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The modern use of the word ‘culture’ is not older than the eighteenth century. A new awareness of non-Western societies highlighted the fact that their mores were quite distinct from those of the West. This awareness has continued to grow during the last two centuries and has been strengthened by the study of anthropology and of the history of civilization. It has gradually become a part of modern awareness that every society has a distinctive tradition of its own which is the product of own history. It is not that such an awareness did not exist in earlier ages or societies. The Egyptians and the Greeks, the Indians and the Greeks, the Indians and the Chinese had no doubt the distinctive character of their own tradition. They, however, regarded only their own tradition to be really cultured or civilized. Other traditions were held to be unredeemable forms of barbarism. The modern point of view as developed in the West is a little more intricate. It too regards only Western culture as really cultured and has had no real doubt about the barbarism of other ages and societies. But it believes that this earlier barbarism has been a stage in the development of modern culture and that non-Western cultures are redeemed if they are modernized or westernized. Modern anthropology, sociology and history have supported the idea that modern western culture represents a kind of universal constant towards which all other traditions must aspire.

This idea was instilled into the Indian mind through the deracinating system of education which the British government established in India in the nineteenth century. Hence modernization with its content largely Western remains a popular slogan in India. It is true that an attempt is often made to distinguish

modernization from westernization and a lip-service is paid to Indian tradition and culture. But then in this context culture is largely interpreted as dance and drama, a sensuous pageant such as is displayed by the Cultural Festival of India. Culture apparently is not the values we live by but a matter of taste and liking or advertisement. It is not a matter of knowledge or wisdom, of moral or social values or even of aesthetic standards. In all these matters we seek to follow universal modern forms of science, social justice and individual aesthetic creativity. In effect we follow Western norms in all serious matters. We speak of Indian cultures only when we discuss ancient history or when we seek to promote international tourism or cultural exchanges.

I must confess my utter lack of interest in a culture which is either simply past history or merely a matter of taste or fashion, which the foreigners might like as something exotic. However, that the past is irrelevant in such a context. What we need is to apply past wisdom creatively. Even the scientist and the technologies cannot rest content with their past results. They need to advance their frontiers constantly.

In fact, it has been claimed that this incessant change is the hallmark of the world today and that old traditions and culture are being left behind inexorably. I would like to argue that to meet the challenge of change we need not only the invention of new techniques and symbols, but also an unchanging faith in moral and spiritual values. Since education is the principal process by which culture as well as technology subsist and grow, it is necessary to so orient education that it can communicate values and at the same time encourage criticism and innovation. Creativity does not contradict tradition but develops it. The education which is needed for the maintenance of Indian culture is not a specialization in the history of Indian culture but of the whole gamut of education.

Now the question is whether Indian culture has any serious contemporary relevance, does it provide any guidance in solving our problems today? In seeking to answer this I would like to point to two things. Thus, although, most governments and individuals have always had a concern with the immediate future, the current development of what has been called futurology seeks to foresee and shape the historic future of mankind. The point which I would like to make as a humble student of history is that while it may be possible to foresee in a limited manner certain trends in specific areas in the future, it is not possible to foresee the historic future.
The Future and the Past

of mankind. Let me begin by defining what historic future is the ensemble of the general conditions of human life and thought which would succeed the historic present, that is, our contemporary age which must remain for us an all defined span of time. How our own age will change and be replaced by another, I am afraid, cannot be foreseen in any rational manner. The reasons for this are manifold. For one, the content and direction of the future growth of knowledge cannot be foreseen. Nor, indeed, being in the midst of the basic conflicts of our age can we foresee how they would end. Nor, indeed, is it possible to predict the outcome of man's struggle with his environment in our age. Until now, all past ages have had a limited run and the succeeding ages have shown new and unpredicted futures. In fact, the more rapid the change in knowledge and technology has been the more rapid and unpredictable has been the historic change from epoch to epoch.

The age of food gathering, thus lasted much longer than the predominantly agrarian age, which has already given place to an industrial age in many parts of the globe. We can thus be certain that our age will pass and a future supervene which we would not be able to visualize. What futurological thinking is able to do is to visualize the future as the continuation and development of the present, as its endless fulfillment. Whether one turns to the Indian Education Commission's Report (1964-6) or the Report of the International Commission on Education (1971-2) one is amazed at their optimism and faith. They believe that in science and technology man has at last discovered the key to perpetual progress. This, in fact, constitutes the basic philosophy of history, characteristic of our age, and it is within the framework of this philosophy that much futuristic thinking lies.

It is true that some contemporary thinkers have pointed out that the present trend of development threatens to exhaust the non-renewable sources of energy and pollute the atmosphere. We must remember that no ready-made solutions can possibly exist for new and emergent problems. For example, that population is tending to outstrip natural resources or that the non-replenishable resources of nature are facing danger of being exhausted, or that environmental pollution is becoming a grave danger, or that nuclear weapons pose a threat to the very survival of human life - all these and similar problems are wholly new problems which were not faced in the past. Demographic and economic statistics have developed to a point where it is easy to visualize certain tendencies
over, say, the next two decades. At the same time the infusion of rational foresight in the working of most governments today in the form of planning. The present civilization, thus, is likely to suffer from the same malady which destroyed some earlier ones, viz. the exhaustion of available sources. It is true that the historical perception of the present age makes it acutely aware of the difficulties which it is likely to face in the future but the paradox of historical perception lies in its failure to perceive that future difficulties may not be resolved in the same manner in which the difficulties of the past have been. Whether we shall be able in time to replace oil by a new source of energy which will be at once abundant and cheap, remains a moot question.

It may, however, be said that we are concerned not with a remote future lying beyond our age but with our own future, i.e. with the future possibilities of our own civilization. This is certainly a valid type of enquiry but it has clearly two distinguishable dimensions. One is the consideration of factual trends such as of changes in population and production. The other dimension relates to the trend in ideas and opinions, tastes and fashions. As far as this second dimension is concerned, forecasting is likely to have a self-negating effect. But more important than this is the fact that with respect to the future we can hardly remain merely disinterested spectators of ideas and tastes. We cannot afford not to evaluate the ideas which are moving us today and likely to effect our future. In fact, the most important part of our concern with the future must be not with the ‘facts’ of the future which do not exist and cannot be visualized except in fragmentary and highly ambiguous ways but with what we would like our future to be, what we would in any case like to work for. The vision of the future is an essential part of present striving but it is not a prevision of future. It is simply an ideal which moves us. In this sense the concern with the future is not a matter of historical prediction. It is simply an exploration of the ways and means to realize contemporary ideas. The inevitable tension between ideals, and the gap between ends and means make such an exploration useful as well as necessary. That we should think of this enterprise not as an examination of values in a timeless context but as the examination of opinions conceived as historical realities is merely a consequence of the widespread positivist outlook which tends to look upon ideas and values as merely socio-historical realities except when they are scientific representations of nature. I would suggest, therefore, that thinking about culture
and education in the context of the future ought to dispassionately formulate the ideals of the present as the living past and examine the feasibility and strategy of their realization without merely drifting into the current produced by contemporary pressures and tensions.

I. INTERACTION BETWEEN SOCIETY AND HIGHER EDUCATION: LANGUAGE TEACHING AS A MODEL

It is common to think of society as an objective system which may be defined as a dynamic equilibrium of forces seeking to satisfy common and regular needs through the directed and controlled interaction of man and his environment. We may thus conceive of education as the creation and transmission of knowledge, values, norms and skills, all of which are required for social direction and control. Education thus not only reflects the social process but also constitutes its creative and critical aspects. Within the educational system higher education centred in the universities may be characterized by its emphasis on the learning of fundamental theoretical principles leading to the capacity for original work as well as the attainment of professional standards. Thus defined educational and social change have obviously a dialectical interdependence. In past ages the role of education was conceived as one of maintaining social continuity. The social order itself was conceived as perennial, and the common task of the educator and ruler was to maintain it against the forces of chaos. This was the situation traditionally in India or China or Mediaeval Europe where the educational system was given a central importance and the class of educators was considered in many ways as the most honoured class in society. We can illustrate this for India by taking up the paradigmatic case of language teaching. Language is not merely the complete symbolism but the most pervasive tool of social activity. While it has its grass roots among the folk, it is standardized by the elite. Subject to continuous temporal, spatial and functional variation, language still seems to maintain its fundamental form. The Indian tradition developed the science of linguistic form or grammar to an extraordinary extent and although it recognized the descriptive character of grammar it was inclined to treat it as prescriptive in the context of teaching. The same attitude was adopted to social rules and laws collectively called dharma. The result was a remarkable continuity ensured by classical language teaching.

The nineteenth century introduced the notions of society and
language as the products of historical evolution and tended to regard it right that these should change. The principle of natural selection appeared to justify the conquering colonial order. Instead of maintaining the traditional social order, the state now sought to change it by legislation. Pari Passu the teaching of classical languages with their reverence for fixed and unalterable forms and standard was increasingly replaced by the teaching of living languages and dialects of which even the grammar had not then been formulated. When the model of classical language teaching with its emphasis on fixed standards and traditional forms was replaced by that of modern language teaching which emphasized empirical flexibility and spontaneity, it might have been expected that the notion of conservative and elitist society would be replaced by that of a progressive and democratic society. The transition was, however, impeded by the fact that the model of language teaching in India tended to become simultaneously a model of foreign language teaching. A foreign language is like a social language in its appeal to an authority beyond the spontaneity of the learner. In India, thus while the nineteenth century popularized the notions of historical evolution and progress, national identity and democracy, the educational model of learning a foreign language continued to emphasize authoritarianism and elitism. Inconsistently enough while such an educational system tended to strengthen colonial rule and create increasing deracination it inculcated at the same time the ideals of liberty and national self-determination. While increasing the gap between the people and the educated bureaucratic elite, it yet tended to encourage popular ambition by inculcating the abstract idea of the people as the ultimate source of worth. The contradiction between liberal British ideals and imperialistic colonial practice was paralleled by the contradiction between the modernizing orientation and the imitative and foreign idiom of the educational system. By the time of Indian Independence in 1947, this contradictory education had worked for nearly a century and produced a still continuing destabilization. The educated and ruling elite in 1947 was the product of a western style education which imitated current western ideas and sought to implement them under the compendious rubric of ‘modernization’. A series of Five Year Plans have sought to speed up economic development through industrialization and concomitantly propounded scientific and technical education. Along with these measures was taken a series of other measures
seeking to abolish all vestiges of feudalism and the iniquities of the caste-system. During the Nehru Era, thus, India stood firmly committed to scientific and technical education, industrial development and social equality. This programme, it was obvious, must fight a tremendous backlog of illiteracy, poverty and inequality.

The linguistic model for this educational and social situation is as interesting as it is revealing. According to the Three Languages Formula as actually practiced, primary education is universally conducted in the mother tongue or regional language except in the English medium schools which are favoured by the elite. At the secondary level the mother tongue is supplemented by a smattering of Hindi and English. At the University level the student is expected to use English at least as a library language though in practice only a small number acquire much proficiency in English while the majority are increasingly drifting away from any real knowledge of it. More serious than the deficiency of English at the University level is the deficiency of the mother tongue which most students cannot use spontaneously or creatively as a medium of abstract thought or theory. This is largely due to the continuing prestige of the foreign language with which the students keep struggling at an age when alone the formation and creative transformation of new concepts could take place in the psyche. Even the textbooks in the mother tongue tend to create an artificial idiom imitated from English originals with the result that concepts acquired through them never wholly shed their opaqueness. The situation is made worse by a pragmatic outlook which devalues the subtleties and native structures of ordinary language and proclaims the sufficiency of the sign language of science and technology. This attitude imports English technical terms wholesale into Indian language and creates a highly cumbersome symbolic tool which lacks inner cohesion and the capacity of spontaneous development. The current system of higher education in India is most tellingly symbolized by this mixture of languages and idioms. The top of the system using a foreign language is joined to the international world of ideas while the roots lie in the soil with its innumerable dialects and innumerable traditions. Between the two ends no adequate organic connections have been built as yet. The development of grassroot democracy with its local, pragmatic leadership and the simultaneous waning of the old style highly cultured national leadership tend to bring the inner tensions of the system into sharp relief and accentuate them. The virtual
exclusion of classical languages from the new Educational policy threatens an unprecedented age of cultural illiteracy.

II. SOCIAL CHANGE AND INDIAN UNIVERSITIES: TRENDS AND PROSPECTS

The most important trend which India shares with the rest of the world is the trend towards social levelling. Education has hitherto been the privilege of the upper classes and its restriction to them has served to perpetuate the distinction between the upper and lower classes. In the old Indian tradition it was sacred learning which was deemed the privilege of the Brahmanas but there were no deliberate restrictions on vocational learning which was essentially practical being acquired through apprenticeship in guilds. Gradually, however, the guilds hardened into subcastes and were placed low in the social hierarchy. When the colonial system of education was established in the nineteenth century it effectively destroyed village institutions of primary learning. At the same time colonial exploitation destroyed handicrafts and introduced new elements of feudalism while strengthening old ones. The result was that during the mid-nineteenth century illiteracy perhaps increased in the vast rural population of India in which the proportion of the landless certainly increased. It is only in the towns which multiplied, that the new system of education catered to the demand for learning without the restrictions of any caste system. In practice, however, it is only the upper castes and classes which took advantage of the new schools and the only purpose which the system served was to help the recruitment of a loyal class of Indian officials.

The first universities in India in the nineteenth century were modelled on the London University and essentially examining Boards while the actual task of teaching devolved on far flung colleges with omnibus teachers and authoritarian principals. This was a complete departure from the traditional system which did not believe in formal examinations and diplomas. In the traditional system of higher education students from different parts of the country sought instruction from famous teachers who were always specialists and were generally supported by local patrons including the local rulers. The new system was completely different. It rested on the grant of diplomas on authority of the state. Since then examinations and diplomas have plagued the Indian universities.
The old system higher education was inexpensive and often subsidized by charities. The new system has become increasingly expensive and dependent like medical colleges or technological institutes is so expensive that is clearly beyond the means of the poorer class. Although the present day universities in India seek to fight caste and class distinctions on an ideological level, their real benefits are available only to those who come from relatively well-to-do classes.

It is true that as a remedy for this, various measures have been initiated such as financial support in diverse ways to those who come from the lower castes and tribes or have given evidence of scholastic promise. The trouble, however, is that those who have come from the poorest sections find it difficult to make it to the university. Their initial handicaps prevent them from acquiring the kind of linguistic competence and general awareness without which they stand hardly any chance of attaining the standard required for admission to the universities. The result is a growing demand for lowering the requirements for admission to the universities. The worst sufferers from this pressure are the Departments of Humanities which cannot plead for the restriction of admission on the ground of non-availability of adequate laboratory fittings. But then the students who are admitted to those departments come out of the universities without qualifying for any jobs which are generally available to science and commerce graduates alone.

The most potent factor working for egalitarian social change in India today is undoubtedly the inbuilt tendency of a democratic structure of government. The representatives of the people are drawn from all castes and classes, and exert a mounting pressure to make education available to all without distinction. Since, in India, almost all jobs requiring education also seem to require graduation, the right to education is popularly conceived not as the right to elementary education but as the right to job giving education. This necessarily includes university education, which however is not sufficient to ensure jobs. The net result is that except for professional courses in medicine, technology and management or highly specialized courses in science, it is increasingly difficult to restrict admissions to the universities and colleges on grounds of mere scholastic suitability. There is a constant tendency to expand admission to the universities beyond the level justified by their resources and indeed to open far more colleges and universities
much beyond the resources which the current budgetary allocations make available to the state government or the Central University Grants Commission. As a result the search for social equality tends to produce a lowering of quality in most universities and colleges subject to local pressures.

This ironic situation arises from the fact that the model of university education accepted in a developing country like India is that of the industrially developed countries. The cost of providing education of this kind to the fast rising and demanding population of India requires expenditure on an unattainable scale. Thirty years ago the Chairman of the U.G.C. estimated that the starting of a residential university required a minimum of 20 million rupees and from this he concluded that it would be better to concentrate on opening new colleges. The U.G.C. has subsequently reiterated that new universities should not be started improvidently. And yet such efforts to restrict the expansion of higher education are constantly disregarded by the state governments under political pressure necessarily arising from the development of democratic forces.

The remedies suggested and partially adopted for this tragic impasse are to encourage self-study or through correspondence. But these methods are not permitted for the areas most sought after viz., the study of professional or scientific courses, where they are permitted at all, advantage is taken by those who are already in employment and seek to improve their prospects. Thus the pressure from those who seek admission to the universities in order to qualify for jobs remains unaffected. Besides, correspondence courses are much more expensive than regular collegiate courses and do not contain any provisions for exemptions of fees etc. Their quality too does not seem to recommend them and that again is because the universities are unable to spend as much on organizing correspondence studies as they would have to if they sought to attain high standards in them.

The result is that not only does a large and growing demand for higher education remain unsatisfied, even of those who are enabled to enter the portals of universities more than half fail to come out successfully. And even of those succeed, only a small proportion gets degrees which are likely to qualify them for suitable jobs. This situation breeds despair and a widespread indiscipline. Within the accepted model of university education this situation can be remedied only by the acceleration of economic development.
This brings us to second major trend of social change which India shares with the rest of the world and that is the continuous process of economic change consequent on a continuing scientific and technological revolution which is world-wide and of which the pace continues to gain in acceleration. It has been computed that the quantum of scientific knowledge tends to double itself every decade and that the time lag between scientific discovery and its technological application continues to become narrower and narrower. At the same time the dissemination of knowledge is becoming easier, more rapid and global. In the developed countries, thus, educational and techno-economic growth are mutually dependent and run parallel at an accelerating pace. It is natural, therefore, that developing countries like India should seek to inaugurate and promote this independent developmental process. In an accelerating process, however, the pace depends on the time the process has been on. India being a late starter has to reckon with a relatively slow pace of development. The growth of population tends to further diminish the net result of the process.

Let me illustrate some results of this situation on the quality of university life in India. If we take the older universities, especially of the Hindi speaking states which are the largest and the most populous, we find that during the last few decades they have been struggling with increased enrolments and paucity of funds. The policy of the state governments to make the study of English wholly optional at the secondary stage in the states also has added to the academic difficulties of the universities. The disparity between the material facilities which the students expect from the universities and what they are actually able to provide them leads to agitations. On the other hand, some of the newer universities and colleges in state capitals or metropolitan centers which are relatively better financed have managed to improve their earlier and humbler conditions. Then again, there are some new universities and colleges in outlying areas which have never had the material resources to fully harness and utilize their human potential.

From these illustrations it would seem that there is a simple and direct correlation between the financial resources and the academic attainment of the universities. This, however, is largely though not wholly true. To a large extent a university with better resources is able to attract a better faculty and students and is able to retain its own best products whereas if a university falls into poverty it tends to be deserted. This at least seems to be the general rule in our
country. But in this context the exceptions have a great significance. Institutions like the Gujrat Vidya Peeth, imbued with high idealism, functioned in an excellent manner till their staffs and students began to be effected by the prevailing search for affluence.

III. THE EVALUATION OF CHANGE AND VISUALIZING THE FUTURE

It may be tempting to conclude that if the current vogue of economism were to continue and grow in India and her universities were to retain their present model, their condition is not likely to show much improvement in the foreseeable future. It may be objected that we already have a number of excellent centers of specialized teaching and research which have hardly any dearth of funds. Such are, for example, the Institutes of Technology or the post-graduate institutes of medical study or the Agricultural universities or the several institutes of specialized scientific research and laboratories. We also have a few relatively affluent central or national universities and, finally, a number of advanced centers of study in different universities which are specially assisted by the U.G.C. Then again, it may be said that the teaching of science has been improving generally in most universities through the efforts of the U.G.C. and that progress in all these directions may be expected to grow. It may be argued that in a country like India this pattern comprising a variety of standards for different types of institutions is inevitable. Small colleges in remote rural areas, new universities in district areas coordinating the efforts of such colleges and creating a few pace-setting centers, larger and older universities in important towns, especially the state capitals, central or national universities in metropolitan towns, specialized national institutions of research—these would constitute a kind of hierarchy and illustrate different standards. Such is the trend at present and is likely to continue in the future. What is more, the difference between the different rungs of hierarchy are not likely to increase since a basic parity of salary scales has been adopted at the national level for all colleges and universities. We may expect the overall conditions to improve although the diversity of standards will remain.

This version of the future is unimpeachable factually but it rests on a wrong conception of what constitutes a university. It assumes that a university is the same thing as an institute of scientific research, pure or applied. If, on the other hand, the university is conceived as a place where the central values of a social tradition
are critically apprehended and creatively formulated, it would be obvious that the university could not then be a centre of more specialization, specially of the natural sciences, which are often studied in a value neutral manner. Even the inculcation of a scientific outlook which enquires rationally and relies on experimental verification is hardly adequate to the development of the total man. Even the realm of cognitive enterprise extends far beyond the methods and attitudes of experimental or mathematical sciences. And apart from cognitive values the realms of aesthetic, moral and religious values being integral to the conception of an educated man, must be included within the ambit of that wider enquiry which should be held to define a university. Knowledge must be relevant to the discovery of the meaning of life as a whole and in this sense must be a seamless garment. The acquisition of piecemeal proficiency, which is characteristic of pedestrian scientific research, may be necessary for training in the use of empirical reason and even more necessary for meeting the requirements of an industrial society. It does not thereby constitute the sufficient or major task of a university. That task must begin with a sound general education which introduces one to the perennial values and wisdom enshrined in the human tradition. From this point of view the much despised undergraduate colleges and the departments teaching the classics and humanities, fine arts and social sciences are at least as important as the specialized institutes of research for it is at least as important for a man to be enlightened as it is for him to have the skill to help the growth of affluence. He must not only acquire the language of mathematics and the sciences, but also the language of the heart expressing feelings and intuitions.

What is more, from the point of view of a democratic society is the standard of education attained in the rural college and the district university which is of the real moment. Institutions for high grade specialization affect only a few persons. Their utility is not in question. But education is not merely a matter of utility or the techno-economic development of society. It is leading each and every citizen to a sense of his own humanity. Primary and secondary education would not succeed in this if the universities were not to concern themselves seriously and critically with the human tradition of self-consciousness.

The future which our educational policy and practice actually visualize today is one of economic development and social equality
in which education is required to assist as a prime instrument of social change. Beginning with literacy at the primary level and running through general scientific education, inculcation of a secularizing and modernizing and social outlook and vocational training at the secondary level to high level scientific and technological learning and research in the universities and institutions, these constitute the different moments of the new educational ladder. About the actual future of this programme, it seems to me futile to speculate because it will obviously depend on the orientation and distribution of economic resources which may optimistically keep moving towards the distant horizon of a democratic and affluent society. It is the underlying assumptions and ideas of this reaching out for the future which merits serious discussion. That traditional institutions and culture are merely passive hindrances, that scientific knowledge constitutes the pragmatic case of knowledge, that an ever-increasing material standard of living and an ever-increasing concern with it represent prime values, that not only is humanity changing fast but that such a process is inevitable and welcome, and that education should prepare a man for change and help to bring it about, all these assumptions really need critical examination, unless we were to succumb to the organized power of industry and business, the technical professions and the politicians who find nothing more calculated to win votes than the promise of affluence. To propose an enquiry into such assumptions is not to propose a historical volta-face, a return to lost times. As felt by Rousseau, while man has been corrupted by civilization the future of man lies not in a return to the past, but in a new and real education of the human heart. The greatest Indian of the present century, Mahatma Gandhi, felt the same. Education should undoubtedly prepare man for livelihood but it should also prepare him for worthy living. The removal of poverty and inequality in mankind in general conceived as service is, doubtless, a morally elevating task but is gets vitiated if one’s attitude becomes that of economism of an egoistic gratification. Moral worth belongs to giving, not to possessing and consuming.

Should the universities be conceived entirely as factories of specialized knowledge demanded by an industrial society or as centres of critical reflection over the whole of social experience, past as well as present? Is scientific humanism so adequate a philosophy that the very structure of the universities should be
built on its foundations? Surely men does not live by bread alone. Nor does he live by positive knowledge alone. Man inevitably seeks a value which transcends his own transience. Is it fair to tell him that this value lies in a future historical epoch, that what man cannot realize as an experiencing individual is somehow approximated in history by humanity in a go-up in terms of its general conditions of existence? Doubtless each man must serve humanity, but the service of humanity does not constitute a sufficient faith for man who must also know what he really is. And no university would deserve to be called so unless it could help in the most fundamental of all enquiries, the enquiry into human nature as a self-consciousness. It is only a *philosophia perennis* which can reveal the unity of mankind, not the exchange of goods, knowhow or military hardware. What is more, the awareness of a moral order requires a sense of permanence and is endangered by rapid social change. I am afraid that we must guard against an excessive preoccupation with the virtues of social change and its means, the sciences of nature or even of society conceived on the analogy of nature and in the spirit of value neutrality. We must at least allow the fundamental questions to be raised by each individual entering the universities, leaving him free to choose his answer. I am afraid that the dependence of a university on the state or on industry and business for its financing tends to curb such freedom of enquiry but I am not sure what practical, viable alternatives there are in the present situation unless we can somehow move away in highly organized and costly institutions built from utilitarian or ideological motivations. We have somehow to move towards a situation where educators as well as learners can act as free individuals seeking enlightenment and not merely livelihood or honours from the state.
Accessibility, Excellence, and Accountability in the Indian Higher Education System

BHIM S. DAHIYA
Former Vice Chancellor
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The concepts of accessibility, excellence, and accountability are exercising today their respective pressures on the system of higher education in India. Although working at cross-purposes, all the three have powerful forces to press for their due claims in the democratic edifice of our country. A comparative investigation into the end-result of each pressure would reveal the real character of our democracy, which may not be in consonance with the spirit of our lofty constitution. Keeping in view the constraints of space and time, let us have a look at the facts as they obtain today in the world of Indian higher education, and analyse them in terms of the three concepts which do work as determinants of the policies and programmes related to our universities and colleges.

Although India, like all other modern nations of the world, inherited the basic principles of the western Enlightenment, those principles have not met with as much measure of success in the complex society of the Indian state as they have done in the comparatively simpler (that is homogeneous) societies of the western world. 'Two great social principles of the Enlightenment are, firstly, that the determination of life-chances by the accidents of birth (ascription) should be mass rather than elite participation in democratic societies. Education has been seen as central to this agenda, in helping to provide the technical skills for modern society and in selecting the talented for upward mobility.' Even though these twin principles have been enshrined in our Constitution, just as they are enshrined in the characters of the democratic countries, the gap between the ideal and the actual is perhaps much wider in India than in the countries of the west. The reasons for this wide gap are not difficult to identify.

In a country where only about 50% of its population gets

to primary education, where opportunity to learn alphabets is denied by birth, the lofty principles of the democratic ideal seem entirely out of place. No doubt, there has been an expansion of education in the last 50 years, raising the enrolment at the primary level from 42.6% in 1950-51 to 94.9% in 1999-2000. But the official figures in this regard reveal intriguing facts. In the year 1999-2000, the enrolment figure at the primary level is shown to have reached 1136 lacs, but the figure soon sinks to 420 lacs at the upper primary level in the same year, raising the figure of dropouts to 73 per cent. The story at the higher education level is not very different. No doubt, expansion of higher education, too, as also of accessibility to higher education during this period have been quite significant. From about 20 universities and a little over 500 colleges in 1946, we have today over 275 universities and 11,600 colleges. Besides, we have a few open universities and almost as many Directorates of Distance Education as there are universities. Also, we have several thousand self-financing institutes of technology and management offering higher education courses and training. And yet, not even this expansion of education and accessibility is good enough for providing equal opportunity to all those born to a complex of inequalities and in a country of over one hundred crore population. Adding even 500 colleges every year in a country where about 5 crores are annually added to the already staggering figures of our population is not good enough to improve the chances of equity and accessibility in higher education.

Besides the factor of birth benefits only the creamy layers of both the lower castes as well as the upper, there are also other factors, such as globalisation, privatization, and technologisation of higher education, which disadvantage the lower classes. The fact that despite our best (or not so best) efforts the enrolment figures through both formal as well as non-formal streams of higher education, have not exceeded even 1% of our total population shows the depth of inequality inbuilt in the nature of our society and the system of our education. As for the accessibility of higher education to those eligible (in terms of their having passed the senior secondary examination) we have attained only about 6% level (including the figures of both formal non-formal streams). Considering the accessibility figures of countries like the U.S.A., which is about 60%, Canada, which is 54%, even Israel, which is 33% the status of our economy, as well as of higher education,
compares very unfavourably with these developed countries. Also, the inbuilt social inequalities as well as policy priorities leave out the majority of the masses far away from the entry doors of our higher education edifice. The phenomena of globalisation, privatization, and technologisation in the field of higher education have all combined to make higher education extremely expensive, especially for the overwhelming majority of our population. Consequently, only the creamy layers of our forward as well as backward castes can take advantage of the competitive higher education. The requirement of several lacs of rupees for admission to medical and engineering education in the private sector, which now counts for more than 50% of our total intake capacity in these courses, automatically shuts the doors of accessibility to the majority of our students aspiring to join these courses. Whereas the phenomena of globalisation and privatization have both made available higher and technical education to the wards of those who cannot make it on the basis of merit but can afford to buy it, the phenomenon of technologisation has made higher education expensive even for those who solely rely on merit, thereby making even the doors of the public sector institutions of higher education inaccessible to those meritorious but not rich. Before these phenomena, those meritorious but nor rich could make it to the doors of higher education. After these phenomena, a significant change has taken place in the demography of technical education sector. Whereas earlier the wards of the educated middle class families made the majority in the professional courses, now it is the wards of the not-so-educated neo-rich sections, consisting of all those who are able to make money by hook or by crook, who, despite inferior merit (or even no merit), overwhelm all others.

The concept of merit or excellence as a means to ensure equity in higher education, making admission on the basis of open competitions on the state or national level, is also an aspect of the ideology of Enlightenment, which formed the basis of modern democratic states. Once again, we have to take this western concept with a pinch of salt. In this foreign concept, adopted by the third-world democracies including India, meritocracy is supposed 'to give full expression to the twin social principles which have shaped so much of economic and social life since the Enlightenment, in the equation “intelligence + effort=merit”.' All components of the concept defined here are questionable, for what passes for 'intelligence', for instance, in one culture or society, and even for
different castes or classes, groups and regions, within the same culture and society, is never the same thing. In the context of the present scenario of our higher education system it will not be very wrong to say that 'mediocrity + money = merit'.

