Bose, S. (2024). Democratising Dissent: Counter-Hegemony Through Art in India's Citizenship Protests. *Critical Debates in Humanities, Science and Global Justice*, *5*(1), 31–43.

RESEARCH ARTICLES

Democratising Dissent: Counter-Hegemony Through Art in India's Citizenship Protests

Srina Bose[a]

Critical Debates in Humanities, Science and Global Justice

Vol. 5, Issue 1, 2025

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) along with the National Register of Citizens (NRC), enacted in December 2019 and implemented in 2024 introduced a communal angle to Indian citizenship, excluding Muslim minorities of citizen rights. In resistance to these two policies, large scale protests were organised all over the country within which student-led demonstrations at politically active universities Jamia Milia University (JMI) and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) played an influential role. The young protestors employed innovative means to democratise advocacy through the medium of protest or activist art. This study uses the Gramscian framework of hegemony and counter-hegemony to conceptualise the praxis and impact of the protest art created in response to the CAA and NRC, set against the backdrop of the growing Hindutva hegemony and the elite cultural industry of India. Through diverse artforms, students brought together marginalised communities, collectively challenged the Indian government's dominant Hindutva ideology, and shaped public pedagogy within the university space. Protest art is a process, an experience, and a performance that is revisited and redone over time, and eventually seeps into public consciousness to become a popular symbol of resistance. While the primary goal of the art produced within the CAA-NRC movement–the repeal of the policies–was not achieved, its true success lay in the counter-hegemonic discourse it gave way to, the new subaltern alliances it forged, the precedent it set for future demonstrations, and the praxis of the art itself.

Author Summary

The Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens of 2019 imposed a communal angle to citizenship, systematically depriving India's Muslim minority population of citizenship. This triggered widespread protests across the country and primarily in the university spaces. Art was an essential component of activism within these spheres of protest. Such protest art helped challenge the Hindutva hegemony of India, foster authentic public participation, and aided in shaping a critical pedagogy within the university space wherein dissent and dialogue were encouraged.

a Srina Bose is a student at Springdales School, Dhaula Kuan India

Introduction

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), enacted in December 2019, has become a topic of extensive debate within Indian society. A campaign promise of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) during both the 2014 and 2019 parliamentary elections, the law grants Indian citizenship to any Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, or Christian migrant from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, or Pakistan who arrived in India on or prior to December 31, 2014. Related to the CAA, the National Register of Citizens (NRC) is a list of people who can prove they came to the country by 24 March 1971, a day before neighbouring Bangladesh became an independent country. Supporters of these policies argue that they uphold India's tradition of protecting the oppressed and address the issue of illegal immigration. However, critics believe that these measures enable the government to impose a communal angle to Indian citizenship, excluding persecuted Muslims from India's neighbouring countries and those lacking proper documentation within India, thereby contradicting the secular ideals of the Indian constitution.

The CAA and NRC are just two policies within the broader context of India's growing Hindutva hegemony propagated by the BJP. This ideological framework, coined by Savarkar, views India as a Hindu state (with its definition of Hinduism including Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs) and Islam as a foreign and invasive religion. In resistance to the CAA-NRC, India witnessed mass student protests all over the country, especially in the Shaheen Bagh locality, Jamia Milia University (JMI) and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). Albeit public universities under government control, these university spaces stand for subaltern counterpublics led by organic intellectuals symbolising the role of civil society within political contestation. Through care as a protest mechanism and networks with several subaltern groups, including Muslims and Dalits, these protests mobilised masses. However, the only means for effective political organising was to democratise activism in itself. Thus students were compelled to think of innovative and accessible ways to further their cause. Protest or activist art became one such way of enabling authentic public participation and fostering a critical pedagogy within the university space. This paper investigates counter-hegemonic cultural production in the context of the CAA-NRC protests, challenging the dominant Hindutva ideology. It explores how the praxis of art can contribute to protest movements, bringing together different communities, shaping educational practices and challenging dominant power structures. Furthermore, national projects such as Hindutva intersect with global neoliberal networks of capitalism, imperialism, and democratic backsliding. These networks are upheld by a transnational capitalist class of art-world elites who maintain hegemonic power and a cultural industry that leaves little room for dissent. Drawing on Gramsci's framework of cultural hegemony and counter-hegemony, this study highlights not just the structural and material changes art may produce but also its intrinsic role in reimagining

the dominant 'common sense.' By shifting cultural norms, art fosters global networks of solidarity and resistance, offering new possibilities for collective action.

