textbooks and audio library. (December 1, 2001. Free bus passes for the disabled[1])

Another article outlined a scheme that was aimed at incentivising the "able-bodied" to marry the "disabled,"

> . . .marriage is the one institution where the stigma of being differently-abled is starkly highlighted. Now, the state government has decided to rectify this and is planning to launch a scheme where anyone marrying a disabled person will be awarded Rs 50,000. Social justice minister Shivajirao Moghe said the idea is to encourage marriages between the "disabled and the able-bodied." (October 9, 2010. Wed a disabled person, get Rs 50,000 from state)

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[1] We have noted the date and article title for each example.

Next, articles noted how governmental and other actors such as non-governmental and for-profit organisations tried to "mainstream" those historically sidelined or ostracised. Specifically, these articles focussed on setting up of vocational centres for training persons with a disability, making polling booths and religious places accessible, conducting disability-specific job fairs, and working towards integrated education. These articles did not refer to equality or human rights as was the case in articles we captured in the next ascribed identity. Here we note an example,

> The handicapped and welfare department is looking forward to beginning "relax therapy" at home for elderly persons. . .Guess who would come knocking at your door? A blind!. . .the department has selected 10 blind students of the Blind School in Lucknow for three months training. . ."The department has identified as many as 18 trades in which the department would give specialised training to blind and physically disabled and mentally-retarded persons for their self-employment and rehabilitation," says Rohit Nandon, secretary, Handicapped Welfare department. (September 21, 2004. Relax, blind masseurs will heal you)

Finally, the portrayal of welfare recipients included articles outlining charitable activities such as monetary donations, distributing assistive technology, providing funds for or free access to medical help, activities of organisations in the realm of corporate social responsibility that targetted those with a disability, and forms of token inclusion such as including persons with a disability in bursting of firecrackers during festivals. We note here an excerpt from an article,

> Distributed: Appliances and walking aids were distributed to the disabled and handicapped persons by Bharat Vikas Parishad on Sunday on the occasion of World disabled day by the chief guest IG, Allahabad range, Surya Kumar Shukla who said that people who feel and think about disabled really act to bring smiles on their faces. (December 8, 2009. State-safety day observed in MP)

Often, articles noted charitable activities by grouping this collective with other economically and socially backward collectives in India (e.g., scheduled tribes, that is, certain indigenous tribes that are officially recognised as being socially disadvantaged). As a specific example, in 2010, we noted that the Goa (state) cabinet had asked for the implementation of the Rashtriya Madyamik Shikshan Abhiyan[2] which focussed on "making secondary education accessible to the weaker and educationally backward sections, such as the girl child, the disabled, those from Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and educationally backward minorities".

Overall, a collective that was a welfare recipient was noted through articles that focussed on governmental schemes aimed at welfare, attempts at mainstreaming the ostracised—though *not* from a rights perspective, and on charitable activities that may benefit those with a disability.

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[2] This is a scheme of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India aimed at secondary school education.

Persons with human rights

These articles portrayed a collective that should be and is equal. Articles focussed on general advocacy about human rights focussed on changing mindsets through general awareness building (e.g., through rallies, campaigns, street plays). These articles highlighted problems faced by the collective and urged those with a disability to be aware of their entitlements and rights. Accessibility was also noted as a right. These articles noted how accessibility was missing, how it could be and is enhanced. We note an article that outlines a street play aimed at raising awareness,

> The psychiatry department of the Behramjee Jejeebhoy Medical College and the Maharashtra Institute of Mental Health held a street play and poster exhibition on children's mental health on November 14, which is celebrated as Children's Day, in order to do away with the stigma attached to mental health issues and spread awareness about mental care. (November 19, 2003. BJ play highlights children's mental health)

Alternatively, articles focussed on policy advocacy were more specific in noting the right to education, making demands regarding implementation of quotas, and other disability benefits such as pensions. For example, an article highlighted the following,

> Approximately 2,000 disabled people from across the state will organise a day-long token fast on Wednesday to protest the inefficiency of the government in administering the schemes meant for this section of the population. . . the government constituted a higher level committee to ensure 3% reservation for the disabled in government jobs. . .convened its first meeting on June 26. During this session, it was found that only 753 disabled people are currently employed by the government instead of 9,000. (July 1, 2009. 2,000 disabled people across TN fast against government apathy)

While the aforementioned articles asked for equality, other articles noted how this collective was already equal. Such articles focussed on highlighting how persons with a disability are skilled—that they have specific educational, sports-related, or other achievements. For example, we noted articles about persons with a disability who displayed their skills in forums such as state level, national, and international abilympics. Other articles outlined specific achievements in board examinations (i.e., public examinations which determine university admissions). Below excerpt from an article highlights achievements,

> Born in Kolkata in 1977, Gautam was abandoned by his mother after he contracted polio. . .now 30 years old, has built an illustrious career in the music industry by managing many high-profile bands, running his own nightclub during his college years and recently becoming the only Indian with polio to have become a pilot in Europe. . .it's his will power and discipline that led to his success. "I might be disabled but I don't like people judging my capabilities. Every time someone assumes I can't do something I take it up as a challenge to prove otherwise," says Lewis,

who uses crutches to walk. (November 23, 2007. From orphanage to cockpit)

Overall, relative to the specifics noted in the aforementioned welfare schemes, the portrayal of a collective with human rights was more general in the form of raising awareness about rights. We noted some degree of specificity in articles demanding rights, and these were focussed on disability-specific benefits or welfare schemes. Finally, the skill base of this collective was highlighted to note their equality in various spheres such as education or sports.