The disparities between region and region, caste and caste, class and class, and between individual and individual within the same region, class and caste, in terms of both money and morality are so wide that any talk of equity sounds altogether alien in our native environment. The UGC’s table showing regional disparities in access parameter (Formal System) of higher education among the various states of the Indian Union reveals a good deal about the state of equity (or inequity) in our higher education system. The table shows that while the national access parameter is 5.75% it ranges from 10 to 13% in the states of Goa, Manipur and Delhi from 5.7 to 10% in the states of Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Pondichery, and 3 to 5.69% in the states of Andhra, Arunachal, Assam, Bihar, Himachal, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan, U.P., West Bengal, Sikkim and Tripura. Thus, our borrowed concepts of equity, merit, and accessibility are fraught with all sorts of problems hard to be straightened, given our legacies of the caste system, the colonial past, and the corrupt present. These disparities are still greater in the case of women education. While Kerala, for instance, has 53.8% women in higher education, Bihar has the lowest of 19%. While Punjab with 51.7% is only next to Kerala; Harayana continues to have percentage lower than the national average.

As for the question of excellence, the scenario is not less dismal than that of equity. The question of excellence is also linked with the question of equity, for the disparity is not in terms merely of accessibility of higher education but also of the availability of infrastructural facilities required for quality education. To begin with the very fact that 60% of our public sector institutions of higher education are in the urban sector, which counts for 20% of our population, shows how unequal are the parameters of accessibility for the two sets of population. And if we include the private sector also, than the ratio changes from 60:40 to 80:20. Since the quality of an educational institution is linked with the quality of life the place of its location offers, the urban institutions have a distinct advantage over those in the rural areas. If we go into the statistics of spendings on infrastructural facilities respectively in the urban
and rural colleges, the picture about the difference in the quality of education and available in the two categories of these colleges becomes all the more clear. In other words, the institutions of excellence are not better than a few islands in the large ocean of mediocrity. These islands, undoubtedly, are the institutions in the metropolitan cities, such as, the Indian Institutes of Technology, or the Universities in Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay, etc. It is a different matter though that the UGC has granted excellence to several state universities, and has denied it to Delhi University.

In the case of the general universities, there is a vast difference between those managed by the center and the others managed by the states. The very statistics of spendings show the differences between the two. While the central universities like Aligarh Muslim University and Banaras Hindu University receive each an annual grant of over 70 crores a year. These spendings have direct bearing on the degree of excellence (or the lack of it) the two categories of the universities are able to create in their products. Besides the difference in the annual grants, these two categories have even greater difference in the working conditions of their teachers. While a department of Delhi University may have twenty odd Professors and double the number of teachers drawn from the colleges affiliated to it to teach the course of M.A. and M.Phil, in the same department of a state university not more than one or two professors and half a dozen other teachers are made to do teaching for the same two courses. Besides, in many a state university today, these very half a dozen teachers have to handle those courses also in the Directorate of Distance Education of their university, in some cases, as a compulsory component of their duties, in others, as an added attraction owing to extra payment. In such stringent working conditions as obtain today in our state universities, any expectation would sound rather preposterous.

Expansion of higher education has helped in both enlarging accessibility as well as undermining excellence. The number of new colleges established in the last ten years has been over 3000, showing an increase of 87% in medical education, 1% in technical education, and 41% in Arts, Science and Commerce education. Since education today has come to mean skill and training, which have better market than liberal education, greater expansion has taken place in the areas of applied sciences (called technologies) and the managerial skills. But this expansion has brought about, for sure, a marked decline in the standards of technical education.
One reason for this has been the Government's incomprehensible policy of not pressing for the Private University's Bill introduced in Parliament in 1995, but promoting individual entrepreneurship to carry out the required expansion in the field of self-financing institutions with minimum investment in infrastructural facilities, quite often only for laundering their black money earned in trade or business. The concerned authorities of the All India Council for Technical Education, which grants technical approval for these institutions, the state governments, which have to issue no objection certificate to them and the universities, which have to give affiliation to them, all have found the idea very profitable. This private sector in higher education, to say the least, is almost comparable to the parallel economy of the black money in the national market. The norms and standards of education in these institutes, compared to those obtaining in the proper institutions like the IIT's and REC's are very poor.

As for the norms and standards of higher education in the non-technical colleges and universities, there is a sharp decline of late. The responsibility for the decline lies squarely on the shoulders of the governmental authorities in the states. The state-managed universities and colleges receive funds barely for the establishment, which means salary bill of teachers and non-teaching staff. As for the quality and number of teachers, both are utterly inadequate in terms of the norms and standards laid down by the UGC. It is another matter, though, that the UGC has not done enough to ensure its own norms and standards in the state-run universities and colleges. In a state like Harayana, large part of the college teaching is done by unqualified teachers engaged on part-time basis who are paid not more than one third of the prescribed salary for the amount of work-load they are made to carry. Beside, the direct politico-bureaucratic interference right from the creation of colleges or departments, the requirement of teachers or non-teaching staff, to the admission of students or examinees has been largely responsible for the dismal absence of excellence in higher education today. The policies of paid seats and reservations of all sorts based on caste, region and schooling have created such a strange mixture of merit and demerit in the college classes that the teachers have to tune themselves, perforce, to the lowest common denominator. Logically, the examinations have also to measure only the practical inputs in the classroom. The UGC document for the Xth Plan speaks of 'genuine demand for Indian
brain power', and of 'recognition of Indian graduates at global level'. This exportable human commodity, however, is only microscopic, confined to the areas of Information Technology, Medicine and Engineering. The vast quantities of our human commodities are, not only unexportable, but also not of much use even in the domestic market.

The unemployment of the national educated force is staggering in numbers. The employment exchanges, created by the Union and state governments, have already ceased to be of any use. In fact, the graduates have stopped going in for registration with these offices, knowing full well that no job will come forth through this agency of the government. A study made about the uneducated employment a decade ago is revealing. Not less revealing is a survey made by a committee of the government of the engineering colleges in the state of Karnataka. One of the members (Dr. Amrik Singh) disclosed to this writer that over 20 thousand of qualified engineers were unemployed in the state. And yet, the political bosses were busy doling out more 'No objections' for the setting-up of new institutions. Interestingly, majority of these institutes are in the private sector and most of them are owned, directly or indirectly, by the politicians. One such institute was found functioning in the garage of a minister of the state. Once a similar study of these technical institutes was made in the state of Maharashtra. As it was reported in the *Times of India* a few years ago, not more that 7% of the students enrolled in these colleges qualify in the first attempt. And I remember having noted myself personally that over a dozen of these institutions were being owned by none else than the then Education Minister of the state. All these facts give a fairly clear idea of the level of excellence obtaining in the Indian higher education. UGC's NET is another indicator of the degree of excellence obtaining in the various universities and colleges in different parts of the country. While the UGC is still not ready with the state university and subject-wise analysis of its NET results (although it has been holding the examination for 12 years) I have personal knowledge about English in which the national average is 2 to 3%. As for the universities in our region, the percentage is not higher than the national. In fact, in states like Haryana, Himachal, and J&K, it is less than the national average.

Coming to the third component of our talk today, the status of accountability in the Indian system of higher education, we find that, as usual, the idea has been borrowed from the west. With the
increasing dominance of business in the recent years, which has acquired precedence even over politics, it was but natural that the universities and colleges would be subjected to stringent-parameters of accounting and auditing. Since higher education has become expensive owing to advanced technology, it is understandable that those funding higher education would be impatient to impose conditions on spending. The financial auditing of the institution of higher education has always been there. In fact, the universities in India have pre-audit system, where all spendings are done only after the proposals have been scrutinized by the government's own auditors. When we hear clamours for accountability, it is as a matter of fact, an attack on the autonomy of the university. The reason for this aggression are not far to see. One relates to the global phenomenon of the state's attempt to control the instruments of economic and industrial development. Since higher education is the most powerful instrument of scientific and technological growth, universities would automatically invite greater political and administrative attention that they did even before. The following from the report of a recent Canadian Commission on higher education would show how the call for accountability is a global one.

The problem is that various governments, particularly in England, Australia and some US, have seen fit to impose rigid requirements and form budgetary formulas in the name of accountability. The Commission believes that Canada would be ill-advised by adopting a heavy handed bureaucratic approach to this matter .... Apart from normal financial auditing, what Canadian universities need to demonstrate is that they are genuinely accessible to those with the appropriate abilities, are equitable in their admission practices, and are producing an appropriate number of graduates who are satisfied with the education they have received and whose worth is satisfactory to their employees. That is what people expect and that can be measured. Thus, what lies behind the façade of accountability is actually an attempt to have direct control of the universities, making it possible for the government to interfere in the decision-making processes of these institutions. From selections to admissions, the government is trying to have an effective say in the academic domain. The state universities in India know how they are subjected to all kinds of direct as well as indirect control of the government in their
daily affairs.

To ward off the threat of accountability the academics have devised their own elaborate mechanism of evaluating quality, using the industry's norms of measuring quality of its produce. UGC has adopted these norms and has already initiated the measure, awarding three, four, five, or seven stars to the universities, indicating their rank among the fraternity. These mechanical norms continue to be questioned by the liberal academics, but the voice of liberalism is no longer heard in the market-driven corridors of power. The danger of mechanical measurement of quality in higher education is that the individual initiative, which emanates from autonomy, and the spiritual vision, which springs from the institution's inner energy, get curbed and trampled. It is certainly not advisable to insist upon these unacademic measures for making universities socially responsible or officially accountable. As has been aptly summed up by Cabal,

"... the concept of accountability is bound up with that of autonomy" (Albornoz 1991). Indeed, if by accountability we understand the relation between ends and means, in university terms they are relations that ought to exist between mission and functions. If these are well conceived and well achieved, the university strengthens its institutional autonomy and deserves to be recognized. In turn, the clear distinction... between external and internal accountability is the same as the two senses of the verb administrate... The University organizes itself internally to provide external service to society.\(^1\)

As is apparent from the argument here, the external form of accountability is bound to be counter productive. The internal form implies an external expression. If the internal content is good, the external expression is bound to be good. What is therefore required is, not bureaucratic application of mechanically formulated criteria, but an inbuilt system of checks and balances to be operated from within. The bureaucratic attempt to create remote control to operate the university system can only ensure the killing of the very spirit of enquiry on which the system of the university is founded.

Incidentally, what is there, after all, for which we are so keen to clamp the coercive apparatus of accountability on the necks of these poor universities? As of today, the government gives no funds for books and equipment, nor for providing properly qualified adequate faculty. In such a situation, who are we trying to hold
responsible for all these deficiencies? Rather than book a starving man for his ill health, the government should discharge its duty of providing him the needed nutrition. As George Strong said it long ago,

*It seems certain that we shall effect nothing lasting or important except by and through teachers of the first order and the higher repute.... With professors of respectable mediocrity or a little above it, a college will languish, but may subsist indefinitely. But a university cannot be planted and long sustained in life without professors of splendid name and ability.*

Here is a vision of excellence for which universities are created. The question of equity and accountability are in a way extraneous to the domain of the academia. Equity to the extent of fairness to all the deserving students and researchers is internal to it, but equity in the sense of education for all, merit or no merit, is a social or political concept, not academic. Similarly, accountability in the bureaucratic form or business form is also foreign to the spirit of the university. Its accountability has to be to itself, to its bodies created by the Act of legislation, not to any external agency including the UGC, the AICTE, or any other outfit created for the purpose. Added to the existing agencies is the Accreditation Board, another borrowed idea from the west. These agencies have acquired the bureaucratic character, functioning like any department of the government. The huge funds being spent on them for maintaining their establishment were better spent on the universities. It is a strange approach to higher education that you starve the man on the wheel, so to say, and spend large sums on keeping supervision on him. This approach is bureaucratic or governmental, responsible for several ills in our democratic machinery. Earlier, the universities had small breathing spaces of their own, away from the fangs of bureaucracy. Now, they are being brought right under the fangs, leaving no room for their individual existence.

Concluding the discussion of the three key issues in higher education today it can be suggested: (i) That the system of higher education should be made self-regulatory on the model of our juridical system, so that it can have the measure of autonomy it requires for the pursuit of truth; (ii) That the political form of equity, call it social justice, should end with the school education, and that only the economic concessions should be offered,
irrespective of caste, creed or religion, to all those meritorious students who are unable to pay the cost of higher education; (iii) That the private sector should be encouraged to establish universities and the petty entrepreneurship should be discouraged; (iv) That the Central Government should bear the burden of higher education by bringing universities on the central list; (v) That rather than promote parallel economy in education in the form of petty institutions, proper public sector institutions should be allowed to have the system of paid seats; (vi) That the Distance Education Mode should be an essential component of every university, of course, not as a milch cow without subsisting input, but as a proper department in its own right with the necessary and full academic infrastructure. These measures, hopefully, can tone up our higher education system to a reasonable level of excellence.

NOTES

1. See India 2002, Govt. of India Publication, New Delhi, p. 79.
4. See UGC’s Xth Plan Profile of Higher Education in India, New Delhi, October 2001, p. 6.
5. See ibid., p. 13.
7. See UGC’s Xth Plan Profile, p. 16.
8. Ibid., p. 18.
9. Ibid., p. 20.
10. Xth Plan Profile, pp. 11-12.
13. Ibid., p. 213.
The title of the paper—How to Read the Manusmṛti?—implies some dissatisfaction with the way it is being read. This raises the question: is such an assumption justified?

Permit me to settle this point by offering you two brief statements and asking you which of the two you actually associate, or are likely to associate, with the Manusmṛti. The first is ‘a woman is not fit to be independent’ (na strīśvātantryamarhati) and the second is ‘equality for all’ (samatā caiva sarvasmin. In all likelihood the auditor or reader will associate the first of the two statements with the Manusmṛti and the second with second with any text except the Manusmṛti, perhaps with the Bhagavadgītā or the Yogavāsiṣṭha, for example.

The fact of the matter is that both the statements are found in the Manusmṛti – the first in verse 3 of chapter IX and the second in verse 44 of chapter VI. If most auditors or readers failed to locate both the verses in the Manusmṛti then something is obviously amiss with the way the Manusmṛti is being read and room is created for me to proceed. One wonders whether it has suffered the fate of many works which are reviled without being read.

I

I would now like to present what I have to say in three parts: a beginning, middle and an end or with an introduction, a discussion and a conclusion—hopefully in that order. As soon as the introduction is over, I shall identify five ways of reading the Manusmṛti (or Manu for short) which will yield three conclusions, but let me begin with the introduction before I proceed any further.

Some years ago I had the opportunity of reading the Manusmṛti
from cover to cover for the first time, in the course of preparing a presentation on it. Reading it as a whole, as distinguished from reading it in selected citations, began to produce in me an understanding of the text somewhat at variance from the prevailing one and I will now share these altered understandings with you to see where they might lead or point to.

So how to read Manu? Different people could make different suggestions; different people could also make the same suggestion, or the same person could make different suggestions. My present effort belongs to the last category.

II

Let me begin by classifying the manner in which these fresh understandings were generated, as they provide the natural channels along which the discussion might proceed. You may, if you will, call it a five-point plan for reading Manu.

(1) I found it necessary to understand Manu in the tradition as a law-giver, as distinguished from the author of the law-book which bears his name. Let me share with you the examples which led me in this direction:

(i) Manu has a very bad press in relation to what he says about women. It therefore came as a great surprise to me, and may surprise you too, that in his famous eulogy of women in the Brhat-Samhitā, Varāhamihira (sixth century) cites Manu in support while lauding women! Lest this be considered a misreading, on my part I cite the following remarks of P.K. Kane in extenso:

Varāhamihira (6th century AD) in his Brhat-Samhitā chap. 74 (ed. by Kern) makes a spirited defence of women and eulogises them highly. He first says that on women depend dharma and arth and from them man derives the pleasures of sense and the blessing of sons, that they are the Lakṣmī (goddess of Prosperity) of the house and should be always given honour and wealth. He then condemns those who following the path of asceticism and other-worldliness proclaim the demerits of women and are silent about their virtues and pertinently asks 'tell me truly, what faults attributed to women have not been also practiced by men? Men in their audacity treat women with contempt, but they really possess more virtues (than men)'. He then cited the dicta of Manu in support (verses 7-10). 'One's mother or one's wife is a woman; men owe their birth to women; O ungrateful wretches, how can happiness be your lot when you condemn them?'

I consider it a point of some importance that Manu, who is
regularly cited as offering a negative estimate of women and their rights on the basis of the *Manusmrti*, should be cited in the self-understanding of the tradition itself, as holding a positive view about them.

(ii) It is widely believed that women do not possess the right to inherit according to the *Manusmrti* and, moreover, that women did not have the right to inherit in Rg Vedic period.\(^2\) It seems, however, that ‘there was a school of jurists representing a small minority, which favoured the recognition of the right of inheritance of the daughter along with the son as early as c. 500 BC’.\(^3\) One of the authorities it relied upon is a passage in the *Nirukta* (III.4), as passage which is attributed by Yāśka to Manu! ‘This verse does not, however, occur in the present *Manusmrti* and it contradicts its views on this point.’\(^4\)

So we now experience yet another moment of ‘cognitive dissonance’. First we found Manu, denounced for his negative portrayal of women, being cited in the tradition for his positive portrayal of the same women. Now we find Manu, branded as the denier of rights to women, being cited within the tradition as an upholder of the daughter’s right to inherit!

(iii) The *Manusmrti* is regularly cited as the classical proof text of the Hindu caste-system. This caste-system is the subject of discussion between Nahuṣa (in the form of a snake) and Yudhiṣṭhira in the *Mahābhārata*. I cite a summary of the dialogue below.

When Yudhiṣṭhira, the incarnation of righteousness, is asked by the snake, to define a Brahmaṇa, he answers, ‘He is considered a Brahmaṇa in whom one can see truth, liberality, forgiveness, character, non-violence, self-control and the –Satyanām dānam kṣamā śilam ānṛṣṭaśīrayaih dano ghnāt/ Dṛṣṭyante yatṛa nāgendra sa brahmaṇa iti smṛtah. At this, the snake logically points out that these qualities may be found in a Śūdra. Yudhiṣṭhira then goes on to declare, ‘In that case the Śūdra is not a Śūdra, nor the Brāhmaṇa a Brāhmaṇa, where this conduct can be discerned, he is a Brāhmaṇa, where it is not found that one is to be indicated a Śūdra’. In that case, the snake argues, jāti would be quite meaningless. Yudhiṣṭhira replies by saying that jāti is impossible to discern since all men constitute a single species. Hence, according to Yudhiṣṭhira, Manu rightly stated that all are Śūdras by birth till they are spiritually regenerated. It is conduct, therefore, that really distinguishes the varṇas. Otherwise, their confusion is unavoidable.\(^5\)

It is worth noting that the view, that all are Śūdras by birth, is
attributed by Yudhishthira to Manu – a view highly subversive of the caste system. G.C. Pande notes that ‘The view attributed to Manu does not occur in the present Manusmrti but may be traced in other dharma-sāstra authors’.6

Here then is a third example to ponder in which the modern understanding of Manu diverges almost diametrically with the traditional understanding of his position as articulated in the Mahābhārata.

(iv) The Manusmrti is also associated with extravagant claims made on behalf of the Brāhmaṇas. Thus when A.L. Basham describes the ‘Brāhmaṇa as a great divinity in human form’7, he is paraphrasing Manusmrti (IX. 517). And these claims are based on birth as a Brāhmaṇa.

Such claims of the Brahmānhood on the basis of birth are contested both in the Vajrasūci8 attributed to Asvaghoṣa, as well as in the Vajrasūciikopaniṣad.9 Both the texts take the view that Brahmanhood is not based on birth (tasmāna jātir brāhmaṇa iti).10 In the Vajrasūci the statement takes the following form: tasmāt jātir na kāraṇam.11

What is striking is that this statement is introduced in Vajrasūci as a citation from the Manusmrti (iha hi mānavadharmāḥ bhūhitām).12 The verse cited, however, is ‘not found in the extant Manusmrti.’13

(v) In present-day perception, Manu is perceived as a Hindu law-giver par excellence. This is at variance with the fact that the ‘Burmese are governed in modern times by the Dhammathat, which are based on Manu’. The Buddhist appropriation of Manu in Burma and Indo-China has been amply documented by R. Lingat.14

(2) When one places the Manusmrti, or the precepts of Manu, alongside what other smṛti texts attributed to Manu, one undergoes another cycle of cognitive dissonance. Three illustrations must suffice.

(i) A verse which permits the right to divorce to the wife in traditional Hindu law is found in Parāśrasmṛti and Nāradasmṛti.15 It states that ‘another husband is ordained for women in five calamities, viz. when the husband is lost (unheard of), is dead, has become a saṁnyāsin, is impotent or is a patita.’16

Although the text of the Manusmṛti is said to regard marriage as indissoluble, this verse permitting divorce is attributed to Manu in the Smṛticandrikā.17

(ii) Two other versions in which the Manusmṛti is found are
referred to as Vṛddha-Manu and Brhan-Manu or the later or older Manu and the larger Manu. The exact relationship of these, whose existence is known only from citations, to the Manusmṛti as we know it is a matter of conjecture.\textsuperscript{18} What is significant for us is the fact that these citations diverge from the existing text. ‘For example, our Manu is silent about the widow’s right to inherit to (sic) her husband, but Vṛddha-Manu recognizes the right of a chaste widow to take over the entire wealth of her husband.’\textsuperscript{19}

(3) Another differential understanding of Manu was also generated when the key concepts of the culture were read only in terms of the text of Manu itself and when they were read after the Manusmṛti had itself been placed in the broader context of the tradition. The concept of varṇa provides an interesting illustration of this point.

The Manusmṛti is a text avowedly organized on the template of the fourfold varṇa system. The second verse of the text informs us that Manu was requested by the sages as follows: ‘Deign, divine one, to declare to us precisely and in the due order the sacred laws of each of the (four chief) \((\text{varṇas})\) and of the intermediate ones \((\text{antaraprabhava})\).’\textsuperscript{20}

Thus the text really is a varṇa-dharmaśāstra by explicit request. The varṇa division of society is taken as a given. This template virtually governs the entire text.

As against this the following consideration must be kept in mind: that the scheme of the four varṇas it therein subject to a higher justification. This point is important inasmuch as the text alludes twice clearly to the \textit{puruṣa sūkta} of the Rg Veda while explaining the origin of the varṇa system. Thus it is squarely within the tradition. However, before alluding to that account, it attaches a rider on both the occasions it refers to that account: in 1.31 and 1.87. The first allusion is prefaced by the remark: ‘\textit{For the sake of the prosperity of the worlds} (lokaṁ āṁ tu śivṛddharthāṁ)’ and the second is prefaced by the remark: ‘\textit{But in order to protect the universe} (sarvasyāṁ tu sargasya guptaṁ arthāṁ).’\textsuperscript{21} That is to say: the four varṇas were created and separate duties assigned to them not in some random or purely natural fashion but with a definite purpose in mind: to secure the protection of creation and the prosperity of the worlds.

What happens then if the world does not prosper? Is one supposed to change or even abandon it?

The answer is provided by Manu in the fourth chapter. Verse
176 of this chapter states:

Let him avoid (the acquisition of) wealth and (the gratification of his) desires, if they were opposed to the sacred law, and even lawful acts which may cause pain in the future or are offensive to men.22

The translation barely conveys the force of the verse, which may well be one of the reasons why its significance has been overlooked. The Sanskrit text runs as follows: parityajedarta-kamau yau syaitam dharma varjitaun, dharma an cāpyasukhodarthe lokavikruṭamān ca.

Thus dharma which is reviled by the people and is not conducive to welfare may be abandoned. Does this not apply to varṇadharma? The Vedas are said to be the root of dharma (vedo’śkilo dharmanuśām) and from that root the varṇa scheme is derived. And Manu explicitly states that such dharma may be given up under two circumstances: (1) when it is going to result in unhappiness and (2) and when it is denounced by the people. One may wish to note that it was precisely for the benefit of the people that the varṇa was set up in the first place: lokānāṁ tu vivṛddhyartham.

These three differential perspectives may be described as paratextual in nature: they dealt with the text of the Manusmṛti by placing it within a larger context.

The next two differential perspectives have to do with the text itself.

(4) Concepts in the Manusmṛti take on a different complexion when read only in one part of it, as compared to when read as embedded in the text as a whole. An interesting example of this shift in perspective is provided by the term yuga, when it is read first as only occurring in chapter I and then as also occurring in chapter IX. As a matter of fact the theory of the four yugas provides further illustration of the basic theme of the paper – that one should look at all the relevant before firm conclusions about what the Manusmṛti says might be drawn.

The references to the yugas occur often in Manusmṛti. Their celestial chronology is spelled out in I.60-71, as follows:

They declare that the Kṛta age (consists of) four thousand years (of the Gods); the twilight preceding it consists of as many hundreds, and twilight following it of the same number.

In the other three ages with their twilights preceding and following, the
thousands and hundreds are diminished by one (in each).

These twelve thousand (years) which thus have just been mentioned as the total of four (human ages), are called one age of the Gods.23

Its implications for the state of dharma are spelled out in 1.81-86:

In the Kṛta Age dharma is four-footed and entire, and (so is) Truth; nor does any gain accrue to men by unrighteousness.

In the other (three ages), by reason of (unjust) gains (āgama), Dharma is deprived successively of one foot, and through (the prevalence of) theft, falsehood, and fraud the merit (gained by men) is diminished by one fourth (in each).

(Men are) free from disease, accomplish all their aims, and live four hundred years in the Kṛta Age, but in the Tretā and (in each of) the succeeding (Ages) their life is lessened by one quarter.

The life of mortals, mentioned in the Veda, the desired results of sacrificial rites and the (supernatural) power of embodied (spirits) are fruits proportioned among men according to (the character of) the Age.

One set of duties (is prescribed) for men in the Kṛta Age, different ones in the Tretā and in the Dwāpara, and (again) another (set) in the Kali, in proportion as (those) Ages decrease in length.

In the Kṛta Age the chief (virtue) is declared to be (the performance of) austerities, in the Tretā (divine) knowledge, in the Dwāpara (the performance of) sacrifices, in the Kali liberality alone.24

In another section of the Manusmṛti, however, this chronological scheme is transformed into a conceptual one. The Ages are associated with the diligence with which the king pursues his royal duties (IX.361-302):

The various ways in which a king behaves (resemble) the Kṛta, Tretā, Dwāpara and Kali Ages; hence the king is identified with the Ages (of the world). Sleeping he represents Kali (or Iron Age), waking the Dwāpara (or Brazen) Age, ready to act the Tretā (or Silver Age), but moving (actively), the Kṛta (or Golden Age).25

(5) Our current understanding of Manu is also altered when the verses are topically correlated instead of being read independently on their own. Again three examples must suffice.

(i) Consider, for instance, verses which attribute an extravagant status to the Brāhmaṇa. Read by themselves they seem self-
laudatory, as texts like the Manusmṛti were ‘Written by Brāhmaṇs and from the Brāhmaṇic point of view, and represent conditions as the Brāhmaṇs would have liked them to be’.  

Let us however now examine the point more closely. The role of the Brāhmaṇa in relation to other varṇas possesses a twofold dimension; (1) how should they be respected by the other varṇas and (2) what should their own attitude be towards such respect shown to them. That the Manusmṛti inculcates respect for the Brāhmaṇas is widely accepted and documented. What has been ignored is its statement on how the Brāhmaṇas should respond to such respect when displayed. This is laid down in verse 162 of chapter 2: ‘a priest should always be alarmed by adulation as by poison and always desire scorn as if it were ambrosia’.

(ii) Manu’s statement that a woman is not fit for independence has been legally construed to mean that she has no legal right to possession. Such right belongs only to the father, husband or son (Manu. IX.3). In the same Manusmṛti, however, the wife’s right to śrīdhana is unequivocally upheld.

(iii) It has often been alleged that Manu held the life of a śūdra of little account, largely on the basis of XI.132, which prescribes the same penance for killing small animals such as a dog, etc. as ‘for the murder of a Śūdra’. By the logic of the same level of penance, however, it can be argued that a Śūdra gets away scot free by killing women, and even other Śūdras, Vaiśyas, Kṣatriyas, because such offences cause the same loss of caste (XI.67) and a Śūdra cannot commit an offence causing loss of caste (X.126). If the life of a Śūdra were held in such contempt as it is claimed, would Manu permit one to even commit perjury to save the life of a Śūdra? So Manu VIII.104: ‘Whenever the death of a Śūdra, of a Vaiśya, of a Kṣatriya, of a Brāhmaṇa would be (caused) by the declaration of a truth, a falsehood may be spoken; for such (falsehood) is preferable to the truth.’

On the basis of this text the life of a Śūdra is worth that of a Brāhmaṇa! The order of enumeration of the varṇas is also worth remarking. The usual order is reversed, with the Śūdra being enumerated first. According to the logic of enumeration, then, the Śūdra’s life is even worth more than that of any other varṇa, including the Brāhmaṇa.

These then are the five ways in which one could supplement our current habit of reading the Manusmṛti piecemeal.
What do all these accretions of detail lead to? Ideally they should lead to a finely shaded conclusion. Let us see what we can do.

The Manuvāda presentation of Manu is for me an illustration of how information without context can lead to, or at least contributes to, alienation. It provides scope for ideologies to provide the context, or scope for speculation or worse to provide the context. Information in contrast, promotes analysis.

I draw the following three conclusions from the foregoing analysis.

(1) When read holistically on its own terms, the Manusmṛti is not as formidable an obstacle to social reconstruction as it has been made out to be. Individual verses can be used to draw toxic conclusions; generate synthetic outrage and magnify it into a generalized fear about the future. When judged be selective quotations, one tends to look upon the Manusmṛti with an air of excited horror, while evidence to the contrary from the same text is tactfully, or perhaps I should say tactlessly, withheld. Read as a whole the text helps us break out of circumscribingly limited hermeneutical circles, in which people have been going in circles for two centuries now.

I am not saying that it is not an obstacle. What I am saying is that it is not that formidable an obstacle. Its negative features are lessened when the text is read as a whole but they are not erased; much in it still remains obnoxious to the evidence of daily life. The yearning for justice and equality is present but it is a complicated yearning and the egalitarian and just impulses within it have remained an underutilized option.

(2) When, in the light of points two and three of the previous section, one lifts one’s sights beyond the Manusmṛti and reads it in the light of other law books, and in the light of the key concepts of the tradition, one can offer a bolder conclusion. Take the caste system, for instance. Some have argued that to be a Hindu one must belong to a caste—so closely is Hinduism tied to it. To dissolve caste, they say, would be to dissolve Hinduism. They remind one of the following comment of Chesterton: ‘Do not free the camel from the burden of the hump; you may be freeing him from being a camel.’ To me Manusmṛti seems to be saying—in the second and third ways of reading it—that caste is not the hump of the camel, it is the saddle.
Read this way the Manu of the Manusmṛti is not so much of an impediment as a stimulus; not so much an obstacle as a stepping stone, on which one may confidently place one's foot to step beyond.