Materials & Methods

Conceptual Framework: Gramscian analysis of Hegemony and Counter-Hegemony Under Hindutva

Whilst domination includes coercion via state machinery, hegemony is far more subtle. It is perpetuated through civil society, which includes non-state institutions such as education, religion and media, and relates to the ways in which a ruling group holds on to power through the unique co-existence of consent as well as coercion (Lears, 1985). If this system proves to be stable over time, it can be called a "historic bloc", shaping socio-political activities along with formation of hegemonies and counter-hegemonies. The growing Hindutva sentiment in India forms one such historic bloc, thus influencing politics, culture and education within the country.

Under hegemonic systems, ruling groups impose a direction on social life–a "dominant fundamental" or commonsensical approach as to how individuals should engage with society. These groups wield not only economic and political power, but also cultural authority. Their dominant fundamental, or more precisely, our interpretation of the world within the confines of the knowledge, culture and political socialisation permitted by the ruling class, significantly influences how we produce art. Despite this, Gramsci's view of hegemonic structures is not static, but a dynamic and iterative process, with counter-hegemonies and civil society institutions as key sites of political contestation. These spaces, particularly universities, are sites of ideological struggles that both uphold and challenge hegemony. This article conceptualises the role of protest art as a medium of promoting counter-hegemonic narratives, as opposed to high-end gallery art or the Bollywood industry, which exemplify cultural hegemony.

Gramsci rejected the idea of economic determinism, which argues that those who control material realities also control ideas, culture and subjective realities. He viewed hegemony as a form of "cultural leadership" that is exercised through persuasion and consent cultivated by intellectuals who act as links between state machinery and civil society (Bates, 1975). "Organic intellectuals" are those that rise authentically from their social classes and engage in "everyday meaning makings of society" (Chun, 2022). These include the protest artists of the CAA-NRC movement, who mostly come from marginalised backgrounds. In contrast, "traditional intellectuals" are those who propagate the interests of the dominant class by reproducing hegemonic structures. These intellectuals include the elite art collectors and Bollywood artists of India. Changes driven by this group are often in the form of a "passive revolution" that maintains hegemony, preserves the state's power and suppresses subaltern resistance (Thomas, 2006). The state-

sponsored Jan Shakti art exhibition in New Delhi and the recent hypernationalist Bollywood projects demonstrate the ways in which state power is exercised in the realm of culture.

The politics of the Indian art sector are situated in the broader context of neoliberal globalisation and the domination of transnational capitalist class interests within the political and cultural economy. Furthermore, it intersects with national hegemonic projects such as Hindutva in India. This study traces and illuminates these various scales of power, contestation and hegemony. With prominent international art collectors being of Indian diaspora and popular international events such as the India Art Fair hosted in New Delhi, a new "transnational capitalist class" has emerged within the art economy. Theorised in Neo-Gramscian work by Kees Van Der Pijl, this class of people operate across national borders, control cultural narratives, maintain and reproduce hegemony, and benefit from the accumulation of global capital, of which art is an integral part (Pijl, 1998). Additionally, they correlate with the growth of the "cultural industry", as conceptualised by Adorno and Horkheimer (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002). This system encourages cultural production that caters to the capitalist or business sentiment, thus promoting standardisation of the arts and compliance with the ruling class. This study uses these threads of Gramscian and Neo-gramscian theory to analyse the production of student-led counter-hegemonic culture and the creation of subaltern counterpublics at the university space, set against the backdrop of the Hindutva hegemony perpetuated by the CAA-NRC policies.

Methodology

This paper employs content and visual analysis to interpret the meanings and symbolic relevance of both the protest art of the CAA-NRC movement as well as the state-sponsored art within the Bollywood industry and Indian gallery system. These analyses are further supported by a broader structural examination of cultural creation, highlighting the material and political forces that shape artistic production. In doing so, this study demonstrates that culture not only reinforces the hegemonic systems of the ruling class but also actively challenges them, generating counter-hegemonic discourses and new pedagogical frameworks.