The vulnerable

Articles that lead to the portrayal of a vulnerable collective noted how various societal actors were either apathetic towards the plight of or how they actively abused those with a disability. First, articles focussed on noting apathy outlined how the government did not help with procurement of a disability certificate, how governmental actors delayed or denied disability-specific benefits, how such actors were generally indifferent, and that the quota system was often inappropriately implemented or not implemented at all. An article outlined governmental indifference:

> Many of them were confined to the wheelchair. They came with their parents and doctors. Still, children with cerebral palsy were made to wait for more than one hour in front of Raj Bhavan on Sunday. . .A walkathon to observe National Cerebral Palsy Day was scheduled at 10 am. Children and parents started arriving at 9.30am, but the governor, who was busy with Congress leaders, flagged it off only at 11.30am. (October 4, 2010. Walk the talk with cerebral palsy kids)

Apathy by other societal actors included exclusion from employment or other spaces (e.g., religious places, families, and clubs), and generally considering those with a disability as a burden. For example, an article outlined the exclusion of a woman from a nightclub because she was a wheelchair user,

> A wheelchair-bound woman was denied entry into a night club in Kolkata early on Sunday with the staff telling her that handicapped persons weren't entertained. Alka Arora, 36, suffers from sclerosis, an auto-immune disease, that has left her lower limbs immobile. . .The management. . .while acknowledging that the guest had been denied because she was in a wheelchair, reasoned that it was for her own safety. . .(November 9, 2009. Club denies entry to girl in wheelchair)

Next, articles also noted active institutional abuse. Governmental actors were noted as being corrupt and articles specifically outlined corruption in the form of quota misuse, bribes taken from those with a disability, and general misuse of disability-specific funds or schemes. Abuse by other societal actors included rape, murder, manhandling, and conning those with a disability. An article outlined governmental corruption as a politician usurped a job from a disability quota for his family member,

> S. Srinivasa Gowda of Rajendrahalli in Mulbagal taluk was removed from the post of Village Panchayat Library Supervisor within four months of his appointment. The reason being a local politician of Mulbagal wanted to give the post to one of his kin. . ..Gowda, who is 39 years old and physically handicapped. . .was removed from the post in September as per the village panchayat order. (November 30, 2001. Physically challenged man's tale of woe)

Overall, societal apathy and abuse aimed at persons with a disability were outlined in such articles.

The miscreants

Articles which portrayed those with a disability as miscreants did so by outlining murders, frauds, and nuisance caused by them. For example, articles noted how persons with a disability hide their disability to marry those without a disability, and how they exploit children and make them steal. Other articles outlining cases of fraud outlined how street hawkers with a disability were engaged in illegal activities but got away based on the sympathy they elicited, and how they engaged in banditry. Articles that noted nuisance in society did so by narrating stories of how some persons had created a ruckus by sending cartridges to the President of India, had made hoax calls, had hurled stones at people, and had desecrated a sacred place. We note an example,

> A day after Bangalore airport was subjected to intense search operations following a bomb hoax call, it was the turn of Karnataka's Vidhana Soudha on Saturday. . .Police traced the caller to Raichur, who made the call from his cellphone. A police team was dispatched to Raichur to track him. . .The caller is a mentally-challenged person in Kolar's Srinivasapur. (November 13, 2006. Bomb scare in Karnataka assembly)

Apart from the aforementioned types of articles, we noted a few (a total of 55 articles) which questioned "who" this collective with a disability comprised. For example, articles questioned if a certain medical condition fit the description of a disability and thereby qualified the person with that condition for disability benefits (e.g., someone who had a kidney transplant). Articles also noted that census enumerators and census training facilitators were focussed on who should be considered as a person with a disability in the upcoming census.

Discussion

In the present study we asked: how do institutional discourses, as represented in mass media such as newspapers, confer identities upon a traditionally marginalised collective? We observed that identities—that of a welfare recipient, a collective with human rights, a collective that is vulnerable, and that engages in miscreancy—were ascribed through selective highlighting of certain aspects of a collective, thereby socially positioning the collective, and through the associated signalling of institutional subject positions.