(2) Manu, read in the light of the first way of reading the Manusmṛti, emerges as an icon: an ideal law-giver. And Manu as a symbol of and therefore in the role of an ideal law-giver one is in a position to offer an even more challenging suggestion. Those whose sympathies for Manu extend further may wish to claim that Manu does not even represent a bar on the high pole of social idealism we have to vault over. it is the very pole which will help us leap over the bar. In our ignorance we mistook the vertical pole for a horizontal bar.

If we read Manu in the five ways I have briefly outlined there is still a controversy then about Manu’s role in the social destiny of India, only it is now transformed into a controversy of a nobler kind, than that to which we are accustomed, once Manu is allowed to rise from the procrustean bed of Manuvāda.

NOTES

3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 240
10. Ibid., p. 936.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid. The verse runs: aranigārthnasambhūtā kātā kāma mahāmānti. Tapasī Brahmaṇa jātāstasmitat śūrnavaharam.
16. Ibid., p. 611.
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19. Ibid.
22. Ibid., p. 156.
23. Ibid., p. 20.
24. Ibid., pp. 23-4.
25. Ibid., p. 396.
29. Ibid., p. 443-1.
30. Ibid., p. 429. By resorting to such logic it can also be argued that Manu accords the same status to a slave as to a son, because he equates them in a verse (VIII. 299).
31. Ibid., p. 272 (emphasis added).
Perceiving faith and reason as binary opposites rather than as two alternate ways in our quest for truth is more typical of Western thought, where this readily leads to an impassable divide, as between fideism and rationalism. ‘What has Athens got to do with Jerusalem?’ asked Tertullian at the beginning of the Christian era when confronted with Greek philosophy! But if believers would privilege faith, rationalist would reverse the hierarchy, and never the twain would meet! The resulting dualism between faith and reason would seem to leave each in an independent domain of human experience and knowledge, compartmentalising our lives and impoverishing them into bargain, even as philosophers and theologians attempted to accommodate each other across the divide.

However, our contention here, as with Eastern thought more generally, is that faith and reason are complementary not contradictory ways of seeking the truth, since in fact truth itself, *satya*, as ontological reality even more than just epistemological truth, cannot be contradictory, otherwise reality itself would be absurd. What is needed is to include both in a more comprehensive understanding, which in fact would thereby be the more human for being the more inclusive and holistic. However, we must first refine our understanding of what we mean by ‘faith’ and ‘reason’ so as to explore more incisively the dialectic between the two.

To say that the relationship between faith and reason is dialectic, does not directly address the problematic between the two, unless one further explores how this dialectic in actuality operates. For if
a ‘dialectic relationship’ implies that one pole must be read against the other and vice versa, then we must still ask: what does being ‘reasonable’ mean to faith, and again what does the being ‘faithful’ to reason require?

For, though ours is an age, which at the global level may be characterised by secularism, there are as yet strong pockets of religious resistance, at times even provoked by this very challenge of globalisation (Beyer, 1994). There is an increasing religious revivalism and fundamentalism that seems to be spreading like inkblots on the global map across countries and even continents. Then again the age of reason once seemed to have undermined our faith with its rationalism, but now with the end of the Enlightenment this very critique of reason has turned on itself and undermined our confidence in the older rationalist optimism. Today a postmodern age is putting to question all the grand narratives that once seemed to epitomize the cutting edge of our evolving rationality.

Typically in Western thought, a binary opposition between faith and reason readily leads to an unbridgeable divide between fideism and rationalism, which all too easily deteriorates into a schizophrenia between religious intolerance and rationalist dogmatism! Eastern thought more generally, however, implies a more inclusive understanding as expressed in our first sutra: faith and reason are complementary not contradictory ways of seeking the truth.

TOWARDS A PHENOMENOLOGY OF FAITH

More conventionally faith is understood as giving one’s ascent to a truth on the testimony of another. This is what makes belief credible, that is, worthy of being believed. Thus understood faith is a matter of belief that focuses on the content and its credibility. In so far as this testimony is external to the believing person, its trustworthiness would rest on the credibility of the one giving the testimony, and not only on the content of the belief itself. Hence our second sutra: what we believe depends on whom we trust. Thus if I believe you, it is not just because I accept what you say as true, but more so because I believe in you, i.e. I believe you are a trustworthy and truthful person. This opens up the interpersonal dimension of faith that focuses not on our relationship to things as to objects, but to persons as to subject, an I-thou, not I-it relationship. This is the faith that gives me access to the other person as a self-disclosing
subject. For Martin Buber such I-Thou relationships are possible with things as well (Buber, 1958). An empiricist worldview constrained by a reductionist methodology cannot but discredit such ‘knowledge’.

It is then the authority of the testimony, moral or formal, that legitimates belief. However, as this testimony gets institutionalised in a tradition it can get even more distant from the original founding experiences and events themselves. Thus oftentimes claims of divine inspiration for the authority of religious testimony made by such institutional traditions, or at times the author of this testimony, the testifier, is seen to have claimed divinity itself. This would seem to put such testimony beyond human scrutiny. However, any communication, and most certainly a revelation of the divine to the human, must inevitably involve filters. Indeed, even the immediacy of a mystical experience, in its very first and necessary articulation to oneself, and in its later communication to others, necessarily involves the mediation of thought and language. This already implies an inescapable distancing from the original experience itself and the inevitable need for a hermeneutic understanding if the experience is to be relevant and reasonable. In sum then:

To believe is, formally, to know reality through the knowledge which another person has of it and which he communicates by his testimony; between faith and reality there intervenes the person of the witness, who communicates his knowledge so that the believer may share in it and thereby attain to the reality itself (Alfaro, 1968: 316).

ARTICULATING A CRITIQUE OF REASON

The term ‘reason’ derives from the Latin ‘ratio’ and its more restricted sense

absorbs the meanings of ‘giving an account’, ‘ordering things’ or ‘laying things or ideas out in a comprehensive way’. Other terms it may be contrasted with are μυθος (‘tale’ or ‘story’), αεσθησις (‘perception’), φαντασια (‘imagination’), μιμεσις (‘imitation’), and δοxa (‘belief) (Finch, 1987: 223).

Logic, deductive and inductive, the experimental method, are among the various ways that have been proposed to systematise the use of such reason. Thus ascent to truth here is ‘reasoned’, not
dependent on testimony, but on evidence that can be verified, and which leads to conclusions that can be tested. This then is a rational method of investigation that leads not to ‘belief’ but to ‘knowledge’. The acceptance of such knowledge is based on intrinsic criteria, and not on any extrinsic testimony or authority.

So far the focus is very much on the method of rational knowledge not on its content. In practice much of what we accept as reasoned knowledge, scientific or otherwise, is not something that we have tested or verified for ourselves using any kind of rational investigation. Often it is merely on the authority of someone who ‘knows better’. In other words, on the authority of wiser, more learned, more knowledgeable persons, or sometimes it seems simply because of the formal position the person holds. For every bit of information in our lives cannot be traced to source and verified before accepted. It is not just a practical impossibility theoretically it would leads to an infinite regress, because the very methodology of any rational knowledge rest on the basic premises, like the reality and intelligibility of the world we live in, which cannot be logically proven. They are experienced existentially.

‘Rational knowledge’ then has an element of ‘faith’, which is often neglected. But once again this refers to its content. What needs to be examined is the methodology by which such knowledge is arrived at. For even when such knowledge is accepted in ‘faith’ in principal at least it can be tested and verified. However, even while acknowledging the limitations of a methodology, one must also accept its validity where this applies. And so our third sutra: a rational methodology transgressing its inherent limitations can never yield ‘rightly reasoned’ knowledge.

In this context Karl Popper’s distinction in his *Open Society* (Popper, 1962) between classical rationalism and critical rationalism is pertinent here. The first seeks secure knowledge from axiomatic premises, the second accepts given knowledge as ‘hypothetical’ and through critical testing seeks to further refine and extend it. Thus Euclidian geometry is completely rational within the constraints of its own premises, but the non-Euclidian ones start from different assumptions and has extended geometric applications substantially.

A critical examination of the methodology involved in these rationalisms would arrive at certain limitations that are often neglected and even violated by their proponents for reasons that
are external to the methodology itself. This is precisely what the sociology of knowledge has drawn attention to and has convincingly demonstrated, how the underlying presumptions, which inevitable are socially derived, prejudice our presumed rational and impartial objectivity. These presumptions and pre-judgments are beyond the investigative methodology of such reasoning itself. How then do we critique such presumptions and prejudices? For if the ideal of the Enlightenment, of an unbiased, autonomous subject, must be abandoned how does this become a positive constituent of any interpretation, and not a limiting one? It is precisely here once again that the dialectic of faith and reason must come to bear.

Thus we have the Kantian 'a priori's that are accepted as methodological imperatives if such empirical/experimental knowledge is to be possible at all. However, there are pre-judgements and presumptions that must ground any rationality, as the hermeneutic tradition would insist. Moreover, when non-empirical/experimental sources of knowing are involved, other methods of ascertaining truth are required. Dilthey's understanding of an interpretive discipline, and Weber's *verstehen*, empathetic understanding, do offer such viable methodologies, while hermeneutics and deconstruction have today demonstrated the limits of the old Enlightenment rationalism and have offered alternative analytic approaches.

In fact seminal breakthrough in science, in the paradigms shifts in our thought, are the result of intuitive leaps of the imagination as Thomas Kuhn has established. It is only later that staid scientific methods are used to verify the theories thus proposed. In making then, this distinction between the content and method of reasoned knowledge, we discover not just the limitations of the empirical-experimental methodology, but we once again uncover the 'faith' element that is more often than not decisive in the content being accepted.

For the prejudices and presumptions that hermeneutics and the sociology of knowledge emphasise are not subject to reason so much as to the interests and status, the 'unconscious ideologies' and fundamental options of those involved. For Hans-Georg Gadamer, the present situation of the interpreter is not something negative, but 'already constitutively involved in any process of understanding' (Linge, 1977: xiv). We can never be entirely rid of our prejudices, or more literally our 'pre-judgments', or in communication terminology our 'filters'. For 'the historicity of our
existence entails that prejudices, in the literal sense of the world, constitutes the initial directedness of our whole ability to experience (ibid: 9). Hence it follows there can be no pre-suppositionless interpretation, since there is no pre-judgementless experience! Consequently our forth sutra: where we position ourselves influences how we reason.

To conclude then:

There has been a marked decline in the prestige of reason in the twentieth century, due to a changing awareness of the conventionality of what passes for reason. But the present age does not suffer so much from a want of rationality as from a too arrow conception of what constitutes rationality. To some present-day critics, rationality has been purchased at the cost of human meaning and human understanding (Finch, 1987:224).

FAITH AS CONSTITUTIVE OF THE HUMAN

We need now to make a similar distinction with regard to faith. Too much attention has been focused on faith as content, that is, 'belief'. We need to examine the act of faith, and precisely what makes such belief possible. Why in fact do we accept the testimony of others? Once again the capacity to make this act of faith is certainly an a priori condition for the necessarily interdependent lives we live. Moreover, if we grant that we are not the ground of our own being, then this 'faith' must transcend and reach beyond the horizons of the empirical and all knowledge to be derived from inductive or deductive logic, then clearly in such an empirical-rationalist frame of reference, there is no room for faith, or as Paul Tillich says, for 'what ultimately concerns man' (Tillich, 1958).

Hence our fifth sutra: whether or not we believe depends on our self-understanding.

In this sense Panikkar rightly insists that faith becomes a 'consecutive element of human existence' (Panikkar, 1971: 223 – 254). And it is precisely as such, that we must test any content of faith. For a content of faith that does not fulfill the human dimension, i.e. to make the believer more human, cannot be 'god faith'. And so our sixth sutra: if to believe is human, then what we believe must make us more human not less! So too rational knowledge that is the result of a methodology that has not been sensitive to its inherent limitations, can never be 'rightly reasoned'. The test of
Dichotomy or Dialectic

God faith then would be whether the act of faith gives ascent to a content that is in fact humanizing. And this is precisely what an experiential self-reflective rationality can do. This is where and how we must seek the reasonableness of our faith.

So too with blind faith; here the act of faith becomes compulsive rather than free, and catches on a content that promises security and perhaps even grandiosity, rather than one that expresses trust and dependency. Hence sutra seven: *faith that is not humanizing, is to that extent ‘bad faith’*. But only when we accept that faith is a constitutive dimension of human life, do we have a framework for making such an investigation.

**LANGUAGE AS DISTINCTIVE OF THE HUMAN**

But if faith is a constitutive dimension of human existence, certainly we must say the same of reason. After all the classic definition of man that we have come to accept from Aristotle as a ‘rational animal’, does not quite integrate the elements of faith and reason together. It is a one-sided definition that stresses only a single dimension, which certainly might help to identify humans, as opposed to animals but it does very little to help to a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of what is distinctively human.

In fact the original Greek word used by Aristotle was ‘*logician*’ from ‘*logos*’, which in its more restricted sense means ‘word’. Hence, Panikkar insists, Aristotle’s definition would more correctly be translated as man is a ‘verbal animal’, or in other worlds it is language that becomes the distinctive and defining characteristic of human beings. This of course implies reason but much more than that as well. Anthropologically this makes sound sense. And it is precisely because language implies inter-communication and inter-relationship, that it expresses so well the inter-dependence of humans, for there is no such thing as a private language. It is only such a comprehensive understanding of the human, that would give us a framework in which faith and reason can be included, as distinct but complementary dimensions of the human.

Unfortunately however, reason is often used to investigate, challenge and even rubbish the content of faith, by applying a rational-empirical methodology. This is precisely to misunderstand the language of faith, which is not at the level of rational-empirical discourse. What is needed rather is an interrogation that derives
more from a hermeneutic investigation that contextualises content, and to interpret the content at the various levels of meaning that are often present therein, from the literal and the direct, to the symbolic and the metaphoric. For when it comes to the act of faith, an experimental methodology with its objective emphasis, is quite inadequate to such a subjective act. What we need is a more self-reflexive and experiential methodology, which while being subjective is neither arbitrary or irrational, but one which focuses on meaning and 'meaningfulness', rather than just on measuring quantities and determining cause and effect. Thus our eighth sutra: *only a self-reflexive, experiential methodology is meaningful to the discourse of faith; a rationalist, empirical one is alien to it.*

Besides inductive and deductive logic, there are many kinds of rationality as Max Weber has emphasized, and in fact has demonstrated in his *Sociology of Religion* (Weber, 1964). If with him we understand rationality as the application of reason or conceptual thought to the understanding or ordering of human life, then in so far as there can be many understandings and orderings of human life and society, there must correspondingly be many kinds of rationality as well. This is our ninth sutra. Instrumental and value rationality are just two classics examples of this, but they are other complex ways in which reason can impinge on human life as when it rationalises or 'orders' it on the basis of law, bureaucracy, tradition or charisma.

**DILEMMAS AND DIALECTICS**

The institutionalization of religion involves fundamental dilemmas that must be lived in tension since they cannot be resolved or wished away. For as Thomas O'Dea (1969) so insightfully point out: *religious experience needs most yet suffers most from institutionalization.* This is our tenth sutra. Precisely because such experience is so fragile and impermanent it needs institutions to preserve and communicate it across generations; and yet it is so ephemeral and ineffable that it cannot but be distorted and alienated by this very institutional process. In Max Weber's phrase, the 'routinisations of charisma', is both necessary and subverting. There is a correspondence here between the charisma-experience and routinisation-institutionalisation dilemma, and the faith and reason dialectic discussed earlier. Hence sutra eleven: 'experience' is necessary to vitalise institutions, and vice versa, 'institutions' are needed to preserve experience.

For even as new experiences precipitate new understandings,
they can alter our consciousness in radical ways, which then demands a renewed faith. For ‘on the one hand, there is an interpretation of the faith conditioned by one’s view of reality nurtured by one’s interpretation of revelation’ (Libano, 1982: 15). In other words, we have sutra twelve: while it is true that faith does not ‘create’ reality, it does make for a ‘definition of the situation’ that is real in its effects; and vice-versa, our experience of reality affects our faith-understanding.

Religious traditions that have stressed ‘orthodoxy’ (right belief) tend to focus more on the content of faith, whether this be the intellectual content of the belief or the moral one of the commitment. The first focuses on intellectual truth, the second on moral goodness. However, such orthodoxies tend to neglect the act of faith, which as a constitutive dimension of our life represents precisely an internal critique, an intrinsic guarantor of a content of faith, which ought to fulfill our deepest human desires and hopes.

For this a religious tradition must emphasise an ‘orthopraxis’ (right practice), where the focus is on the act of faith. For here the crucial emphasis is neither on belief in the true or the good, but rather a commitment to the true and the good to authentic human living, an existential engagement with, and a critical reflection on living. It is at this fundamental existential level that the reasonableness of faith must be sought. For it is at this level of living praxis, that truth must have relevance and value must be meaningful. So to with reason the critical stress must not be so much on a rationalist logic as on a sensitivity to the real boundaries of its discourse.

Indeed, this dialectic between faith and reason can be very fruitful. Reason must critique faith for its fidelity in humanizing our life, rather than for its belief-content; just as faith that must commit reason to make it serve this same humanizing enterprise, not merely by affirming its validity but also by constraining it within the domain of its own discourse. Hence the constant search for an ever deeper and more relevant ‘orthopraxis’ and ‘orthodoxy’, rather than an uncritical faith in a tradition, as also the continuing quest for a more adequate and pertinent ‘rationality’ beyond the rationalism of the Enlightenment. And so our thirteenth sutra: faith and reason must complement and critique each other in an ongoing humanizing dialectic.
Our hermeneutic suspicions can now become the points of departure for us to initiate and continue this dialogue across the apparent divide between faith and reason. But we must first be clear with regard to the horizons of understandings in which it takes place. Only then can there be a ‘fusion of horizons’ which can give the dialogue ‘the buoyancy, of a game, in which the players are absorbed,’ (Linge, 1977: xix) as the later Wittgenstein had observed (Wittgenstein, 1962). And it will happen as in ‘every conversation that through it something different has come to be’ (Linge, 1977: xii).

In making a distinction between the content and the act of faith, we realise that the content may vary across various cultural and religious traditions. However, the act of faith in so far as it is constitutively human, will necessarily have a great similarity across cultures and religions because at this level we begin to touch on the most fundamental aspects of the human. Here again it is our faith, both as act and content that can help us discern the human authenticity of these pre-judgements and presumptions.

This precisely becomes the basis for an enriching inter-religious dialogue, which can begin to bridge the divide between religious traditions, and in which one can recognize oneself in the other and vice versa! For unlike the content, which may vary across various cultural and religious traditions, because act of faith is constitutively human, it will necessarily have a common religious basis across varying cultures and traditions; thus it is the act of faith rather than its content that must become the primary basis of inter-religious dialogue. This is our fourteenth sutra.

Today religious revivalism justifies the unreasonable and even the irrational in the name of faith, while a rationalist secularism dismisses all religious beliefs as irrational and unscientific. This merely turns the dilemma between faith and reason into an irresolvable dichotomy not an enriching dialectic. And so our fifteenth and last sutra; an inclusive humanism must embrace both ‘meaningful faith’, as well as ‘sensitised reason’. The ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ must eventually yield to the ‘hermeneutics of faith’, as Paul Ricoeur would say (Ricoeur, 1973). For it is only thus that we will be able to bring a healing wholeness to the ‘broken totality’ of our modern world, in Iris Murdoch’s unforgettable phrase. This gives our sixteenth and last sutra: the dialectic between faith and reason.
must be pursued in the context of a hermeneutic circle as a dialogue or it will degenerate in a debate across an unbridgeable divide.

It was Jonathan Swift who said that we have enough religion to hate each other but not enough to love each other. To conclude this discussion it can be rephrased thus: we seem to have so much ‘dogmatic belief’ we become intolerant of each other, and not enough ‘human faith’ to appreciate and learn from each other!

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This paper will thus explore the vicissitudes of the term 'postmodern': its 'origins', its manifestations, its principal features as evident in its manifestations as also in theorizations on it, the contradictions and inconsistencies it presents, its relations with and reactions to philosophy prior to it and theoretical developments contemporary to it, the processes behind its construction as a descriptive term for social and ideological processes per se, and the political implications it entails, leading to the intended conclusions as to the academic construction of postmodernity and its possible raison d'être lying in its subversive extrapolation into political enablement.

As far as the origins of the term is concerned, 'postmodernism' seems to have been used as early as the 1870s by the British artist John Watkins Chapman to describe the then new post-Impressionist art which, in his opinion, went further than the French Impressionist painters like Claude Monet or Auguste Renoir in capturing the fleeting appearance of nature. One comes across a second use of the term in 1917, when the German writer Rudolph Pannwitz spoke of nihilistic amoral 'postmodern men' who had broken away from old established values of European civilization. The term was first used for literature when Federico de Onís coined the word 'postmodernismo' in his Antología de la poesía española e hispanoamericana (1882-1932), published in Madrid in 1934, and Dudley Fitts picked it up in his Anthology of Contemporary Latin-American Poetry in 1942, to indicate a reaction to the modern latent within modernism itself. In his abridgement of British historian Arnold Toynbee's first six volumes of A Study of History (1947), D. C. Somervell suggested that Toynbee's focus on history could be called 'post-Modern'. Toynbee took the term up, and in subsequent volumes of his work he put forward the notion of a 'post-Modern age', starting from 1875, following the Middle Ages (1075-1475) and the Modern Age (1475-1875). In 1957, the American cultural historian Bernard Rosenberg named as 'postmodern' contemporary social and cultural changes, which included the rise of technological domination and the development of a mass culture of universal 'sameness'. Soon, the term was used to describe a rather lamentable falling off from the great modernist movement by Irving Howe in 1959 ('Mass Society and Postmodern Fiction', Partisan Review, vol. 26, no. 3, Summer 1959, rept. in Howe, Decline of the New, New York, 1970, pp. 190-207.) and by Harry Levin in 1960 ('What was Modernism?', Massachusetts Review, vol. 1, no. 4, August
1960, rept. in Levin, Refractions, New York, 1966, pp. 271-95). It was finally in the 1960s, under the likes of Leslie Fiedler and Ihab Hassan, that a more favourable reviewing of the postmodern condition led to further postulations in the 70s and 80s by theorists like Habermas, Lyotard, Baudrillard and Jameson.

Moving on next to trace the chief features of what is termed as postmodern, one gets led into three major points. The first concerns an incredulity towards art as an authentic representational medium, the second is an incredulity towards global grand narratives of emancipation and speculation, and the third is about an incredulity towards the hierarchically perpetrated differences between the high and the low, the central and the marginal, the classic and the popular.

The first could have been very much due to the invention of photography, which took up from painting the task to reproduce reality, while art took a leap in a necessarily non-realistic direction, having lost both its claim to truthful representation and aesthetic aura. This led artists towards the beginning of the twentieth century to Cubism in France, the Dutch De Stijl group, the Weimar Bauhaus, Italian Futurism, Russian Constructivism, etc. Constructivism (1914-20), abandoned easel painting in favour of kinetic art and technical design applied to typography, architecture and industrial production, and led to Dadaism and Surrealism in the 1910s to 30s, where the very medium of representation was problematized. The Dadaist Marcel Duchamp's sensational exhibitions of readymade non-art objects like a bottle-rack (1914) and a porcelain urinal (1917) as art displaced the very idea of artistic originality and laid the foundations of later movements like Expressionism in the 1940s, and Minimalism, Conceptual art, and Andy Warhol's Pop-art in the 1960s. The last two of these movements showed how just about anything could be labelled 'art' if the consumerist aura of an ultimate commodity was appended to it. This is image consumerism, whereby the reproduced takes the place of reality and replaces it as hyper-reality, as what Baudrillard calls the 'simulacrum', where in four increasing stages of estrangement, the representation ceases to have any relation whatsoever with the original. A similar problematization of representation can be noticed in literature from early predecessors of postmodernism like Joyce and Beckett to current practitioners like Barth, Barthelme, Pynchon and Eco.

While the first incredulity is noticed mainly in art and literature,
the second is most evident in theory and architecture. The shocking experiences of the two world wars made the first world doubt one of its fundamental metanarratives—that of linear progress. Similarly, the Stalinistic turn in the Soviet bloc made one suspicious of global emancipatory agendas. The result was immediate in philosophy, which rechristened itself as ‘theory’ in the wake of changes in its basic assumptions. Epistemologically, the empirico-rational model gave way to a discontinuist model, borrowed to a great extent from Nietzsche\(^5\), whereby there is neither a certain origin, nor a definite telos, nor even a synchronic continuity in terms of traditional binders like causality and reason. Ontologically, this results, in a blending of Nietzsche and Heidegger, in a questioning of homogenizing categories like the self or subjective identity, totality, reality, history, and meaning, and corollarily in a privileging of surface over depth, of space over the determinism of time. At an ethical level, this means a doing away with a faith in a priori\(s\) and setting in its place the question of legitimation or, in a combination of the Nietzschean ‘will to power’ and Wittgensteinian ‘language games’, to probe how knowledges get legitimated as functions of power. This branches in contemporary theory in two opposite directions—that of a resistant radicalization of this legitimation problematic and that of a nihilistically relativistic ‘anything goes’. The incredulity towards emancipatory metanarratives takes a related turn in architecture. Modernist architecture of the likes of Le Corbusier was rooted in a belief in progress and aimed at building ‘living machines’ providing, in conformity to the dream of class liberation, functional homes for everybody. The emancipatory metanarrative having ceased to appeal, postmodernist architecture turns to either ornamentation and the retro mode of eclectically recalling earlier styles\(^6\), or kitsch and a celebration of popular forms.\(^7\) One should note how Jameson’s theorization of this intertextual referencing in terms of ‘parody’ and ‘pastiche’\(^8\) can be made applicable to art and literature too.

The third incredulity, that towards the privileged position of high art and central sociocultural categories vis-à-vis the popular and the marginal, is raised at the ethical level within the second incredulity itself. While the academic inclusion of popular culture may be dated back at least to Adorno\(^9\) and struggles to foreground marginal cultures even farther back, it is under the rubric of postmodernity that this gains a theoretical consensus. While on
the one hand, the resultant relativism does lead to an academic legitimation of often reactionary popular notions and the promotion of general apoliticism. On the other, it also makes room for resistant notions and marginal practices. No doubt, Laura Kipnis calls feminism the ‘political conscience of postmodernism’¹⁰, Bell Hooks shows how some assumptions of postmodernism have been especially helpful for struggles of black people,¹¹ and Linda Hutcheon shows how the political potential of postmodernism lies in the very duplicity that it presents in terms of the reactionary and radical sides to its pluralistic relativism.¹²

While I have tried to outline some of the features of postmodernism in the preceding pages, one should note that it may not be that easy to pin down the term, as definitional debates on the nature of the postmodern have been on for quite some time. This leads us to the next point concerning the contradictions the term ‘postmodern’ entails. While for Habermas¹³, it is too early to abandon the enlightenment project of modernity for a postmodern condition, for the likes of Lyotard, Baudrillard and Hassan, one has passed on to a state of postmodernity. Among the latter, Lyotard believes that postmodernism ‘is undoubtedly a part of the modern’¹⁴, while for the other two, it stands radically at divergence with the modern. Among these two, Hassan gives a binary table of differences between the modern and the postmodern, and terms ‘indeterminance’ (a portmanteau word comprising ‘indeterminacy’ and ‘immanence’) as the latter’s basic characteristic,¹⁵, but for Baudrillard, the change can be understood in no binary terms but in a fourfold development of the ‘simulacrum’, whereby representations become ‘hyperreal’.¹⁶ In analysing the contextual basis for postmodernism, Jameson argues that it is the ‘cultural logic of late capitalism’¹⁷, while for Callinicos, advanced capitalism or post-industrialism itself seems to have not yet happened,¹⁸ leading to an impossibility of postmodernism being the ‘cultural logic’ of the same. Talking about the political implications of postmodernism, Feyerabend says that political activism has become a thing of the past with postmodernism being marked by the extreme relativism of ‘anything goes’,¹⁹ but for Linda Hutcheon, the postmodern condition is particularly conducive for a political foregrounding of the marginalized.²⁰ What all this points towards is that far from being a seamless descriptive category of the current conditions of cultural production, postmodernism refers to a state of affairs which is fraught with several contradictions.
The contradictions that underlie postmodernism are not merely definitional. One can decode several glaring aporias in its theoretical postulations too. While it talks about a non-teleological approach, postmodernism often constructs itself as a telos, a development over modernism and the final stage of human culture. This is most evident in Fukuyama, when he says that capitalism and postmodernism having established their global supremacy, one has reached the veritable telos, the ‘end of history’.21 Similarly, while postmodernism talks about pluralities as opposed to binarism, it itself indulges in binaries like surface/depth, space/time, mass/high, and of course modern/postmodern, so much so that Ihab Hassan gives an elaborate binary table of the differences between modernism and postmodernism.22 At another level, one can notice how while talking about foregrounding local narratives, postmodernism constructs itself as a global phenomenon—much like a grand narrative it is apparently incredulous of—and in the face of constant globalization the local gets included in the postmodern pantheon only when it follows a global idiom. Thus a work of folk art or black music can be canonized only when it becomes a commodity in the global market; a piece of African or Indian literature gains status only when it is written in or strategically translated into English. An even greater problem arises with postmodern positions regarding identity politics. The postmodern denunciation of subjectivity and its foregrounding of minority cultures are mutually contradictory, showing that some of the postmodern energy is devoted to showcasing the marginalized rather than giving it a voice. There are some more concrete procedural contradictions within postmodern thought like its reliance, as in Lyotard23, on pre-subjective notions like the sublime, its invocation of pre-industrial forms of cultural production while engaging post-industrial technological tools for the same, etc. These contradictions suitably problematize the apparently non-problematic term ‘postmodern’ and make this paper probe into the construct that postmodernism is.