Through these methods, this paper analyses cultural production in India within the context of the Hindutva hegemony. Utilising a systematic analysis of the themes and narratives emerging from protest art, content analysis provides a rigorous method for identifying patterns of recurring discourses, and provides crucial links to the identities of the protest artists. Additionally, this analysis provides insights regarding the diversity of protest art forms, ranging from hip-hop to street theatre. Visual analysis further deconstructs the major motifs and images that act as symbols of resistance and pave the path for cultural and narrative shifts. In the context of the recent projects within the Bollywood industry and the Indian art gallery system, this analysis traces the growth of cultural hegemony and the interests of the state, as

depicted by elite networks within the arts. Together, this methodological framework conceptualises the material and political forces shaping the art, while considering the structures and spaces of cultural production. This illustrates how power operates and is contested in the cultural realm, resulting in the formation of both hegemonies and counter-hegemonie. The following section identifies two different sites and structures of cultural production and the material and political forces shaping the politics of cultural production. Then, drawing on content analysis, the subsequent section analyses the production of counter-hegemonic discourse through the various forms of protest art emerging from the CAA-NRC protests.

Results

The University As A Protest Ground

The public university provides an important space for political contestation where hegemonic and counter hegemonic forces fight for and against power. Jamia Milia University and Jawaharlal Nehru University, the primary focus areas of the research, are situated at the crossroads of Gramsci's political and civil society. They were epicentres of the anti- CAA-NRC movement and serve as key examples of "subaltern counterpublics" or collective spaces formed by historically marginalised groups (Fraser, 1990). These are important hubs of Delhi's organic intellectuals, who have emerged from underrepresented social classes and work to advance the position of their community without the elite backing that traditional intellectuals may enjoy. The student networks at JMI draw from earlier experiences with campus-specific issues like hostel curfews or faculty misconduct and extend it to large-scale protests against national issues like the CAA-NRC. Additionally, these networks are not ideologically homogeneous. They involve local communities such as those of Jamia Nagar, transcending beyond the immediate university environment and have various links with other central universities such as Aligarh Muslim University and Jadavpur University.

Tracing the structural changes taking place within universities amid the era of neoliberal globalisation and increasing financialization, Nair argues "The public university is moving from being a public good – as it was envisaged in the late 19th century – into becoming a private investment and a vast credentialing mechanism" (Nair, 2017). As the commercialisation of higher education continues, elite private universities like Ashoka University and Jindal University lead passive revolutions of their own, which include structural and policy-based changes that perpetuate the ideas of the ruling class. As such, these institutions are exclusive and their alumni networks, often extending beyond India, contribute to the formation of a transnational capitalist class. This makes the significance of the Indian public university even more pronounced. These universities, with their affordable fees,

constitutionally mandated reservations for socially marginalised groups, and role as key instruments for social mobility, must resist being co-opted by the elite ruling class.

Cultural Hegemony: Art Galleries & The Bollywood Industry of India

India's art market has grown by more than 250% in the past decade (Dar, 2024). However, this growth is often steered by bourgeoisie elite interests, further reproducing cultural hegemony. In India, arts is largely dominated by the private sector, which includes commercial galleries and patrons. Art spaces such as the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre (NMACC) in Mumbai are a notable example of this.. The centre is well reputed since Nita Ambani is the wife of billionaire industrialist Mukesh Ambani who enjoys a symbiotic relationship with India's ruling government. Leading art collectors of India, including Kiran Nadar and Sangita Jindal, also hail from similar bourgeoisie elite backgrounds. Additionally, the valuation of the Indian art market is largely determined by a transnational class of art world elites and traditional intellectuals who maintain hegemonic systems through their cultural leadership (MacKay, 2022).

In recent times, art galleries have been increasingly co-opted by the government and reshaped in a way to inconspicuously promote their interests. In 2023, at Delhi's National Gallery of Modern Art, the exhibition "Jana Shakti: A Collective Power" emerged not just as a showcase of contemporary art but as a propaganda event. This exhibit celebrated 100 episodes of Mann Ki Baat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's monthly radio show with the stated aim of establishing "a dialogue with the citizens on issues of day-to-day governance" (Bhattacharya, 2023). The exhibition featured the works of 13 renowned modern and contemporary artists who employed various mediums to represent government programmes via art (Frontline, 2023). This event marked a strategic utilisation of a state-run gallery to perpetuate partisan viewpoints that glorify the ruling government. Indian artist and curator Pushpamala N argues that the artists, many of whom worked on Gandhi, Ambedkar and farmers' rights would lose their credibility as those were the exact things that the government had worked against (Pushpala N, 2023).

