

BOOK REVIEW

Brij Mohan (2022). Rediscovery of Society: A Post Pandemic Reality, New York: Nova Scientific Publications. ISBN: 978-68507-321-3, (pb).

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Brij Mohan is an internationally renowned author and intellectual with expertise in social philosophy, social welfare, public policy and international social development. He has 25 books and over 400 articles, papers and book reviews to his credit. Brij Mohan has established himself as one of the most authentic and creative intellectuals in social work. His most recent books include: *Development, Poverty of Culture and Social Policy* (Palgrave, 2011), *Climate, Economy and Justice* (Palgrave, 2015), *The Future of Social Work* (Sage, 2018) and *Social Policy on the Cusp: Values, Institutions and Change* (Nova, 2020). Brij Mohan is one of the frequently cited authors in the field of social work and allied areas.

I have decided to write this review because of two reasons - firstly, because of its context and contents are close to my heart as the COVID-19 pandemic has devastated the economies, social fabrics and the life of individuals, families and marginalized populations across the world and there is a need to *rediscover* and *reconstruct* the society; and secondly, the book is written by the teacher of my teacher. I have been following Brij Mohan's writings on different social issues and found that he is making commendable and positive efforts with his work.

A new book by Brij Mohan is an event to reckon with. Going it through cover to cover is an intellectual feat. While I was still re-reading a few chapters of his earlier monograph, *The Future of Social Work* (Sage, 2018), the arrival of *Rediscovery* triggered my curiosity to read his take on the current "post-pandemic reality." The last three years have been catastrophic, to say the least. Humanity almost faced its dreaded end. A few restless souls, knowing this all well, were burning midnight oil in the last hope to *rediscover a Society* without institutional fissures and existential anxieties.

How can we *rediscover* such a society amid chaos? Russian invasion in Ukraine has brought the world at the brink of the Third War. NATO's European reorganization and nuclear options are frequently in the news. We are approaching the abyss. In such a globally toxic environment, by implication, new pathways must be explored to deconstruct society's vital institutional linkages, blocks, and principles that sustain and endure. A panoramic view is best reflected in the substance of these Chapters: (1) Ideology, Social Contract and Civil Development; (2) Inequality and Racism in America; (3) Deconstruction of *Social Contract*; (4) The Pandemic Paroxysm: Meltdown, Hope and Economy; (5) Existential Angst and the Plague; (6) The art of Reason; (7) Coloniality and Oppression; and (8) Dialectic of Ambedkarian Praxis.

Brij Mohan, abstractly, lays down the rationale within a framework to achieving *Social Contract Two* (SC2). Though he has introduced this construct many times in his previously published books, he deconstructs this cornerstone in Chapter 3. His call for SC2 manifests itself is a *post- Enlightenment* manifesto to rebuild a broken society. This phenomenal transformation involves *Enlightenment Two* (E2). In other words, $SC2+E2=Rediscovery$: A society without inequality and injustice. One hopes, *Homo sapiens* as they evolve will be inclined to eschew innate aggression toward achieving a civil society without predatory proclivities. I quote a few words from the *Preface*, presciently poignant, and provocative:

“Humanity confronts its own monsters: Fury of fires; scourges of a pandemic; random mass shootings; and mayhem, not to speak of the ravages of pervasive inequality, in justice and ubiquity of fear. A culture of falsification, terror, and nihilist narcissism obscures small steps toward progress” (p. xv).

Eight Chapters preceded by a Foreword (written by an expert named Mark Lusk) and followed by the author’s Afterword unravel unsettling facets of life. He faults human ingenuity as a force that causes social meltdown. Democracies across nations are faltering. The United States of America is a worrisome example. Trumpian politics has changed the character of the beacon of freedom. “A *social work pioneer* debunks the myth of a Great Society” (p. xv).

In a nutshell, Brij Mohan addresses the contemporary issues in order to reshape a new society. He challenges the current institutional collapse and dysfunctional status of all world communities during COVID-19 pandemic situation. He offers a new social insight that restore hope for a post-pandemic society. He brilliantly brings the readers of the book out of depression with the post-pandemic hope of the *rediscovery* and *reconstruction* of society through social change.

The book is indeed a good piece of work which opens a dialogue about the possibility of alternate pathways to sustainable models of social development. In fact, this book is relevant and a ‘must read’ for all the educators, practitioners and scholars of social sciences who are interested to lead our society to bring about social change for social and human development in the post-pandemic situation.