In this quagmire of mutually conflicting attempts to define the postmodern, and mutual contradictions within the definitions themselves, a raging suspicion arises as to whether postmodernity is a ‘real’ description of a state of affairs or an academically fabricated ‘condition’ aimed at legitimating the existence of humanities and the social sciences in the face of changing socio-economic and political orders, especially through a construction
of contemporary cultural modes as radically different from the modern ones. Much in the direction of what David Simpson proposes, one can argue the possibility that postmodernism has its genesis in the rather restricted sphere of academics and its articulation can only be found in the legitimation-seeking changing face of cultural pedagogy. When Lyotard says that the modernist grand récit of science having faced a certain 'incredulity', knowledge can gain legitimacy in the postmodern age only through the narrative mode of language games and 'paralogy', he could not have been nearer the nature of theoretical postulations that comprise postmodernity. Faced with rapidly changing class formations whereby democratization of knowledge demands the popular to be considered at par with the erstwhile high art, rapidly changing gender and race relations which make it impossible for the erstwhile marginalized to be simply excluded, and rapidly changing levels of everyday scientific and technological application resulting in changing patterns of institutional funding, humanities and the social sciences can legitimize their existence only through a paralogical narrative—that of the postmodern, which gives them new theoretical tools and perspectives, rendering them relevant in the face of redundancy. One can thus show how the jargon of postmodernism has its roots in this academic strategy at survival, this need of the 'liberal arts' to retain for themselves a stranglehold in the knowledge industry that they seem to be fast losing out on.

This construction of the postmodern condition can be studied in relation to three layers of influences and correspondences—a vertical one concerning the influence of Western philosophy on postmodern thought, a lateral one probing correspondences between poststructuralism and postmodernism, and a closed-circuit reading of the processes of auto-historicization.

A genealogy of the construction of postmodern thought shows that most of its fundamental features have had occurrences in philosophy prior to it and the postmodernist constructs about the same draw heavily from these predecessors. The first feature of postmodernism mentioned in this paper, that of its incredulity towards the certainty of representation in language, has been the prime concern of the poststructuralists and drawing straight from the question Wittgenstein raises, the likes of Barthes, Derrida and Blanchot problematize language and representation much in the way practitioners of postmodern art do. The second feature of postmodernism that this paper mentions—its incredulity towards


5. The Nietzsche connection as also that of Heidegger and Wittgenstein will be probed in greater detail later in the paper and so I desist from elaborating it here.


Postmodern Contradictions and Subversive Appropriation


27. See especially Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Principles of a New Valuation,*


31. See Jameson, op. cit.


Unlike in sciences and engineering, multidisciplinary studies in humanities and social sciences seem rare. In the present article I will like to share some of my experiences and observations in this concern with reference to a project of study I have been engaged in for some years.

While researching for a paper on testing spoken English some years ago, I had this curiosity about the past—how was spoken English taught and tested while the British were still here in India. And then one question led to another and I found myself besieged with a whole lot of them concerning the use of foreign languages in India as well as concerning the foreigners’ use of Indian languages in India. Some of these questions, for example, are given below:

Other than the British, who were the first users of English in India?
What language did the British use with the Indians and others in India?
Who were the first teachers of English in India?
Why did the Indians need to learn English in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries?
What teaching and testing methods and materials were used by the first teachers and learners of English in India?

How similar or dissimilar was the English used by Indians to that used by the British in India, especially in pronunciation, syntax and pragmatics?

I had many other questions of a similar kind.

I had little doubt even then that the answers to many of these questions could not be found in only one place, or even in only

one area of history or linguistics. Some six years later I realize that much of this may be beyond the capacity of one researcher past his middle age and without much support. I also had doubts about the relevance of such a study - if such an enquiry is in deed worth the time and money it would take. There were other doubts and hesitations.

English is not the only language which is and which has in the past been used as a language of communication by and with non-native speakers. Many languages of the world have had this distinction. Still surviving among the once colonizing languages are Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, French, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Oriya, Persian, Pali, Portuguese, Prakrit, Sanskrit, and Spanish. But within the recorded history of mankind no other language has spread among as many people in as many domains and as fast as English has done in India. This unique socio-linguistic spread, unprecedented in the history of civilization, calls for a systematic appraisal of reasons.

There also is a practical reason for such an investigation. History is not just a bag of used artifacts. It is a repository of community’s experiments and experiences in learning. As Maley (2001) says, there are at least four reasons for us to consider about history:

- When we look at our past, it becomes clear that many of the current ideas which we think of as being so innovative have, in fact, been around for a long time.
- A second reason for cultivating a sense of history is that it gives us perspective. There is a sense in which we can not know where we are going without an appreciation of where we have been.
- ... much of our current effort is expended on innovation: more new ideas, more new materials, more new research. It could be that much of this frenzied effort is misdirected and even counter-productive.
- Finally, the past offers us a rich source for generating new ideas. We can use it as a stimulus for our own present thinking.

In this project of research I have tried doing just as Maley, cited above, says – making an appraisal of where we have been vis-a-vis use and teaching of English and some other foreign languages in India, and the use of Indian languages by foreigners.

There was hardly an Indian who used any English in the early seventeenth century. A hundred years later there was hardly a leading business house in India where someone did not know any
English at all. A hundred years later the number of Indians who knew and could use English for business stood in hundreds of thousands. And a further hundred years later, i.e., at the beginning of the twentieth century English became the language of millions of Indians from different parts of the subcontinent congregating to demand freedom. Perhaps the only language common to these freedom-fighters was English.

Such a growth in about three hundred years seems to have been the result of a strong motivation to learn, and of some significant exposure to the language to be learnt. In the beginning the Indians obviously had limited exposure to English, from their limited contact with the British who spoke hardly any English with the Indians. But as the commerce between the Indians and the British grew the extent of the use of English grew too, thanks largely to the motivation it gave the learners. English soon became a passport to profit and position.

Earlier the British had done business in the Portuguese language and official work with the Indians in the Arabic and/or Persian. But by the end of the eighteenth century the use of English was clearly on the rise. Many merchants, middlemen, agents and moonshies of the British knew by heart many wordlists pertaining to their specific merchandise. So English for Specific Purposes (ESP) does not seem to be all that new. Special word lists had started appearing, and there were Indians working as Dubash in many big cities and port towns of India then. When John Fryer landed in Masulipatnam in 1668, he was surprised to have been greeted in English by an Indian at the port (Fryer, 1698). These were the self-taught Indians who used English to enhance their opportunities and earnings. This was what I feel like calling the age of self-teaching, and it continued until the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

Raja Ram Mohun Roy can perhaps be said to be one of the best and most successful learners of English during this age. He started learning English after he was twenty-three and already proficient in Bengali, Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. He was then the Diwan of Mr Digby, the Collector of Bhagalpur, and so he was exposed to some English in the spoken form and plenty of it in print and writing as he had access to all the newspapers and the correspondence of Digby. From these alone in about five years Roy learnt enough English as we may see in his forceful representation to Lord Amherst (see Mahmood, 1895: 29), the then Governor General of Fort William at Calcutta.
been Vennelacunty Soob Row who rose from a clerk to a minor English official at Guntur in 1799 to the Chief Marathi Translator of the High Court in Madras Presidency. Like Raja Rammohun Roy he had no formal education in English either, though he pleaded and worked for it fervently too. But most sociolinguistic histories of English in India seem to be totally unaware of such an important aspect of this history.

How is the state of knowledge in the field of History of India? It appears to be no better. Many historians have written about the British interaction with people in India. Some have even wrongly reported that they generally got very enthusiastic welcome in India. But none seems to have bothered even to mention what language they spoke with whom, and how they generally managed their affairs in India without a link language. Writing the history of Jahangir, for instance, Prasad (1962: 230) observes,

\[\ldots\] He (i.e. Sir Thomas Roe) was received with great favour and courtesy by the emperor who often talked to him about things European. He forthwith addressed himself to the real object of his mission - the negotiation of a commercial treaty between England and Hindostan…

This does not appear to be a correct account of the way Sir Thomas was received. By his own account Roe had to wait for months, and then he had to resist very humiliating conditions suggested to him for a meeting with the emperor. Finally he also had to bribe the relatives of Noorjahan, the empress. For details see Roe’s own account of his embassy to Jahangir edited by Foster (1899). Not that all historical accounts of such momentous events are as incorrect as this, but few record details of interests other than that of politics and chronology. For instance, I am yet to find in a book of history any account of the language or languages used by Jahangir for conversation with Roe.

Roe had his interpreter, and Jahangir had a multilingual court too. Speakers of at least 28 different languages were there in his court. He had Jesuits who could speak many European and Indian languages. Jahangir himself spoke Hindi/Urdu, Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. In the months that Roe had to wait for a meeting with him, Jahangir had also found out that Roe knew some Turkish too. And so finally when they met, Jahangir and Roe had some conversation in Turkish before they were joined by interpreters and others.

The point I wish to make is the following. Neither of the two
disciplines, history or linguistics, as we know it now, appears to be capable of giving a complete and correct answer to the questions I raised at the beginning of this article. An interdisciplinary approach, therefore, must be promoted to get these answers.

There are two other problems in an investigation of this kind.

First, a good deal of source material to reconstruct this history is permanently lost; and, secondly, the remainder is scattered all over the world.

Let us first form an idea of what is lost. When the marauding forces of Muhammad Ghori of Ghazanavi set fire to the massive collection of manuscripts at the Buddhist monastery of Nalanada in the present day Bihar at about the beginning of the last millennium, they also burnt the vast treasures of knowledge leading to this and many other subjects. Similarly the great floods of Calcutta in 1731 destroyed much of the archives at Fort William. These archives were again burnt in 1756 by Nawab Sirajuddowlah of Murshidabad when he captured Fort William (Wheeler in Dutta, 1959).

Of the copies of these papers that had been shipped to London during the 250 years of the East India Company’s contact with India, hundreds of tons were burnt in 1858 by the keepers of the records at the India House in London themselves. Birdwood (1891: 71fn) says:

“When the (East India) Company’s business was taken over by the Imperial parliament in 1858, one of the first acts of the new masters of the India House in Leadenhall Street was to make a great sweep out of the old records that from 1726 had been preserved there with scrupulous solicitude. They swept 800 tons of these records out to the Messers Spicer’s ... to be boiled, bleached and bashed into low class paper pulp...

And, finally, during the four months of Lord Mountbatten’s viceroyalty in India, a section of his office burnt and authorized the burning all over India of a good deal of papers for weeks before the transfer of power in 1947 (Collins & Lapierre, 1975: 150-52).

These are, of course, recorded instances of destruction. One can only speculate about how much in and about India has been destroyed without a record. In the absence of these records much of the past remains at the best only a speculation rather than history.

Another problem for an investigation of this kind lies in the way source materials are scattered. Many travellers, traders and invaders...
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took away not only silk, jewellery, furniture and gold from India, they also took works of arts, crafts and books away. Here is, for instance, a record of what Hiuen-Tsiang took away from India at the end of his travels in the spring of 645 AD:

1. One hundred and fifty particles of flesh sariras of the tathagat.
2. One golden statue of Buddha (according to the pattern of) the shadow left in the Dragon cave of the Pragbodhi Mountain in the kingdom of Magadha; also a glittering pedestal 3 ft 3 in. high...

The list goes on like that and finally says that 'He also deposited in this temple the books of the Great Vehicle, which he had brought from the West, including 224 Sutras, 192 Sastras, 15 Works of the Sthavira school, ... altogether 520 fasciculi, comprising 657 distinct volumes, carried upon twenty horses' (Li, 1911/1914).

So if that was the kind of cargo Hiuen-Tsiang could carry at a time when transportation was only as safe and fast as a horse's temper and the speed of the cart, one can easily imagine the kind of cargo later travellers did possibly cart away from India. Many British officials carried away bundles of valuable documents as private papers. Some of these are now available with the British Library and with other public collections. But many others are still beyond the reach of the public at large.

They are scattered in many well-known, not-so-well-known and unknown public and private collections virtually all over the world, and many of even the well-known collections have policies that do not encourage easy access of copying of the material. Much of the pre-nineteenth century material in the British Library collection, for instance, can be seen only in their reading room in London. So is it with the Bodleian Library of the University of Oxford, The Library of Congress, The Library of the University of Heidelberg, and many others. Copying in many libraries in Europe is awfully expensive.

Missionaries from many European countries have also carted a great deal of materials away to a number of libraries in east and central Europe.

Materials are also scattered all over India. Many of the erstwhile native princes had their own libraries, archives and record rooms for proper keeping of records and books. But after the abolition of their estates these personal libraries lost their only means of survival and are languishing for funds. A very good case in the point is the erstwhile Raj Library at Darbhanga. Now this library is a part of the L.N. Mithila University library at Darbhanga in Bihar and is, like much else in Bihar, in a truly pathetic shape.
The library began as a personal library of the Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh Bahadur of Darbhanga. The Maharaja had had the advantage of a liberal British education and there is no aspect of the Indian nationalist life to which he did not contribute. His cash donations saw the founding of the Indian Society for the Cultivation of Science, Indian National Congress, Indian Industrial Congress, universities at many places in India, and equally generous contributions for temples and religious charitable trusts (Jha, 1972).

His own seat of power, Darbhanga, a small sleepy town with a population then of about 50,000 people became a seat of many national events. It also became a seat of a medical college, and, of a good library. But after independence the Raj Library found itself left with about 76,000 volumes of books, and a long collection of all issues of some journals in the arts, sciences, business, medicine, law and technology, over 500 rare scripts and other documents but no money, not even for maintenance and salary payments. Hence, in 1976, after the creation of a general university at Darbhanga, the Raj Library, as it is known locally, was gifted to the university.

But even that does not seem to have any effect for better upon the library either. There is even now no budget for the modernization and maintenance of the library. Its old catalogues are lost, new and modern catalogues are yet to come in, most furniture from reading halls have been removed; shelves survive, but no routine cleaning or dusting, fumigation, etc. is ever done. There is no light, fan, water or any other convenience for the reader, and as a result, or perhaps, as the cause, there is no reader there either. The whole thing is decaying and desolate. The only good thing that has happened has been for the few employees of the library who are on the university's pay rolls, and receive their salaries, many for no work, oftener.

Like this many a princely family of the erstwhile British India had their own archives, their own record rooms and collections of books and documents. They are scattered all over the country and abroad, and each of this mass may be a valuable source for the reconstruction of this history, for the absence of each of this the writing of this history may remain incomplete. We might do well to begin at least thinking of networking all of these vast resources through a central catalogue managed by a national-level body such as the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla. That will be the true beginning of the convergence of divergence, and of the so
In my earlier study I had discussed the definition or formulation of feminism and also raised the difficulty in formulating a definite concept of the term. The paper had also raised queries such as whether feminist theories are useful in understanding women's writing, whether women writers are aware of theories of feminism, whether the women writers write with the conscious purpose of changing the existence of women or do women writers just depict the social and cultural reality. It was also pointed out that in spite of feminist theories in India, feminism is still a long way from achieving any status as most people are of the view that feminism has no roots in India. But it was accentuated that one cannot ignore simple issues of women's problems such as oppression, suppression, submissiveness, socialization, conditioning, patriarchy and indoctrination. It may be that the perception may change due to the conditions one faces and the degree of what one experiences in different parts of the country and also the different levels. In the light of this the present paper is an attempt to review briefly the role of Kannada women writers and their attempt to create a space for Indian women.

After 1950s Kannada literature witnessed a great change due to the adoption of modern literary trends. The literature that developed was a literature of protest and rebellion. This trend was witnessed mainly in poetry where poets such as V.G. Bhat and Gopalkrishna Adiga began to discuss in their poetry the truth and validity of existence. This theme of protest, rebellion, existential quest and disillusionment was witnessed in the fiction of 50s and 60s too. Illustrations of this can be found in the novels of Vyasaraya Ballal and Niranjana. This representation paved the way for the
The emergence of one of the greatest novels in Kannada literature depicting the idea of human bondage and liberation, namely, Shivarama Karanth’s *Chomanna Dudi*. This novel highlighted for the first time the fundamental problems of faith, untouchability and moral values in Karnataka. Later in 1960s and 1970s one witnessed the growth of writers such as U.R. Ananthamurthy, Shouri Ramanujam and Purnachandra Tejaswi. Among the popular novels of these writers, the one that gained immense popularity was *Samshara*. The novel dealt with the values of the Brahmin class, the disintegration of traditional values and existential struggle of the individuals. It also for the first time brought into limelight the problem of women by casting the role of Chandri and her anguish at the death of her husband. Another novelette that revealed the power and hold of religion and faith on women was *Ghattashraddha*.

The major women writers who have emerged after Independence in Kannada are Triveni, M. K. Indira, Anupama Niranjana, Vaidehi, Veena Shanteshwar, Sara Aboobaker, and others. Among these the writer who has made a big mark in Kannada literature is Anasuya Shankar known by her pen name, Triveni (1928-1963). Triveni has to her credit twenty novels and three collections of short stories. As Tharu and Laitha mention: ‘the central forces of Triveni’s novels are women. She explores, with considerable insight, the psychological problems faced by middle-class women at different stages in life, and is particularly interested in societies in which women’s social status, their educational backgrounds, and their professional involvements are rapidly changing. Triveni sets the individual against a background of the social forces that determine her experience and investigates the origins, especially within the structure of the family, of women’s tensions and behavior’ (1993: 285). Many Kannada critics think that she was not a feminist but as her novels portrayed a woman’s psyche, they were thought to be intolerant towards men.

Each one of Triveni’s novels such as *Eradu Kanasu, Bekkina Kannu, Sharapanjara, Belli Modda* depicted the mental anguish and trauma that women faced. It would be just cause to narrate some of the plots so that one can grasp the anxiety and predicament that the women in these novels display. *Belli Moda* discusses the plight of the protagonist who happens to be the daughter of a rich coffee plantation owner. Her marriage is arranged to a doctor, who has returned to India after completion of his studies abroad. After the marriage is arranged and finalized the protagonist’s mother has a
late pregnancy and has a male child. Knowing that the male child will inherit the property the husband of the protagonist begins to oppress her and the trauma she faces sandwiched between her loyalty to the husband and her parents is finely sketched. *Sharapanjara* is another powerful novel that discusses the affliction of mental illness and the treatment meted out to women. The protagonist on the birth of her child develops mental depression and this leads to a state of madness—hysteria. Doctors advise the family that this is a common ailment when women give birth and therefore there is no cause for worry. They also give assurance that it is completely curable and all that she needs is plenty of attention and care. Therefore, Kaveri is admitted in a psychiatric ward and with great care and treatment she becomes normal. However, her return home is disappointing for everyone at home cannot get over the fact that she had being mad. Her mother-in-law silently condemns her and does not allow her access to the child, thinking she may harm it. Her husband no longer feels any affection or love for her and her neighbours treat her warily. In such a situation the mental trauma is too much for Kaveri and she succumbs to a relapse.

Her short story taken up for discussion in the present paper is 'Koneya Nirdhara' (Final Decision) which portrays the life of Lalitha Devi who has separated from her husband Venkatesh Murthy as he had ‘doubted her virtue and become suspicious of her. He remarries while Lalitha Devi educates herself and becomes a principal in a school. Murthy later comes back to her and requests her to live with him. Lalitha at the point realizes that he wants her back not because of love or attachment to her but for the sake of convenience and comfort. The reader also learns that Murthy’s wife is dead and therefore he needs a woman to take care of his house. As the protagonist sums up:

So this man had not come to me wishing to make amends for his mistake! There was neither pity nor love in his request. Of course, he couldn’t remarry at his age. All he needed was a woman to run the house. A woman to mother the orphaned children, a woman to be his wife (1993: 290).

She decides that she can live her own life and turns down his request.

M. K. Indira’s (1917) first novel was *Tungabhadra*, which presented the problems of rural women realistically. *Gejje Pooje* is
a novel that dealt with the life of devadasis and the difficulty that women had in bringing up their children, especially the girl child. Phaniyamma, her award-winning novel, is based on the life of her great aunt. The story deals with the life of Phaniyamma who becomes a child widow within months of her marriage due to the death of her child husband. The story documents not only how Phaniyamma is forced to embody tradition but also how to question it. The final passage into the life of a widow is at the onset of menarche where in she is forced to shave her head to make herself unattractive, be restricted to one meal a day and relentlessly serve members of her family. She is conditioned to live a frugal, austere and celibate life. Many feminists do not agree with the novel as they feel it depicts women in traditional roles. The strong point of the narrative is that the protagonist does re-view various social and cultural constructions in the course of her life. Phaniyamma’s story calls into question the tragic circumstances where the female space is constructed and also where the woman’s body due to the gender construction is bounded, restricted and marginalized in the name of tradition. The narrative foregrounds the concepts of sexuality and culture, and also reveals that the site of tradition’s continuity is through the woman’s body. Phaniyamma critiques the space of the male in her perplexed mind even though she herself is shackled to the traditional norms of society. Her critique of tradition emerges at two points once when she is invited to help with a difficult childbirth of a lower caste woman and later when she has to give verdict regarding the passage of a young girl into widowhood. In the first instance the words of the women in the family reveal the deep internalization of values:

Back at the house, each one turned to look at the other. Phaniyamma’s brother’s daughter-in-law burst out, “Just before she died, Malakka wanted to eat some fish. It’s just like that. I really wonder why such a thought entered Ancheyatte’s mind. She’s gone on pilgrimages, she’s done the rishipanchami regularly—why is she going into that untouchable area now? What were they doing these four days that woman’s been in labor, those sons of foolish widows? Eating mud? And now they’ve come to call her—at this odd hour of the night! And she—ready to go when they call. There’s little to choose between them ‘if you ask me—they that ask them that go! And now tomorrow she’ll have to undertake the panchganya ceremony to purify herself.”
Reviewing and Re-Viewing

This was the first time that the people in the house were displeased with Ancheyatte, or Post Mother, which is what they called Phaniyamma. They lowered the wick of the lantern, and as they went to sleep each one had something to say to the other (1989: 80).

Phaniyamma reasons against her action by reminding herself that her grandmother often used to say that doing one's duty at a single birth is as good as making a pilgrimage to Kashi. And here she had saved two lives, which could only mean that it should be even more meritorious (1989: 81). Phaniyamma, thus tried to reason within herself and comfort her tormented soul.

Eventually she raises her voice against these oppressive traditions to interrogate on behalf of another young widow. Evocatively, she questions:

Why should I say anything? I never even saw my husband's face and this poor girl with her man for two years. Our times were different. Everything's changed now. Those who live in the city and are old enough to have grandchildren don't even feel the need to shave their heads. Does all the impurity rest there? What punishment do you want for a child who has just opened her eyes (1989:109)?

Anupama Niranjana (1934-1991) was trained in medicine besides being a novelist and short story writer. She fought against male bias and gender discrimination and was attracted by leftist ideals. Her first major work is Madhavi published in 1976. Her other important works are Eie (Thread, 1980), and Gosha (A Rallying Cry, 1985). Her autobiography Nenapu Sihi Kahi (Bitter Sweet Memories) was brought out in 1985. In 1986 she published Manini a collection of articles on the situation of women. She won the Karnataka Sahitya Akademi award in 1978. She also wrote medical treatises to help women to take care of their lives such as Dampatiya Deepika, Jayimagi, Vadhuvige Kivimatu. Her short story “Ondu Ghatana Mattu Antara” (An Incident - and After) discusses the issue of rape and the aftermath.

Vaidehi (Jankai Srinivas Murthy, 1945) is among the younger generation of writers. She has three collections of short stories Mara Gida Balli, 1979, Antarangade Putagalu, 1984, Gola, 1986 and a novel, Asprushayaru (Untouchables, 1982). Her contention is that she explores human condition. As she states, 'However much we understand, we are thrown into a world of mystery – that is nature. And that is the nature of the individual also.... I feel that the domineering old faiths are withering away and my inner voice
begins to be audible, as if from a distance ... what a long journey it has been to hear one's inner voice! I may have traveled long to get to the source of this voice ... but the quest has been as good as the quest for the knowledge of the whole universe' (cited in Tharu and Lalitha, 1993).

Veena Shanteshwar has published Mullugalu, 1968; Koneya Dari, 1972; Kavalu, 1976 and Hasivu, 1984. Her novels include Gandasaruu, 1975, Soshane, Bendaya, Iyadi (Exploitation, Revolt and so on, 1984) and Adrishta, 1990. She is a recipient of the Karnataka Sahitya Academy Award. The protagonists of her stories were earlier rebels against established society and conventional morality, but in the later ones they compromise with life. Veena Shanteshwar feels that this has happened because she has understood that ‘however independent and aggressive and powerful an Indian woman may be, she has still to go a long way before she is liberated in the real sense’. She further states that, ‘At present a liberated woman is an outcast in our society, a miserable creature, with no sympathy or support anywhere ... perhaps this is a transitional period. She is yet to emerge as the truly New Woman who can defy everything that binds her and yet to be happy. It’s a slow, painful, trying and uphill task’ (cited in Tharu and Lalitha, 1993: 526).

The story that is taken up for discussion is ‘Avala Svantantrya’ (Her Independence). In this story the protagonist has at one time being an ardent follower of feminism and has discussed and debated during her younger days, on the issues of feminism. Her marriage and increasing family responsibility, however, change her lifestyle and her ideas of women’s upliftment and emancipation. The burden of family tightens around her, and she realizes that her ideas of women’s liberation, etc are just not possible to follow practically. She has to commute everyday for her job in another town and she is forced to leave her children with her father-in-law not knowing whether the children are well cared for. Added to this anxiety is the fact that her husband, Shankar works in a different town and he gets to come home only on weekends. Even when he comes home, he expects his wife to give him the relaxation he needs forgetting that she too may need a lending hand. If this is her situation at home, for many women who know her outside she is thought to be an independent woman who can take her stand on women’s issues and discuss such aspects. As the lady who insists that she comes to deliver a speech for the International Women’s Day states:
How strange to hear you speak this way, Vimala. I can’t believe you are the same person who used to talk about working for women’s upliftment, women’s emancipation not so long ago! Surely you don’t think of our work like some others do—as propaganda or a passing fashion. You know that women, especially middle-class women like you and me, face thousands of problems .... In all of Hubli or Dharwad, there’s no better person than you to talk about these things (1994: 528).

Here one is made aware of the paradox of the situation. At the point in the story the lady who invites Vimala is only aware of Vimala’s passion for women’s empowerment and liberation but she is not privy to Vimala’s plight at home. It is the reader who can understand her threshold existence, sandwiched by the Indian woman’s loyalty to family and her urge for some freedom in her life. As the protagonist muses:

... Perhaps Shankar could help. Also the baby needed to go to the doctor for check-up. She wondered how the child had spent the day with his grandfather... Also, Neelu needed cloth for her uniform....This could be done in the evening. Maybe in the morning Shankar could go to the depot and get some firewood (1994: 531).

Even though at no point in the story Vimala’s feelings of childbirth and children are brought forth, yet the reader can subtly understand the husband’s callous behaviour towards his wife for pleasure, which may have been the cause of three children. She is also made aware that her husband unburdened of all family responsibility may be living a very different life for she has no means of checking how he lives there:

She thought of her father-in-law’s remarks, ‘Lives alone ... far away’ Belgaum, the lodge who knows how he lives, what he does...The insurance policy, the monsoon, the fuel, the baby’s fever, father-in-law’s stomach ache, cooking office, the local train.... She sank down, momentarily overwhelmed.

This sense of being overwhelmed concludes by the following lines: ‘... Hubli’s town hall was filled with women that Sunday evening. They listened to Shrimati Vimala Shankar with curiosity and with admiration.’ (1994: 532)

Sara Aboobaker’s Chandragiri Theeradalli (Breaking Ties) exposes the orthodoxy, cruelty and helplessness faced by Muslim women. The story is based on the life of three women protagonists, Amina
The novel, to an extent, is autobiographical as it depicts Sara's own life of oppression in a Muslim family suffering due to gender and religion. Muhammed Khan is caught in the vortex of poverty and not having male progeny. He lives on Amina's earnings while Nadira and Jamila grow up without any education. Later, Nadira gets married to Rashid, who is not only educated and urbane but also wishes to educate his wife. Khan, however wrecks the happy marriage by his cruel and brutal behaviour towards Rashid for refusing him a loan. Khan in a fit of anger brings away Nadira and the grandson. On the other side, Rashid's mother unable to live without her grandson brings back the child from Khan's house. The child thus grows up without the mother and Nadira's life is wrecked without her husband and child. Khan adds to her misery by trying to get her to marry an rich, old man. Nadira resists but by tricking Rashid to say talaq thrice, Nadira's life is sealed. Even though Nadira and Rashid wish to live together the clergy put their foot down. The story questions the authenticity of religion, relationships between men and women, unquestioning authority of men and religion.

The queries that arise at this juncture are why am I looking at this literature, what idea of feminism do I notice, are these women's novels or feminist novels, do these writers subscribe to feminism, can western feminism be part of this study, can I expose these novels/stories to the ideas of body and sexuality, etc. The main reason for reading fiction of these linguistic regions is my awareness of not only the two languages but also some knowledge of the tradition and culture of the two regions. My belief in initiating such a study is that it may raise awareness of the latent female traditions and highlight the idea of women's space, aspirations, anguish and paradoxes. I am not yet sure if these writings do portray any feminism but they do question women's roles in society. The fiction speaks against tradition and cultural norms. Of course one could argue that these are just women's novels and not feminist ones. My argument at the moment is based on the idea that feminism does not mean a political stance. It can be just the simple task of illuminating women's attitude towards life encounters and experiences. It is basically the inscription of feminist subject positions in women's writing, which determine its radicalness and not just the author's biological sex, or depiction of typical experience. Feminism is in other words speaking and the outlining the strategies of formulation that thrust women's lives forward. In fact, if one considers Feminism has not emanated from the
women who are victimized or oppressed. The victims, in most cases compromise and reconcile to their fate. Suffering is not necessarily a fixed and universal experience that can be measured by a single parameter. It is related to situations, needs and aspirations. However, there must be some historical and political parameter for the use of the term so that political priorities can be established and different forms and degrees of suffering can be given most attention. It was in the light of this perception that the present study was undertaken. Difference that I could locate in the western and Indian perspectives is the concept of dualism or binariness. Western ideas deal with concepts such as culture/nature, body/mind, and emotion and reason. In the Indian scenario such concepts cannot be distinguished. Further the distinction that arise from such a concept such as reproduction and production and others are only nullified in Indian feminist thought. The key concepts I think I would need to dwell on is the idea of power, body and difference. Power is important, as it need not be just economic and could arise due to many other aspects. The emphasis on the body is important for it allows one to think 'how discourses and practices, create ideologically appropriate subjects but also how these practices construct certain sorts of body with particular kinds of power and capacity' (Destabilizing Theory). The differences of gender as well as caste, class, position, etc would also reveal their own implications. Much of contemporary literary criticism analyses the female body through categories of tradition, modernization, patriarchy and dissemination. In Avadesh Kumar Singh’s view the Indian feminists do not show radical departure as the western feminists do. He states:

Yet they [Indian feminists] do not show radical departure of the kind of the western feminism which proposed insulation of the world of women from that of the men before entering the post-feminist era. The reason for this may be that the family still exists in India despite many blows to it and if it exists though in its changed form, the credit for it should go to women. The radical individualism of the west has found favour with the Indian mind that by nature or whole universe (2001: 127).