Similar to the dynamics of the art gallery system, the Bollywood industry, which is one of the most important cultural industries of India, is a crucial agent of maintaining and reproducing cultural hegemony. 2024, as the year of the general elections, saw the production of several pro-Hindutva movies including "Swatantra Veer Savarkar" and "Article 370." JNU: Jahangir National University", for instance, is a film critiquing the left wing student politics of Jawaharlal Nehru University, and is produced by individuals involved with the ruling government (Menon & Dahiya, 2024). It propagates an exaggerated version of the protest culture of JNU, labelling dissent as 'anti-national', and dismisses the university's role in important demonstrations such as that in the CAA-NRC protests. Through free screenings and tax

relaxations, the ruling government has used propaganda films such as "The Kerala Story"—a factually inaccurate depiction of Islamic fundamentalism—to promote its Hindutva message.

Together, these systems are maintained by traditional intellectuals and their cultural authority over the dominant 'common sense' concerning Hindutva and the position of Muslims and other minorities in Indian society. This underscores the need for subaltern counterpublics, independent from the exclusive zones of the Bollywood and art gallery system, wherein organic intellectuals can produce democratic and participatory culture that highlights their struggles and addresses the needs of society.

Discussion

The Praxis of Protest Art

Orthodox Marxists asserted that those who controlled the means of producing economic capital were the ones who controlled cultural production too, which in turn fit their own class interests. This is contrary to the protest art shaped during the CAA-NRC demonstrations. The politics of art production at the university spaces during the protests, unlike the dynamics of the contemporary art gallery or Bollywood industry, are much more democratic and participatory in nature. In these circumstances, the collective creation of art is driven by a sense of urgency, the need for wider accessibility, and a push for tangible policy based change. To further dissect protest art's unique role, Bombay based cultural theorist Nancy Adajania argues that this art must *"politicise the aesthetic and aestheticize the political."* The art forms employed by the students in the CAA-NRC protests include graffiti, visual art, music, poetry, film, theatre and online art. Each of these forms may have originated in the university space but have transcended far beyond that. However, these forms of contestation are not restricted to the CAA-NRC alone. Instead, they are a part of a broader conversation regarding the future of Indian democracy and secularism. Although arts alone cannot change the world, artists play a crucial role in effectively conveying nuanced political messages to the masses and aiding social movements. As American author and art activist Toni Cade Bambara puts it, "The role of the artist is to make the revolution irresistible."

Furthermore, protest art is an experience. It is not a mere commodity or product which has a clearly defined role or that can be monetised and robbed of its emotional value and socio-political context. Although the aim of artistic activism, according to the Center for Artistic Activism, is social change– this equation is incredibly nuanced (Center for Artistic Activism, 2018). Protest art may not always result in a tangible policy based or material change; however, the intrinsic value of the public sentiment embodied in the art, perhaps independent of its majorly utilitarian role, still persists. Thus, protest art is not a means to an end. It is a process, an experience, and a performance that is revisited and redone over time, and eventually seeps into public consciousness to become a popular symbol of resistance. While the

primary goal of the protest art of the CAA-NRC movement–the repeal of the policies–was not achieved, its true success lay in the counter-hegemonic discourse it gave way to, the new subaltern alliances it forged, and the praxis of the art itself.

Public Art at the Public University

Simeen Anjum, then second-year student of Fine Arts at JMI, was a vocal graffiti artist in the CAA-NRC demonstrations at the Shaheen Bagh locality. These pieces of graffiti and wall art were accessible to first time protesters as well as passersby who did not have a formal education (Ara, 2020). This encapsulates the essence of public art within a public university. Students reclaimed the walls of JMI as their own, transforming it into a place where they challenge the Hindutva sentiment and spark counter-hegemonic discourse. Besides this, other physical exhibits include a 40 foot-high iron and mesh installation of the Indian map and a cardboard installation of India Gate with names of the protesters who had lost their lives to police violence. Situated in public areas, these large, innovative and attention-grabbing exhibits played a crucial role in cultivating the on-ground movement.

Although physical spaces could eventually become co-opted by pro-government forces such as the police –the erasure of graffiti art being one such example–online protest art resisted this to a certain degree and thus became a crucial extension of the physical movement. Through this, public art within the protest was no longer restricted to Shaheen Bagh, JMI or JNU alone. Protesters employed creative uses of social media for information sharing, organising, and documentation, of which art was an essential component (Sharma, 2021). Digital counter-hegemonic spaces were formed through systems like Google Drive and collectives such as Creatives Against CAA and Artists Unite. Additionally, interactive Instagram filters and political memes became effective ways of new-age democratic discourse.