In this section, we discuss areas where present observations offer theoretical implications. Specifically, we discuss

implications for institutional design in terms of how collectives are formed and how certain understandings or "regimes of truth" can be created and which imply intended or unintended portrayal of certain groups (c.f., Reeve, 2002). For example, as institutional discourses represented in media selectively highlighted certain aspects with regard to a collective (e.g., job reservations or employment quotas available only to them), they conferred identities onto the collective (e.g., a collective that received welfare benefits from the government). As another example, discourse portrayed a collective that was vulnerable (e.g., general exclusion from society or active societal abuse in the form of rape).

With regard to selective highlighting of certain aspects, it is noteworthy that despite the amount of textual activity within the time period of the study, and the acknowledged importance within policy circles of understanding what disability implies, there was relatively minimal nuance within discourses that outlined identities other than that of the welfare recipient. For example, types of welfare schemes were outlined in detail while what exactly human rights meant was not always clear as articles alluded to rights and inclusion in general. The welfare discourse remained dominant and specific over the span of our study.

Discourse also socially positioned the collective as certain aspects about the collective were noted. For example, as vulnerability or miscreancy was noted, the discourse not only segregated the collective as being in need of help or guidance, it also simultaneously implied who could help or guide the collective. Such social positioning meant crafting or reinforcing certain institutional subject positions. More specifically, as vulnerability, miscreancy, or requirements of welfare were outlined, they all also implied, tacitly or otherwise, that governmental actors (e.g., the state police force or welfare officers) assume positions of power within institutions. Present observations thus support the notion that institutional discourses not only confer subject positions onto the marginalised or the relatively less powerful, but simultaneously onto the relatively more powerful institutional actors (Fairclough, 1992). It can then be argued that, as with other minorities in India, the very process of categorisation to aid social integration can contribute to social separation (Hasan, 2009) as institutional inhabitants perceive each other as different and possibly antagonistic identity groups (Weisskopf, 2004).

While authors of articles were not always evident, the institutional discourse alluded to how persons with disabilities themselves demanded seemingly oxymoronic "welfare" rights. This observation extends the notion that institutional elites alone usually confer social roles and identities onto the relatively less powerful through the manipulation of discourses (Brown et al., 2012; Fairclough, 1989). In this regard, we draw attention to the idea that labelling can influence beliefs of labeller, labelled, and other stakeholders (Haller et al., 2006).

Identities can be socially constructed, as we constitute our sense of self through an understanding of broader narratives that are often not of our own making (Somers, 1994) and those marginalised may accept institutional conventions if they are procedurally legitimate or when they materially advantage the marginalised collective (Penn, 2008). Conformity in institutions can thus be elicited as self-reflective agents absorb institutional vocabularies (Brown & Lewis, 2011) or through

the process of subjectification (Foucault, 1983) as identity and motives are ascribed onto and internalised by actors (cf. Cooper, Ezzamel, & Willmott, 2008).

Present observations also indicate that certain ideological confines may underpin or regulate institutional discourses. In the present study, the disability identity subsumed other possible identities as the collective with a disability was grouped alongside other marginalised collective such as scheduled tribes. No attempt was made to explicate differences between these groups as is of consequence in the Indian context (Hasan, 2009; Weisskopf, 2004). Such discourses may reflect and reinforce "totalising fictions" or universalism in the theorisations of identity, that is, a single identity category (e.g., disability) assumes dominance over other simultaneous categories (e.g., caste) that can characterise a collective (cf. Somers, 1994).

Overall, present observations allow us to emphasise a connection between institutional discourses and ascribed identities, and may also explain discursive foundations of institutional maintenance and reproduction. As dominant discourse conventions are solidified through textual specificity and as social collectives engage in conscious or unconscious reproduction of such, institutional structures of knowledge and beliefs, social relationships, and identities are further coagulated (e.g., Fairclough, 1989). Present findings thus help explicate the durability of certain discourses over others and indicate that identities conferred through making of the "other" (Kiesling, 2006) or the linguistic "othering" of social collectives (Galvin, 2003) can be authored by disparate actors, sometimes including those "othered".

Exploration of multiple meanings and their implications is a subjective process (Phillips & Hardy, 2002) and our observations may be construed as mere "thinking devices" which can be validated communally as readers note our mistakes or offer other investigation paths (Gee, 2005). We acknowledge that discourses and treatment of minorities are context and time bound (Weisskopf, 2004) but we hope that outlining such will allow for an explication of institutionalised thought structures. Further, authorship of articles and type of article (e.g., a policy editorial versus a journalistic report) was not necessarily evident in present data. However, we hope that since media not only points to critical policy spokespersons, but also creates such by affording people a voice (Hoynes & Croteau, 1989), we can claim to have captured how certain actors can attempt to confer identities. Finally, future research can locate the discourse on disability within the larger debate on inclusion in Indian society as India has made unique attempts at inclusion of various minorities since the 1920s (Weisskopf, 2004). Institutional changes or the lack thereof can thus be understood as a multiplicity of interacting discourses (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Maguire & Hardy, 2009). In conclusion, we believe that examining imprecisely defined or evolving institutional concepts such as disability and disability identity, and what underlies them has the potential to shape policy as well as experiences of persons with a disability.

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