Now the other query is why do these women not subscribe to feminism? This is a difficult question to answer and the only easy thing that I could do is to accept the words of Jasbir Jain where in she states:

Most women writers who protest against being labeled as feminist are
doing so for a variety of reasons, some of which can be studied as follows: the reader-critic reads them selectively and glosses over their subtexts; the media and the market view them as woman-to-woman writers, i.e. women who write about women and address a female readership; a lot of research and reviewing is confined to this slot and stereotypes them; they are identified with victim-literatures and this limits the perception of their experiment or aesthetics; feminism is still not viewed as an individual's right to grow, but as militant rebellion bent upon indiscriminately destroying all social and moral codes or the 'new' woman is seen as a promiscuous one... (2001: 85).

Besides these one must be aware of the number of other problems that originate in placing these texts within the discourse of feminism. Some of these are caste, class, economic dependence, fragmentation, the sway of superstition, and the essential nature of religions. Moreover, identity can be partly a construct or part of internal self. When it is external it could be formed by the elements of education, marriage, family morality, linguistic constructs, custom, and law, while individual consciousness could distinguish a self as an individual.

In conclusion, I would like to state that women writers are generally aware of the problems and restrictions that women face in the social set-up of India. Of course, the degree and the manner of restrictions differ from region to region, caste to caste, and class to class. Consciously or unconsciously the women writer takes up the task of portraying women's anguish either matter-of-factly or in a subversive manner. Whatever the manner, Indian women writers unlike the western women writers do not adopt modern or postmodern techniques of narrative. They adopt a methodology wherein they highlight and foreground the principal character's thoughts, actions as well as their relationships with others in society. It is essential to identify that women's cultural identity in the Indian setting is built upon her interaction with various members of the family. Moreover, it is inherently recognized that Indian women, whatever their background are socialized and conditioned to accept the superior attitude of men, especially their husbands. Their obedience and faithfulness to their children is another aspect that is part of their psyche, which also indicates that to provide a good family background to children they may, in many cases, resist the temptation of breaking away from their husbands, thereby leading to a more positive attitude of
conforming. Within this conformity, however, the women realize their inner selves and in many cases attempt to actualize their potential.

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Victims of Development in the Struggle for Survival
A Case of Fisherpeoples’ Movement in India

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Fishermen like to talk about their esprit de corps, and it is true that there is a warm camaraderie, a sense of an elite brotherhood. Fishermen are like combat veterans who feel understood only by their comrades who have survived the same battles. But fishing is a constant struggle for economic survival. Each man works for shares of the catch. Anyone who can’t keep up, whether because of injury or age is harassed out of the fishery. There are few fishermen over fifty. And because fishermen are technically self-employed and not salary earners, governments have been slow to recognise claims to social benefits for those who are out of work.

Cod: A Biography of Fish That Changed the World
by Mark Kurlansky

“The notion of development as solution be turned on its head because it is development that has caused modern poverty.... To eradicate poverty we must seek not the promotion but the abolition of the development project as we know it today.”

Through the export of prawns and other high quality marine products India earns quite a lot of foreign exchange. This is because these products realise high prizes in the international market and there are no restrictions for them to enter the markets of the industrialised countries. In many cases however the modernisation/westernisation of the fisheries that is often referred to as the ‘Blue Revolution’ damaged the ecology of the coastal areas and threatens the livelihood of the small-scale fishermen and their families. This paper tries to analyse the fisherpeoples’ movement in India as a response to the various ‘developmental’ policies/programmes

undertaken by the Government since independence in the marine fishery sector.

THE SETTING

India has a coastline of about 6,000 km. The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) spreads over 20,20,000 square km, equivalent to 66 per cent of land area. Traditional fishing communities, who not only live on the geographical fringes but they are economically marginalised and also occupy the lower strata in the hierarchical caste system, depend on fishing in the seawaters for their survival all along the coast. The population of marine fisher people numbered 21,15,612 according to the All India Census of Marine Fishermen, Craft and Gear, 1980, spread over 2,132 fishing villages in ten coastal states and union territories. Kerala has the largest population of marine fishermen population accounting for the 30 per cent of the total marine fishermen population; Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh occupy second and third positions with 19 per cent and 15 per cent respectively. The other states in descending order are, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Orissa, Karnataka, West Bengal, Goa, Diu and Daman and Pondicherry. These traditional fisherpeople depend basically on variety of traditional crafts such as Catamaran, Plank Built Boats, Dug-out Canoes, etc., and a wide range of traditional gears such as Drift/Gill Nets, Boat and Shore Seine, Fixed Bag Nets, Hook and Lines, Rampans, Traps, Scoop Nets etc. These wide varieties of craft and gear are evolved through generations of trial and error methods and indicate regional variations in coastal ecosystems and specific nature of the fish resources to be caught and their behavioural aspects like breeding habits, swimming habits, swimming speed and depth.

Improving socio-economic conditions of the fisherpeople or welfare of the fisherpeople has been continued to be one of the stated objectives of the planned 'development' of marine fisheries development since independence period; the real objectives have been increased production, exports and foreign export generation, which resulted in the modernisation/westernisation of fishery technology, institutionalisation of fishery related knowledge and creation of large network of bureaucracy for the general administration of the sector. In practical terms stated objectives continued to be just elaborated in preambles of policy/programme documents and real objectives have been met with increased
production, exports and foreign exchange; for example, marine fish production increased from 7.52 lakh tonnes in 1950-51 to 52.90 lakh tonnes in 1998-99, and quantity exported increased from 0.22 lakh tonnes in 1950-51 to 3.12 lakh tonnes in 1998-99, and export value realised increased from Rupees 3.30 crores to Rupees 4330 crores in 1998-99. Thus real beneficiaries of the five decades of ‘planned development’ in the marine fisheries sector are not the traditional fisherpeople, but a class of new investors, mechanised boat owners, exporters within the country and already overfed consumers of the developed countries. The traditional fisherpeople continued to be one of the marginalised groups in the society. The developmental policies/programmes undertaken, one after the other—beginning with the early phases of modernisation/westernisation, which in actual terms manifested in trawlisation, perse-senisation to the present hightechisation under the New Deep Sea Fishing Policy (NDFP), introduced as a part of New Economic Policies (NEP) in 1991—continue to uproot the fisherpeople from their occupation and from their places of living.

It is in this kind of scenario that the victims of development in the marine fisheries, the traditional fisherpeople, have been left with no option to organise themselves in the form of a peoples’ movement for not only survival but also for the protection of fishery resources in the coastal waters. Beginning with the purely spontaneous expression of outrage, the fisherpeoples’ struggles have come a long way to become a well-organised movement.

INITIAL PROTESTS

Most of the earliest protests, which began in early seventies, were spontaneous and sporadic in nature, in the sense that they were not planned or organised and there was no link in the protests from one area to another. These protests were first started in Tamil Nadu and Goa and later spread to Kerala and other parts of the coast. As early as 1971, conflicts arose between Catamaran fishermen (traditional) and the trawlers (mechanised) in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu. Though the state government issued orders declaring the three miles from the coastal waters as trawler free zone to protect artisanal fishermen, it was never enforced and the trawlers continued to operate very close to the shore. The fishermen expressed their anger through burning the houses of trawler owners. The district
administration reacted by placing buoys at sea to demarcate zones for catamarans and trawlers. Even a patrol boat was employed, but nothing worked. Then the fishermen started to seize the catches of trawlers on landing in the villages. Though the police arrested the people involved and kept them in jail, the protests continued. As there was no harbour near by to protect their catches, the trawlers stopped their operations and left the place.13

The first major clash between catamaran fishermen and trawlers occurred in Madras in May 1976, when the trawlers ignoring the five fathoms law, continued to encroach more and more into the shallow waters, destroying the nets of the fishermen and the spawning grounds. The state administration, then under the Presidential rule, did not take any proper action. Though the fishermen stopped the illegal operations trawlers, seized them and handed them over to the police, the police without any penalty let them off. As a result, clashes erupted at the sea between the two groups. Boats were burnt, nets were destroyed and people were killed. By the end of 1978, sixteen fishermen lost their lives and 110 boats were destroyed. In these agitations, women also took part.14 These agitations later spread to Quilon and Cochin areas of Kerala coast and also other parts of the Indian coast. The response of the Governments all the states was coercive, and situation was viewed as a law and order problem without any concern for the fisherpeoples' rights and the damages caused to the coastal ecosystems.

All these agitations were spontaneous and violent, reflecting their anguish over the injustice meted out to them. They were the logical outbursts of the evolving socio-economic and technological forces rooted in the very development mode of modernisation/westernisation adopted in the marine fishery sector. The protest agitations continued to take place despite the suppression by the state apparatus. These spontaneous actions gradually awakened the fisherpeople, coupled with action of the voluntary groups in different regions, there emerged fisherpeople associations across the coastal states of India, which ultimately resulted in the formation of regional unions at the state level as well as a federative forum combining all of them to coordinate the activities.

TOWARDS AN ORGANISED AGITATION

In June 1978, fisherpeoples' representatives of different states met
in Madras, with the initiation of Matanhy Saldanha and Xavier Pinto of the Goan fisherpeople organisation. The groups discussed in detail various issues at stake in the coastal areas of Goa, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. At the end, they arrived at the conclusion that the situation in the sea had reached the level of a national catastrophe. The traditional sector, which was contributing a major share of the marine fishery catches, was literally threatened with extinction, if proper measures were not initiated immediately.

There was threat not only to the fisherpeople but also to the resources itself. In the same month the National Forum for Catamaran and Country Boat Fishermen Rights and Marine Wealth (popularly known in the fisheries circles as the National Forum), a representative body of thirteen major regional fisherpeople unions/associations was formed under the chairmanship of Matanhy Saldanha. The National Forum launched a nation-wide campaign in July 1978 with the following demands:\textsuperscript{15}

1. To reserve 20 km of coastal waters for the traditional sector (non-mechanised).
2. To put a coast guard on the seacoast.
3. To fix the minimum mesh size.
4. To restrict the trawlers and purse seines.
5. Not to issue licenses for mechanised net making industry.
6. Prevent water pollution by the factories.
7. Prevent pollution of the sea from tankers and ships.
8. Initiate fishermen development banks.

The demands of the National Forum should be understood in the context of crisis in the marine fisheries sector that emerged with the advent of modernisation/westernisation process. The large-scale mechanisation process since the third five-year plan period\textsuperscript{16} (i.e. from 1961 onwards) in the marine fisheries created acute competition between the unequal partners—labour intensive non-mechanised sector and capital intensive mechanised sector—resulting in reduced oceanic space and reduced landings of fish on the part of traditional sector, thus causing several hardships to the traditional fisherpeople.

The demand for the reservation up to 20 km distance in the coast for the traditional sector was meant to avoid conflict between the two sectors—traditional and mechanised. The demand for installation of coast guard was to monitor the zonal violations by the mechanised sector, once they were demarcated. The third
and fourth envisaged regulation of the mechanised sector, as unregulated operations of the mechanised sector lead to causing damages to the coastal ecology and the fish resources. The fixation of minimum mesh size is essential to prevent unnecessary catch of juvenile fish. The mechanised net making, which made dent into the marine fisheries sector in the wake of modernisation process, displaced hundreds of fisherwomen all along the coast from their hand-woven cotton net making occupations. This was another blow to the traditional fisherpeople affecting their livelihood sources.

With the onset of industrialisation and urbanisation process a large number of industries have come up in several coastal areas of the country. The untreated industrial sewage and municipal sewage entered coastal waters causing pollution and death to fish resources. What the National Forum demanded was preservation of the health of the seawaters and its resources, which determine the livelihood of the fisherpeople. There is no proper credit mechanism devised by the government for the fisherpeople. While for the mechanised sector there existed various financing agencies to cater to their credit needs. The National Forum's demand for the establishment of fishermen development banks to cater to specific credit needs of the traditional fisherpeople was to liberate fisherpeople from the clutches of private moneylenders. Lastly, these demands can only be possible through comprehensive legislative measures,¹⁷ as visualised by the National Forum.

To impress upon these problems the National Forum convened a meeting of Members of Parliament at Delhi on 26 July 1978, to explain the grievances of the fisherpeople. Eighteen M.Ps attended the meeting, prominent among them were include Jyothirmai Basu, Ahalya Rangnekar and Mrinal Gore. All these members agreed to support the cause of the traditional fisherpeople. The next day, the representatives of the National Forum tried to represent the matter with the then Prime Minister Morarji Desai. On 28 July, the representative of the Forum demonstrated with a day long Dharna before the residence of the Minister of Agriculture, Surjit Singh Barnala and submitted a memorandum of demands.¹⁸ This action brought the plight of fisherpeople to the attention of the national media and the public. It also boosted the morale of the National Forum by strengthening it organisationally. Then onwards the National Forum came into operation in full swing. In November 1978, different state unions coordinated by the Forum initiated fasts and other forms of agitations to pressurise the government on their
demands. In Goa, fisherpeople went on relay hunger strike for 367 days. In Kerala, agitation was taken up as relay fast in Trivandrum, Quilon and Alleppey. Dhram, picketing, rallies and other forms of peaceful agitations were organised in Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Karnataka. 19

Meanwhile, the National Forum undertook the issues in concrete and worked out a draft bill on National Marine Fishing Regulation. The Forum also succeeded in presenting it in the Parliament, in the form of a private bill. However, the bill was withdrawn on the request and promise by the Prime Minister, Morarji Desai, to introduce an official bill along the same lines in the Parliament. The A.K. Majumdar (Secretary of Fisheries, Government of Maharashtra) Committee was appointed by the Central Government in the wake of 1976 clashes, discussed earlier, to examine the question of delimiting the areas of fishing for different types of boats, submitted its report in December 1978. It also worked out and enclosed a model marine fishing regulation bill on the lines of the National Forum's draft bill. 20 Though the Janata Party Government could take up the issue it could not enact the law. It fell into deep political crisis ultimately resulting in the collapse of the government. The Congress Party Government, which came to power in 1980, instead of making a common national legislation, had referred the bill to the respective maritime states for enactments. With this development, the focus of the National Forum had to shift from the Centre to the State level activities. As nine coastal states were involved in the question of legislation, the National Forum had to seek allies in all the states and strengthen the struggle. Efforts by the National Forum yielded good result, the regional unions, which were already under the National Forum, were strengthened and new unions were formed in the states where there were no union activities. After a prolonged struggles, Goa and Kerala passed bills in 1980. Since then, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Orissa and Tamil Nadu have also enacted marine fishing regulations. But many of these enactments, have been challenged in the courts of law.

Apart from demanding fishing regulation, the National Forum also put forward concrete ideas on different issues relating to marine fisheries and campaigned on them. They include, appropriate forms of fishing technology -labour intensive, eco-friendly and income distributive. Other activities include protests organised from time to time against the use of 'development aid' and commercial investments in large scale fisheries 'development'
by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO, the World Bank and the Parries Group of Investors, which have been detrimental
to the interests of artisanal fishermen. The National Forum
launched an international campaign against the export of seafood
from the country, which was one of the causes of reckless over
fishing in shallow waters by trawlers and the consequent anarchic
growth of the fishery industry. One successful intervention by
the National Forum in this regard was a combined campaign with
the India Committee of the Netherlands—a solidarity organisation
supporting progressive movements and organisation in India—
against the purchase of seventeen trawlers worth Rs. 120 million
from the Netherlands in 1982. The National Forum voiced the
protest to the Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation through
a number of letters. In Netherlands, the India Committee, spoke
against the trawler deliveries by the Dutch Government. Their
move gained considerable public support and finally the Dutch
Government had refused to finance trawlers for India without a
preceding the 'experimental fishing programme' on the seafood
resources in Indian deep-sea zone.

CONSOLIDATION MOVES

The early 1980s were the years of intensive organisational
consolidation, both at the national and the regional levels. As
stated earlier, the shift of focus in the activities of the National
Forum from the national to the regional, to organise the
fisherpeople for the enactment of marine fishing regulation in
different states, resulted in the consolidation of regional allies. The
number of general body meetings organised during the early
eighties strengthened national regional tie-ups and provided
systematic direction to the movement. The general body meeting
of the National Forum held in September 1983 at Bangalore was
considered unique in this respect. It was in this meeting that the
National Forum decided to change its name to the National
Fishermen's Forum (NFF). The general body also finalised a new
constitution. Matanhy Saldanha who held the position of the
national Chairman from the inception handed over charge to the
newly elected Chairman, Thomas Kochery. The general body
unanimously decided to call for an All-India Convention to finalise
the national manifesto and to strengthen the organisation.
Accordingly, the NFF organised a National Convention on 17 and
18 January 1984 at Calicut in Kerala. Over hundred delegates representing seven states participated in the Convention. The Convention discussed the manifesto and decided to register the body under the Trade Union Act, for this purpose once again name of the organisation was changed as the National Fishworkers Federation (NFF). The state reports presented by Goa, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and West Bengal were also discussed in the Convention. In 1985, the NFF decided on new points of agitation. They include:

1. To take immediate measures for fisher management, as there is a further decrease of fish wealth in all states.
2. To save life and sea wealth by correctly imposing the marine law.
3. To stop trawler operations in 10 km area from the sea coast, to stop night trawling, to curtail the number of fishing boats and to forbid trawling in June, July and August months every year.
4. To curtail the star-hotels mushrooming on the beaches and to stop eviction of fisherpeople from the seacoast on account of tourism ‘development’.
5. To prohibit factories from throwing out untreated materials which pollute the seawaters.
6. To stop perse seine operations in 22 km radius on the seacoast. To press these demands, all the states organised a demands day on 15 June 1985. The states of Kerala, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, West Bengal and Karnataka responded positively to the NFF’s call and organised demonstrations.

Two more nationwide agitations of the NFF can be considered as important moves in the 1980s. They were March 1987 agitation and the Kanyakumari March of 1989. The March 1987 agitation was well planned, almost eight months in advance in July 1986. The NFF chalked out fifteen demands for the agitation. Increase in the number of demands signifies the increased crisis in the marine fishery sector and the concomitant victimisation process of the fisherpeople in the country. The new demands added include stopping joint ventures in deep sea and promoting deep sea fishing in public and cooperative sector with the active participation of the fisherpeople; legislation and implementation of labour laws in the processing plants and mechanised boats; exemption of excise duties on imported Out Board Engines (OBE) and supply of quality kerosene at reasonable prices; reorientation of fisheries research in cognisance with traditional skills; controlling the export of marine products; introduction of old age pension...
schemes; and providing title deeds to fisherpeople of their house sites where they reside.  

One important aspect of the March 1987 agitation was gaining support from other trade unions. It was with this aid that the NFF participated in the National Convention of Militant Trade Unions, organised by Datta Samant and George Fernandez in early 1987. The Convention unanimously passed NFF sponsored resolution on the demands of the fisherpeople. Thus, the NFF succeeded in its attempts to gain support from other trade unions. Several trade unions – Kamgar Aghadi, Hind Mazdoor Kisan Panchayat, All India Centre of Indian Trade Unions, Bharatiya Shramik Sabha, Indian Federation of Trade Unions, Indian Confederation of Labour, Artisans and Craftsmen Association supported and participated in nationwide agitation on 16 and 17 March 1987. On these days, fasts, rallies and public meetings were organised in Delhi, Raipur, Calcutta, Patna, Berhampur, Puri, Madras, Trivandrum, Panjim, Bangalore, Pune and Bombay. Simultaneously, the fisherpeople staged mass fasts, picketing, dharnas, rallies and public meeting in coastal villages and towns all over India, in which inland-fisherpeople also joined the agitation all over the country.

The Kanyakumari March, a month long campaign and agitation held from 2 April to 1 May 1989 with the slogan of, 'protect waters, protect life', was a unique and historic event in the fisherpeoples' movement in India. Like earlier nation wide agitation, the Kanyakumari March was also pre-planned and well organised. Planned in the general body meeting held in December 1987, the historic March secured an extensive support from not only different non-party trade unions of the country but also environmental groups, non-governmental organisation, women's groups, teachers, students etc. Basic aims of the Kanyakumari March were:

1. Widening peoples' awareness of the vital link between water and life and providing encouragement to the peoples' initiatives and struggles to protect waters.
2. Forming a network of all those who were concerned about the issues.
3. Pressurising the government to evolve a sustainable water utilisation policy, democratising and strengthening the water management agencies.
4. Assessing the damage already done and identifying problem areas, which need to be studied in detail and evolve practices
for rejuvenating, water resources.

5. Revival and propagation of traditional water conservation practices and regeneration of fishing technologies.\textsuperscript{28}

A close look at these issues reveal that each issue has got multiple aspects within it and each issue is interlinked with the other. The formulation of a campaign and agitational programme based on these multi-dimensional aspects shows the deep and comprehensive understanding of the NFF in its sphere of activities.

The east-coast march began on 2 April 1989 from a small fishing village called Purandar Basudebpur on the bank of Hagol Creek in Sunderbans area of 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal and was led by Thomas Kochery. In the west coast it began on 3 April from a place called Utan in Bombay and was led by Matanhy Saldanha. Both the teams covered important towns and villages of the coast on their way to Kanyakumari. In each spot the teams campaigned the basic aims of the March through addressing public meetings, rallies, dharnas and cultural programmes. Besides campaigning on the issues mentioned earlier, each team attempted to find out and comprehend specific problems of the areas through the people wherever the teams visited. These attempts resulted in formulating a single comprehensive statement covering seven common issues at the end of the Kanyakumari March. Both teams reached Kanyakumari on 1 May 1989 and culminated in a huge rally of more than 15,000 people, of which nearly three quarters were women. Despite the attempts of State machinery to disrupt the rally, including an incident of firing by the police, the rally was successfully concluded with a public meeting addressed by the Chief Speaker Justice Krishna Ayyar and the leaders of the NFF and its allies. In order to further strengthen the movement, the NFF reviewed its activities and several decisions were taken at the end of the March. The important decisions taken by the NFF were:\textsuperscript{29}

1. To continue to strengthen the unionisation process, mainly in Tamil Nadu, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh.
2. To further support the artisanal sector in the struggle against the trawlers and other over-efficient technologies.
3. To deepen the consciousness of the artisanal fishworkers on the ecological aspects of the sector.
4. To support local struggles against pollution of the waters where this has become a major threat to fish life.
5. To further study the intensive aquaculture programme sponsored by the government leading to the privatisation of
the common property lands and make alternative proposals.

6. To extend campaign for the protection and regeneration of the mangroves wherever possible.

7. To support the women fishworkers in their right to work and access to fish primarily in Andhra Pradesh where they are not organised.

8. To support the people of Koodankulam and Kaiga in their struggle against forthcoming nuclear plants.

9. To further the debate at state level regarding new plans and ventures in industrial fisheries.

JOINT STRUGGLE AGAINST THE JOINT VENTURES

The opening of the Indian EEZ to the foreign joint venture operations under the New Deep Sea Fishing Policy (NDFP) of 1991—part and parcel of the Government’s New Economic Policies (NEP), triggered the beginning of a new phase in the fisher peoples’ movement in the country. It united hitherto antagonistic sections of traditional fisher folk and the mechanised boat owners. The entry of foreign joint ventures with high-tech deep sea vessels and 100 per cent export orientation sent shock waves to the different sectors of marine fisheries in the country.

These groups on several grounds are opposed to the NDFP. From the point of view of resources, the density of fish resources in the deep sea is low. There is an absence of precise biological knowledge about some of the species and there is also inadequate information about the location and seasonal behaviour of the fish resources. It is also observed that these constraints could impinge on the commercial viability of an expanded deep-sea fleet. These aspects were dealt with clearly in the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) study, which suggests that improving the efficiency of the existing deep-sea fleet of 180 boats based in Visakhapatnam rather than recommending the expansion of the vessel numbers. On this basis the NFF questioned the very rational of the NDFP. The chairman of the NFF said: ‘It is assumed that there is a lot of exploitable fish in the deep-sea, in view of the 200 mile extended EEZ. This is a fallacy. The FAO fishery survey clearly indicated that 75 per cent of the total exploitable marine fish resources are within the 50 metre depths from the shore. If that be so, why should the bureaucrats and the scientists insist that we exploit the deep-sea?’
operation of joint venture Deep Sea Vessels (DSV), he said: 'This is another fraud on the Nation. Most of the DSVs are carrying on their fishing activity in India, hardly 15-20 km away from the shore. Even the foreign fishing vessels, which were recently nabbed poaching in the Indian territorial waters, were found fishing hardly 20 km off our coastline.'

From the point of view of employment, the very nature of technology employed in these vessels rules out employment opportunities. Trained workmen from abroad fill the few jobs required. Further, the processing, grading and packing of catches that are carried out on board the vessels, rules out the employment of shore based labour. Neither will there be any marketing jobs as the markets are abroad. From the point of view of consumers, since the deep-sea fishing units are 100 per cent oriented, fish supply will be channelled away from Indian people to foreign consumers.

The NFF is critical about excess export orientation of marine fisheries. It is of the view that, 'export of fish in any form, should be banned, as it is criminal to export food, at the expense of millions in the country who are malnourished and deprived. Even fishmeal should be stopped from being exported as the same could be utilised as baby food for the malnourished children of our country, as well for the ever increasing food needs of our poultry and live stock farms'.

Lastly, the Government has given a number of incentives to these joint ventures — waiver of customs duty on imported fishing vessels, 100 per cent exemption from customs and excise duty on capital
goods, spares and raw materials imported and purchased in the domestic market—including providing diesel at the highly subsidised rate of Rs 2/- per litre against then prevailing domestic price about Rs 8/- per litre. The only condition imposed on them is that 12 per cent of their earnings have to be remitted to the government. Even this cannot be implemented in actual terms as the trade of fish resources at the high seas is bereft of accurate information to the government, i.e. the size and nature of the catch and the value. Thus from the point of view of economy, it is clear that there would not be any economic gains, but resource plundering would take place.

On the whole, the NFF considered that the NDFP was the result of a collaborative effort of bureaucrats, scientists, private big business and multinational corporations (MNCs). The NFF chairman pointed out: ‘The lure for sophisticated machines at the cost of the traditional fishing technologies and poor masses has been the prime motive for our bureaucrats and scientists to advocate deep-sea fishing. It is our conviction that our policy makers are under the heavy influence of private Indian companies involved in joint ventures in fishing industry collaborating with MNCs.’

It is in the light of these arguments that the NFF is opposed to the NDFP and demanded a total recasting of the policy. According to the NFF, deep-sea fishing policy should ensure the expansion of the ambit of operations of the small fishermen to deeper waters. Enterprising fishermen should be encouraged and supported to move into offshore waters. The policy should ensure liberalised central subsidies and credit for small fishermen who venture into the seas. It should also lead to increased supply of fish for domestic consumption. The government should confer legal rights and reserve exclusive fishing zones for small-scale artisan fishermen at least up to the contiguous zone, i.e. up to 24 nautical miles. Annual fishery management plans with estimated of Total Allowable Catch (TAC), introduction of quota system, fishing holidays and surveillance should form part of resource management.

Articulating the demands on these lines, after the declaration of the NDFP, the NFF initiated an extensive campaign, to seek support from not only the traditional fisher folk but also the other affected sectors of the marine fisheries, mechanised sector, processing industry marketers, etc. to build a massive joint struggle against the NDFP. The NFF has succeeded in its attempts to mobilise
support from the above-mentioned sections as well as other organisations and groups. The practical agitation against the joint ventures began in early 1994. The NFF in collaboration with the Small Mechanised Boat Owners Association (SMBOA), the Association of Wholesale Fish Merchants (AWFM) and thirty-one other organisations and groups, such as trade unions, non-governmental organisations, environmental groups, women’s groups, and student groups organised an All India Bandh on 4 February 1994. Not a single boat, non-mechanised or mechanised went to sea in any of the coastal areas on the bandh day. The major wholesale and retail fish markets also remained closed in all the coastal areas of the country.

On 3 March 1994, a demonstration was staged before the Parliament in New Delhi and representatives of the NFF and other Associations met the Minister for Food Processing to press their demands and later they submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister. As there was no response from the government, the NFF decided to intensify the struggle.

The representatives of the NFF, mechanised owners and operators, fish traders—domestic and exporters, and processing industry met twice in May-June 1994, at Ernakulam and Kochi in Kerala, discussed the future course of action against the joint ventures and formed a joint action committee called the National Fisheries Action Committee Against Joint Ventures (NFACAJV) (hereafter referred as to NFAC—National Fisheries Action Committee), and called for the cancellation of all licenses issued to the joint ventures in deep-sea fishing and stoppage of the issue of further license.

The NFAC observed ‘Black Day’ on 20 July 1994. On 23 November 1994, the entire marine fishery sector except joint venture companies went on a two-day strike on the call of the NFAC. Nineteen leading central trade unions, environmental groups, women’s organisation, non-governmental organisation and other concerned groups all over the country actively supported the strike. The NFAC unit of Bombay organised a boat rally involving 1,000 vessels, which sailed from Bombay’s Sassoon Dock and Ferry Wharf to the Governors residence in ‘Headland’ and submitted a memorandum explaining their demands. The Goan branch of NFAC organised a trawler rally in which 200 trawlers participated and gheraaoed (blocked) foreign fishing vessels. In Orissa, 10,000 fisher people staged demonstrations in Paradeep. Similar kinds of actions were undertaken in other important coastal cities of India.

This two-day strike made an impact on the national media,
general public and the government. The newspapers and magazines covered the two-day strike writing supportive news items, editorials and special write-ups. About 300 Members of Parliament wrote to the Prime Minister asking him to withdraw all the licences issued for joint ventures and chartered vessels. The State Governments of Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal wrote to the Minister for Food Processing Industries asking him to withdraw licenses. The Parliament Members belonging to all political parties raised the issue in Parliament on 12 December 1994. The Government initially responded negatively describing the strike as 'uncalled for' and rejecting the demands. Later on 15 December the Government took a decision to freeze its policy on deep-sea fishing for the time being, not to issue fresh licences and appoint a committee to review the NDFP. Accordingly, the Central Government appointed a review committee on 7 February 1995 under the Chairmanship of P. Murari, the retired secretary of Ministry of Food Processing Industries.