However, online domains of cultural production too have mechanisms that restrict counter-hegemonic discourse including Twitter bots, internet shutdowns and discriminatory algorithms (Shaji, 2020). Thus we should avoid overestimating either the role of the internet or the physical movement in the production and dissemination of public art. Instead, we should strive for an intersection of both, focusing on the people at the heart of these efforts rather than the modes of organisation.

Art as Ideological Resistance

In the CAA-NRC demonstrations, protest art was a powerful tool to "aestheticize the political" and resist the Hindutva hegemony. Music and poetry paved the way for this resistance, considering how these art forms have a unique ability to enter public consciousness and be transformed into memorable refrains that adeptly capture the essence of the protest. "Ham Dekhenge" (We Will See) by revolutionary poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz is one such iconic piece that echoed throughout the protest grounds. Penned in 1979, following the military coup in Pakistan, its symbolic relevance extends to

struggles for democracy and religious freedom worldwide, highlighting global solidarity and transnational counter-hegemonies (Daniyal, 2020). Amir Azis, an alumnus of JMI, saw his poem "Hum Sab Yaad Rakhenge" (We Will Remember Everything) reach as far as London, where, on 20th February 2020, Pink Floyd's co-founder Roger Waters recited it at an event advocating for Julian Assange's release. This too stands for global unity and counter-hegemonic networks.

Original compositions by students such as Sumit Roy's "Go Protest", dedicated to the victims of the police violence in JMI, were aided by the revitalisation of existing pieces such as Poojan Shahil's Hindi parody version of famous Italian anti-fascist song "Bella Ciao", named "Wapas Jao" or "Go Home.". With its simple and catchy refrain and well filmed Youtube video–it created a space for accessible counter-hegemonic discourse on social media as well as the university space. Additionally, in response to right-wing counter-protests, activists recited the preamble of the Indian Constitution. This approach implies that the impact of art lies not only in its creation but also in its active reinvention and reinterpretation.

In contrast with the mainstream Bollywood industry, independent films and street theatre remain an effective way of counter-hegemonic discourse. The Turban, directed by Ravinder Siwach, is based on the CAA-NRC riots and explores themes of mob violence and communal harmony (Mathur, 2022). Although relatively unknown amongst the general Indian population, the film reached the Cannes Film Festival, again highlighting the role of internationalism with regard to resisting local hegemonic projects such as Hindutva. Additionally, a theatre group of ten girls called "Inquilab Ki Rasoi '' or "Revolution in the Kitchen'' is notable for their performance of short street plays dedicated to the women protestors of Shaheen Bagh (The Print, 2020). Overall, student-led counter-hegemonic art facilitates cultural and narrative shifts and reimagines the dominant 'common sense' perpetuated by the Hindutva hegemony.

Subaltern Alliances Through Art

In contrast to the dominant cultural industries of India, which are backed by an elite network of traditional intellectuals, the protest art of the CAA-NRC movement mobilised marginalised communities and created subaltern counterpublics within the university space. The demonstrations were uniquely characterised by the mass participation of Muslim women, challenging the dominant narrative that portrays their community as outsiders and religious fanatics who do not belong in India. Nabiya Khan, then student at JMI, saw her poem go viral with the powerful refrain, "Pehenke chudiyan, bindi aur hijaab, aayega inquilab"—which translates to "The revolution will come wearing bangles, bindi, and hijab" (Sengupta, 2020). Tanzeela is the artist behind the now-iconic piece depicting a woman in a tricolour hijab quoting revolutionary poetry by Faiz Ahmad Faiz. This image too directly challenges the dominant 'common sense' regarding Muslim women and their position in Indian society, simultaneously

combining visual art with poetry. JNU student Shashi 'Samad', a visually impaired artist, became an internet sensation soon after his performance of a song written by Habib Jalib went viral on social media. Although the Delhi Police assaulted him and mocked his disability, the spirit of the protest was only strengthened by his participation, contrary to the commonsensical perception we may have regarding disability and protest.