The NFAC opposed the one-sided constitution of the Review Committee by the Government. The Minister of Food Processing Industries had acknowledged in Parliament that the Committee was appointed in response to the All-India Fisheries Strike by the NFAC but no member of the NFAC was taken in the Review Committee. The Chairmanship given to P. Murari was also disputed by the NFAC on the grounds that he was mainly responsible for introducing the NDFP. Thus, once again the NFAC started the agitation on 2 May 1995 onwards, beginning with indefinite hunger strike by the National Convener of NFAC, Thomas Kochery, at Porbander, Gujarat, mass Satyagraha in Delhi and other agitations in different coastal states. The question was raised in the Parliament and the Members of the Parliament also staged a walkout on 4 May 1995. On 8 May the Members of the Parliament insisted the Minister for Food Processing Industries to have a dialogue with the NFAC to settle the matter. The Lok Sabha Speaker also urged the Minister to do so. On the same day, when the indefinite fast of the NFAC National Convener had entered the seventh day, the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries called the representatives of the NFAC for a dialogue on the outstanding issues involved in the NDFP and requested them to withdraw the hunger strike/agitation. Accordingly, the NFAC suspended the agitation on 9 May 1995 and held discussion with the Minister in the presence of 13 Members of the Parliament on 19 May 1995.
There was a general agreement at the meeting on withdrawing licenses issued for Bull Trawling, reconstitution of the review committee and changing the terms of reference.

Accordingly, the 16-member review committee on the NDFP was enlarged to a total of 41 members by admitting 12 Members of Parliament representing different political parties and representatives of the fisher people, including Thomas Kochery, Convener of the NFAC. The NFAC also won the support inside the committee and all the five sub-committees after intense discussions, ultimately recommended cancellation of the joint ventures and reversal of the NDFP. Despite this, the final decision by the review committee had been postponed 16 times in 1995. As a result of these delaying tactics of the government, the NFAC once again initiated direct agitation. An all-India fisheries strike was held on 18 January 1996. Demonstrations in support of the NFAC's cause were held on the same day not only in coastal areas but also in cities like Delhi, Bangalore and Hyderabad. Finally on 8 February 1996, the Review Committee (Murari Committee) submitted the report to the government unequivocally opposing the NDFP.

Of the total 21 recommendations suggested by the Murari Committee, the important ones are as follows:

- All licences issued to joint venture, test, and lease vessels should be cancelled immediately.
- No renewal or extension of such licenses.
- No deep-sea vessels (exceeding 20 metre in length) are allowed to fish in coastal waters.
- An exclusive zone be created for traditional fisher folk and mechanised boats below 20 metres in length—up to 50 nautical miles from the shore, or a depth zone of less than 150 meters.
- Financial help for technological upgradation of traditional and small-mechanised sectors.
- Reconstitution of marine fisheries under single ministry and creation of a Fishery Authority of India for better policy formulation and implementation.
- Creation of infrastructural facilities for preventing wastage of fishery resources.
- Effective steps to tackle the menace of pollutants/effluents/sewage let out by industries, which affects marine life adversely.
- Regulation of fleet size for different fishing grounds in accordance of the principle of Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY).
The review committee had given six months time to the Government for the implementation of all the recommendations. But the Government has not taken any decision on the recommendation even after the passing of the stipulated period of six months. The Government held the view that it cannot cancel the licenses already issued due to certain legal intricacies involved in them. However, as the stipulated five-year period has lapsed for majority of joint venture licenses in 1998, the NDFP has ceased to be effective, practically. The agitation of the fisher people is continuing in one or the other form for the total implementation of the review committee’s recommendations, which would not only resolve the long drawn problems but also pave the ways for orderly administration and lessening of the conflicts in the marine fishery sector of India. Despite this, the present ruling party, which played a supportive role during fisher peoples’ struggle against the NDFP, has not taken any action on the complete implementation of the Murari Committee Report.

CONCLUSION

It clearly emerges from the above discussion that the fisherpeoples’ responses to the Government’s policies in the marine fisheries are critical and constructive. Beginning with the sporadic outrages of violence against the mechanised sector in the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu, Goa and Kerala in the early seventies to the emergence of countrywide organised movement of fisherpeople by the late seventies, adverse impacts of the governmental policies/programmes in the marine fisheries sector have created a nationwide movement. In other words, the origin and growth of fisherpeoples’ movement in the country is directly related to the dynamics of ‘development’ policymaking and policy implementation carried out since the third five-year plan. It is also evident that the demands of the fisherpeople are fair and democratic. What they have been demanding is protection of their sources of livelihood. The adverse impacts of state policies on coastal ecosystems and resources have only deprived the fisherpeople of their livelihood and have turned them into victims of development.

As observed in the paper, the fisherpeoples’ movement, unlike the mechanised sector, is very much concerned with the health of the coastal waters. Their slogans like, ‘protect waters and protect
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lives’, their demands on marine pollution problems and regulation of fishing effort by the mechanised sector, clearly reveal their environmental concerns for the long-term sustenance of the fish resources. All these emanate from the fisherpeoples’ deep understanding of coastal ecosystems and resources. Thus, in the course of the movement, the NFF categorically made efforts to educate coastal communities on the crisis in marine fisheries and the need to overcome the crisis with community initiation.

It is also apparent that the NFF, which has been fighting against the mechanised sector, since its inception, took initiative to conclude a tactical alliance with the small scale mechanised sector, the wholesale marketers, exporters and processing industry in 1990s in the wake of the disastrous attempts of the NDFP to convert the EEZ waters and resources into a more ‘open access regime’, for the benefit of big business and the Multi National Corporations (MNC). The sustained struggle of the NFAC against the NDFP paralysed the whole marine fisheries sector of the country and compelled the Government to invite the NFAC for a dialogue and subsequently stop the issuing of new licences to joint ventures and appoint a review committee to look into the matters of deep sea fishing. The Murari Committee’s suggestion to the Government to reconsider the NDFP can be regarded as a victory for the NFAC. The fisherpeoples’ movement in the country is a remarkable movement as it could succeed in reverting the NDFP, the lone case of reversal since the inception of liberalisation process in India.

NOTES


2. These figures exclude Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands where the survey was conducted. See _Marine Fisheries Information Service_, (CMFRI), No. 30, April 1981, p. 3

3. Ibid.


6. See various fishery sections of various plan documents, published by Publications Division, Government of India. For analysis of Marine Fisher


While the nutritional value of fish for the people of the country was stated as one of the objectives of the fisheries policies, in practice, the results are quite the contrary as neither fish nor foreign exchange benefits reach the people. The domestic per capita consumption is static at 3.5 kg a year since several decades, as against a world average of 12 kg. See, *World Resources: A Guide to the Global Environment, 1996-97*, Oxford university Press, New York, 1996, pp. 310-311.

Trawling is a predominant modern/western method of fishing is conducted by dragging heavy weights and beams on the seabed in order to squeeze the demersal (bottom dwelling) species such as prawns, out of the seabed. This process of dragging has a ploughing effect on the seabed and destroys the fish eggs and larvae that breed in its soft sediments. The constant repetition of dragging in the same area finally kills even the benethic life, seaweeds, and other sea vegetation. It also results in raising the sediments causing turbidity of water, which together with the noise, drives away and deflect the new fish from the deeper waters, which want to enter the coast for breeding and spawning, and thus prevents the replenishment of the fish population. See, “Traditional Fisherman and Appropriate Technology” (mimeo, anonymous), Fisheries Research Cell Documentation, Programme for Community Organisation (PCO), Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala), and John Kurian, ‘Ruining the Commons and Responses of the Commoners: Coastal Overfishing and Fishermen’s Action in Kerala State, India’, *Discussion Paper No. 23, UNRISD*, Geneva, May 1991.

Contra-distinctly to trawling, perse seining is a technique used for pelagic or shoaling type (upper dwelling) species. The technique of perse seining is derived from string purse/bag, when the strings are pulled the bag is closed. Unlike traditional shore seine or beach seines operation which wait for the fish following their natural and biological circle to come to the shore where it is encircled and caught, the perse-seine go after the shoals, out to the sea, hunting them out and capturing them thus stopping their movement towards the shore. See ibid.

Under the NDFP huge vessels known as Factory Vessels or Deep Sea Vessels capable of fishing continuously for 3 months or more and undertake all kinds of works such as processing and packing on board automatically. For the detailed analysis on the NDFP see, M. Channa Basavaiah, ‘Conflicts in India’s Exclusive Economic Zone: A Case of New Deep Sea Fishing Policy’ in Sudheer Jacob George, *Inter-Intra State Conflicts in South Asia*, South Asian Publishers, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 190-202.
12. The world ‘catamaran’ originated from Tamil world ‘Kattu Maran’ which implies ‘logs tiled together’. Generally, all varieties of beach landing crafts are referred as catamarans. In India it is specifically referred to a craft made of logs lashed together either in a boat or raft form.


14. Ibid., p. 149.

15. Ibid., pp. 150-51.

16. During the first and second five year plan periods from 1951 to 1961 the state’s marine fishery policies were positive in nature, in the sense that they aimed at slow modernisation. They attempted at developing intermediate range of technology to mechanise traditional boats thus raise the productive capabilities of the existing methods in a gradual manner, taking into confidence the accumulated skills of traditional fisherpeople. The ‘success’ of Indo-Norwegian Project (INP) in the introductions of trawlers in two villages of Kerala and subsequent high catches by these trawlers resulted in the imposition alien model all along the coast from the third five-year plan period. See, M. Channa Basavaiah, ‘India’s Marine Living Resources...’ op. cit. pp. 101-102.

17. There are problems of jurisdiction over marine fisheries between and the centre and the state and there are also problems of jurisdiction between various ministries such as Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Surface Transport, Department of Ocean Development, Ministry of Environment etc. As a result there are problems of administration and accountability with respect to marine fishery sector, unless a comprehensive legislation is made covering all aspects of the marine fishery sector the problems cannot be solved.


19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.


23. For more details see correspondence between the National Forum and the India Committee of the Netherlands between 1983 to 1984, (mimeo), Fisheries Research Cell Documentation, PCO, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.


25. Ibid., p. 154.


27. Ibid.


29. Ibid.

31. Interview with NFF Chairman Thomas Kochery, 6 February 1993, Thiruvananthapuram.
32. Ibid.
33. Interview with Nalini Nayak, NFF’s women activist and incharge of Fisheries Research Cell, Programme for Community Organisation (PCO), Thiruvananthapuram, 8 February 1993.
34. Ibid.
37. Interview with the NFF Chairman.
38. The NFF’s memorandum submitted to the Ministry of Food Processing, Government of India, January 1993.
41. Ibid.
42. Members of the Parliament belonged to the BJP and AIDMK walked out.
43. The technique of bull trawling is similar to that of trawling, but carried out simultaneously involving two vessels in more intensive manner causing more damage to the seabed.
44. The Telegraph, 21 January 1996.
45. The Hindu, 20 January 1996.
46. The Economic Times, 10 and 24 February 1996.
Social movements are generally conceived as the manifestation of collective behaviour. They are often the results of organized group efforts aimed at some reform of the existing social structure or creating a newer one through revolutionary activities. They can also assume the form of counter-group activity for the resistance of such changes in the status quo. In this sense Robert D. Benford defines social movements as 'collective attempts to promote or resist change in a society or a group'.

On the basis of their objectives, social movements vary in scale and nature. If the objective of any social movement has some bearing across the whole society then it certainly acquires a larger scale than the one, which has some particular objectives relating to any specific group or segment of a society. The objective of any movement, however, also determines its potential participants who in turn reflect its scale as well as nature. The economic, religious and cultural components of the social movements as well as the structural composition of its participants most clearly classify them as class struggle, religious and cultural. However, from a sociological point of view we should not entertain such a classification just because, as Oomen says, 'Overall features of any system mould the nature of its social movements'. Hence all the institutions of any society along with the values they propagate shape the character of the social movements. Therefore, it may well happen that during a particular period in the long history of any social movement, some institutions become conspicuous but reification of it will be a methodological mistake. This is just an event or we can designate it as a phase in the lifetime of the social movement concerned. The study of this historicity of the social movements is extremely important in order to have an insight into the present structural arrangements of it as well as its

future orientations.

The present paper attempts to study the historicity of the Jharkhand movement, which is going on in the Chotanagpur plateau region covering a large part of central India. Such an attempt is particularly important as it can throw some light on the continuing debate concerning the nature of the Jharkhand movement being an ethnic one. The Jharkhand region, as we all know, is the home of numerous adivasi communities. These adivasis along with their social and cultural attributes come very close to what we mean by an ethnic group. In the movement, these adivasis are undoubtedly a major force to reckon with. Due to this the movement is often designated to be an adivasi movement, hence ethnic. But this is only one side of the argument. There are some scholars who launch a severe criticism against this on the following grounds. Firstly, the imposition of the ethnic status upon the adivasi communities follows from the word 'tribe' which is a colonial construct purposefully applied to convey a sense of inferiority to those indigenous communities who tried to resist the colonial encroachment in India right from its beginning. In the words of K.S. Singh, 'the tribal communities who with a sensitivity born of isolation and with a relatively intact mechanism of social control revolted more often and far more violently than any other community including peasants of India'. This act of resistance of the indigenous communities to protect their autonomy appeared to the colonizers as an act of barbarism and hence they found it appropriate to call them as 'tribe'. But a scholar like Susana B.C. Deval firmly believes that the attributes which are considered to designate a community as a tribe, like homogeneity, isolation, inherent egalitarianism, autonomy, economic independence, slow change etc. just simply do not hold in case of the communities in Jharkhand. In fact Devalle asserts: 'I will argue that there were no 'tribes' in Jharkhand until the European perception of Indian reality constructed them and colonial authorities gave them their administrative sanction.'

Secondly, although the adivasis are participating in the movement in large numbers non-adivasis are also present in it. Hence it is incorrect to designate it as an ethnic movement. Finally, the objectives of the movement got changed in and through the long history of it. With the passage of time the movement gradually acquired considerable maturity, which can be revealed from its objectives as it enveloped to cover the aspirations of the different
The Historicity of the Jharkhand Movement

The cross-sections of the Jharkhand society.

For the analysis of social movements, this debate, however, has no serious implication simply because social movements encompass, theoretically, a wider space in the society. There is no point in charactering a social movement on the basis of some of its dimensions exclusively. As a matter of fact, all the social institutions of any given society play their role either actively or passively in the long history of it. Ethnicity which is shaped by the social and cultural institutions of any society, hence, may assume significance in some stages in the life history of a social movement.

The history of the Jharkhand movement should be traced back to the introduction of the British rule in India. It is by no means the colonizers who were the first to subjugate the indigenous adivasi communities of Jharkhand. In fact, it well happened in the pre-British period when the independent native states of this region were converted into tributaries of the Mughal Empire. This resulted in a considerable increase in the economic significance of the region. To cope with the demands of the changing economy the indigenous states required generation of agricultural surpluses and for this they invited people from the plains who with their better agricultural technology could to this. By affecting the economic sphere through the change in the agricultural relations of production and the cultural sphere through the introduction of people from outside the region the Mughal rule prepared the ground for rural class struggle with all of its pre-conditions.

British colonialism made a very excellent use of this situation and added some more dimensions it. Through the enactment of the Permanent Settlement Regulations Act in 1793 it introduced the concept of private property in land, which was unknown in Indian history. As a result of this most of the erstwhile adivasi rajas or chieftains were converted into zamindars or landlords and the common peasants were transformed into serfs or rayats. Instead of payment of nominal subscription to the Mughal emperors, British rule made the payment of land revenue a compulsion. The responsibility of revenue collection was vested with the zamindars. The burden of this proved to be enormous for the peasants and a large number of them were forced to sell their lands, only to become landless labourers. The moneylenders, liquor vendors and other people from outside the region exploited this situation. Hence a new class of absentee landlords was also created. By undermining the local rajas or the chieftains the British rule for
the first time in Indian history tried to bring this region under its uniform administrative network. The people of this region did not have any such experience of monolithic ruling. This provided a severe blow to their political organization, which was governed more by custom rather than contract.

The land question here required some more attention. The adivasis of this region conceived of themselves as natural owners of the land, which they have reclaimed by extensive labour. Moreover, land and the forest were not merely viewed as means of production in their custom; they were rather, culturally and religiously, associated with the land and forest. In fact land was the primary medium through which, in their view, they were connected to their ancestors. So, they could hardly tolerate their alienation from the land and the forest as created by the British agrarian policies. These, therefore, brought them into the arena of resistance movement for the first time in Indian history. The Jharkhand Movement, as we know it today, definitely has its legacy in these earlier insurrections of the indigenous communities of this region.

Hence, the Jharkhand Movement started through the unfolding of the agrarian movements pitted against the colonial agrarian policy. Then onwards it passed a long course of time to reach its present state. For analytical purpose we can divide it into four discernible phases which are also indicative of the underlying trends of the movement in relation to the social, economic, cultural and political scenario through which it passed and is still passing today:

1. Phase of Agrarian Struggle (1765-1845)
2. Phase of Consolidation (1845-1920)
3. Phase of Confusion (1920-1970)
4. Phase of Elevation to Social Movement (1970 onwards)

PHASE OF AGRARIAN MOVEMENT (1765-1845)

In the words of Alvin Johnson, “True agrarian movements take place whenever urban interest have encroached, in fact, or in seeming, upon vital rural interests.” Hence agrarian movements take place whenever urban penetration occurs in the rural areas. It may be through the influence of urban values, (as for example, interdependence, individualism etc.) or through the acquisition of better lands in the rural area, imposition of land revenue, land
tax and so on. Hence, in any agrarian movement both the culture and economy occupy the center stage. In this phase of the Jharkhand movement all the uprisings bore the evidences of agrarian movement, especially the later ones. The major peasant uprisings of this phase are as detailed below:

1. First Chuar Rebellion (1767)
2. Dhabhum Rebellion (1769-1774)
3. Tilka Majhi’s War (1780-1785)
4. Pahadia Revolt (1788-1791)
5. First Tamar Rebellion (1795)
6. Second Chuar Rebellion (1798-99)
7. Nayek Hangama (1806-1826)
8. Second Tamar Rebellion (1820)
10. Ganga Narayan’s Movement (1832-33)

Descriptions of these uprisings seem unnecessary at this stage. What is important here is to have an analytical insight into the underlying trend of these uprisings. British encroachment into the Jharkhand region started in the year 1765 after receiving the ‘Dewani’ of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. At its initial stage colonial administrators were basically interested in collecting land revenues from this region which was quite inaccessible due to its heavy hilly and forest covers. Apart from this the British administrators had to face another difficulty and that was concerning the attitude of the indigenous communities who refused to pay land revenues. Hence payment of land revenue and that too in a compulsory manner, was the basic reason behind the uprisings of this phase especially those prior to 1793, the year in which the Permanent Settlement Regulation Act was enacted. As in all these, solely the land question came into prominence so we cannot say that all the pre-conditions of an agrarian movement were present there. Here we have a mixture of the essences of rural class struggle and agrarian movements. The Permanent Settlement Regulation Act was enacted. As in all these, solely the land question came into prominence so we cannot say that all the pre-conditions of an agrarian movement were present there. Here we have a mixture of the essences of the rural class struggle and agrarian movements. The Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 brought certain administrative changes which much more directly undermined the traditional customs of the adivasi communities of this region. Firstly,
the payment of land revenue by the cultivators to their chiefs were customarily guided but the Permanent Settlement Act ‘tried to suddenly substitute contract for custom’ as argued by W.W. Hunter. Secondly, the law and order of this region was maintained by the ‘ghatwals’ or the pykes under the command of the local chiefs who were well informed of the customs and local cultures of the people. These pykes enjoyed gifts of lands from their chiefs for the service rendered by them. But the Permanent Settlement Act brought these lands also under its purview. Naturally the pykes suffered due to this change and became rebellious. The British administration dispossessed the pykes from their duties and the government took into its hands the law and order system. The indigenous people perceived it as a threat to their traditional system of administration. Thirdly, due to strict revenue assessment most of the local chiefs were found in huge arrears and their estates were auctioned to meet the revenue balances. The indigenous communities had a traditional organic relationship with their chiefs and could not bear the system that eventually led to their extinction. Finally, and most importantly, the estates of the local chiefs in arrears were auctioned and in most of the cases, they were purchased by the outsiders, mostly non-adivasi zamindars. This was the final assault to be tolerated by the adivasis. They perceived the entry of the non-adivasis into region as a severe blow to their cultural distinctiveness.

Therefore, the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 marginalised the peasantry economically and also drove them towards a state of cultural alienation. The traditional economic and political organisations of the indigenous people centering on the autonomous village community were undermined. The entry of the outsiders in this region became associated with a considerable degree of urban encroachment which had its effect felt in the cultural life of the indigenous communities there. This resulted in a value conflict and the all-important issue of collective identity of these communities was facing the crisis of disintegration.

The uprisings after 1793 were, thus, the voices of protest of the indigenous adivasi communities to protect their economic self-sufficiency and cultural distinctiveness. The second Chuar Rebellion of 1798-99, later the Kol Insurrection of 1831-32 and the Ganga Narayan’s uprising of 1832-33 most prominently showed this trend. In all these the adivasi communities especially the Bhumijs of the Jungle Mahal and adjacent areas of the Chotanagpur
plateau region participated in large numbers. Economic issues pertaining to the question of land and land revenues were definitely there but the uprisings were more and more directed to protect the culture and custom of the autochthons which were on the verge of submergence due to the onslaught of an alien rule. The magnitude of these rebellions reached such a proportion that led E.T. Dalton to write with a great degree of despair: ‘I do not think that the settlement of any one of the Bhumij Jungle Mahals was effected without a fight.’

Hence, all these rebellions, particularly those of the post-1793 period, can be designated as ‘agrarian struggles’.

**PHASE OF CONSOLIDATION (1845-1920)**

Agrarian struggles are always indicative of an emerging conflict of values, ideas, beliefs, and, so to speak, cultures of the two polar opposites—the rural and the urban. In the case of underdeveloped economies where the differences between these two are highly pronounced, there the rural communities due its sheer backwardness, grown out of relative isolation, develop kind of hatred towards the townsmen. But we should not blame the backwardness of the rural people for this exclusively. In fact, the urbanites also try to use the backwardness of the rural people and exploit them, their resources. This conflict often turns to be more violent if some other dimensions viz. race, class, region, ethnicity, etc. are added into it. In the case of the Jharkhand movement this happened in its second phase where the conflicts, which were already there in its first phase, assumed some other dimensions, most prominently, ethnicity.

Ethnicity, as we all know it, is primarily a method of group formation in the societies on cultural accounts. It pertains to the individual, or the group, a sense of identity, which only assumes significance in the context of inter-group relations by creating a demarcation between the ‘we’ and the ‘they’.

With the entry of the outsiders into the Jharkhand region, and with the increasing intensity of the agrarian struggles in the first phase, gradually the insider-outsider contradiction became crystallized. In the second phase, this gained momentum, as the insiders were increasingly becoming conscious of their ‘adivasi’ (original inhabitant) identity in contrast to the outsiders who were largely non-adivasis. These outsiders were mostly the zamindars,
moneylenders, etc. created by the British rule, and they used to exploit the peasantry severally. In this way the identity of ‘outsider’ became largely conterminous with that of exploiter to the ‘insider’ adivasis whom the latter designated as ‘diku’. Christianity in the second phase of the movement, also played a major role in the process of identity formation of the indigenous communities of Jharkhand. Christianity was introduced into this region in the middle of the nineteenth century. Unlike in some other parts of the globe, Christianity in India never became an agrarian institution. Rather, the main mission of Christianity in India was to prepare a support base for the British rule among the indigenous communities. To attain this they quite successfully utilised the prevailing insider-outsider contradiction, which was there in the socio-cultural mosaic of Indian society. In Jharkhand also, like many other adivasi-inhabited regions of India they appropriated it and tried to consolidate it. In the words of K.S.Singh ‘They gave a new sense of self respect to the tribal peasants and sought to create a separate identity for them.’

Although Ganga Narayan’s uprising of 1832-33 was the final major uprising of the first phase but the fallout of the combined uprisings continued till the middle of the next decade. In this period the British authority felt the need of separating Chotanagpur from the Calcutta Presidency for its smooth administrative functioning. For this the South West Frontier Agency (SWFA) was established and Captain Wilkinson became the first administrative agent of it. This separation also contributed to the development of ethnic identify of the inhabitants of the Chotanagpur region. This was the major achievement of all the uprisings of the first phase. Hence it was 1845, the year which saw the introduction of Christianity into this region, which should be regarded as the starting point of the second phase.

The major uprisings of the second phase are as under:
1. The Santhal Insurrection (1855)
2. The Sipoy Mutiny (1857)
3. Sardaro Agitation or Mulkui Larai (1858-1895)
4. Kherwar Movement (1874)
5. The Birsa Munda Movement (1895-1900)
6. Tana Bhagat Movement (1914-19)

In all these uprising ethnicity played a major role although we
cannot neglect the general discontent of the masses arising out of the exploitative British agrarian policy. But what we can assert with a great degree of certainty is that all these were the products of an ethnicised socio-political structure where the question of economic inequality was viewed through the lenses of ethnicity.

All these uprisings centered on the adivasi-nonadivasi divide. The adivasis in order to safeguard their distinct cultural identity, which in their view was jeopardized by the nonadivasis, often sought political solution of it in the form of self-determination through self-rule. This was most prominent in the Santhal Insurrection, Kherwar Movement and Birsa Munda Movement. In the first two, the Santhals participated enormously and tried to establish the Santhal Raj while the Birsa Munda Movement went for the Munda Raj under the leadership of Birsa Munda. Religion also proved to be very significant in shaping the ethnic identity of the contending groups. Apart from the Santhal Insurrection, in all the other uprisings religion became a major issue. The Sipoy mutiny of 1857 got a ready support from the Hindu zamindars of the region as they were engaged in struggle against their Christian ryots who were aided by the Christian missionaries. The suppression of the mutiny turned the tide in favour of the Christian ryots to launch severe protest movements against the zamindars, that marked the beginning of the Sardari agitation in which the Munda sardars and the oraons of Chotanagpur region took part in 1858. Just as the Sardari Agitation was influenced by the Christian missionaries so was the Kherward Movement of 1874 by Hinduism. According to S.C.Panchbhai, the leaders of the movement, ‘sought to introduce social reforms in the line with the Hindu traditions and adopted many Hindu symbols to mobilise the masses’.

The general aim of the movement was to drive away the British and the Christian missionaries from the country and in, this way, to establish a Santhal ‘Raj’. In the Birsa Munda Uprising, the new religion ‘Birsaism’ preached by ‘prophet’ Birsa assumed an important role in mobilising the adivasis against all the outsider ‘dikus’: Indian as well as English. Finally in the Tana Bhagat Movement too religion in the form of Hinduism became crucially important in order to mobilise the oraons. In the words of Sachidananda ‘the entire Bhagat movement may be conceived as an attempt to raise the status of its members in the eyes of Hindu neighbours by Sanskritization which also included the inculcation of Hindu beliefs and practices’.
The revivalist, revitalizing, and the messianic characters of these uprisings bring them close to what is perceived as ethnic movements. These were revivalist, revitalizing or to be more precise ‘revivalistic nativism’ to use Ralph Linton’s\textsuperscript{11} concept as they tried to revive and revitalize certain moribund elements of adivasi culture like wearing of sacred threads and sacred paste, practice of offering prayers instead of sacrifices to spirits (in case of Birsa Munda’s uprising) and insistence of ceremonial purity in food and drink (in case of Tana Bhagat Movement). To have a glimpse of the revivalist nature of these uprisings Mcpherson wrote in the context of Santhal Uprisings of 1855: ‘Santhal yearning for independence, a dream of the ancient days when they had no overloads perhaps a memory of the pre-historic times when according to some speculators they were themselves masters of the Gangetic valley and had not yet been driven back by the Aryan invaders.’\textsuperscript{12}

These uprisings were also millenarian and messianic in character as in all these the belief was there that they were always supported by the divine power either in the form of God or of any prophet. W.H. Grimley the Esq. Commissioner of Chotanagpur Division in his report on the Birsa Munda Uprising mentions in 1895, that ‘Birsa claimed that “he” was a prophet sent by God to preach the coming of a deluge which not only made it unnecessary for the people to cultivate their lands, but would sweep away government.’\textsuperscript{13}

Hence, all these major uprisings of the second phase reveal their resemblance with ethnic movements. In fact, the British rule through a very crude interference in the indigenous communities’ economic and socio-cultural system created the pre-conditions for ethnic conflict to emerge in the Indian social structure. In any ethnicised social structure all its elements become conscious of their identity and it becomes more vibrant to those who are being pushed into the periphery. In the instances of these peripheral groups deprivation in economic as well as cultural terms conjointly influence the process of collective identity formation. This was the case with the uprisings of the second phase as Swapan Dasgupta writes, ‘To the adivasis the loss of land was not merely a matter of economic deprivation, but an affront to their dignity, their izzat, a theme recurrent in subaltern perception.’\textsuperscript{14}
All the uprisings prior to this were largely unorganized, though spontaneous in character, but the opposition comprising the landlords, the moneylenders and the British Authority combine was not only well organized but also very systematic. This may be the reason behind the failure of these uprisings. The third phase, which covered a considerable portion of the twentieth century, however, witnessed a significant change in this respect. The need of the organization of the oppressed was felt in the very beginning of this stage. In the words of Susan B.C. Devalle, ‘The twentieth century inaugurates the modality of formal politics in Jharkhand’. The central objective of these formal organizations was to turn the unorganized adivasi uprisings into a systematic movement. But their endeavour was not successful, as they became plagued with great dilemma concerning their objectives, structure and the nature of the participants. It was in this phase that mining and industrial activities ranging from small to large scale were introduced in the Jharkhand region. As a result of this, the process of working class formation began here. Industrialisation triggered the process of urbanization also. Some large cities like Jamshedpur, Rourkela, Ranchi, and Bokaro came into being containing a sizeable portion of the middle class whose genesis went hand in hand with the twin process of industrialization and urbanization. A considerable section of the industrial workforce was composed of people from outside. All these made the social composition of the area quite complex. Ethnicity, which emerged as an engine of mass mobilization in the second phase, especially among the adivasis, found itself in a very confusing state, which manifested itself in several dimensions but the centrality of it, in my opinion, was located in the nature of interaction and interrelationship of ethnicity and class.