Care was used as a strategic means of protest, in stark contrast with the violence monopolised by the police and state. This is embodied within the participatory art and the collective meals. New solidarities were built between farmers' organisations and progressive religious associations (Roy, 2024). With the solidarity of Dalit individuals such as Radhika Vemula, mother of Rohith Vemula– a student who committed suicide due to institutional casteism at the University of Hyderabad–the movement further solidified the network of organic intellectuals. Furthermore, the CAA-NRC protests inspired and facilitated other movements across the country, including the farmer's protests.

Art as Critical Pedagogy

Art, as a participatory practice, can be viewed as a form of public pedagogy that nurtures dialogue, public connection and preserves "people's fragmented, uncertain and incomplete narratives of agency"(Peters, 2015). This is exemplified by marginalised student groups who utilised art as a medium to immortalise their fight for citizenship and dignity within their country. Moreover, the mobilisation of subaltern groups at the backdrop of the university space nurtures Paulo Friere's "pedagogy of the oppressed" (Freire, 2005). Additionally, the emotive symbols of art and their links with education and politics are demonstrated by Gould's "emotional pedagogy" (Gould, 2010). The general Indian public usually considers the university merely as a tool to earn a living, downplaying its role as a crucial agent of nation-building (Kurup & Singai, 2017). Additionally, under neoliberalism, the university is increasingly marketised and co-opted by the government, which in turn harms the educational content taught and reinforces hegemonic ideas. Although the Indian classroom is primarily "teacher-centred", discouraging student-led counter-hegemonic discourse and critical pedagogy, the protest art of CAA-NRC movement directly resisted this, creating spaces for dissent and political contestation within the university space.

Conclusion

Although the student-led protest art of the CAA-NRC did not lead to the actual repeal of the laws, it actively challenged the Hindutva hegemony, paving the way for critical cultural discourse and important subaltern alliances. The ideological framework of Hindutva and its dominant 'common sense' portrays India's Muslim minorities as uninvolved infiltrators who do not belong to the country. This idea has been perpetuated via a Gramscian model of cultural hegemony, as demonstrated by the Indian art gallery system

and Bollywood industry. These hegemonic institutions are sustained by a network of traditional intellectuals and a transnational capitalist class who feed neoliberal structures of accumulation and reinforce the profit-driven interests of the ruling class. Taking these circumstances into account, protest art acts as an effective way to create counter-hegemonic culture wherein the production, consumption and participation is democratised, the ruling class is challenged, and the dominant 'common sense' reimagined. The public university space, namely Jamia Millia Islamia, its neighbouring Shaheen Bagh locality, and the Jawaharlal Nehru University act as the vantage points of the CAA-NRC movement. Although the public university is a governmental institution, it is also a crucial zone of political contestation, thus situating itself at the crossroads of Gramsci's political and civil society.

By bringing together diverse student groups during the CAA-NRC demonstrations, the university space evolved into a 'subaltern counterpublic' wherein organic intellectuals were mobilised and the pedagogy of the oppressed was fostered through participatory public art. Finally, this paper argues that protest art is not a means to an end. It is a process, an experience, and a performance that is revisited and redone over time and eventually seeps into public consciousness to become a cultural symbol of resistance. As Adrienne Rich said: "Poetry / isn't revolution but a way of knowing / why it must come" (Rich, 1987). Furthermore, the art produced in the context of the CAA-NRC movement is not restricted or defined by these two policies alone. Instead, it concerns the overall democratic and secular future of not just India, but also the world. Through transnational counter-hegemonies, global solidarity networks are fostered. With crackdowns on university spaces, cultural domains, and media outlets, restrictions have been placed over counter-hegemonic discourse throughout the country. In a largely capitalist market-driven order, in which art is regarded as capital that is consumed and produced by only a limited section of society, it is crucial to create mechanisms that protect and encourage authentic cultural production. This form of artistic expression, generally driven by organic intellectuals, plays a pivotal role in the overall welfare of society (Peters, 2015).

Published: November 15, 2024 EDT.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CCBY-4.0). View this license's legal deed at http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0 and legal code at http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode for more information.

References

Ara, I. (2020, February 15). *'Walls Are the Publishers of the Poor': How Women Sketch the Language of Resistance*. The Wire. https://thewire.in/women/walls-are-the-publishers-of-the-poor-how-women-sketch-the-language-of-resistance

Bates, T. R. (1975). Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, *36*(2), 351. https://doi.org/10.2307/2708933

Bhattacharya, A. (2023, June 10). In the Shadow of Mann Ki Baat, Outrage Over 'Big Names' at JanShakti Art Exhibition. *Outlook India*. https://www.outlookindia.com/national/in-the-shadow-of-mann-ki-baat-outrage-over-big-names-at-jan-shakti-art-exhibition-magazine-293554

Center for Artistic Activism. (2018, March). *Assessing the Impact of Artistic Activism*. Center for Artistic Activism. https://c4aa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Assessing-the-Impact-of-Artistic-Activism.pdf

Chun, C. W. (2022). Organic Intellectuals or Traditional Intellectuals - Critical Discourse for Whom? *Applied Linguistics and Politics*. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350098268.ch-011

Daniyal, S. (2020, January 1). *The Art of Resistance: How Faiz's 'Hum Dekhenge' has battled tyranny across time and place*. The Scroll. https://scroll.in/article/948419/the-art-of-resistance-how-faizs-hum-dekhenge-has-battled-tyranny-across-time-and-place

Dar, V. (2024, January 28). *'Indian Art Market Has Grown 250% in Past 10 Years.'* Financial Express. https://www.financialexpress.com/lifestyle/indian-art-market-has-grown-250-in-past-10-years/3376629/

Fraser, N. (1990). Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. *Social Text*, *25/26*, 56–80. https://doi.org/10.2307/466240

Frontline. (2023, July 8). *Kiran Nadar Museum Faces Backlash Over Dismissal of Employee for Critical Facebook Post*. Frontline. https://frontline.thehindu.com/news/kiran-nadar-museum-faces-backlash-over-dismissal-of-employee-for-critical-facebook-post/article67056823.ece

Horkheimer, M., & Adorno, T. W. (2002). The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception. In G. Schmid Noeri (Ed.), *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (pp. 94–136). Stanford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9780804788090-007

Kurup, A., & Singai, C. (2017). Redefining University Education in India: Pedagogy and Student Voices. In *Transforming Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 175–190). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-46176-2_10

Lears, T. J. J. (1985). The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities. *The American Historical Review*, *90*(3), 567–593. https://doi.org/10.2307/1860957

MacKay, J. (2022). Art World Fields and Global Hegemonies. *International Studies Quarterly*, *66*(3). https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqac029

Mathur, Y. (2022, February 15). *Creativity From Chaos: How Anti-CAA, NRC Protests Inspired Art*. Outlook India. https://www.outlookindia.com/art-entertainment/creativity-from-chaos-how-anti-caa-nrc-protests-inspired-art-news-18249

Menon, A., & Dahiya, H. (2024, April 4). *2024 Pro-Hindutva Films Were Funded by BJP-Linked People, Promoted by BJP Netas*. TheQuint. https://www.thequint.com/news/politics/bollywood-bjp-jnu-savarkar-godhra-article-370-2024-lok-sabha-elections#read-more

Nair, J. (2017). The Provocations of the Public University. *Economic and Political Weekly*, *52*(37), 34–41. https://periodicos.ufsc.br/index.php/esbocos/article/download/84909/51498/339827

Peters, C. (2015). Re-imagining spaces, collectivity, and the political dimension of contemporary art. *Policy Futures in Education*, *13*(1), 149–159. https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210314566735

Pijl, K. van der. (1998). *Transnational classes and international relations*.

Rich, A. (1987). *Dreamwood*.

Roy, I. (2024, April 24). *How the CAA Protests Ignited Hope and Prompted Indians to Reimagine Citizenship*. The Wire. https://thewire.in/books/how-the-caa-protests-ignited-hope-and-prompted-indians-to-reimagine-citizenship

Sengupta, S. (2020, March 17). Art in the Time of CAA. *Caravan*. https://hindi.caravanmagazine.in/arts/art-in-the-time-of-caa

Shaji, G. (2020, January 9). *Instagram: A Place for Indian Students to Organize Against Fascism*. Media Diversity Institute. https://www.media-diversity.org/instagram-a-place-for-indian-students-to-organize-against-facism/

Sharma, R. (2021). #AntiCAAProtests: Negotiating Online and Off-Line Resistance. *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, *37*(2), 121. https://doi.org/10.2979/jfemistudreli.37.2.09

The Print. (2020, February 3). *Theatre groups hit the streets to educate anti-CAA protesters*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwq4BJw46gs

Thomas, P. (2006). Modernity as "passive revolution": Gramsci and the Fundamental Concepts of Historical Materialism. *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*. https://doi.org/10.7202/016590ar