The major organizations of this phase were:
1. Chotanagpur Improvement Society (Chotanagpur Unnati Samaj).
2. Adivasi Mahasabha, and

The first formal organisations of the adivasis having support of all the core groups was the Chotanagpur Improvement Society formed in the year 1915 under the leadership of some educated Christian adivasis. From the very beginning it was concerned with the issues
of social security and the distinct identity of the adivasis. Although formed in 1915, this organization officially came into existence in the year 1920. The ‘Samaj’ tried to ameliorate the social, economic and political backwardness of the adivasis of Chotanagpur. To safeguard the identity of the adivasis, the ‘samaj’ placed a demand before the Simon Commission in 1928 to form a sub-state of Chotanagpur joined either to Bengal or Orissa. This should be regarded as the first demand for the separation of Chotanagpur from Bihar. Its attempt, however, failed to attain the desired objectives because it could not resolve the contradictions regarding its scale and scope of activities. Firstly, it was concentrated only on the educated segments of the adivasi population, but initially it had the goal of the upliftment of the adivasi society in general. Secondly, although there was an effort to extend its range of activities to the rural areas, but in reality it remained confined within the urban areas only. One reason of this may be its orientation towards the middle class that was basically urban in nature. Finally, as only the Christian adivasis dominated it, the large section of the non-Christian adivasis of the region, somehow, remained isolated from it. In fact, this intra-ethnic contradiction centering on the question of Christianity was so fundamental that it led to the division of the ‘samaj’ into two parts. The non-Christian adivasis formed the Kisan Sabha while the Christian adivasis formed the Chotanagpur Catholic Sabha.

In order to bridge this intra-ethnic gulf the Adivasi Mahasabha was formed in the year 1938 in which all the organisations who had the vision of developing the Chotanagpur region were merged. The Adivasi Mahasabha tried to respond to the demands, which were there in the then society of Jharkhand. Due to industrialization and urbanisation, as we have mentioned earlier, the area witnessed an influx of outsiders from the neighbouring states which led to a change in the social fabric of the Jharkhand region. To ensure the proper representation of the different cross-sections of this society, the Mahasabha under the leadership of Jaipal Singh, an Oxford educated adivasi, opened itself to all the non-adivasis also despite of its nomenclature. This led to a change in the concept of ‘diku’ also. Previously all the non-adivasis were regarded as ‘dikus’. Hence, the Bengalees who founded their interest unsafe in Bihar, and the Muslims who had some strategic interest in Chotanagpur at that time, stood beside the Mahasabhas, and
were not considered as ‘dikus’. The term only signified those outsiders, according to Sinha, Sen and Panchbhai ‘who are from North Bihar in particular ... Who earn and send their earnings outside to their homes’. 16

This type of precision in defining the term ‘diku’ gave the Adivasi Mahasabha a relatively wider space of operation. But unfortunately, it could not capitalize on this as, with the passage of time, the non-adivasis became gradually separated from it, the reasons whereof can be diagnosed from the objectives of the Adivasi Mahasabha as mentioned by B.P. Mohapatra:

... the establishment of a separate province for the aboriginal tribes of Chotanagpur within the framework of the Government of India, the representation of the aboriginal tribe in the state cabinet of Bihar by at least one educated aboriginal, an the introduction of Santhali and other aboriginal languages as the media of instruction in schools. 17

Hence, just like the intra-ethnic contradictions that had plagued the Chotanagpur Unnati Samaj earlier, here in the case of the Adivasi Mahasabha, the inter-ethnic strife centering on the adivasi-nonadivasi conflict besides other, led to its downfall. But here we should take into account the resilience of the factor of class. In fact, the ‘dikus’ who were the people of North Bihar, Marwaris etc. were also viewed by the adivasis as exploiters. There were plenty of outsiders who were non-adivasis, located in the lower stratum of Hindu caste hierarchy, were never regarded as ‘dikus’. Therefore, here ethnic identification coincided with that of class. But the Adivasi Mahasabha perhaps failed to grasp this crucially important social reality.

At a specially convened meeting in Jamshedpur in the year 1950, the Adivasi Mahasabha, which was gradually becoming unpopular, was wound up and the ‘Jharkhand Party’ was formed under the leadership of Jaipal Singh to mobilise all segments of the people of Chotanagpur with the demand of a separate Jharkhand state. Under its auspices, the concept of Jharkhand was enlarged to include all the areas that once formed part of the Chotanagpur administrative division. Thus, some parts of West Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh were included in it. The result of this was quite interesting. Some portion of the non-Bihari moneylending community who otherwise could be regarded as ‘dikus’ became the members of the ‘Jharkhand Party’. This led to the apparent transition of the Jharkhand Movement from the level of ethnicity to regionalism.
Overemphasis on regional solidarity made the Jharkhand Party unable to read the nexus between class and ethnicity, although the formal liberal policies of the party gave it some electoral success in the first two general elections of independent India in 1952 and 1957. At the height of the movement for a separate state the Jharkhand Party submitted a memorandum to the State Reorganisation Commission (SRC) in April 1954 demanding the formation of the Jharkhand state within the national and constitutional framework of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of India. The SRC, however, rejected the demand on certain grounds like, the minority status of the adivasis in the Jharkhand region, absence of a viable link language, the Jharkhand Party not having a clear majority of seats in the region and the imbalances between industry and agriculture which such a bifurcation would cause for a residual Bihar state. This refusal of the SRC had a tremendous frustrating impact upon the Jharkhand Movement, and in the general election of 1962 the strength of the Jharkhand Party decreased considerably. Jaipal Singh, thinking that the separate state cannot be achieved by the politics of separatism or isolation, merged the Jharkhand Party with the ruling Congress in 1963 ignoring all the views against it.

Regarding this merger, and the consequent degeneration of the Jharkhand Movement, many a reason can be put forward. But the reason that merits a sociological analysis must concern itself with the internal contradictions prevailing at the level of the then Jharkhandi society. In fact, these contradictions were present there throughout the third phase and none of the organizations could resolve them. Nirmal Sengupta very succinctly summarises the issues of these in his characterisation of the features of both the Adivasi Mahasabha and the Jharkhand Party: 1. Urban orientation in thinking and activity; 2. Christian domination and close links with the Churches; 3. Pre-dominantly Munda-Oraon organization and, 4. Efforts to establish tribal solidarity alone tending to sectarian behaviour against non-tribal autochthons.

Thus despite its advocated policies of liberalism the Jharkhand Party failed to bring the rural agricultural non-Christian adivasis into its fold. Being pre-dominantly a Munda-Oraon organization it also failed to win over the Santhals of the Santhal Pargana region who had a very proud legacy of struggle against the alien rule. Moreover, the non-adivasis who had remained indifferent earlier became rather skeptical towards it. Against this backdrop the
merger of the Jharkhand Party with one of the mainstream nationalist parties, like the Congress, made it very difficult for the future Jharkhandi organizations to reorganize it. As the causes of the deprivation of the people were there, so also the movement, but practically there was no organization to lead it. Some associations were formed particularly in the Santhal Pargana region during this period, which tried to bring together the factors of class and ethnicity into degree of their agenda. During the closing period of the 1960s some degree of radicalization entered into their politics due to the influence of the Naxalite Movement going on in other parts of the country. This paved the way for the emergence of radical politics under the banner of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) led by Shibu Soren and some others, which ushered in a new phase in the history of Jharkhand.

4. PHASE OF ELEVATION TO SOCIAL MOVEMENT (1970 ONWARDS)

This phase witnessed the maturation of those tendency hints of which were apparent in the closing period of the last phase. The agrarian issues, hitherto neglected by all the organizations of the third phase were brought into a sharp focus. Ethnicity, which was considered the primary mobilising agency, lost its exclusive significance. Efforts were being made to blend the ethnic factor and the class factor together, which was really the challenge before all the Jharkhandi organizations in the third phase.

The first organization that tried to accomplish this goal was the ‘Shivaji Samaj’, a social reform organization established by Binod Bihari Mahato in the year 1971. This organization tried to bring the Kumi-Mahatos of the Jharkhand region close to the adivasis. It also tried to develop the consciousness of the people against the evil of land alienation. Hence it sought to form a kind of pan-ethnic solidarity of the wretched peasantry of Jharkhand to struggle against oppression. In the words of Arvind N. Das ‘the leaders of the movement took the stand that any such struggle should be taken up by the people as a whole and not by any particular community’. 19

But, primarily being a social reform organization, this could not actually lead the people in any political struggle. This led to the birth of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, a radical political organization in the year 1973 under the leadership of Binod Bihari Mahato, A.K. Roy, Sadanand Jha and Shibu Soren. This is the first
time in the history of the Jharkhand Movement that non-adivasis became its leaders, as the first three leaders mentioned were non-adivasis. Binod Bihari Mahato was the leader of the Mahatos who were basically agriculturists in the Chotanagpur region. A.K. Roy had a considerable influence among the colliery workers of the Dhanbad belt of the region. Sadanand Jha was a militant trade union leader operating among the railway workers at Gomoh and finally Shibu Soren had a wide acceptance among the adivasis of the region who called him 'Guruji'. Naturally, the composition of the leadership resulted in the seeming unity of the adivasis and the non-adivasis on the one hand and the workers with the peasantry on the other. The JMM leadership realized that the problem of the oppression of the Jharkhandi sub-nationality was integrally linked with the class exploitation of the workers and the peasantry of this region by both the private and the bureaucratic state capital. As Arunabha Ghosh says, 'The Morcha projected itself as a radical Marxist party which not only demanded a separate state of Jharkhand with reservation of jobs for the sons of the soil, but also to free that state from class exploitation.'

Hence, the JMM by blending the factor of class and ethnicity widened the social base of the Jharkhand Movement. It also led to a change in the connotation of the term Jharkhandi as well, by signifying, 'a producer, irrespective of caste, tribe or nation, residing in the Jharkhand region'. But the JMM, inspite of having some initial success, failed to achieve its objective in the long run. This failure may be attributed to the complexity that the process of working class formation experienced here due to the intervention of ethnic factors. A large portion of the working class here, as mentioned earlier, was composed of immigrants who considered the 'dikus' as their ethnic brethren. Consequently, there was a split among the working class, and the movement along with the organisations, lost the momentum, which was gained in the initial period of this phase. The immigrant working class gradually distanced itself from the JMM and to achieve political mileage out of this hazy situation almost all the nationalist parties opened their Jharkhand cells here during 1978-1980. The salt was added to the injury when Shibu Soren, like his predecessor Jaipal Singh, decided to fight the seventh Lok Sabha election in 1980 by forming an alliance with the Congress(I). Binod Bihari Mahato in protest left JMM and formed JMM(B) while A.K. Roy also resigned.

The history of the Jharkhand Movement from this point was marked by the evil of narrow electoral politics. Unethical political adjustment,
The Historicity of the Jharkhand Movement

Corrupt practices of the leadership, mushrooming of political organizations devoid of any concrete ideological base, and factionalism, isolated the people from all these. Several organizations like JMM (M), Jharkhand Peoples’ Party, All Jharkhand Students’ Union and many others came up but all these failed to achieve any noteworthy success. At times there were some efforts at integration of these splinter Jharkhandi groups. These saw the formation of the Jharkhand Co-ordination Committee (JCC) in 1987 but this also disintegrated without making any positive contribution due to the inimical stands taken by different leaders regarding its structure and operation. Basically during the 80s and 90s there was no Jharkhand Movement, despite the fact that there were a number of Jharkhandi organizations. These organizations did not try to organise and mobilise people over the demand of Jharkhand their only intention was to convert it into an ‘issue’ having considerable electoral value. The game of political understanding and adjustments for electoral benefits resulted in the formation of the Jharkhand Area Autonomous Council (JAAC) in August 1995 which was a powerless and crippled body gifted to the people of this region to ensure their loyalty to the system of electoral politics. The same political arithmetic of electoral profit and loss saw the passing of the Jharkhand Bill by the Indian Parliament on 2 August 2000, which resulted in the formation of a separate Jharkhand state on 15 November 2000. The people of this region, realizing that the formation of the state was a result of political manoeuvering instead of their active struggle, remained indifferent. They were enough conscious to perceive that this could not resolve their contradiction with the ‘dikus’ both indigenous and outsiders, hence the story of their exploitation would also carry on. The attitude of the common people of Jharkhand towards the new state was well reflected in The Times of India report on 5 August 2000: ‘A quick survey of the Santhal Pargana area reveals that it is the dikus who are celebrating the formation of Jharkhand, not the tribals. The reason, they are preparing for the loot of the vast natural resources of the area’.

Although electoral politics occupied the center stage but one should not underestimate the role played by the people, in general. In the later part of the 1970s and almost throughout the 1980s we saw the alienation of the immigrant working class from the movement. But the indigenous working class, however minimum their proportion in the total work force might be, was always there
in the movement. The economic policies of liberalization, privatisation undertaken by the Government of India in the later part of the 1980s and the early 1990s resulted in severe exploitation of the working class. The economic reality of exploitation again brought the immigrant, mostly the non-adivasi working class close to their adivasi counterparts. This was evident in some of the programmes of Jharkhand bandh, days-long economic blockade of the region, organized by the Jharkhandi political outfits here, where they participated in large numbers. Therefore, at the societal level the working class, both indigenous and immigrants and the peasantry were on the same track. But unfortunately, there was no political organisation to recognize the merit of this to further the cause of the Jharkhand Movement. As a result, this force remained unorganised, rather unutilised too. Even the Communist parties like the Communist Party of India (CPI) and Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPIM) perhaps due to their over-allegiance to constitutional politics did not make any serious attempt to mobilise these people. In such a situation of extreme political vacuum, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which did not have a very strong base here, realizing the popular mood of frustration, appeared as a saviour with its slogan of 'Vananchal'. The people knowing fully well that 'Vananchal' is a Sanskritic version of the word 'Jharkhand' accepted it hesitantly. Thus, behind the formation of the 'Jharkhand' state, in no way, can we undermine the role of the people of Jharkhand. A.K. Roy summarises it:

The feeling of Jharkhand is so strong that no manipulation from the top can control it. Even if all the leaders are bought, the movement is reborn in another form. At present the Jharkhand parties are weak but not so the Jharkhand sentiment. It is the pressure from the bottom that forced national parties like BJP and Congress to form this new state to survive politically in the area. 21 

Hence, the fourth stage, as the above discussion reveals, is successful in bringing out the movement from the clutches of ethnic particularism. In this period we witness the combined operation of both the cultural and economic variables in terms of ethnicity and class respectively. By exposing the social reality of this combination, this phase, no doubt, contributed in a great deal towards the widening of the social base of the movement although, during some period in this phase the movement became dormant but this should not be regarded as death of it. As a matter of fact,
this will be a great analytical mistake to confuse the objective of the Jharkhand Movement with the issue of statehood only. In the context of Indian social polity the achievement of the statehood status, of course, is a major determinant of nationality but this by no means is the only one. This is equally true in the context of Jharkhand also. Statehood is, undoubtedly, a step towards the achievement of the nationality status of the Jharkhandi sub-nationality but this alone is not enough. The people of Jharkhand have to go many a mile to establish a state and society which is free from all sorts of exploitation, economic, and national, which was the dream of the forerunners of the Jharkhand Movement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this sense, the movement in its fourth stage is still continuing. In conclusion, we can mention that the analysis of any social movement should make a thorough study of its historicity. To understand the interrelationship of the society and the movement, the contextualisation of different social factors in the history of the social movement is a necessity. Only through this we can reveal the inner dynamics of any social movement. Without this the analysis tends to be partial and loses its sociological significance. This weakness in methodology is responsible for a great many less systematic and unrevealing understanding of the Jharkhand Movement. The imposition of the ethnic attribute upon the Jharkhand Movement is indeed a result of this. In the long historiography of the movement, as our analysis points out, in some period ethnicity had played a major role, but socio-economic factors also contributed to its reinforcement while in some other period it gave way to other social factors, keeping itself in a dormant position. In the process of group identity formation, ethnic factors, indeed, act hand in hand with other socio-economic and cultural factors. The same is true of the process of identity formation in Jharkhand. The quest for identity of the relatively long history of the movement and for this it is in a process of acquiring a social character.

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The Akka Mahadevi: The Saint–Poet

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The Virashaiva Movement in the twelfth century Karnataka is essentially a bhakti movement, of which we may see different expressions at different stages in the spiritual history of India. Bhakti is central to the heritage of India, and is its essential ethos. The unique phenomena of the Bhakti tradition appears to have begun in South India, in Tamil Nadu even before seventh century with the Alvars and the Nayanmars and later the movement spread to other parts of the country. The bhakti cult found one of its strongest expressions in the Virashaiva movement of the Shivasharanas, spearheaded by Basavanna during the twelfth century in Karnataka. The Haridasas followed the Shivasharanas in the fifteenth century. The bhakti tradition continues with Tukaram and Namadev in Maharashtra, and Vallabhacharya and Narasimha Mehta in Gujarat. If Tulsidas, Kabirdas and Mirabai are the great mystics of the north, Chaitanya belongs to Bengal and Lalleshvari to Kashmir.

Irrespective of the religious and philosophical systems to which they belonged, all the mystics of the bhakti tradition speak the same language of loving devotion offered to God. In bhakti, rituals are replaced by devotion and there is an accent on purity in personal character. The mystic’s bhakti involves a total dedication of the will. These mystics have made the supreme transition from the life of the senses to the life of the spirit. The intuition of the ‘Real’ lying at the root of the visible world and sustaining its life impels them to hanker for the communion with the Supreme Self. The quest for God constitutes the whole meaning of life for a mystic soul. When one’s mind flows into God and harbors there, one has the experience of bhakti. Total self-surrender and self-conquest is the mark of a lover of God. True mystics are never self-seeking; on the contrary, they are god-centered men and women who have

made the utmost sacrifice of the will. In the 'Mystic Way', the self passes through different stages of development, which are identified broadly as Purgation, Illumination, and Ecstasy. At the beginning of this path, the individual soul is drawn to spiritual life, undergoes a process of purification and practices annihilation of the self. By directing the vital powers of the will towards the Higher Reality, the seeker is able to reach the illumination of the inner self and attain Inward Light. Through a constant practice of renunciation and purification, he/she is able to reach the experience of ecstasy in which the human soul enters consciously the presence of God.

The characteristics of the 'Mystic Way' though commonly coincide and are seen in almost all the mystics of the world, the order and degree of these spiritual states may not always be the same in all of them. But they are all seekers of God who have removed themselves from the entanglements of the sense-world and are rooted in God. The Shivasharanas of the Virashaiva movement belong to the band of god-seekers who exhibit a total dedication of the will to the service of God. The movement initiated by these Sharanas is distinct in a number of ways. A whole host of mystics converged in Kalyan under the banner of Virashaivism in the stewardship of Basavanna, one of the greatest of Virashaiva sharanas. It is necessary to recognize that the Virashaiva movement led by Basavanna is essentially a spiritual movement which protested against an unjust religious system which prevailed at the time. The Vedic religious system of the time had been reduced to a set of mechanical rituals and religious injustices had paved the way for social injustices against the poor and the ignorant. The common people had been deliberately kept away from true knowledge; as a result they indulged in superstitions and worshipped all kinds gods and spirits. Sanskrit being the language of the learned, the ordinary man had no access to traditional religious texts or the knowledge of the true path to God. Women were denied both equality and independent thinking. Exploitation and oppression of caste and gender in the name religion and rituals was rampant. The Virashaiva movement launched a spiritual and social revolution against these injustices and strove for a radical change in the religious life of man. As religious life is closely bound up with social life, the spiritual revolution initiated radical changes in social life as well. The Virashaiva movement was double-edged. On the one hand, the Sharanas opposed the oppression and exploitation of the lower castes by the upper castes in the name of
religion, and on the other hand, they fought against the superstitions and the blind beliefs to which the lower caste people had resorted and tried to bring them to the path of true experience of God. The Sharanas responded to an urgent need to envisage a new concept of religious faith, a necessity to redefine the relation of man and man, man and God, and man’s relation to life.

Among the Virashaiva Sharanas, the great names that stand out are those of Basavanna, Allama Prabhu, Channabasavanna, Akka Mahadevi, Siddharam, and each of them had reached a unique spiritual height. But the saga of the spiritual attainment of Akka Mahadevi is one of the most fascinating. Akka has been acclaimed as a realized soul by many Sharanas of her time and is admired for her spiritual daring. She is a spiritual rebel who broke all conventions that had kept a woman from achieving liberation of the spirit. At a time when a woman’s stature was no more than that of an instrument of physical satisfaction, she refused to conform. She was the daughter of God-fearing parents who belonged to a small village called Udutadi in Karnataka, and she had early taken to a life of devotion under the guidance of her guru. Forced into a marriage with a Jaina king Kaushika against her will, she would not submit to a worldly life and allow him to interrupt her devotional life. When he overstepped the restrictions she had set, she threw conventions to the winds, and broke out of the family bonds. She chose a life of austerity and embarked on a pathway to God. She left her home and wandered in search of her God-lover whom she names ‘Chennamallikarjuna’. She then journeyed towards Kalyan seeking the spiritual companionship of Basavanna and the other saints. It is said that rejecting a worldly life with Kaushika, she also rejected the ‘shame’ of the body and the ‘burden of clothes’, which perhaps was part of her protest against the world, which treated woman merely as a ‘body’. Like Lalleshvari, the mystic of Kashmir, Akka Mahadevi discarded the ‘burden of clothes’ in an ultimate defiance against the patriarchal social structure which stood in her way preventing her from a total surrender to God. Another woman saint, Mira, had danced with anklets on her feet, God-intoxicated, unmindful of worldly censure or family shame. These women saints broke out of the traditional role model of womanhood but at the same time, as great mystics transcend the boundaries of gender. Apparently female spirituality seems to clash with the demands of patriarchy and the urge of the women saints to seek ultimate union with God may appear as an
act of subversion. But it has been observed that in true spirituality, gender boundaries collapse and in the presence of God, the saint is an asexual being.

At a time when women were thought of as snares to male asceticism, these women saints walked out of their homes and attained communion with the divine and thereby breaking the patriarchal construct. One of the most common traditional images has been to regard woman, money and land as sources of temptation. The identification of woman as body-centered and the close association of sexuality with the feminine is another patriarchal construct that gets splintered by women saints like Akka Mahadevi, Mira and Lalleshvari. The case of the women saints perhaps projects a paradoxical situation where although they appear to reject the patriarchal structure at the physical level, they seem to operate within the same framework at the spiritual level. They move away from their roles as women in the patriarchal framework and stand as spiritual rebels on the one hand, and on the other, they call themselves the ‘brides of God’ returning to the role they have rejected. But it is also clear that they become ‘brides of God’ in the mystical sense of the term where it does not signify the limited sense of female submission and surrender; on the contrary, it foregrounds the sense of giving oneself completely with loving devotion to the divine.

The *Shunya Sampadane*, one of the most significant Virashaiva texts, which gives a poetic account of the spiritual deliberations held in the *Anubhava Mantapa* by the Sharanas, provides a moving description of how Akka Mahadevi was put to an acid test by the Sharanas before accepting her into their fold. She was a soul born with an ‘instinct for the Absolute’ and hence even before she arrived in Kalyan, she had been able to transcend the entanglements of the sensual world and root herself in the divine. She had made the transition from the life of the senses to the life of the spirit. Among the Sharanas, Akka Mahadevi was one of the finest examples of the intimate and affective type of contemplation, which expresses itself in an intense form of mystic love where the mystic sees herself as the beloved of God. She identifies the divine by the name ‘Chennamallikarjuna’ and He is her bridegroom, her eternal husband and her Supreme Lord. She has lost her Self in Him, having reached the summit of illumination. Foreseeing her arrival in Kalyan, Allama Prabhu who presides over the spiritual discourses at the Anubhava Mantapa, sends Kinnari Bommayya,
another sharana, to test Akka's dedication. But Akka Mahadevi was one who has achieved victory over Kama, the god of love himself. Kinnari Bommayya's encounter with Akka reveals the truth that she has 'lost the darkness of the body' and 'is arrayed in the eternal light of Chennamallikarjuna'. Although Allama is aware of her evolved state of spirit, he questions her severely to make sure her rapturous immersion in the divine is genuine for the benefit of others. For, her uncommon life, which involved rejection of the commonly held patriarchal attitudes, puzzled many. As Chidanandamurthy points out, the queries, which come from Allama Prabhu, are not really his but they were raised for the sake of others (p. 118). He deliberately begins by questioning her harshly, "Who is your husband? You may sit giving the identity of your husband or quit." The questions are loaded with patriarchal preconceptions denying her an identity of her own. Akka Mahadevi who has transcended the gender boundaries as true mystic, replies with feeling that she is married to her Lord Chennamallikarjuna and that she has nothing to do with the husbands of this world. Considering her hair-cover as her attachment to the sense world, Allama is not convinced by her claim to renunciation. He questions her further:

It true that
You laid the blame and left him?
Casting away clothing and body bare
Illusion of mind's pride not lost;
Hair still screens the form
How then is shame shed?
This attire befits not
Our Guheshwaralinga

A rebel woman mystic is not easily accepted even by Virashaiva sharanas who had themselves opposed caste and gender discrimination. Akka rejects the implication of body-consciousness and replies with the power of detachment and introversion,

What if body darkens black?
What if body shines bright?
Once Inward purity gained
Body that Chennamallikarjuna loves
What matters how it is

When Allama still persists, she says unhesitatingly,
Akka entreats the Sharanas not to pester her, as she is one who is immersed in her God Chennamallikarjuna and reveals her unique communion with the Infinite in the following vachana:

I love the Handsome One
The deathless, decayless, formless One
Mother, I love the beautiful One
Matchless and infinite
Markless and complete
I love Him
Who has no bond or fear
No clan or land
Lord Chennamallikarjuna
is my handsome husband

Take away these
Dying, decaying husbands
And throw them into the kitchen fire

Allama and the other Sharanas are finally convinced that Akka is a deeply contemplative soul that dwells in God and that hers is an extreme form of the personal and intimate communion of the going forth of the beloved to the lover. Although the concept of ‘Sharana sati – Linga pati’ in which Sharana, the spiritual seeker, whatever the gender, is seen as the wife and God as the pati, the eternal husband is a typical feature of Virashaivism, similar belief may be found in western mysticism too. St. John of the Cross, St. Catherine of Avila considered themselves as the beloveds of God.

The long debate between Akka and Allama in the Shunya Sampadane highlights the extreme austerity of Akka’s personality and also her total dedication. In the act of contemplation, the mystic’s whole personality, directed by love and devotion, transcends the worldly distractions. Casting off its attachments, it then rises to the freedom of the spirit. The mystic constantly practices self-naughting and self-surrender and discovers that ‘And there is death in fruition, and a melting and dying into the nudity of Pure Being’ (Mysticism, p. 345). It is this ‘nudity of Pure Being’, which belongs to Akka Mahadevi in her state of union with her Lord Chennamallikarjuna.
The purgation of the senses and selfhood are placed first in the order in the Mystic Way. Purification of the soul of imperfections to make it a worthy dwelling for the divine is seen as a perpetual process. The mystics of all ages and all faiths agree that the three virtues which are the essential virtues of the mystical quest are poverty (of possessions), chastity (poverty of senses), and obedience (poverty of will). The well-known western mystic Meister Eckhart says, ‘God is Pure Good in Himself, therefore will He dwell nowhere but in a pure soul. ...What is Purity? It is that a man should have turned himself away from all creatures and have set his heart so entirely on the Pure Good that no creature is to him a comfort, that he has no desire for anything creaturely save so far as he may apprehend therein the Pure Good, which is God.’ The Sharanas also put forth that detachment keeps the soul away from the distractions of the sense world which dissipate its precious energies and have contempt for all things which are not God.

Although Akka Mahadevi agrees with the Sharanas on the importance of detachment, yet she lays a greater emphasis on chastity of the body and the chastity of the senses. She sees chastity of the body as paving the way for the chastity of the mind. Her vachanas underline the fact that spiritual freedom is achieved at the cutting edge of the victory over the physical desires. The transition from the world of the senses to the world of the spirit is seen as a formidable task. When Akka emphasizes the purity of the body, she seems to speak as a woman saint for the world had forced the woman to think that the body was the province of her power. Akka subtly rejects this patriarchal proposition in a spiritual sense and highlights the need to achieve loss of the ‘shame’ of the body and stand before the Divine Reality in the ‘nudity of Pure Being’. Basavanna praising Akka in one of his vachanas, testifies to the fact that her spiritual enlightenment had reached this very level,

Illusion of body’s shame lost  
Love of life’s shame lost  
Memory of mind’s shame burnt  
Knowing that mind’s merging  
Is to stand nude before God  
Shedding eagerness,  
Affection and commerce  
Lord Kudalasangamadeva  
This is mother Mahadevi’s stance.
Akka Mahadevi's losing the awareness of the body by losing herself in the Divine Reality is one form of subversion of patriarchy, she also approaches the traditional belief that the female is a snare to the male ascetic in her own unique way. In one of her vachanas, she speaks of it lucidly,

Maya plagues man  
As the pride of woman  
Maya plagues woman  
As the pride of man  
To the maya of this world  
The way of the sharanas seems insane  
The sharana Chennamallikarjuna loves  
Has no maya, nor forgetfulness,  
Nor pride.

Akka Mahadevi sees 'maya' or illusion as a universal phenomena which dogs all seekers on the pathway to God and she visualizes the path of bhakti as the only means to reach the truth. Here she not only rejects the patriarchal construct that woman is a snare to the spiritual aspirations of man but subverts it by saying that man is as much a snare to the woman. She extends the meaning of the idea when she points out the universality of the concept.

Akka Mahadevi is a mystic who rises above the worldly notions of the body and the feminine qualities and having lost body-consciousness, she had attained a spiritual state in which she was ever one with the Divine. Allama Prabhu, the most austere of Virashaiva saints, recognizes the spiritual splendour of Akka and pays homage to her,

She became  
Companion of Linga  
Body-consciousness lost;  
Companion of awareness  
Mind-consciousness lost;  
Dazzling Light  
Self-consciousness lost;  
Division of self and other lost;  
One with our Gogeshwara Linga,  
To the stance of Mahadeviyakka  
I bow.

The unique feature of Akka's spiritual attainment is her supreme self-abandonment and an extreme purity of soul. She had shed
the ‘burden of the body and its pride’, and her soul stood ‘nude’ before the divine. There is a deep inwardness of soul which she cultivates and her vachanas give a powerful expression to the inseparable bond she forges with the divine.

If there seems to be a paradox at the heart of Akka Mahadevi’s mystical vision, as she had renounced all desires and attachments on the physical plane, and resorts to them on the spiritual plane, perhaps one has to admit that it is a paradox which is part of the mystical life itself. She regards herself as the bride of God Chennamallikarjuna in whom her Self is merged in a spiritual marriage and she employs the whole gamut of feelings that surround the image of conjugal love and describes her feelings of longing, the pain of separation and the rapture of the union with her spiritual husband most poetically with the intensity of the actual. When an evolved spirit like Akka Mahadevi who is said to have shed her very quality of femaleness and had detached herself from the world of the senses, takes recourse to descriptions from conjugal life like beloved, wife, husband, marriage, it is not in any conventional sense. She uses them as metaphors to express her powerful spiritual vision of the union with the divine. For even a mystic has to give expression to the highest experience of the divine in terms of the worldly life and its experiences in order to be understood. The uniqueness of these metaphors is that they at once convey the sense of the personal and the spiritual, extending the meaning beyond the particular symbols and metaphors.

Like all great mystics, Akka Mahadevi borrows symbols and metaphors from the material plane to articulate her transcendental perceptions, for the transcendental experience to be grasped by surface consciousness, there is a need to employ symbolic devices. Akka Mahadevi embodies her spiritual perceptions in the ‘Vachanas’, a form the Sharanas discovered and her vachanas are clothed in a great poetic beauty. Like all other sharana poets, she too chose to write in Kannada, the language of the common people unlike the writers of the time who composed in Sanskrit. Although the Sharanas are not poets primarily, some of them like Basavanna, Allama Prabhu and Akka Mahadevi excelled in the use the poetic idiom and the manner in which they expressed the metaphysical thoughts in the colloquial language. Akka Mahadevi was one of the most poetic of the sharanas and her vachanas were especially known for their nature imagery. Her writings carry a rare sense of immediacy and involvement and abound in poetic similes and
metaphors. Her language was supple, rhythmical and lucid. Akka Mahadevi's *vachanas* are among some of the earliest compositions by women in our country. Her contribution in terms of mystic vision and poetic imagery has enriched *vachana* literature too.

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Quest for Identity in V.S. Naipaul’s Novel, *Half a Life*

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Vidiadhar Swarajprasad Naipaul in his lecture on 7 December 2001, said, ‘The world is always in movement. People have everywhere at sometime been dispossessed. I suppose I was shocked by discovery in 1967 about my birth place because I had never had any idea about it.’ In fact, this statement of Naipaul shows that in almost all of his works, the persistent theme of identity finds a direct reflection. *Half a Life* (2001), the latest novel, which is based on the theme of identity of an Indian, who goes to England, for higher education, his trial of adoption of western culture and indulges in sexual activities, visits different African countries make it an interesting piece of work by Naipaul.

The story of *Half a Life* begins with a question of a son to his father, who is an offspring of a brahmin and low caste woman:

Willie Chandran asked his father one day, ‘why is my middle Name Somerset? The boys at school just found out and, and they Are mocking me. His father said with a great joy, ‘you were named after a great English writer. I am sure that you have seen his books about the house.’… And this was the story Willie Chandran’s father began to tell. It took a long time. The story changed as Willie grew up. Things were added and by the time Willie left India to go to England this was the story he had heard (p. 1).

In fact this is the vital question by which the novel starts and the central character is haunted by these sorts of questions for his name which was answered by his father but he was unknown about those all things which had happened in the past.

The departure of Willie Chandran from his village to England for higher education on scholarship begins a search for solace. His experiences in London and the attempts for literary vocation, the sexual adventure, the decisive shift to the Portuguese – African

colony with Ana, for eighteen long years living with fabricated hallucination for an unknown destination marks the story of this novel. The plot of the novel is a blending of that plight of immigrants of imperial colonies and displacement of the migratory people. Willie Chandran’s visit to England, his meeting with Percy Cato a Jamaican, June, a girl friend of Percy, and after then with Petrida and Roger who are also searching an identity. Willie’s creative quality attracts Ana, a mixed racial girl who lives with him for fifteen years, and at the last he thinks to come back India, because he is afraid of that he may be thrown out from the college and till the time he is living the life of Ana. His story is much similar to that of Mr. Biswas in the novel *A House for Mr. Biswas*, who longs for a house, but couldn’t get it. His crisis of identity is similar that of Willie, when the former looks his own reflection and couldn’t recognise him as one and comments, ‘I don’t look like anything at all shopkeeper, lawyer, doctor, labourer, overseer I don’t look like any of them’ (p. 159).

Being a writer of diaspora, Naipaul presents the characters of all his novel struggling for their identities for which they had been suffering throughout, and want to achieve it through the different modes:

Since diaspora writing emanates from identity formations leading to further and more sophisticated articulations of identity, or manifest in community, nationalhood, and also larger global contexts, it is important to remember to perceive diaspora space as at all times exploratory, fluid and dynamic so that intersections within histories, pasts and futures, do not congeal into rigid boundary-laden states.

In fact, the migration of people from India to Caribbean Islands as an indentured labourer for sugarcane estates, is a story of longing and suffering which cannot be seen only in *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987), and, in *A Way in the World* (1994), but this theme continued in *Half a Life* (2001), which is apparently a record of Willie Somerset Chandran’s quest for identity. However, this theme of search and unrest towards the end of life remains a persistent subject matter of V.S. Naipaul’s work, because the environment of native land reflects in his art. His views on the Caribbean society of Trinidad; its multi-lingual and multi-cultural shape can be seen on his lecture at Stockholm during the Nobel Award Ceremony:

This was my very small community. The bulk of this migration from India occurred after 1880. The deal was like this. People indentured
themselves for five years to serve on the estates. At the end of this time they were given a small piece of land, perhaps five acres, or a passage back to India.\(^3\)

This was the condition of people, most of whom settled in that country, but they never adopted it as their own, therefore, the sense of belongings remains throughout in the literature of Caribbean Islands, of which Naipaul is the spokesperson.

Naipaul has presented a background of Indian setting in the novel, the traditional belief of caste and starvation of emotions of the false social taboos, which Willie has to face. His birth in itself is a question mark as his mother was a low caste woman, which Willie realised when he was in the school. This realisation haunts his mind and here begins the search for an identity in the society:

And that was how, when he was twenty, Willie Chandran, the mission school student who had not yet completed his education, with no idea of what he wanted to be, expect to get away from what he knew.... Went to London (p. 51).

Like all other works of Naipaul, the crisis of identity continues till Willie went to England and lives there a life of an immigrant. His education is a compulsion and not something voluntarily accepted action. He is unanchored without a proper mission. His meeting with Percy Cato, a Jamaican, who has similar background like Willie, but both of them live in a fabricated hallucination without revealing the reality to each other. Naipaul presents in the novel, 'both exotic, both on scholarship, had been wary of one another in the beginning, but now they met easily and began to exchange stories or their antecedents' (p. 61).

Percy Cato, a friend of Willie too hides himself and tells a lie that his father was a clerk at Panama Canal, but Willie understands and reacts, 'He's lying. That's foolish story. His father went there as a labourer' (p. 62).

With the help of Percy Cato, Willie Chandran meets June, a prostitute and a friend of Percy, with whom he gratifies his sexual desire. This sexual indulgence is one of the factors of western culture, which is an attraction for immigrants. Willie's experience with June had a deep impression in his mind and he took it in a different way from the strict moral taboos of his native country. It made him to understand the sexual behaviour of the people of Notting Hill that is presented by the novelist as:
No one he met, in the college or outside it, knew the rules of Willie's own place, and Willie began to understand that he was free to present himself as he wished. He could, as it were, write his own revolution. The possibilities were dizzying. He could within reason, re-make himself and his past and his ancestry (p. 62).

This indicates the quest of a protagonist which Naipaul presents its contrasts, socio-cultural history and its relationship with modernity. His discard of June and the culture or Notting Hill is strange for Willie, even Petrida who is Richard's friend leaves Willie aside after the frustrated experience of the night. Different other persons who had come to London from the different places of India and Africa and other countries are continuously searching for something and other in the culture of the west, where they had to live but can't discard the psychology and heritage they stored in their minds:

It was a little world of its own. The immigrants from the Caribbean, and then the white colonies of Africa, and then Asia, had just arrived. They were still new and exotic; and there were English people—both high and low, with a taste of social adventure, a wish from time to time to break out of England, and people with colonial connections who wished in London to invert the social code of the colonies—there were English people who were ready to seek out the more stylish and approachable of the new arrivals (p. 72).

In fact this was the world different altogether for those people among whom Willie Chandran an Indian tries to locate himself, and goes such a long search for that identity of himself which is the most common pursuit of writings of Naipaul. The western world is not at all favourable for him as Rostan Murray comments:

For maintaining his identity Willie starts writing scripts for radio which are accepted by Roger with great enthusiasm, who himself is ‘like a man happy to sink his own identity in the grander identity of his corporation’ (p. 78).
Willie gets solace in writing stories and perhaps in this matter Naipaul is personal about his own ambitions and adherence. Willie's stories about Indian background in London are accepted popularly. The writing becomes a sort of emancipation of his exiled self, whereas the thoughts always remain in those places of his arrival.

Percy's departure from London to his birth place and Willie's creative endeavor attracts Ana, who is an admirer of his writing. She finds in his stories something similar related to her life and background, therefore, she writes a letter to Willie about her feelings: 'I feel I had to write to you because in your stories for the first time I find moments that are like moments in my life, though the background and material are so different. It does my heart a lot of good to think that out there all these years there was someone thinking and feeling like me' (p. 124).

Because she herself belonged to a mixed community and was again in a half position of life. Willie desires to visit her African nation where they go together. Ana herself narrates the past of her dynasty and also suggests a plot for his story.

Visiting the different parts of Africa, Willie is continuously in search of identity of the other self inside him, which always worries him. Ana reveals the past and her parentage of a mixed heritage. Ana's grandfather, living in Africa, 'had himself become half-African with an African family' (p. 150). She has a different impression of Willie and was unknown about the background of his origin, while the latter was with her in Africa he was known as 'Ana's 'London-man.'

Besides Willie, all other characters have the quest for their identity in the novel. Percy Cato, Roger, Ana, Graca and Sarojini, Julio, Carla, Ricardo and Alvaro all are in the search of their lost past and they are living in hallucination. As the title of the novel goes, there is 'half' in the present, which they are leading, but the other 'half' part is always haunting them. It is very difficult for the characters in the novel to combine these two lives to make one perfect and complete self. As this has been put by Manjit Inder Singh:

If this is the pattern of unmasked route that Willie's life takes, it brings him headlong into confrontation with other lives, lives half-lived and half wasted, a version of mixed, amorphous quality of cultural collisions that signal the uncertainties of post-war world of movement and drift.5

This is the story of the divided world not only of Willie, but almost of all the characters including Percy Cato, Marcus, Ana and his
sister Sarojini. Willie initiates himself into all that is incomplete in him—the ‘art of seduction’, which he tries for perfection in the suburbs of London. It is the novelist’s quest of identity that makes a character to learn English there but not forgetting those haunting scenes from the native land. This indicates his trial for the adoption of that culture and discard of his own which at a time becomes impossible for Willie like the other characters of the novel:

The expatriate individual, living in permanent exile is cut off from tradition. Uprooted in time and place he gets fragmented and twisted as a person. Naipaul explores the failure, futility, isolation, dispossession, rootlessness and valuelessness of persons forming this unanchored community. The metaphor of half is about the plight of those migrants who neither completely mixed up with the immigrant countries, nor could they follow the traditions and beliefs of their original heritage. Therefore, it is an expanded and divided world that shapes the story ‘which emerges as a sign as a marker of the convulsion of the post-colonial world.’ And Willie is still continuing that search which perhaps may not come to him as it has already been half lost. He says this to Ana, ‘When I asked you in London I was frightened. I had nowhere to go. They were going to throw me out of the college at the end of the term and I didn’t know what I could do to keep afloat’ (p. 227). And he laments, ‘But now the best part of my life has gone, and I’ve done nothing’ (p. 228). This crisis continues in his mind and perhaps he realizes as there is no destination for him. V.S. Naipaul’s characters quest for identity remains in all his classics, and an autobiographical interpretation of the novelist can be seen through the descriptions of events in the novel as Bruce king rightly said: ‘Naipaul’s fiction often has subtexts: the novel can be understood as autobiographical in the sense that they are projections of his own life and anxieties of homelessness, of living in more than one culture, of needing to find a narrative order for experience, of needing to achieve, of needing to create, of having to build a monument to his own existence through his writing.’

NOTES

Aristotle’s statement ‘we are our desires’, feels true. What we want and how we go about satisfying that want shows who we are. To map the histories of women, one would have to place them in dialogical relation within, between and among cultures and nation. The formation of mentalities, as an interaction between economic, political, socio-cultural and religious structures, needs to be understood more clearly. In the Indian context, it may be difficult to clearly distinguish between religious, magical or traditional beliefs, as they occupy complementary domains in the space of social cognition. Unlike in the West, there has been no internal confrontation between them. Muslim ethos, history and culture are different. Women, in these cultures live in different social and cultural realities. Western paradigms of free floating freedoms do not work in conventional closed Muslim society. The margins have to be viewed carefully. Gayatri Spivak makes a relevant observation, saying that, there 

"... can be no universal claim in the human sciences. This is most strikingly obvious in the case of establishing ‘marginality’ as a subject position in literary and cultural critique. The reader must accustom herself to starting from a particular situation and then to the grand shifting under her feet." [1]

Women’s (Muslim) issues were first raised in public debate by Rokeya Shekwat Hussain (1880-1932). The activities organized by Rokeya and her associates initiated a crusade for women’s empowerment. They worked for women’s right to education and increased mobility and engaged in charity and relief work for destitute women in the slums. Neither the modernists nor the traditionalists supported Hussain’s challenge to the ‘divine’
ordination of male supremacy. Ironically, the modernist’s supported her for women’s access to formal education as a necessary qualification for a good housewife and mother in a ‘modern’ household. Rokeya’s dream of empowering women was forged into her famous feminist utopian short story, *Sultana's Dream*. The story showed a reversal of gender roles, by letting women take charge of public sphere and by putting men in seclusion, and thereby usurping power.

If Rokeya’s feminist utopian story explored new boundaries of freedom, Ismat through a large body of her work, articulated her concern about women’s power and freedom. Seen as a chronicler of the middle class Muslim culture in Uttar Pradesh, she questioned the social fabric of her cultural milieu. The Muslim men and women that she portrays are not however bound by a meta-culture. She wrote in the 1930s when intellectual vagrancy was almost an offence. She was dealing with issues of gender, and marginalisation when the vocabulary like periphery, marginality and subaltern had not gained currency. She showed what it meant to be and feel unequal.

Ismat challenged the traditional concepts of womanhood from the repository of lived experiences. She does not engage in inert theoretical concepts. Chabran assert the primacy of experience over theory. She appeals to the instructive status of intellectual’s pre-institutions, history in the fields, the family and the factory on the grounds that we have to consider the shaping way which experience directs us to ask certain questions of a particular theory, which theory alone does not lead us to ask.3

Ismat challenged constructs like the ‘family,’ ‘motherhood,’ ‘wife’ and the complexities of invisible economics. She questioned concepts about ‘body,’ ‘beauty,’ ‘gaze’ long before such concepts, filigreed with rhetoric, sneaked their way into the Indian shores from the conference rooms of the Western Academia. Her, apparently ‘small,’ ‘inner-courtyard,’ stories are heavily loaded. The stories do not encourage a political reading but if read politically, reveal amazing plethora of meanings. In each story, there is a discovery of perception and multi-dimensionality. Everything said in the short story also contains all that has not been said. Truth comes out by reflection, implication or by exploitation of the symbolic configurations of the language. Situations may apparently seem trivial, unchallenging but within the fortress of their experience, the women face them squarely and resistance in each story is different. Ismat questions the dynamics of relationships
and shows that the self does not exist in isolation. She questions marriage, law, customs—all these being important elements of self-construction. Culture, says, Rajeshwari Sunder Rajan, may be seen as

the product of the beliefs and conceptual models of society and as the destination where the trajectory of its desires takes shape, as well as the very day practices, the contingent realities and the complex process by which they are structured.¹

Women’s dresses and visibility continue as a symbolic identifier in Muslim societies even today. Purdah is more complex issue. In the broad sense, Purdah represents all the other symbols as well, because its implications are various and may not always be manifested through the actual wearing of the Purdah. Veil relates to by and large women’s relationship with the world. Vrinda Nabar observes:

In other words, a physical symbol like Purdah may signify a whole way of life, and in turn, incorporates several other modes of discrimination ‘purdah,’ extremely and etymologically, means ‘curtain’. In the global context, it is commonly associated with the veil, worn by the women in many Islamic societies to hide their faces and bodies from the gaze of strangers. In other words, its gender connotations are by and large known to people familiar with Muslim culture or with women related issues. However serious commentators have insisted on its etymological meaning as a more comprehensive indicator of its various functions, including the gender-related ones. Purdah or curtain literally signifies a concealment of what lies on the other side.²

Veil, in Ismat’s stories becomes an extended metaphor to explore the protected space. The stance of protectionism towards women is often mobilized on behalf of misogynists in Muslim countries today. Protectionism is a strange stance to take towards the individual who are best at making life and peace. For example Taliban seeks to protect their women from public display yet they are also abusive to women. Lot of women, today are trying to fight protectionism as violation of equal treatment and equal freedom, the crusade that Ismat in her own unique way started in 1930s.

Veil, becomes a powerful image of women’s experiences of exile, alienation, objectification, struggle and rebellion in politico-socio-cultural contexts. Commenting on the politics of the veil, El Sadwaan syas:

Consider, for example, Hejab, (veiling) and debates in the West concerning its role in empowering Muslim women by providing them
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For her veiling and nakedness are the two sides of the same coin. Both mean that women are bodies without a mind and should be covered. Purdah also connotes an extreme form of sexual control. Apart from concealing women behind the veils or keeping them within the walls of the Zenana, Purdah implies multitudes of complex social arrangements which maintained social distance between the sexes. Ismat has tried to show how authentic identity is based on unveiling our minds and not on veiling our faces. Ismat plays a subversive game with the traditional codes. In today’s global market, ethnicity has become a prized commodity, to be vended under the table of ‘difference’. Ethnicities are manufactured and constructed for the consumption of the power centers of the first world. The post-modern specimens of the attitude to ‘exotic’ practice and institutions which viewed from afar, are celebrated as ‘authenticity’, ‘local’ responses to indigenous problems—and excused as inevitable because they fit with the culture, did not work for Ismat. She does not glorify the veil, simply as a ‘different’ way of life. She has shown the horrors of suppression and subjugation behind the veil. For feminists at home in India, the agitation around Muslim women’s rights to maintenance consisted of a series of bitter lessons. The Shah Bano case (under the section 125, the individual can choose secular alternatives), became a controversial issue that rocked the nation and hit the newspaper headlines for months. Abandoned by her husband (after the ‘talaaq’), Shah Bano appealed in the court for right to maintenance from her husband. There was a lot of hue and cry by the Muslim religious leaders against the court’s decision. It was argued that section 125 transcended the personal law. The whole case became a study of the ease with which, the Muslim religious leaders resorted to fundamentalist assertions, among which the control of women was one of the first. Communal agitations claimed that ‘Islam’ was in danger and the Ulema issued a fatwa, saying that the judgment violated the teachings of Islam. So much pressure was put on Shah Bano that she gave up the right, she had long fought or, abjuring the maintenance the court had accorded her. It is obvious how in the name of culture and religion power structures work and a status
maintained. Even today in the twenty-first century, things have not changed much. We can see however today in the major pockets of India, Middle East countries and some other Asian countries, Muslim women still live in a different time zone. Ismat's work becomes all the more relevant today because of her insightful critique of how women are subjugated in the name of religion and culture. Taliban, not far from home in Afghanistan and their bizarre methods of suppression and atrocities is a living reality. Since 1992, Algerian women too had to bear a dose of the fundamentalist's bitter medicine and these terrors in open daylight were known to the world.

Ismat's stories draw on the experiences of middle class Muslim women but her concerns are more comprehensive and wide-based. Stories are told from diverging viewpoints. Analysis of gender is made in the socio-political and cultural parameters: deconstructing from within, the Muslim ethos, history and culture, she questions confirmative roles. She shows through her stories how men's control over women, by constructing women as its vestiges, needs critical attention. The questions of power, justice, moral choice and identity are taken up largely in the socio-cultural context and not in the existential context. Developing around the relationship of gender and ideology, her stories show how gender and ideology are constructed socially and historically. Religion intersects with society, affecting women's location, status and position. Religion plays a vital role in constructing gender at the level of culture. These aspects of everyday life are all too often taken for granted and seldom subjected to close scrutiny. Ismat shows how at cultural level, religion informs our notions of sexuality, marriage and family. In her view Koran is potentially democratic. It is filled with open meanings for what equivalence can and should mean for men and women. The problem lies not with Koran but its interpreters and the self-empowered Ulemas. Commenting on the same issue, Azizah Al-Aibri says:

No where does the Koran say that Eve was crafted out of Adam. Instead it states that males and females are created by God from the same soul or spirit (nafs). The founding myths are not inherently patriarchal. When read in this way.

Ismat's stories are not stories about women but social institutions and the nature of freedom and choice. Stories like 'Hindustan Chor do', 'Do Haath', 'Bichu Phupi', 'Til' show the various facets of her art. She gave the short story a new vocabulary. The stories
open up a dialogue on the many contradictory ways in which the secular struggle can be strategized and sustained. Stories like ‘Gainda’ explore the painful process of discovering sexuality. Ismat explores sexuality as a serious subject. She shows how if sexuality is the site of love, desire, sexual fulfillment and physical procreation, it is also at the same time for women, the site of shame, confinement, anxiety and compulsion. She feels that experience can never be obscene. Questioning the whole concept of ‘filthy’ and ‘dirty’ she says:

If removing the bandage helps the wound to dry and heal
then that is not obscenity, that’s just treatment—what
is so wrong with eroticism, why are you so scared
of eroticism in literature? And don’t you see that the writer
himself is trembling fearfully and is terrified of the world’s
obscenity.8

‘Lihaaf’ is one her most powerful stories which questions hetrosexism and the limits of eroticism. In most of the stories, on the first reading, there seems to be some internal disconnectedness, some disjointedness — but there is an internal design, an oblique reference which combines into a rich texture of trope, exposing a pattern of meaning within the symbolic structure. The silences in the story struggle to break open into speech. Enveloping the whole gamut of stories are images of exposure and concealment, sight and blindness. Stories become metonymic structures of understatement, revealing the suppression and exploitation that the protagonist face. As Manju Gorakhpuri says:

I find Ismat’s art akin to suggestion—avoiding evident linkages in the narrative, she reveals and illuminates meaning by sudden disjointed and suggestive hints. Her artistry is like the lihaf which reveals by concealment. One has to be adept reader to pick up the signs that hint at her message.9

Stories like ‘The Veil’ questions the socio-cultural traditions which glorify and romanticize feudal gender ownership. Images of ownership are of course universal and originate in patriarchal feudalism. Goribi’s loyalty to the institution of marriage consumes her entire life. Living under the veil of non-being, life remains a big void for her. She is alienated and cocooned in a deadening silence. Her husband Kale Mian’s repeated disappearance and resurfacing does not make any difference in her condition and is an oblique commentary on culturally constructed roles. The concept of ‘izaat’ pushes her towards ‘martyrdom’, Ismat shows
how such idealization of female martyrdom is cultural. Her non-role is her definition. Her ‘grotesque’ and ‘absurd’ existence is an overarching commentary on the socio-cultural situation, of which Goribi is a product. ‘The Wedding Shroud’ is a potent comment on how women internalize their social roles and how their minds and bodies are guarded from change. There is an irony and ambivalence implicit in the whole story. Kubra is the ‘widow’s burden’ and has to be married at any cost. The story reveals a wide variety of pre-defined roles. The story shows how the so called wedding ‘jora’ obstructs the process of individuation. It is obvious how the idea of marriage as the central priority of social life, seems to be the end towards which all girls are conditioned to believe they should be moving. The stereotype is all the more potent because it is superimposed with moral values which posit it as not merely virtuous and desirable but also as representing everything that a long cultural tradition has sanctioned as necessary in a woman. Kubra’s ‘shrinking’ womanhood, her ‘waning’ youth makes the search for a groom more urgent and desperate. Rahat Mian is wooed, bribed, pleased and baited by Kubra’s mother. Crushed under the social set up, Kubra’s weird expressions of hostility towards womanhood and symbolically towards her own self are subtly presented. The story shows the psychological impact of the experience which is the real context of the story.

In ‘Lihaaf, Ismat forges a new definition of freedom. She puts the questions of sexuality and gender, challenging heterosexual assumptions. Heterosexism is the set of values and structures that assumes heterosexuality to be the only natural form of emotional and sexual experience. This story deals with a traditionally undefined social situation. Exploring the tabooed subject of female sexuality, she subverts the whole idea of abstinence as a sign of devotion. Begum Jaan tries to cope with an incompatible marriage. She finds emotional and sexual solace in her female servant, Rabbo, puts at ease her ‘eternal’ itch. Begum Jaan’s aggressive sexuality is a way of keeping herself alive. Her act of drawing attention to her body is a defiance of norms. It is the beginning of the subject position. The story sent shock waves and the reading of the story just converged on the portrayal of ‘bold’ female sexuality, ignoring the allied (deeper) implications of the story. The quilt is used as a veil. The very object from which one hides one’s action becomes the informer of one’s deeds. In Muslim societies, the normative thrust has been increasingly towards the concealment of the female
body. This may be analyzed as a literal and metaphorical extension of Purdah. ‘Curtain’ denotes various modes of physical constraint in the public display of the female body. Metaphorically, Purdah makes a shift in emphasis to what is socially considered proper behavior for a woman. Deepa Mehta’s film ‘Fire’ was an attempt to explore sexuality as a serious subject. The two sister-in-laws, seek solace in each others company and find their relationship very liberating. The movie was dubbed as ‘filth’ and criticized as an attempt to ‘contaminate’ the culture. Ismat, in 1944 propelled the issue of sexuality to the surface. Lesbianism in itself is not important. Ismat integrates the issue of lesbianism into the larger issues of ‘choice’ and ‘freedom’. She shows through the story how a person’s ethics and private symbols can become valid tools of social intervention. Apart from all this the story also challenges the notions of ‘motherhood’ and the ‘maternal’ instinct. The nine year old girl, who comes to stay with Begum Jaan, does not not evoke in her any maternal instincts. Enveloped thickly in her sexuality, Begum’s repeated calls ‘come to me, come’ sound ambiguous. They are anything but a motherly call. Rabbo’s warning ‘Raw mangoes are sour’ imply Begum’s intended exploratory adventures. Angela Carter, in another context says:

> The theory of maternal superiority ‘is one of the most damaging of all consolatory fictions’ and it places women out of history, where ‘fertility’ governs all decisions, choices and relationships.\(^6\)

There are multiple perspectives from which the story can be decoded. A lot of damage seems to have been done by the industry of the so called fellow women critic. They get carried away by the gender issues, micro-categorize the women authors, circumscribing their works. Complex and wider meanings seem to be lost in an enthusiastic attempt to focus on just ‘women’s issues’. Ismat’s reputation has oscillated between two extremes—from being trivialized to being canonized. She is much more than ‘Lihaaf’. Even her male contemporaries like Manto and Krishan Chander wanted her to have a so called ‘balanced approach’ and not be obsessed with ‘sex’, glossing over her contribution in expanding awareness of the more institutionalized form of inequality and suffering. Theorists like Faizia Gardezi echo what Ismat had said in the 1940s. Faizia Gardezi says:

> There may well be a narrow strain within feminism which views the
struggle as simply open of achieving equality with men, while not calling for any broader restructuring of society. But increasingly there is a realization that feminism cannot be reduced solely to a concern with gender inequality, because this ignores the inequalities that exist among men. Again, women have different experiences based on characteristics other than gender to struggle around gender alone is to downgrade this diversity and generalize the experience of women. Feminism is and must be every woman’s movement and the only way, it can achieve this is to bring every woman’s experiences into its fold.11

There may be an obvious limitation of Ismat’s project in terms of its focus on the middle class Muslim women in U.P. However no study can address itself to all the complexities of Indian womanhood. This does not diminish the validity of a study that defines its scope provided it offers a means towards solving a multi-dimensional jigsaw puzzle. Ismat does not see feminism as an end in itself. She uses women’s issues as a springboard to explore other complex cultural and psychological dimensions of human living. She moves out of the narrow grooves of religion to define culture in a broader and more inclusive way. She says:

I am a Muslim. Idol worship is a sin. But puranic mythology is a part of my national legacy. A eons of culture and philosophies are saturated in it. Religion and culture of a nation are two different thing. Here, I have an equal share just as I have in its soil, sunlight, its water.12

She moves from the micro to the macro, the issues gradually get broadened and she moves beyond the gender. There is a shift from identity to relationship, from a concern with oppression to the with the concept of freedom. She goes beyond resistance, and questions the moral premise of this inequality.

Ismat does not talk in a void. Her need for women to be recognized as individuals is her foremost concern. Her stories act as cultural radars for the self-correction of the society. In a Gramascian reading of the ‘radical revolution in thought’ the task of the intellectual is to eradicate illusions from the mind and imagination, disclosing specific interests which have become embedded in them and which draws sustenance from one dominant ideology a contentious struggle must be waged in society against hegemonic understandings, in an effort to create counter hegemony. Gramsci says:

This awareness develops through intelligent reflection ... on the reasons why certain situations exist and on the best means of transforming what have been opportunities for vassalage into triggers of rebellion
Ismat’s consciousness raising, in the Gramscian sense, focuses on the equality in gender relations coming about when women have secured the space they need. She says:

Are we going to continue advising them to be bashful and modest? Drowned in a sea of feminity as ancient custom demands, or will we explain to them that when they go to work, they shouldn’t carry their feminist and coquettish ways with them?14

She moves from the womanist to the humanist, a redefining in ideological terms of humanism to become a category which does not demand the price of submerging gender differences or placing them in hierarchical relationships, but values them as of equal importance. Some of the hardliners may see the danger of such an interpretation as the return to same old ‘universalism’.

For the inheritors of Rokeya’s [Sultana’s] dream, the task is complex and difficult. An alternate paradigm of development based on participatory politics, fair distribution of social resources and opportunities, free expression of pluralistic culture and non-hierarchical gender relations in family, community and state have to be established. Ismat argues for a holistic perspective which is essential if any change is to take place. Her stories call for a more total and inclusive way of seeing things. Sub-texts in her work are usually ignored. The broad spectrum of the issues that she deals with is obvious. She starts with the so called ‘just women’s issues’ and ‘women’s histories’ and enters a gender free zone to talk about about human dignity, freedom and equality.

NOTES


